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CHAPTER ONE

THE STORY

1990. The setting of this story sees it open in the Mamelodi SOS Village at a meeting of resident students of the community centre, from the local university, and visiting students from a not too distant Afrikaans, white university: all training psychotherapists. Supervisors were present. It was a hot, airless Pretoria day. The still bright light of the relentless sun bounced off the concrete outside the room the group sat in. The resident students explained patiently to the visiting students what it was they did in Mamelodi with the local "semi-literate, vernacular" people, many of whom had never heard of the concept psychology. In that context consulting a medical doctor could sometimes be perceived as radically western when the sangoma best knows the ways of the local people, living and dead.

In the midst of the meeting, a telephone call arrived via a messenger. One of the resident students was asked to please attend to it. A nearby doctor wanted a psychologist to go to his rooms immediately. The doctor, Dr O, practised in Tsamaya Road, close by. The chosen student excused herself and entered the white heat of the late morning.

A Journal: The Story of Lešaka

From this point the story of Lesaka takes the form of a chronicle of events. In order to emphasise the journalistic nature of the narrative that follows, it will be presented at times in the present tense and throughout in the first person.

Day one

Dr O is waiting for me and I am ushered into his neat consulting room. He quickly explains the situation to me while the patient waits in the next room. A

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woman has brought in her neighbour's two-year-old son this morning. The child has been severely beaten, sjambokked, and is in shock. He is dehydrating and must be admitted to hospital. I am asked to look into the matter, as it seems to be a family affair. I am taken to the woman and the child in the next room. The child is silent and still. I am told that the shock makes him unresponsive. His little shirt is lifted for me to view the damage: long raised stripes cross his torso on either side of his body. I am struck by how apathetic the child is.

The woman neighbour explains that the child's older brother called her this morning to take the child from him. He has since disappeared but a charge of assault against him has been laid at the police station. The children's mother is in hospital and the father is away. I agree to visit the home.

Day two

The next day I visit the child in the hospital. He is lying in a cot in a small ward with several other babies. The nursing sister tells me that he is much better but still very quiet. He has a drip attached to his arm. His mother has been to see him as she is in the same hospital - Mamelodi Day Hospital, a facility for short stays and routine medical procedures. An attached out-patient clinic serves the community. Paramedical departments include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, ophthalmic services, psychiatric services, social work services. No psychological services are provided.

About day six

A few days later I visit the child's home in Mamelodi Gardens - a middle class, new suburb. The houses are neat but close together. Each garden is walled off from the street and its neighbours. To find the house is not easy as this is a town where the streets have no names. The names were removed to foil the soldiers and the police during the years of political struggle in the country. Houses are identified by large hand painted numbers on the doors. The numbers run into the tens and hundreds of thousands. A typical address would

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be, 105334 Mamelodi East. I find a spot with numbers approaching the one I am looking for, I follow the numbers until they run out, then the sequence starts again somewhere else. Eventually I find it.

The child's mother is home. The child is home. They both look weak. The child is called Neo and his mother, Patricia, is Mrs Morare. Neo is more cheerful than when I had last seen him. He is a plump, healthy looking child with a winning smile.   Patricia and I talk about what happened. She tells me that there is a boy, Lesaka, seventeen years old, who was living with them. She had to go to hospital suddenly and Lesaka beat the child Neo while she was away. Mrs Morare is a large woman who speaks passionately. She is very angry and wants to see justice. She does not want Lesaka living with them in the house any longer. He still sleeps at the house but she seldom sees him. There is going to be a court case. Her husband is in Cape Town but should be returning in six weeks time to Pretoria. He works for the American Embassy and must travel every six months between Pretoria and Cape Town, the country's two capitals. For diplomats and higher government officials, summer is spent in Cape Town in the south and the winter is seen out in the warmer and drier Pretoria in the north. The winter season in Pretoria will start in six weeks time. Mr Morare is a driver for the embassy official, Mr Dougall. Mrs Morare does not work.

Mrs Morare had developed a kidney infection and was admitted to hospital for an emergency procedure. It was then that she left Lesaka to care for the child Neo but he ended up beating the child.

I negotiated to see Lesaka. I arranged to return when he would be present.

Day eight

When I met Lesaka I found a small, slightly built youth of seventeen years, shabbily dressed with a diffident manner. His eyes remained lowered while we

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spoke, or tried to speak with the help of an interpreter, the house helper. Occasionally he stole a glance upwards at me and his mouth twitched at the one side as he struggled for the odd word in English that was the extent of his vocabulary in my language. My knowledge of his language was nil. He said that on the morning of the beating incident the child would not stop crying. He had had to cook, wash and get the child to school but the child would not stop crying. Lesaka did not know anyone in Mamelodi except his father who was presently in Cape Town. He did not get on with Patricia at all and complained that she often locked him out and refused to recognise him as a member of the household. It was at this point that I understood what the family connection was between Lesaka and Neo: they had the same father but different mothers. Lesaka said that Patricia had been nice to him while his father was home but that she had changed towards him as soon as he left for Cape Town. Lesaka had lived all his life with his mother in the Ciskei until she had died recently. Lesaka had come to Pretoria a few months earlier, after the death of his mother. This was the first time he had left his home in the Ciskei, a large rural area plagued with poverty and much violent political unrest. He had come to look for his father. Lesaka was frightened and asked if I could help him in the court case that he knew he would have to face. I agreed to see what I could do but said that I wanted to speak to his father first.

The next few weeks

I wrote to the American embassy in Cape Town, asking for Mr Morare. I managed to contact him and informed him of the problem. He showed my letter to his employer, Mr Dougall, who allowed him to return to Pretoria early to sort out the problem. We met one late afternoon at his house. I remember him arriving in a car and us shaking hands in the street. I had arrived a few minutes before him and waited in my car outside his house. I remember feeling a bit anxious in case he was aggressive or expressed great anger at what his elder son had done. My stereotyping of black men at that time, in that context, led me to expect an aggressive, violent father to a violent son.

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I was confounded in my expectations. Mr Morare was not big. He spoke softly and reverently. He shook his head when he described the routine fighting in his house. His wife did not want Lesaka in the house. Lesaka was the son of his first wife from his home in the Ciskei. They had been married in a traditional ceremony, not a civil one. Many years ago he had left this first family in the Ciskei and had never returned. He had left the poverty of the Ciskei to seek employment in the more prosperous north of the country. He had found a new life with a new wife, one to whom he was joined legally. He still recognised Lesaka as his son, but what was he to do with him? Lesaka did not speak any language except Xhosa and few people in the north speak this language. Lesaka was not educated, he could not even read or write. Now he had arrived at his father's doorstep and wanted money and a place to live. Mrs Morare was not happy at all with the situation. She felt that Lesaka demanded too much money and did not work enough around the house. If Mr Morare gave Lesaka money or bought him clothes then Mrs Morare became very angry, shouting and complaining. They fought constantly. He asked if I would help with the court case against Lesaka. I agreed to do so. I suggested that we must work together to sort out the family problems. He agreed.

The next few months: Interpreters

I began to see Lesaka at the community counselling clinic almost weekly. He would arrive smiling shyly and sort of bouncing rhythmically as he walked, cap in hand, repeatedly pulling it through the one hand with the other. We always had to scramble to find an interpreter before we could settle down to talk. We eventually established a habit of using one of two interpreters who were mostly available. Not many people spoke Lesaka's language fluently. I briefed the interpreters as to how I wanted them to work with Lesaka and myself. This began as a very formal arrangement of precise translations but soon the interpreters formed their own relationships with Lesaka through myself, as much as I formed a relationship with Lesaka through them. The interpreters and I always discussed our sessions with Lesaka after he had left. As such we formed a small therapeutic team in which I led the formal

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dialogues.

There was Catherine, the motherly mental health worker. Catherine grew very fond of Lesaka. She would tell me in detail about any chance meetings she may have had with him in between sessions. She also used to remind me of his visits before he arrived. She often asked after him when he was not there. Catherine would nod approvingly at some of my questions to him or smile indulgently at his answers. My relationship with Catherine changed, too. We became mothers in alliance although at times I felt as if I were an apprentice mother to her expertise. She sometimes had to patiently explain cultural issues to me. Lesaka became a shy boy in the presence of Catherine. His sentences were short and he spoke of his personal life, his fears and his concerns.

Marley, or Rasta Marley, as he was known, was the other interpreter. Marley was long and thin. His gentle, almost oriental face, also long with high cheekbones, was scarred deeply on the one cheek with two long gashes. His dreadlocks were always in various stages of progress. They never quite made it to a respectable Rastafarian length. This was typical of all of Marley's life. He never quite made it to leaving home, or earning a living through his art, or making it with a girlfriend, or even being a "real" man in some opinions as he was slightly effeminate in his mannerisms. Marley brought out a different aspect of Lesaka from the one Catherine elicited. When Marley was with us, Lesaka became more masculine, more assertive. Lesaka smiled less and his answers were more focussed, less emotional. He spoke of work, the law and his father. Marley, too, was different with me during the period we worked together with Lesaka, different from how he was with me when he and I were alone. There was a kind of competitiveness between Marley and Lesaka that I sensed.

About this time I was introduced to Jane, a woman of the community. Jane was an elderly woman but strong. She always wore a maroon beret and a kind of dark green cross-over pinafore dress. Jane spoke beautiful English and so

we could communicate well. I was introduced to Jane because the question of possible alternative accommodation for Lesaka had arisen in conversation with my interpreters. Jane was known to take people into her home. She worked with young children as a day-care mother but also gave care to other people in other ways. She gave me directions to her home and I made my way there one day.

Jane's house was not far from the community centre in an old property. The yard behind the modest standard four-roomed house held a maze of zozo huts standing on raised dried mud platforms. Property owners in the townships often erect temporary (zozo) huts in their yards to rent out for extra income. The aisles between these huts were narrow and most of the doors were open. A few semi-naked babies sat or tottered at doorways. Most of them had thin strings of beads around an ankle while some had a similar string around their plump bellies. One or two had a strip of hairy animal skin around a wrist. Adult women, probably mothers of the babies, were seated in the aisles, some of them washing clothes in galvanised basins. None of them could speak much English but attempted to communicate with me anyway. I crouched down to play briefly with one of the babies and its mother touched the bangles on my own wrist. I wore two twisted copper wire bangles and a solid brass bangle with engravings on. I had been given each of them by different people and kept them on my wrist as nostalgic reminders of the givers. The woman showed me her own arm that was adorned with bangles, then she pointed to the bangled wrists of the other women. They all laughed and one of them said "sangoma!" She then pulled on the beads around her neck and repeated "sangoma!" I laughed, too, but shook my head, "no, I'm not a sangoma".

Jane was not there that day but I learned later that she accommodated sangomas in training.

That day as I drove away from Jane's house I found myself face to face with the entrance to the Day Hospital not 50 meters from Jane's yard. I suddenly

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remembered the visit to Neo. He was a toddler not unlike the ones I had just left behind me, but the day I had visited him he had been hooked up to a drip and held in a barred iron cot. I was struck by the contrast and wondered at the juxtaposition of the two images in my mind. Perhaps strangely, they did not seem incongruent in that moment.

In the Same months: The Court Case

I took Lesaka to consult a lawyer at a Legal Aid Clinic at an office in the centre of Pretoria. The elderly white lawyer we spoke to was understanding and patient. He suggested that the case would not be treated as a very serious one; he knew the magistrate concerned and was confident that Lesaka would get off with a warning especially as a psychologist was involved.

The Mamelodi court was crowded to over-capacity on the day of the hearing. We waited our turn as case after case was heard. People continuously entered and left the court room that had something of the flavour of a market place: bustling people, children crying, parcels and bundles crowding the aisles. I had arranged to be present as an expert witness although no written report was asked for. I also needed to testify that Lesaka would continue to see me in therapy. The hearing was remarkably quick, with the case being heard in a matter of about half an hour in total when it was eventually presented.   I was questioned briefly from my seat and it was all over, with a warning. The lawyer had been present from early on as he had several cases to defend that day.

Setting therapeutic goals

Like a therapist well trained in conventional methods, I started to set goals for our sessions together. Lesaka and I discussed the way forward, Mr Morare and I discussed the way forward and Mrs Morare and I discussed the way forward. Among all these discussions, it emerged that Patricia (Mrs Morare) believed

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her husband to drink too much alcohol. She said he became drunk and then they would fight. She accused him of being "harsh" with her. She complained of how tired she became looking after the small child, Neo, and with her sewing activities. Patricia belonged to a women's group who met regularly to sew for a small profit and learn further sewing skills. This served also as a community group who engaged in politico-social awareness activities with members of foreign embassies. Patricia told me that she had known of Joseph's (Mr Morare) first wife but had not known of a child. She had been shocked to have Lesaka turn up on her doorstep. However, right now her main concern was to sort out the quarrels between herself and her husband. She also found Lesaka "cheeky" to her: he did not respect her as the woman of the house. He seemed to want all of his father's attention.

Joseph was less giving in his communication with me. He admitted to the quarrels between himself and his wife. He was hesitant to speak of his first wife or his previous life in the Ciskei. That life seemed very far from the life he had established in the respectable middle-class suburb of Mamelodi Gardens. The Ciskei is one of the poorest areas of rural South Africa. He had left in desperation to find work in the more prosperous north (under desperate circumstances) but in so doing had never returned to those perpetual desperate needs of his first family. Lesaka had been a baby but Mr Morare had never sent any money home for his care. He had heard that his first wife had died recently.   He acknowledged Lesaka as his son and wanted to help him but did not know where or how to begin. In our conversations we looked at the possibility of sending Lesaka to night school to learn to read and write. Lesaka was approached with the idea and was very enthusiastic about the prospect. All was organised and soon Lesaka was travelling to lessons four times a week.

Mrs Dougall, the American official's wife, wrote to me to thank me for assisting the family. They said that they would encourage Joseph to maintain his commitments from their side. I tried not to see this as patronising but as a genuine concern for a soft-spoken loyal man.

In our sessions, Joseph was not keen to address any marital issues he may have been having with his wife. Thus, I referred his wife to another counsellor for marital therapy and indicated that I would work only with Lesaka or with them as it related to Lesaka.

The community centre

Lesaka and I continued to see each other at the local community clinic. The clinic itself was situated under a large blue gum tree - a circle of chairs in the shade. The clinic had had a history of attempts to establish itself in Mamelodi. It had started out in one of the back houses in the SOS Children's Village. From there it had been moved to a section of a front house of the same complex, closer to the street. Lastly, it had been moved to the grounds of the YMCA adjacent to the SOS Village. At first the grounds had had three prefabricated huts that the clinic was allowed to use although they came to be used mainly for storage, the huts themselves being unpleasant 'hotboxes' in the summer sun. The use of the huts proved short-lived: I clearly remember arriving one morning to find the largest of the huts being dragged away on the back of a large truck. The two smaller huts followed soon after. At the stage of the clinic history when Lesaka came for counselling the only remaining shelter was the large tree.

The members of the clinic often speculated on the metaphorical meaning behind the out casting of the clinic from official community structures in the township. We saw it as a reflection of the struggle for psychology to fit with local traditional healing. Nevertheless, the services of the clinic were used by some and possibly the visibility of the tree setting was more acceptable to local people. Issues of confidentiality were not the same in this township community as they were in the urban, more western community of Pretoria. When I met with Lesaka others would eavesdrop or even at times join in. Lesaka never brought a friend to our sessions, possibly because he had no real

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friends at that time, but sometimes other clients did bring friends or family members to sessions. This was community counselling in a different sense. It was not so much that 'community' defined a specific type of counselling activity, as that it indicated that counselling was largely performed in small communities, not one-on-one.

Lesaka continued at night school, took up boxing at the YMCA hall and met some friends. Lesaka wanted to get himself an identity document as a matter of urgency. He had no birth certificate either. Without any official documents he could not get work. This started a long process that was to last over a year and never reach conclusion. I discuss it in more detail later in this chronicle.

The Street Committee

The time came again for Joseph Morare to return to Cape Town with his employer. Lesaka was left at home once more with Patricia Morare and Neo. It was only a week or two after Joseph had left that problems began again. Things did not go well between Patricia and Lesaka and one day Lesaka ran away from home. Mrs Morare told me that he had disappeared when I asked after him after he had missed an appointment. Mrs Morare's neighbour was the chairperson of the street committee. He came over to join in our conversation. Mrs Morare seemed concerned that Lesaka had disappeared - she said that she did not want Joseph to find out that his son had gone. The chairperson of the street committee said that he would put the word out to other street committees to look out for Lesaka.

This was my introduction to the street committees. Each and every street had a committee whose business it was to represent and protect the members of their street. I was given several examples of how these committees worked.

A woman had run into financial difficulty with her payments on some furniture. When the furniture company had arrived to remove the items from

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her house in lieu of payment, the members of the street committee had refused to allow the furniture company's personnel to take the furniture. They stood in the street blockading the path to the woman's house.   At other times people were hidden from perceived aggressors, money was collected for needy street members, protection was given. When municipal services were discontinued due to debt, the street committee arranged for re-connection using people who knew how to connect the electricity wires from the poles in the streets.

Less than a week passed from the time of our conversation when I received a telephone call from Mrs Morare - they had found Lesaka. The street committees had located him in a street close to the YMCA. He had gone to live with a man by the name of Benjamin- someone he had met through a friend he had made at boxing.

The time with Benjamin

Shortly after Lesaka had been located at Benjamin's house, I paid them a visit. The house was in the old part of Mamelodi, just off the corner of a dirt road not far from the main tarred road that ran from one end of the township to the other, along the east-west axis. The old houses were all built according to a similar design; several rooms symmetrically arranged within a rectangular shaped building. The windows of these houses were set in small, iron framed openings; the houses had a back door and a front door; a tin roof and small yards. Benjamin's house had a well developed hedge partitioning the front yard from the road. The most remarkable feature of this house was, however, the maximum utility of available space. It was obvious that some kind of home industry was run from the premises as concrete objects such as grave stones, wash basins, birdbaths, fencing, and paving stones were stacked on the pavement, inside the driveway and hung from wires over the driveway. Also, various metal and wire objects were arranged in some kind of high-rise storage system in the yard. As I moved up the driveway along the side of the house to

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the back, I realised just how remarkably extensive the utilisation of space in this property was. The entire yard at the back of the house had a second storey constructed above it. The ground storey was used for living, with several small outbuildings accommodating persons, a fenced-off section held some sheep in captivity, chickens ran around underfoot, then a staircase led one to an upper level of the yard which I could just make out as having a small hut on it. Later, when I had become more acquainted with Benjamin, I asked permission to look at the top. There I found a container vegetable garden, the small hut and some wash lines. I guessed that the plants and washing were put at the top as they needed the sunlight that was not able to reach the lower storey very well.

On that particular morning as I entered the yard for the first time, I found a gathering of people in the courtyard at the back, between the house back door and the out rooms and the sheep enclosure. The gathered group were sitting on boxes and chairs. I introduced myself and explained my presence. One lady, Rebecca, was able to speak good English. She was also talkative and friendly. She and I eventually established a good rapport. She understood my interest in Lesaka and the purpose of my visit and was able to convey this to the other members of the commune. She in turn explained to me how the set-up at Benjamin's house worked. Benjamin was a strong community figure who took stray people into his home. In return he expected them to work for him or pay rent. Benjamin was presently training Lesaka in his concrete manufacturing and welding industry.

I did not meet Benjamin immediately but had to arrange an appointment when I could return to find him. He was an elderly, frail looking man with a sense of inner strength about him. Rebecca was present to interpret as Benjamin's English was not good and my Sotho was non-existent. We spent some time discussing Lesaka and his problems, how he was getting into smoking dagga, was hurt by his family situation, how his prospects for a productive future were not good. Benjamin, nevertheless, seemed to have considered the matter carefully and decided that he could give Lesaka a chance to train at a craft and

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provide him with a secure home at the same time. Benjamin agreed to encourage Lesaka to communicate with his father.

I met Lesaka at the house one morning, by arrangement. He walked up the driveway, cap in hand, smiling diffidently in his usual manner. Again, Rebecca was present to interpret for us. A new set of consultations now began at Benjamin's house and at the community centre when Lesaka could visit me there. We did not meet often now but our focus of conversations changed from personal crisis to practical matters. It was during this time that Lesaka vigorously renewed his efforts to obtain his identity document and applied himself seriously to his literacy classes.

The identity document

In South Africa it was, and at the time of writing still is, almost impossible to accomplish anything without an identity document. Without this Lesaka would never be able to obtain employment, vote, open an account, or drive a car legally among many things. Lesaka set himself a mission to obtain an identity document that became an absorbing, encompassing activity in itself. I came to think of it as a quest that in some ways symbolically depicted Lesaka's attempt to re-position himself in society generally. Even a third world country fighting major national problems such as HIV/AIDS, widespread adult illiteracy, extraordinarily high violent crime statistics and radical socio-political dissatisfaction, had little tolerance for an unskilled, homeless, illegitimate and "unofficial" youth.

I took Lesaka several times to the Home Office in the city centre to make enquiries. We wrote letters to his home village, to the school principal of his village who we discovered was also deceased. No one could vouch for Lesaka's identity. I forget why his father could not do this, perhaps it required two people, or perhaps because Lesaka's father had never married his mother in a legal ceremony, nor witnessed his growing up, he was not recognised as

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being capable of a formal identification of Lesaka. I made many lengthy telephone calls to many officials to try to obtain some help. Nothing ever came of this. Lesaka remained without identity. This was something that he felt keenly with frustration and regret. As I have already said above, I believe that it had at least as much to do with his need for legitimacy as it did with the possibility of a job.

Lesaka found himself trapped in an imperious looped system of social regulations and demands. He had no way of obtaining an identity document as he could not prove his existence through any of the regulated means. Without an identity document Lesaka had no social rights, except the right to be punished should he break the law, which he was already doing by not holding an identity document. He and I took more than one trip into the city to search for a way through to legitimacy. After many months of trying, giving up, and trying again, we not so much admitted defeat, as finally let it all go.

Night school

Here I briefly discuss the matter of Lesaka's education. It was his idea to become properly literate and learn English as even his own vernacular tongue did not get him very far in the northern provinces where we often scrambled for interpreters. Although he had attended school intermittently in his village, the state of the schools in troubled rural areas did not allow for much of an education. We enrolled Lesaka at an adult literacy night school at which I had contacts, having taught there for some years previously. A regular lift to the school was arranged and we arranged with Lesaka's father to pay the fees and buy the books. Some of this negotiation was done through Mrs Dougall, Lesaka's father's (Joseph's) employer. Mrs Dougall expressed enthusiasm that she could be party to acts of charity for the disadvantaged in the host country. She took it upon herself to "speak to Joseph" about supporting his son. While I

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have no doubt that she approached her involvement with all of the best intentions, the "Joseph" she spoke of seemed other than the Mr Morare I encountered both through his family's stories and in the flesh.

Lesaka attended school for some months but left when he discovered that his father had stopped paying the fees.

Interval

After Lesaka moved in with Benjamin I stopped seeing him as regularly as before. He was working and attending school, initially at least. He had a "family" of sorts and continued staying with Benjamin even after his father returned from Cape Town. He and his father saw each other in a more formal arrangement outside the home of Patricia, mostly. This way they avoided the conflict with Patricia and Mr Morare was able to give Lesaka gifts occasionally, such as clothes, shoes or limited amounts of money. Lesaka appreciated these although he never really got over the sorrow of not being able to live with his father and always held resentment towards Patricia for this.

Eventually I stopped seeing Lesaka altogether and had no news of him for about a year until the next crisis was brought to me.

Another death in the family

I had already completed my two year period of training at the community centre in Mamelodi and was working at a local black matric and teachers' training college, running life-skills programmes, peer counselling training and counselling students, when news came to me that Lesaka was wanting to meet with me urgently. An appointment was set up.

The Lesaka I met at that appointment was self-confident, his English had

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improved tremendously, more so than my Xhosa which remained non-existent, but he was very angry. The week previously, Patricia had stabbed his father to death in the kitchen of their home. Besides the fact that Patricia had now, according to Lesaka, succeeded in forever preventing Lesaka from seeing his father, he was angry that she was not in police custody. Lesaka was concerned that Patricia would not be charged for the murder of his father and would also prevent Lesaka from any inheritance which he might be entitled to. Lesaka wanted recognition as eldest son and the first born of the first wife, and his customary rights protected. He said that Patricia would leave him destitute. Once again I was being asked to become involved in the life of this young man.

I began by visiting Patricia at her home. I found the house filled with several women family members of Patricia's. A large area of the carpet in the living area was stained with blood. I was led to Patricia who was in the bedroom at the back of the house. She lay on a large double bed and seemed in a state of shock although she was able and willing to talk about what had happened. The other women left us alone for a while to talk. She and Joseph had argued, she said that he had been drinking and became aggressive towards her. She drew a knife from the kitchen drawer and stabbed Joseph repeatedly. He died on the spot. It was not difficult to imagine how she succeeded in doing this as she was quite a bit bigger than her husband had been.

Patricia had been arrested and charged but her sewing group leader, also a foreign community worker, was supporting her to try and get the charges dropped. She told me the name of the police officer who was handling the case. It was he who had allowed Patricia out of custody. He was a friend of hers.

I next visited the police station down the road from where Patricia lived. I located the police officer handling the case. The rooms of the station were arranged around an inner courtyard. The investigating officer's office was

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small and dark and filled with simple furniture. There were files stacked on a small wooden table. He offered me a chair opposite him at the desk. I told him who I was and why I was involved and asked him if he knew that Joseph had had an older son. He told me that he had not known of Lesaka at first but that Lesaka had come around to the police station asking questions.   He was reluctant to discuss details of the investigation with me, understandably. He could not yet give me a date of hearing or trial.

On following up when I tried to ascertain a court date, I was told that the file had been lost and that it was unlikely that the case would come to trial. Lesaka expressed his fury when he heard the news. He accused the police officer of conducting some sort of relationship with Patricia. He held his index and middle fingers up together, entwined. He disappeared after that and never contacted me again.

Reflection

I believe that Lesaka gave up on a system that showed no sympathy for one who had no "official" rights in the eyes of our formal social system. I found this ironic in that South Africa was reaching its peak in its engagement in a long struggle to free its people from bureaucratic and unsympathetic laws which marginalised the poor majority who did not fit into the western system. I often wonder about Lesaka and ponder whether he turned to hi-jacking cars or robbery. At other times I believe that I do him a great disservice in even entertaining such an idea. Then sometimes I manage to take a step back and realise that I have yet again been thinking about Lesaka's story from my conditioned western regulated perspective, placing judgements on the events so that they fit into the "malevolent" category simply because they do not fit into my western social expectations.

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I, however, remain grateful to Lesaka who introduced me to a completely different life which is being led by millions of persons in our country in a twilight stratum of our society. If I had not met Lesaka and taken the road with him for a while, I may have remained constantly under my impression that all societies follow similar patterns, although the contents may differ. And if the pattern did digress from the one with which I am familiar, the western one, then I may have been always tempted to judge the digressing one as inferior or malevolent in some way. These events had led me on a journey of critical reflection of what I do as a psychologist in the different contexts in which I work.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FLOW: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

'Silences' refers to those psychosocial phenomena that have not received any research priority or theoretical attention by the discipline. Silences or the 'containment of critical energy' (Disco, 1979, p. 168) may be regarded as one significant indicator of psychologists' interests and those of the movement to which they may be aligned.
(Seedat, 1997, p. 264)

This study explores the active manifestation, the in-action of the integration and/or interface of African local knowledges and traditional perspectives with notions of psychology with particular reference to psychology and counselling/ psychotherapy. Through her work in local South African contexts, the author became curious as to how psychology could accommodate and integrate African local knowledges and ways of thinking about the world and healing, and vice versa. In her search for a path of relevance, the author found little to guide her in a context differing from the mainstream. Writings on local knowledge with particular reference to psychology practice and untainted by western thinking, was found to be scarce. The scarcity of literature in this area contributes to the silence emerging from the local context at a time when the profession needs to listen for guidance in its practice. Some possible explanation for the silence will be discussed further in this study.

Local knowledge is often referred to by other terms and bears a certain character. Barnhardt (2002, p. 242) describes it thus:

These other kinds of knowledge have been variously characterized as traditional knowledge, oral knowledge, indigenous knowledge, or practical knowledge, depending on

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which body of literature you are reading. Some of the distinguishing features of such knowledge are that its meaning and use are context-bound, it usually has utilitarian value, and it is generally acquired through direct participation in real-world activities. If considered in its totality, such knowledge can be seen as constituting a particular world view, or a form of consciousness.

It is this three-fold value of local knowledge as a form of consciousness that captured the interest of the author. It is these aspects of local knowledge that this study attempts to explore at the interface of psychology in the mainstream.

The study begins with The Story (chapter one). The Story introduces a juxtaposition of a chiefly western-oriented model of psychology training, and local conditions. The struggles of both therapist and client in the dialectic of these frameworks are described. The study takes up the struggle in the context of the socio-cultural environment.

The Story, one of two autobiographical stories presented in this study, has been offered as the first chapter in order to present a perturbation and set a context for the further writings of this study. This white, western author trained in a conventional tertiary institution of a westernised education system in the prevailing dominant paradigm of psychology in the world today at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The prevailing dominant paradigm of the discipline of psychology currently promotes the western scientific method in research, and psychotherapies that have evolved from within mainly western contexts (Fouché, 1996; Lincoln, 2000). Many of the major theories from fields such as developmental, personality and social psychology, comprise content to be found in European (mostly British) and American texts (Fouché, 1996; Lincoln, 2000). This constituted the major bulk of her curriculum.

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During her fourteen years of work and practice in the socio-cultural environment of The Story, the author has come no closer to any single understanding of how to practice her profession there than she was the day she entered. However, her ideas have multiplied, complexified and hopefully, become enriched. The challenge has been to accept and celebrate the diversity, the ambivalence, the uncertainty, the unknown, the changing, the hidden and the visible. This study aims to highlight these experiences while giving some small voice to the silent, non-western majority.

The Context

The context of practice referred to above, could be described as an underdeveloped, underprivileged, possibly 'Third World', environment. The author found herself dealing with issues such as witchcraft, ancestry, prayer, spirituality, callings, graveside rituals, naming ceremonies, family lineage, protection and cursing, prediction and interpretation, dreams, *muti[1]*, singing, dancing and drumming. Clients consulted the white doctor on the one side of the street only to leave the hospital and visit the *sangoma[2]* on the other side of the road.   The author often could not engage in psychotherapy with her clients without including the voices of the ancestors and the *nyanga[3]*. She found herself needing to understand or at least to be open to understand why sometimes a whole family was prepared to make enormously compromising sacrifices for one child selected out of many. She needed to understand or at least be open to understand why a son could not attend college if the deceased grandfather did not approve. She learned about connecting and community in different ways from what the books told her and from what she experienced in her own life.

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1 Muti: Medicines (herbal and other) used for treatment by the traditional healers
2 Sangoma: Traditional healer "called" to the profession by the ancestors; spiritual healer and herbalist
3 Nyanga: Often used interchangeably with *sangoma*

There came a point where the text books seemed to refer more to discussions in the corridors of the university and provided answers more relevant to exam questions than her practice. Much of what she did with her clients in the context of her practice she had to discover for herself and in conversation with the context (which included others who worked similarly in the context). Texts that did provide some measure of relevancy were those situated at the time on the fringes of the discipline - ecosystemic theories and discussions of matters of epistemologies (Bateson, 1979, 1985; Capra, 1982, 1997, 2003; Keeney, 1979, 1985; Keeney & Morris, 1985b; Maturana & Varela 1980, 1987).   However, these are not widely adopted in training institutions in South Africa, they do not much focus on psychotherapy in particular, and they also do not specifically refer to the author's local context of practice which brings complexities of its own.

Originally, the author had intended to discover an appropriate way of working when she first set out the proposal for the study. The more she has spoken and mostly listened to those she has invited to participate and those who invited themselves, the more she has realised that it is the intrinsic diversity, the ambivalence, the uncertainty, the unknown, the changing, the hidden and the visible which must be voiced and consecrated.

The Story thus shifted from its original conception of being an impetus as if it could lead to a benchmark for an appropriate way of working within the complexities of the context. In the duration of the study, the Story came to yield to Other Stories that are documented in chapter three. The task became to discover the flow that links them. The Story, or aspects of The Story, were included in some of the conversations reported on in chapter three, and their Flowing takes on a momentum that allows a future for more meaningful Stories. Through this process some form of ecological value (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) may be encountered.

Lincoln & Guba (2000) suggest that, through a focus on ecological values and reflexivity on contextual factors both in the research setting and within the researcher, a level of spirituality may be attained.   They have commented on the shift in research approaches from a history of positivist research to one that may ultimately reflect a spirituality previously devoid from research. The nature of the spirituality and an indication of its possible relevance is probably what Lincoln (2000) refers to elsewhere as "a new and more dignity-oriented form of social science" (p. 10); the need to "study love, honor, altruism, heroism, faith, or any of the great - but largely unobservable - traits of the human spirit" (p. 6); in order to discover "much more, and more than was more important" (p. 6) about humanity.

With the Flow as parameter the researcher re-searched stories and they are presented here as narratives. As with all healthy flows, the Flow is not conceived of as being complete or needing to stop, but it is hoped that the stream will strengthen to a river that will flow into a dam. Dams provide a life source for the ecologies that grow around them.

The Approach

Psychologists in South Africa find themselves battling to establish the profession in the broader community on more than one front. Not only do the specific cultural and socio-political issues seem to be inadequately addressed by mainstream psychology, but also helpers/ researchers in a multi-cultural modernising context working from within a fixed epistemology are paradigmatically closed to the potentialities existing outside the framework. While it is recognised that espousing an epistemology is unavoidable, this study is conducted with an awareness of the need to maximise the flexibility of the boundaries of epistemology from within which the research will operate. Fixed epistemological boundaries not only minimise possibilities of conceptualising human behaviour and healing, but also present the risk of

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losing individuals and communities in the areas of non-meaning lying outside the epistemology in which the helper/ researcher works. Issues around the silencing effects of epistemology are taken up further in the study.

Through the process of searching indigenous conceptions and processes of coping and helping interventions within the present shifting social climate, this research moves towards exploring the bridging of western psychology (both modernist mainstream and postmodernist) and local African worldviews in tapping an innate understanding of (South) African cultural perspectives. The research field lies at the interface between the Africanisation of a western discipline and the westernisation of African approaches to the understanding of human behaviour and culturally comfortable ways of dealing with personal and social issues. Natural dichotomies between the two perspectives will be taken up by the research in a way that a sense of the struggle confronting indigenous peoples in a modernising society is accessed and conveyed. In its examination of the cultural nuances of the notions of the western discipline psychology, the study will draw on a heterogeneous population of indigenous South African cultures in a challenging era of cultural, scientific and technological advancement.

While the researcher holds that the indigenous peoples of the population of the country within which the research will be conducted are not homogeneous in traditions, beliefs, customs, language and other possible measures of culture, it is the indigenous, non-western-ness of the peoples which engages the research. The reification of *culture* as a notion or as a variable in this study will be avoided to prevent re-entrenching a different form of ethno-centrism: precisely contrary to the ethos of the study.

Area of Focus

This study aims to identify conceptions and processes of coping and helping interventions employed by some (South) African indigenous individuals and communities in the face of challenges presented by rapidly changing socio-cultural contexts within South Africa today. It is intended that this may contribute to the development of an ecologically sensitive psychology in South Africa in an integration of research, training and practice.

Through the examination of the perspective of emerging communities from an indigenous traditional and also an oppressed era, to a modernising world, traditional (South) African cultural conceptualisations of what westerners engage in as *counselling* or *psychotherapy* in their diverse forms will be explored at the interface of modernisation and change. It is suggested that this examination will afford a view of the effects on a local African sense of intervention (counselling/ consultation and other forms of helping), developed in a relational paradigm, by the encroachment of an alternative individualist paradigm. In addition, the study could reveal the merits or demerits of attempting to integrate a local African sense of *psychology* into a modernising society largely influenced by Euro-American individualism. However, the integrity of the study will require the avoidance of an essentialist standpoint whereby the current Euro-American paradigm is replaced with another dominant one. Nevertheless, where cultural perspectives are found to coincide, recognition will be made and these will be incorporated into the study. The study may suggest how approaches to counselling and psycho-intervention can be challenged to shift from an individualist paradigm to take a socio-ontogenetic approach in order to fit with indigenous epistemologies, the mutual fit-ting of western type counselling with indigenous epistemologies being one of the stated aims.

The researcher has built up an extensive caseload as a counsellor in a South African township clinic which also served the adjacent communities. The large majority of her clients presented with problems emerging from the

demands of cultural clashes, shifts and modernisation. One of the stated aims of the study is to identify indigenous conceptualisations around the observed phenomena but without formulating a new ethnocentric approach. It is the processes of the creation of meanings in contexts that is the intended focus of this study and it is envisaged that the re-search, in reflecting the variety of solutions grappled with by the communities, will in itself form an intervention. Because the processes remain the focus of the study, the precise nature of the problems presented in the counselling situation becomes irrelevant. In fact, to attempt categorisation of these problems may lay an epistemological trap for the research. The focus will be rather on the spaces between the problems and the dis-solutions of the problems, where it is hypothesised that the cultural cracks open up.

Thus, the study, through reflection on these processes, will attempt to achieve congruency, and possibly reflect isomorphy with the context of the re-search, at different levels of process.

Background

South Africa is presently undergoing intense processes of social change brought on by a whole new political system and transformation of government. Such changes induce significant psychological effects on the population, made more complex by the accompanying cultural integration of a previously segregated multi-cultural society. In some respects the former gap between sections of the population that led 'First World' lifestyles, and those leading 'Third World' lifestyles, is narrowing. Modernisation and technological advancements are encroaching on some rural communities and previously disadvantaged sectors for the first time. All social institutions are being engaged in the change process and thus education and the psychology profession are confronting issues in self-reflexive activities.

In pursuit of the stated aims, this research will penetrate these issues in the discipline at a critical time for local practitioners, trainers and researchers. Yet, while in recent literature much discussion is engaged in around the merits or demerits of directly addressing specific cultural issues, relatively little literature is available detailing research which exposes local African cultural conceptualisations in the primary area of practice of the discipline: counselling/ helping and related forms of intervention. Eze (1991, in Peltzer, 1998) asserts that one of the chief reasons for psychology failing to become established as a major service resource in Africa, is the inability of African psychologists to find a fit for psychology, as it exists in the mainstream, to the peculiar African context. At the same time, apart from the specific cultural clashes which may occur, modernisation brings its own psycho-social disorders which are not always amenable to treatment by traditional healers but require some form of psycho-intervention, provided that the intervention is sensitive to the communities with which engaged.

The Problem Defined

A search of the literature shows criticism for what has been perceived as mainstream, generally indiscriminate western, scientific, positivistic approach of psychology, and of this form of psychology's frequent irrelevance to local cultures (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Anonymous, 1986; Atal, 1981, 1990; Azuma, 1984; Bakker & Snyders, 1999; Dawes, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Dorojaiye, 1993; Holdstock, 1981; Kim & Berry, 1993; Lincoln, 2000; Marsella, 1998; Moghaddam, 1993; Seedat, 1997; Seedat & Nell, 1990; Turton, 1986; Vogelman, 1987). The literature also yields references to psychology as having little impact in Africa (Dawes, 1986; Eze, 1991; Gilbert, 1989; Nsamenang, 1995, 2000; Pelzer, 1998), of being in a state of disillusionment and disempowerment (Seedat, 1997), and as taking an inappropriate individualist approach in certain local contexts (Akhurst, 2001; Mungazi, 1996; Mwamwenda, 1999; Seedat, 1997; Tembo, 1985). Calls for

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greater contextualisation and relevancy of the profession have been made (Gilbert, 1989; McAllister, 1998; Nell, 1990; van Vlaerenden, 2001). However, simultaneously, the discipline is pressurised to maintain and/or discover universal and global frameworks (Danziger, 1994; Dawes, 1998). Other voices remind the profession of the need to acknowledge, understand and address the role of cultural variations in behaviour and experience in practice, research and training (Marsella, 1998). These issues will be addressed at greater length in the text of the thesis.

However, it is the contention of this thesis that directly addressing all of the above is possible without any real paradigmatic shift and so could lead to cosmetic solutions. This thesis does not so much search for solutions which could also imply a dialectical[4] approach (viz. African vs. Western; communal vs. individualist; cross cultural vs. universal etc.), but rather seeks dialogical[5] ground for a dis-solution of the problems presented. This thesis looks towards an ecological understanding that may uncover a beneficial evolutionary process description - by implication a context sensitive dynamic process description.

It is further contended that psychology needs to revisit some fundamental premises in order to take a deserving space in the globalised ecology of the world today. Some of the fundamental premises referred to have emanated from the philosophical, scientific and knowledge base contexts out of which the discipline emerged and developed. Some of these premises are examined and explored in chapter four of this study to the extent that they refer to the issues at hand.

Chapter five will critically examine and explore notions of 'African' with regard to psychology and philosophy. Written literature on the content of

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4 *dialectical* is used here to denote that which allows more than one perspective so that processes are conducted to test the strengths and weaknesses of opposing points of view.
5 *dialogical* is used here to denote that which involves a dialogue or extended exchange between different

African philosophy and psychology is comparatively not abundant and it has been found that more is documented in terms of discussions and debates as to whether these knowledges exist, how they exist and why they might be oppressed, rather than what they might constitute. An exploration of these notions as they are documented is considered important in order to enter into the theoretical debates around the relevance of psychology in a non-western context. It is considered that these notions form and reflect a certain aspect of local knowledge.

This thesis will focus specifically on the interface of psychology as a discipline, and the South African environment and social context, in putting forward this argument. To this end, chapter seven will engage with The Stories.

<div align="center">

The African, the Global and the Local in
Psychology and Philosophy

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These concepts are presented against a backdrop of current intense discussions on globalisation and the fit into this picture of small local communities. Boundaries of the world are presently dissolving through rapid advances in technology, - making global communication ever more immediate and more accessible especially to more affluent, dominant sectors of society, emphasising the divide between technologically advanced communities, chiefly of the first world, and local developing communities. A discussion around globalisation and its impact on the discipline and practice of psychology is taken up in the study.

Closer to home, local researchers and theoreticians have commented on the need for relevancy and appropriateness in the theory and praxis of psychology (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Biesheuvel, 1991; Butchart, 1995; Dawes, 1985, 1986, 1998; Gilbert, 1989; Nell, 1990; Seedat, 1997; Seedat &

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points of view or frames of reference.

Nell, 1992). Debates among writers take approaches varying from urgent calls for indigenous psychologies (Bodibe, 1993; Perkel, 1988; Vogelman, 1986), denials of the need for indigenous psychologies (Nell, 1990), assertions that psychology as a discipline is founded on universal concepts sufficient for all contexts (Nell, 1990), and warnings that culture specific approaches will simply create an alternative exclusive paradigm of practice and theory (Nell, 1990). However, overall there seems to be a general call for relevance and appropriateness of practice and theory for the local contexts. Literature on these matters is explored and the trends of arguments documented in chapter four.

<p style="text-align:center">Ecologies and Paradigms</p>

Forming part of the argument contained in this thesis are ideas around ecology, the global ecology, and local ecologies that contribute to a global ecology, just as members of a family contribute to the ecology of a family. Definitions of ecology originated in referring to living organisms, their habits and their relationships to each other and to their environment (Capra, 1997).

The physicist, Fritjof Capra, (1997), refers to ecological thinking as that which focuses on the whole, in a holistic or organismic way. He expands on a definition of ecology:

> Ecology - from the Greek *oikos* ('household') - is the study of the Earth Household. More precisely, it is the study of the relationships that interlink all members of the Earth Household.… Ernst Haeckel ... defined it as 'the science of relations between the organism and the surrounding outer world'.

> The new science of ecology...[introduced] two new concepts

- community and network. By viewing an ecological community as an assemblage of organisms, bound into a functional whole by their mutual relationships, ecologists facilitated the change of focus from organisms to communities and back (p. 33).

The biologist and anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1985), expresses his understanding of ecology in terms of an ecosystem:

An English oak wood, or a tropical forest, or a piece of desert, is a community of creatures. In the oak wood perhaps 1000 species, perhaps more; in the tropical forest perhaps ten times that number of species lives together.... Those creatures and plants live together in a combination of competition and mutual dependency.., and it is that combination which is important to consider (p. 430).

This study will focus on aspects of ecology and evolutionary processes within ecologies, such that it examines the context in which events occur, exploring the idea that the events are co-determined by the context and the activities of the events themselves and how this applies to a particular human socio-cultural ecology.

Many systemic, ecosystemic, and other postmodern thinkers in the social sciences have suggested that psychology needs to return to the context in order to understand human behaviour, which is the subject of the discipline (Aponte, 1976, 1990; Auerswald, 1966, 1971a, 1971b, 1991; Bateson, 1979, 1985; Chrzanowski, 1982; Goodhart & Zautra, 1884; Kelly, 1986; Mulvey & Silka, 1987; O'Connor & Lubin, 1984; Trickett, 1984). In returning to the context in this study, the author wishes not so much to discover solutions to problems, as to move closer to an understanding of the epistemology of the

context.   Through an understanding of the epistemology of the context in which behaviour occurs, it may be possible to explore evolutionary and ecological processes. The concept *epistemology* is used here in the sense that it comprises perception-forming principles (Bateson, 1985). More will be discussed about the role of perception in cognition and knowledge in chapter seven.

Solutions to human problems formulated by psychologists working within a western mainstream positivist paradigm usually, historically and effectively bring to the fore solutions congruent with western perspectives and formulated from within a western epistemology that may not always be appropriate to non-western peoples. This study returns to the context in a striving towards taking an evolutionary and ecological approach in order to uncover more appropriate ways of dealing with the stuckness that occurs in the lives of people in the context of the study. Perhaps the research may also come closer to Lincoln & Guba's (2000) "spiritual" qualities in research, in an attempt to reach "much more and more than [is] important" (p.6) about humanity.

Auerswald (n.d.) has commented on the problem-focus of the typical western epistemological programme in mental health centres. The result is a proliferation of 'experts' in a growing multitude of specialities in a costly linear process searching for solutions to ever increasingly complex problems. A hierarchy of expertise is established and 'progress' is made but, he suggests, solutions are seldom arrived at for complex problems. Through exploring ecology, it is intended to open discussions about human behaviour in context with a certain naïveté in order to facilitate fresh, broader and more congruent perspectives on the psychology of local communities. It is hoped that this will lead to the discovery of small worlds of order through a discipline struggling to reform itself in a nation struggling to reform itself.

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Conventionally, psychologists measure and assess behaviour from within the value systems of European and North American paradigms. A more detailed discussion of this will be undertaken further on in chapter four. Here, it is commented that the values and therefore the assessments, measures and interventions which are currently used by psychologists and recognised as tools of the profession, may be incorrect or inappropriate for cultures outside of the European and North American ones. Besides the ill fit of the value system of Europe and North America, much of the theory and instrumentation in the discipline of psychology is based on categorisation, a form of fragmentation. It has been suggested that institutionalised fragmentation interferes with any evolutionary process happening within an ecology (Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001). The ultimate result of this interference may be alienation.   This thesis suggests that psychologists working with people of a different value system from that of a European/North American one, need to use a different set of tools which may not be tools at all in any conventional sense in psychology.

As mentioned above, it is suggested by some researchers that a large part of psychology as a discipline has become institutionalised (Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001) and thus any ecological evolutionary process has been interfered with. It has also been suggested that knowledge building, - such that more research in psychology builds on previous research so that gaps in information are filled and ultimately the world moves towards a full picture of the knowledge of human behaviour, - yields only small and not necessarily very useful amounts of information, and is subject to what Gergen (1998) has referred to as "historical perishability" (p. 114). This building-block or cumulative notion of knowledge is congruent with an institutionalised approach to knowledge and research. As has been suggested above, the inherent danger here is that knowledge encapsulated in this way can lead to alienation, corrupt value systems and ultimately finds itself obsolete.

Ecological (Auerswald, 1966, 1971a, 1971b, n.d.; Bateson, 1985,

1979) and post-modern movements (Gergen, 1991; Gergen, Lock, Gulerce & Misra, 1996; Kvale, 1992a) have responded to these problems by proposing that a more evolutionary and ecological approach would recognise a possible non-predictability about the progress of knowledge. It would allow for quantum leaps and chaotic patterns. Such is the nature of evolution and ecologies (Gergen, 1998; Prigogine, 1997). Ilya Prigogine, Nobel prize winner and professor of chemistry and physics, with particular interest in evolutionary and complex system processes, refers (1997) to a special issue of "Scientific American" in October 1994, devoted to life in the universe. It reports that at all levels of scientific, biologic and social systems of our universe it is possible to see a process of evolution with regard to instabilities and fluctuations.

One of the aims of this study will be to explore ecological processes within the context studied, and how they might contribute to an evolvement of a contextually sensitive and appropriate psychology, sustaining of human social systems in the broader South African context.

Hegemony within Psychology

It is argued that the institutionalisation of psychology has resulted in hegemony, arrogance and mystification within the discipline (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Holdstock, 1981; Parker, 1999d; Parker, 2000; Said, 1978, 1989, 1993; Simone, 1990, 1993). Professionals entering the discipline from cultures other than that of the male, western, Euro-American, have reported a sense of alienation (Said, 1993; Seedat, 1997).   Insurgent attempts to topple this hegemony have come mostly from non-western cultures and feminist movements (Bohan, 1992; Finchilescu, 1995; Harding, 1997; Lincoln, 2000).

As this study is contextualised within a community that is largely non-western, the arguments and issues around the perceived hegemony need be examined and documented. This is done in chapter six together with a

discussion and presentation of arguments for alternative forms of research. The form this study takes may be considered as deviating from the conventional institutionalised approach to research in the discipline. An attempt is made to fit the study with the historically prevailing oral narrative knowledge systems of the context (Bakker, 1996) in which the study is situated. Motivation for this is given in chapter five where African traditional systems of knowledge are discussed briefly, and in chapter six where western paradigms are looked at more closely with regard to the varying fit of some of them to an African context especially with regards to research.

<div align="center">The Narratives</div>

Case studies and clinical/contextual observations will be drawn upon, and these will, hopefully, contribute to a meaningful discussion of a way forward for the profession. Case studies (stories/ narratives/Other Stories) are set out in chapter three and are interspersed with comments and references to the theoretical discussions to be taken up in later chapters.

As referred to above, the African tradition of knowledge is embedded in oral histories comprising myths, legends, folktales, stories and narratives of various types (Asante, 1985; Bakker, 1996; Boateng, 1985; Hountondji, 1983; Nöthling, 1989; Onyewuenyi, 1991; Serequeberhan, 1991).   Thus, it has seemed ecologically proper to present the data of this study in narrative form, and further motivation for doing so is provided in chapters five and six, as mentioned above. The narratives are contrasted with brief diagnostic descriptions of the stories. These provide the kind of information that may be required in order to make a conventional medico-psychological diagnosis of the presenting problems and to design an appropriate treatment plan according to a medical model approach. The narratives also attempt to introduce a dialogical approach, which it is suggested, carries ecological integrity.
The narratives are drawn from conversations with practitioners,

students, clients, and in self-reflection by the author, all of whom lived in some way within the context in which the study is situated.

Layout of the Text

Chapter one presented The Story as a perturbation for the text which follows, while chapter three shares further experiences and ways of working within the identified context through Other Stories.

Chapter four examines the academic context of the study from a paradigmatic point of view. Some of the criticisms mentioned in this chapter with regard to hegemony in psychology and the subsequent alienation of the non-western, will be explored further to the extent that these ideas have given impetus to this study.

Chapter five, thereafter, will present some debates and voices from what is often referred to as the "African worldview" in psychology and related fields. Both of chapters four and five are expected to create an ecological map of the environment from which The Stories and the study emerged.

Chapter six presents considerations and discussions on the methodological approach taken. This is contextualised within the academic research context and motivated for within the context of the study.

Chapter seven reflects on the narratives and the Flow of the stories, in an attempt to find threads which entwine the stories into processes of ecological, evolutionary and sustainable significance.

Chapter eight attempts to harness the Flow with some concluding discussions.

CHAPTER THREE

OTHER STORIES

Last night I heard the book-worm lament
To the moth in my library:
I have lived inside the pages of Sina's works,
And seen many volumes of Farabi's writing;
But the secret of life I have failed to grasp,
And my days are still dark and sunless!
Aptly did the half-burnt moth rejoin:
You cannot find this secret in a book.
It is yearning that quickens the tempo of life
And endows it with wings to soar.
(Iqbal, 1964, p. 119).
Thanks to Seedat, M. (1997).

In an attempt to avoid a modernist scientific approach, the study draws on Kvale's (1996) interpretation of the interview as being a traveller in conversation. The analysis to be presented in chapter seven of the following conversations will be made in conjunction with discussions in chapter five on the value of local knowledge.

Kvale (1996) discusses the value of a narrative methodology. *Conversation* is according him translated from the Latin origin of "wandering together with" (1996, p. 4). According to this view research data collected thus is owned by the researcher and allows her to interpret the story of her discoveries, or retell (in a reconstructive sense) her tale to her peers, and possibly her fellow-wanderers. Knowledge formed in this way pertains more to the arts and humanities rather than hard-er sciences such as engineering, or human engineering. The experience of knowledge formed in this way may also be transformative, even for the researcher.

Kvale (1996) discusses the use of *narrative structuring* and *meaning interpretation* as two methods of handling qualitative interview material.

Narrative structuring "works out structures and plots" (1996, p. 192) of stories told in professional conversations or research interviews. Kvale refers to this as a "continuation of the story told by the interviewee" (p. 199). When this approach is applied to multiple stories, a reconstruction of the stories may occur in the form of a new construction making coherent sense of extracted meanings. A certain creative freedom is allowed to the researcher as this form of analysis is considered to have a strong social element, both in the telling and the retelling. Kvale (1996) discusses how the researcher may alternate between narrative finding (extracting meanings from stories) and narrative creating as she attempts to re-create a coherent story from the separate meanings before her.

Meaning interpretation "goes beyond the structuring of the manifest meanings of the text." (p. 194). In this approach the researcher searches for meanings not obviously or immediately stated in the narratives of the professional conversations. The theoretical framework employed by the interpreter will influence the final analysis (Kvale, 1996).

This researcher draws chiefly from the above in interpreting Other Stories from the conversations which are presented below. She believes that she is justified in doing so given that she has extensive experience of the research context and that this may facilitate avoiding epistemological traps should a more structured analysis method be used. The openness of these methods corroborate with the openness required to explore knowledge creation in a culture other than her own.

Other Stories from the context of the township where the author has worked for some fourteen years are presented below. Some are taken from the files of her counselling/psychotherapy practice, while others are stories which

crossed her path in the context of her work there. The history of Other Stories individually are as such:

The Story:- autobiographical

Alice and Doozy:- a case file

Thabo:- a case file

Cabangile:- interview

Agape: A prototype community counselling centre? – interview

A Young Healer's Story:- autobiographical

The two interviewees were given The Story to read prior to the interview. They were told that The Story formed a background to the interview, but at no time were they asked to comment on it directly. Only one interviewee – Cabangile - chose to comment explicitly on The Story, but not at length. Founder was interviewed in the story named, Agape: A prototype community counselling centre? He chose not to make direct reference to The Story. The two case files were selected from a large sample of cases. Some of the conscious reasons why these cases were selected include the fact that they have not been discussed in research papers previously and also that issues of *cultural cracks* presented clearly from the start of the therapies. Unconscious reasons may include emotional tugs on the researcher in terms of the intensity of the ambivalence expressed by the clients in the opening of the cultural cracks in the therapeutic conversations.

The two autobiographical stories are included for different reasons. The Story initiated the author's process of questioning the relevance of psychological practice in the context, while A Young Healer's Story describes some kind of a breakthrough which she experienced, a quantum leap in development in her process of praxis. Between The Story and A Young Healer's Story, she had begun to consider that the only way she could continue to work in the context was to become a sangoma. She had been offered training as a sangoma and had toyed with the idea of taking it up. After careful deliberation she came to the conclusion that she needed to find her own way of working, and that this would be accomplished neither through buying

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completely into the then current mainstream western academic training, nor into the traditional sangoma training. She held onto the idea that there was another way of working. This study lies along the path towards that way.

Other Stories all relate in some way to psychological practice among the indigenous persons of South Africa who would not be able to, or wish to (or both) seek psychological help from a mainstream psychological private practice.

The context is considered essential in order to create meaning around the stories of the lives presented. By presenting Other Stories in narrative literary form, the author is able to take some literary freedom in describing the context as it impacted on her and as she believed it to create a meaningful context for the protagonists of Other Stories. In contrast, a "diagnostic" conspectus is also presented, which could serve as a polarity in a dialectic perspective. This serves to emphasise the divergent potential of approaching Other Stories from two different perspectives. The diagnostic conspectus selects those elements of the story that offer themselves for possible symptom identification in a nosographic manner.

The narrative form thus explores the context, listens for a "local", or vernacular explanation and makes relatively little attempt to pathologise the events. This in turn introduces a dialogical perspective towards ecological integrity as the problems interact with the socio-cultural ecological context.

The Term Diagnosis

Psychology is regarded as a new discipline, often referred to as "modern psychology", to be distinct from its more philosophical roots (Schultz & Schultz, 1996) when it was not yet established as a separate science. As previously elaborated on in this text, the role of psychology as a science is often debated and questioned by many in the field. However, the emphasis of the study of human behaviour in terms of psychopathology remains dominant in

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almost all schools of thought. This disease oriented approach to human behaviour, the entrenchment of classification systems such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) IV, International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10 etc, to diagnose the origins of human problems, places the question of diagnosis in a central position for training programmes and practices of psychology.

Definitions of Diagnosis

Diagnosis: 1. Identification of disease handicaps and disorders on the basis of observed symptoms. 2. Classification of individuals on the basis of observed characteristics and usually abnormalities (Wolman, 1973).

dīagnōs´ĭs, n. Identification of disease by means of patient's symptoms etc., formal statement of this; classification of person's character, assignment of species etc. [f, Gk (DIA-, *gignōskō* recognise] (Fowler & Fowler, 1964).

The etymological meaning of diagnosis is literally "to know" (Keeney, 1979, p. 118).

Drawing from the general meanings of diagnosis stated above, each story presented below is introduced from such a diagnostic perspective, followed by the narrative.

1.   Alice and Doozy

This story is told by the author as a therapeutic witness to the narrative.

The Diagnostic Story

Alice, a 20-year-old girl experiences asthma possibly as a result of

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allergy and/ or anxiety due to stress at work. She is possibly feeling pressurised to perform and prove to her father that her education was worth the investment. Alice has recently graduated from a three-year costly (to her father, a domestic worker) computer and secretarial course. She has been unsuccessful in obtaining any work other than that of a domestic assistant in a religious training institution. The pressure she experiences could be contributing to her anxiety at her new job and is exacerbated by a slight allergic reaction to cleaning chemicals she is coming into contact with at work.

Alice was referred to a medical doctor whose interventions included a mild tranquilliser for the anxiety; an anti-histamine for the allergy and a programme of stress management coupled with regular counselling to help her deal with any adjustment problems in her new working life.

Here the focus is on the problem and how to fix it. This narrows the possibilities of change.

The Narrative

Doozy is a man in his early fifties who originates from the North Western region of South Africa. This is a largely undeveloped area of great natural beauty: open veld, mountain ranges and gentle hills sculpt the land.

When he was fifteen years of age, Doozy found employment as an unskilled general labourer/domestic helper with a well-to-do professional middle class white family in an affluent suburb of central Pretoria, many kilometres from his home. The employer's family was young and Doozy ended up spending his whole working life in the employ of this family. He was taught skills in the house and kitchen and eventually by the age of fifty he was running the entire household which included several animals, three grown children, two adults and several other workers. Doozy designed the family menus, he drew up shopping lists, he cooked, supervised other workers and contributed considerably to the daily living activities of the household.

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In the meantime, Doozy married, and fathered four children himself. Three of these were girls while the youngest was a son. They all lived in the rural region he still called home. Doozy rarely spent much time with his own family as he could only see them when he was given leave to travel home. This would occur about one weekend a month and three weeks over the Christmas break.

Doozy remained devoted to his family and their well-being but was nevertheless strongly influenced by the values, customs and ways of thinking of the white family with whom he spent most of his time. His commitment to his own family seemed to equal his loyalty to his employer's family. Being a sensitive and intelligent man, Doozy learned to anticipate his employer's needs and likes and dislikes. Without question and with meticulous attention to detail, he prepared the meals and ran the house in the custom of his employer's lifestyle.

It was a moving event when Doozy stood beside his employer and his employer's family, in April 1994, in a queue to vote for the first time in democratic elections in the country.   His employer turned to him in the queue and held out his hand saying: "Welcome to the New South Africa, Doozy".   As they stood there, they all recognised that the future was changing and possibilities were opening up for individuals, families and communities such as those of Doozy. Previously, his community was largely destined to remain in servitude of some form or another.

Post 1994, when Doozy's first two daughters came of appropriate age, they were enrolled at tertiary institutions in Pretoria. The first daughter enrolled for a marketing course and stayed in a flat close to Doozy's employer's house. The second daughter arrived some two years later to study a computer oriented secretarial course and joined her sister in the flat.

The second daughter was called Alice. On the completion of her

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studies, with a diploma under her arm, Alice struggled to find work in her field of training. The education had cost Doozy dearly and he was keen for Alice to find employment. Eventually, despite her qualification, Alice was placed as a domestic worker with a small training institution for conservative white religious trainees from a major western religion. She was expected to perform domestic duties within a house where the trainees resided.

After having been at the training institution for some weeks, Alice developed a problem with her breathing. She became afraid to go to work as she was always overcome by the breathing problem at work, and sometimes at home. She was sent by her employer to consult a medical doctor in the nearby shopping centre who diagnosed her with asthma. Asthmatic medication, tranquillisers and counselling for anxiety were prescribed. These helped for a short time but then the problem began again.

This time, the employer's wife consulted a psychologist who suggested that it might be anxiety attacks and that Alice should come to see her. In the meantime, before the psychologist could consult with Alice, Alice consulted another medical doctor who diagnosed allergic asthma brought on by the cleaning fluids she was using. More medicine was prescribed together with anti-histamines. It should be mentioned here that Alice had no private medical aid, her father's employer paid for consultations and medicine up to this point. Psychological services are costly and not generally easily available to persons in Alice's position in South Africa at the time of writing. Very few professionally trained psychotherapists are appointed to state hospitals and these few are over burdened with mostly in-patients of the hospitals. The psychologist to whom Alice was now referred agreed to see Alice without charge in her private time. The psychologist was reminded of her work with Lešaka, reported on in chapter one of this study.

The psychologist consulted with both medical doctors prior to her consultation with Alice. She discovered that Alice had been taking a variety of medication over the months during which she had been experiencing the

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problem. Nothing had seemed to help in the long term but she had been urged to continue especially with the tranquillisers.

One early evening, just before sunset, the psychologist waited in the driveway of the employer's home. It had been arranged for Alice and the psychologist to meet for the first time but Alice was late and the home was locked. Just as the psychologist was preparing to leave, believing that Alice was not going to keep the appointment, she noticed two women in the distance, walking towards the house. Instinctively she waited for them. The one young woman proved to be Alice and the other was an older aunt, sister to Doozy, Alice's father.

The house being locked, they had no option but to talk in the driveway. The psychologist asked a few questions which verified the story she had already been told – the story outlined above. The psychologist enquired after traditional solutions which may have been sought. Alice had consulted a sangoma. Then she asked Alice if she had had any dreams. From these questions flowed information which was quite different in content from the previous information. The following story emerged:

Alice had three names: Alice, given to her by her father's employer; Caroline, given to her by her father's family; and Kokomogo, given to her by her grandmother, a sangoma, on her mother's side, now deceased.

The history of the naming was that Kokomogo was the name given to her at her naming ceremony at birth. Then when she was about six years old, her father's family removed the name Kokomogo and gave her the name Caroline, after her father's eldest brother who had passed away. He had been Charles. At an even later stage, she was also called Alice out of respect to her father's employer.

Now, recently, Alice had begun dreaming of her grandmother who came to her in dreams carrying a tray full of objects. Alice was unable to take

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the tray in her dream and always awoke at this point. The dreams had started about the time of her completing her studies. She also experienced pains in her chest as if she could not breathe.

Alice had consulted a sangoma in her home village. The sangoma had told her that she would have to come to stay with her to be treated. She also told her that the family would have to appease the ancestors with regard to the name she had discarded.

Immediately that Alice had told this story, she reported to feel great relief and smiled for the first time in months – or so her aunt remarked. Alice told that she wanted to return to her village and receive treatment from the sangoma. She felt that she would die if she did not.

All the while that Alice was recounting her story to the psychologist, her aunt was nodding and entering the story with comments, which confirmed what Alice was saying. The aunt remarked at one point that they had not believed that anyone outside their village would understand and also that Doozy may be displeased with their interpretation of the problem. They had felt that this was a story which they had to carry in silence. The sangoma had also warned them that the white doctors would diagnose the problem as asthma.

At a later, and it proved to be the last, appointment held in a living room rather than a driveway, Alice consulted with the psychologist again but this time Doozy was also present. He was surprisingly open to Alice and her aunt's interpretation and agreed to allow Alice to attend the sangoma's treatment. He told the psychologist that he knew these things happened in his home community but he had not expected it to happen to his family in the city. He seemed to be expressing ambivalence about the problem and this interpretation. However, he acknowledged that this is how his wife would want to treat the matter and that he was willing to participate in the treatment. He spoke of the need for a family gathering to discuss the name issue and to arrange for the way forward.

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Alice did indeed return to her home and underwent some treatment with the sangoma. She was reported to be much improved and no longer experiencing any of the asthmatic symptoms.

2.   Thabo

This story is told by the author as a therapeutic witness to the narrative.

The Diagnostic Story

Thabo presented as a young man in his early twenties who had experienced a life-threatening assault and was suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This had gone untreated for several months and was moving into an enduring depression. He was referred by a senior at his workplace.

The intervention of choice for a PTSD would be several months of anti-depressant medication with an anxiolytic component and appropriate psychotherapy with some psycho-education around PTSD. As in the stories already reported on in this study, Thabo belonged to no private medical aid scheme and his treatment was thus limited to short-term practical solutions for which his employer was agreeable to paying.

The Narrative

Thabo was a gifted young man who had been awarded a secondary school scholarship to one of this country's most elite private boys' schools, in a province many hours drive from his home.

Thabo had grown up in a township in the north-western area outside

Pretoria. The township where he lived is situated in a dust bowl and constitutes rows of shacks, some built of galvanised metal, some of wood and most a combination of the two. He described his life in the township as having been desperately poor. There had never been money for shoes or books, often not even enough for food. However, he was fortunate to attend a local missionary primary school where he received a solid primary schooling and was identified as being exceptionally capable academically. He was sent to the elite private boarding school for the duration of his secondary school years.

In his consultation with the psychologist, he described how his life had changed after moving to the private school. The other boys accepted him but very few, if any, knew of his poverty at home. One classmate took him under his wing and invited Thabo home for some holidays and short breaks. This friend of his was a white boy from a moneyed background. By going home frequently with his friend, Thabo could continue his new life of privileges and avoid the dire situation at home. However, he retained his loyalties to his family and the community in the township. He did return at times and on each visit took up his place there as if he had never been away. However, he found it increasingly difficult with time to convey his experience of his new life to his community. Instead he simply kept quiet and resumed his role in the manner they expected of him.

From the private school Thabo was granted a full scholarship by a large national company to study accountancy at a local university. He had successfully completed his academic programme and was busy with his articles at the time that he sought counselling for the PTSD.

Thabo presented as a young man-about-town, sophisticated but also visibly distressed. He told his story of the assault that had taken place in the street near where he worked in the city centre. He had been mugged at knife point by a group of young black men. Thabo emphasised that the greatest shock for him was that it was his "own people" who had attacked him. He spoke of how he still strongly identified with the poor people of the shack

settlement from where he came and thus, by extension, all poor black people. He had clung to the belief, all through his education, that he was somehow "doing it for them", that he would return and bring good fortune to his community. He was devastated that his own people did not recognise this and attacked him as if he was from some foreign community. Ultimately, he felt rejected and alienated.

After he had communicated his shock and hurt at his realisation that he was perceived to have become different from his community and had grown apart, he began to talk of his isolation at the company where he was completing his articles. He was one of four black, articled clerks among several more white clerks. He did not necessarily feel that he had anything in common with the other black clerks but felt obliged to commune with them. They sat at one desk apart from the other staff in the open plan office space. To sit apart from his black peers was not an option he felt he could even entertain – he felt that it was expected of him to sit with them. Yet this arrangement left him lonely. He did not fit in at work and he had lost his community.

Thabo felt himself alienated from any community. This was the struggle which depressed him. He had engaged in a period of mourning for a fundamental loss – the loss of connectedness, a life value held to be of significant importance to many African peoples.

Thabo was referred to a physician for medication while he and the psychotherapist embarked on a process of mourning and re-engagement.

3.	Cabangile

This story is presented as a direct dialogue from an interview. Cabangile learned of the study incidentally and had requested to participate in it. She was given The Story to read prior to the interview. Cabangile worked as a lay counsellor in a community clinic in Mamelodi and was also a psychology student at the university (Vista) in the township.

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The Diagnostic Story

In this story, a young woman, Cabangile, enters the healing system through a community counselling centre in the township. The author did not engage with her in psychotherapy and so cannot comment on the treatment process she underwent. However, her story is presented here for two reasons: firstly, because of the value of her commentary; and secondly, because she requested to participate in the study. She is the only participant who directly and spontaneously made reference to the Story in chapter one.

Her own healing process at the community centre inspired her to take up studies in psychology at Vista University and also to become a lay counsellor at the clinic where she had received treatment. Indigenous healing processes were included in her own journey to psychological wellness. Unfortunately, the young woman dies of AIDS and the effects of her untimely death reverberate in her community.

The following section presents extracts from a transcript of the conversation between the author and Cabangile. Cabangile originated from the Eastern Cape, large sections of which are rural, fraught with poverty and all the socio-economic and health problems that accompany this. Cabangile dressed in a blend of African traditional attire and modern trendy clothing of the township.

This section is presented as a direct transcript in order to portray a bit of the personal engagement between the author and the young woman who brought information of difference to the academic dialogue around the relevance of psychology in the broader South African context. Cabangile gave her permission to use the dialogue in this writing and in any possible publications resulting from it.

The Narrative

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Words of the researcher are in italics.
Words of Cabangile are in normal type.

I'm used to this kind of story [The Story]. Actually my story is like Lesaka. My father kidnapped me once and I was staying with my stepmother. So when we were reading I felt a kind of pain for Lesaka because I know exactly what he was going through. - I experienced the same thing. So most of the time I work with such clients. I had this case, it's a little bit different but it was an eleven-year-old boy who was living with his grandmother because his family is poor and the grandmother volunteered to look after him.

Now this little boy was very straight. He even asked me to tell his father that he does not want to stay with his grandmother, he needs his family.   At his grandmother he was doing work. He had to cook, he had to wash the dishes, he was even washing the clothes. I know the pain. It's very painful if you are not staying with your family. So I felt pain for Lesaka, even if he injured the child. But I was on his side, I understand what makes him do that.

What do you think about people who experience that kind of pain, who seem to be lost, who don't have a place to stay in? What do you think that we as counsellors can do for them?

I always think that we must build shelters because I once had a problem. I had a case. It was a little girl, she was thirteen and her mother died and she was staying with her father and stepmother.   They kicked her away and she became my client. She didn't know what to do. She didn't have a place to stay. I went to my mother in law and asked for a place to

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stay. But my mother in law is not a nice person, I can tell
you. The child ran away. Even today we don't know where
she is. She is gone.

We must build shelters, be practical. Because some people
they have practical needs. And now we don't offer them
anything.

*Even if we can offer practical things, what can we still do for
them? You know that western counsellors sit in a room, it's
one hour at a time and you talk in a certain way and there's a
whole ritual, which is very different. How do you think that
we can work with these people? There, problems are
different. Do you think that we can work with these people in
the community? Or do they need a different way of working?*

I think they do understand the way you work. If they are
involved in a bad situation, they need to learn to cope.

One thing, though, they need help to find his or her relatives.
 As a person you've got relatives that love you. You must
try to find them. Me, I never grew up in one place - I moved
many times. I've been in Transkei, I've been in Durban,
I've been in Zululand, in Soweto, I moved every time I felt I
was in a place that was discomfort for me - I felt no, I must
move forward. That is why I am in Pretoria. I don't have
relatives here. I came here by myself and I created a family
by myself.

We must try to teach people that the family is not the family
you were born with - you must create a family for yourself.
Ja, and the family you are not related to, you are not their
relatives, it is the best. I can tell you.

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Why is it different?

Some other people they've got love - the love that you don't get from your family. They are like that. They know the struggle, they understand and they are willing to help other people. They are willing to give other people a chance. So those people are the people you must associate with and make them to be your family.

You speak of struggle – you see a lot of struggle in the cases you handle at the clinic?

Too much. A lot of struggle - lot of struggle.

Yesterday I had a case - this little girl, she's twelve. She's staying with her mum and stepfather. Now this stepfather is always insulting her mum. And then he's chasing them sometimes that they must leave the house. This little girl never knew her real father and this thing reminds her of that - "by the way, oh no..."   And now she's starting to think about her real father, and now she fails at school. Her mother doesn't understand why she fails. The little girl told us the reason she fails is that she is always thinking about her real father - "...because my stepfather is chasing us sometime...". And now she is going out with another guy, she's sleeping out because she's looking for a father, you see.

People are struggling.

Myself, né? I'm...most of the time I have this problem - people they just come to my house [for help]. Last year two

guys came to me. One was from Durban, they just took the taxi from Umlazi to Mamelodi. He didn't know where he was going. He just came to my place and he told me that his mother died when he was very young and his father married again. And now his father died and that woman kicked him out and I had to look after him until another man adopted him. Now he's staying with that man and he's working.

Another one came from Joburg - he's living in Mamelodi because his parents didn't want him to do music and he wanted to go to the music school. They wanted him to continue his studies and he left. He's staying in shelters but they closed and so he went back. He's got his parents but he doesn't want to stay there and he was staying with me until he found a place in Sunnyside. Now he's playing keyboard for a church there.

Recently I've got a psychotic client, from Beit Bridge. During the day he's staying with us. He's found a family, obviously.

Tell me more about "creating family". How do you connect that in your mind with counselling? Are they connected?

Ja, they are. Like Agape. Agape is a clinic. But to us clients, we don't feel Agape as a clinic. We feel like it's our home. Because we connect our spirit with their own. They understand us. The family I'm talking about is the family who understands you even if you've got mental problems - they don't judge you, they accept you the way you are. That's your family.

How would it be different if you went to Agape for

*counselling and you only met one person and you only spoke
to the one person and every week you went back you only
spoke to the one person but every week you only meet the
one person, you speak to that one and you then get up and
go?*

I won't go back. No.

Why not?

Because the family I'm talking about is not about one
person. You have to share with other people, your struggle.
They have to tell you your problem and it must be give and
take.

Is that what counselling is to you? You must give and take?

Yes, you must tell me a little about yourself [as a counsellor]
even if you don't get deep.

Why is that?

No, I believe...myself, I've been betrayed for so many
times...when I was staying at home. I was giving, only
giving. And people were using that information to destroy
me.

*You say you go to a place like Agape and you want this
sharing?...now, other people heard your story...?*

I was seeing two people and they were going to supervision.
 But later when I was getting better I used to share my story
with other people, not to counsellors. If they were sharing

with me, I used to wait for them to share with me, to tell their struggle and then I will tell them.

So there was a community of clients who share their stories?
 Not just with counsellors, but....

Ja. Now you can realise "I am not alone, I'm not the only one with struggles. I'm normal.". That was very important. When I heard their stories I became open. Because most of the time when I tell my story to people outside Agape, they tell me I'm crazy. But at Agape I felt safe.

So, counselling changes at Agape? It's different?
What makes you trust the counsellors at Agape?

I didn't at first. I gave the counsellors a hard time, I insulted them. But I needed help and so I went back.

I don't know if it's grandiosity but I regard myself as a natural-born psychologist. God decided to train me Himself, through struggle. That was a training - and then I was provided by God Himself. I realised that because they come to my house for help - and then I said, "no, that was a training."

Even here, at school, those students who were raped, they just come to me and tell me "I was raped.". I say, "oh, myself, I was raped.". I once took someone to Itsoseng[1], but she was influenced by her friends - they told her to take it as if it was her boyfriend. She was afraid, but I tried.

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1 Itsoseng: Counselling centre at the Vista University Mamelodi Campus (now the University of Pretoria, Mamelodi campus).

Harsh training. Sounds like thwasa - like a sangoma training.

Ja, it is similar in some way to sangoma...ja, that is why...in 1998 I was supposed to train as a sangoma but I rather went to a prophet - here in Mamelodi, but the prophet was from Natal.

How do you use your training as a prophet with your counselling?

I gave up to be a prophet because at home they are Christian. I went home to tell them that I am a prophet and they said "no, you've got demons.". They didn't encourage me. I was not raised to believe in ancestors.

But myself, I know I was possessed - I was poisoned and so I went to traditional healers by myself. These healers told me that "your ancestors brought you here". So now. But I realise that I cannot run away from these things, - it is inside me.

I was at the theatre, I saw a person in the middle of the road, he was surrounded by policemen and others. I thought it was a car accident and I wanted to run away because I am very scared of blood. But after four hours the guy was still there and the police left. Only a few people were there. I thought this person is ill. I went there and saw he was just sitting down, not speaking. The others were massaging him. I said, "I wish someone can pray for this guy."

They asked me to pray for him. Automatically I knelt down, I pulled his fingers and touched his head. He stood up and walked away.

Even on Saturday, there was a crusade miracle day at the

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theatre.   This pastor was praying and I didn't want to be involved.   This person was screaming and crying and jumping. The pastor said the demon is manifesting there and he didn't want to pray for him. One lady said I must pray for him outside.   I said "why?"   She said, "that person is directed to you - you are the person who must pray for him. Not the pastor, that is why the pastor is ignoring him".   She told me that I have doubts - I don't listen to God's voice. "You are listening to the devil".

I went to that guy. I just said, "in the name of Jesus the demon must come out."
That guy just fell down like the people inside were falling down for the pastor. Then I ran away.

Now I realise I have that power - I cannot run away from it. But I want to be a psychologist. If I get involved too much in the prophet thing I will get too involved - no time to study.

[I spent time as an actress.] I trained as an actress. I became involved in AIDS plays.   I worked in theatre, films and SABC productions. But I left to go back to school.

Do you use your acting in a healing way?

Yes, especially the AIDS plays. But I heal myself through acting. I used to choose parts where I was going to cry a lot. It was another form of counselling.

You had to give yourself permission to cry?

Yes, people would say I am a good actress, but it was real.

My sickness - I used to see monkeys, I'm afraid of monkeys.
When I was a child. Now I can tell that voice inside me -
"no, there are no monkeys here." I'm much better now. I
also have a very good English lecturer - he's helping me to
write my story.

People don't always know about counselling. There's this
guy, Sol. He's trained as a sangoma. I never thought he
would go to counselling but one day he came to Agape. Sol
and Sam made a drama and performed at the theatre on
Sunday where the Ndebeles are dancing. They told them
about counselling. Drama speaks to the people.

4.   Agape: A prototype community counselling centre?

This story is told by the author as a report on a conversational
interview between the author and the founder of the Agape community
counselling centre. Because it is a report and not simply a representation of an
interview, reflections and interpretive comments by the author are included.

The Diagnostic Story

Agape is a counselling centre for the local community of the township.
Clients arrive by appointment or simply drop in to consult with a counsellor.
They arrive either through referral from primary health care service points or
by word of mouth. Sometimes, they are brought by previous clients. The
facilities are very basic and sometimes possibly inadequate for a full
psychological service. No private consulting rooms are available and clients
mostly sit in the sun or in the shade of a tree in a bare yard. These minimal
facilities were initially due to a lack of funding but over time have become the
spaces of choice for the Founder of the centre. This statement is expanded
further on in the narrative.

The only structure is an open, partly walled and roofed lapa[2]. This serves as both a waiting room and a group consulting facility.

Because of the lack of facilities, privacy is minimal. Clients not only clearly see each other consulting, but also sometimes overhear or have even been known to join in on other sessions.

Clients frequently return after the completion of their therapy and sometimes assist with the counselling of new clients or simply keeping the clients in the waiting space company by chatting to them or to unoccupied counsellors.

The Narrative

This section presents the author's synopsis and interpretations of ideas expressed by the Founder of the community center in a taped conversation after he had read The Story of chapter one of this thesis. At times direct transcripts are reproduced here.

The centre has come to mean far more to the Founder than simply a service provision facility and a practicum placement for his students. He is a university professor of psychology with more than twenty-five years experience in the field. The narrative is presented as a commentary at times and as direct quote at other times. He is referred to as Founder.

This community centre is located in Mamelodi. It was established in 1983 to offer a counselling service to the local communities of the township. It currently also serves as a training practical site for psychology masters students from at least two universities.

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2 Lapa: an open-walled roofed structure

Founder spoke of the profound impact his work at the Agape centre has had on his own way of working and on his ways of thinking about psychotherapy, the practice of psychology. He spoke of how, from a traditional western practice he has sought and created "other ways of working".   This would seem to be an on-going process for Founder as he spoke later in the interview of the necessity of integrating practice, reflection and research.

Founder described how initially he was acutely aware of the differences between his formalised practice in town and his work in the township ("out there"). In the beginning of his undertaking he had tried to work as if the two spaces were the same but came to realise that his work was "devoid of appreciating the ecology". He spoke of work in a formalised setting and method as "hiding behind our dairies".

His growing discomfort at the ill-fit of what he was doing in the township forced him to reflect on his work as a healer. He pondered on what he referred to as the "uncertainty of the profession". He clarified this statement as such:

In his formalised practice clear certainties of practice were provided by the organisation of the practice, its prescriptions, "the waiting room and receptionist, the telephone and accounting system etc., not least of all the diary".

However, "out there" at Agape, under the tree, every aspect of the practice was brought into question. In referring to the lack of facilities "out there" in a metaphorical sense additional to the literal sense, he spoke of how his practice had "gone through the walls".

Continuing with his reflection on his practice he commented that he believed that practitioners of psychotherapy needed a "safe community and safe space" in which to practice. Again, he referred to the *ecology* of the practice

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and how it should be able to provide a space in which crisis could be dealt with safely - "safe to be in the crisis". Founder expanded on this idea later and explained that he referred not only to crisis brought by the client. This is discussed further down in this narrative. In order for the practitioner to be effective he or she would need to be in the "ecology of the practice" and this could be achieved through the creation of a healing community in which the crisis of the psychotherapist could be experienced as much as that of the client.

In this way, psychotherapists become "conveners of context" who are required to be not only sensitive to the individuals who seek help at the centre, but also sensitive to the convening of a community in which the helping and healing occur. Thus, according to Founder, all psychotherapists are to some extent community psychologists.

In contrast, traditional western practices of psychotherapy have evolved to adopt largely unquestioned prescriptions of practice. The boundaries, which have come to be accepted as convention in western practices, are for the convenience of the practitioner. Founder remarked that he found it "amazing how clients can enter, breakdown and recover within the [scheduled] hour". Beyond this, psychotherapists in the western tradition form exclusive fraternities that segregate them from their clients. According to Founder, psychotherapy is the

> only fraternity in the world of healers who convene community in this exclusive way.... Every other [healing] fraternity that I know of, shamans and healers, recognise that the essence of their work is in creating community and that the fraternity is the bigger family.

This exclusivity of the fraternity of psychotherapists isolates the practitioner in several ways: - from his/her client community, from his/her peers in certain respects and also from access to further knowledge. Further knowledge is available at a cost for those who can afford it and the "gurus" of

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the field are inaccessible except through further expense.

One of the effects of this segregation process is that a separation has developed between practice and theory in psychology. The theory has become detached from practice to the extent that frequently the theorists are not practitioners and vice versa. However, according to Founder:

> The practitioner requires a praxis,... a description of practice as well as a theory...which describes the practice...there [needs to be] an intimacy between them.… Every practitioner is a theoretician and a researcher and all practice requires reflection.… Practice without reflection is dangerous.… Universities don't always reflect the news of difference which is happening in our societies.

Founder commented on his perception that universities have become conservative in the sense that they cling to traditional ways and conventions by establishing screening systems that do not always promote new ideas and changing information. This process encourages the segregation between practice and theory for the psychotherapist practitioner.

> Court jesters, clowns of society, prophets and shamans, always brought news of difference and herded in the changes.… Universities could be viewed as institutionalised systems of this role. But often they fail at this task and reflect stuckness.

Founder turned to a consideration of what constitutes the markers of contexts for healers as conveners of context generally, and for psychotherapists in particular. According to him, psychotherapists mark their contexts with books, certificates, journals, and other formal objects of context. These inform clients that have entered a domain of a particular kind of healing. They know what to expect in their understandings of what the ecology of psychotherapy is

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about. However, according to Founder, the human element has been lost. While signs of formal knowledge are apparent in these contextual markers,

> the productions of the psychotherapist are not visible. The artefacts of the profession remain unseen.

> The contextual markers of Agape community centre are different. There are no books or certificates to be seen, but a natural flow of people moving in and out either to be healed, to heal or both. The flow of people and the sight of them interacting in healing ways become the contextual markers for Agape. The message of healing and relationship is visible in the broader community.

For Founder, artefacts can also carry "subliminal or unconscious prompts" of context. Thus, for him, it is important that the psychotherapist surround him or herself with artefacts that speak of the shamanistic practices of the therapist. The sterile, neutral environments of the typical modern therapist are possibly hurtful to the client seeking meaning and possibility, beyond his or her usual way of thinking. The neutrality of the modern therapist allows the therapist to hide his or her personal self and so the therapist becomes a shadow in the room to which the client must attempt to relate.

The client thus enters a room which is in no way really different from his/her own space, there is no distinction for the client between his/her life up to this point and what is about to happen, or could happen. Founder spoke of the importance of patterns of thinking in terms of healing possibilities:

> The way we think has everything to do with our ecology. [The room becomes] the metaphor for possibilities ... [for] thinking beyond the stuckness of the problem.

Founder spoke also about the difficulty some students experienced in

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receiving training at Agape as the setting for their practical placement. Most of these students came from white middle-class backgrounds. Many have never been to a township before:

> The formality of the university setting and teaching [provides the students] with a confrontation of ecologies when students are taken to Agape. They haven't come to thwasa - they've enrolled for a university course.

This statement speaks of the perception-forming ecologies of the students; it speaks of the epistemologies of their cultures; and it speaks of the role of their education to this point in the formation of their ecology of thought. In this case of what happens around Agape and the training of psychologists, it is the trainees who are also expected to make the shift, it is they who also experience the cracks in the culture and fear the possibility of falling through the spaces. Founder is sensitive to this and engages the trainees in activities to facilitate the process for them:

> This makes me very sensitive to continually recreating, reforming, reaffirming, the safety of them (the trainees) through performing actions. ...We start and end each day by performing rituals for the healing of the healer...it's necessary.

The training at Agape becomes an ecological event for the healer, the healee, the trainer and the trainee. It is not a question of the trainees learning to "understand the culture of the black people". The training becomes a meeting of cultures and ecologies, a conversation between epistemologies. The arrogance and hegemony of conventional western psychological practices are ameliorated:

> This rhetoric of community and serving of underprivileged, - previously disadvantaged groups formed into an ideology,-

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> which justifies people's work in higher places, doesn't come
> through in the training.… Descriptions which were getting
> called the training of psychologists do not attend to the
> majority of the people [in South Africa].… Every form of
> practice [of psychology] needs to be an ethic.

Founder calls for an epistemological revolution in the profession of psychotherapy. He declares that psychotherapists need to "approach our practice through the ways in which we construct our realities."

5.   A young healer's story

This story is autobiographical.

The Diagnostic Story

A trainee in clinical psychology at master's level experienced stomach pains over a period of several weeks. These were constant although fluctuating in intensity and severe enough to wake her at night.

The trainee had been under heavy stress for some months. She was juggling employment with full-time studies as well as running a home with three young children, two of them below school-going age. In addition to this she was struggling with the personal demands of the programme in which she was enrolled.

While she did not consult a medical practitioner for her pains, she believed that it was possible that she was suffering from an ulcer. Then, for reasons inexplicable to herself, after suffering the pains for several months, they disappeared without trace and never returned.

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The Narrative

The young trainee had embarked on a second career at a time when her children were still very young. After the birth of the first child she had realised that she would need to be a breadwinner for the family and that her current career would not interest her for much longer. She had become increasingly interested and absorbed in the reading of psychology and so was thrilled when she was accepted into the master's training programme at her university.

She gave of herself with complete dedication and commitment but never realised what intense personal demands the training would make on her. Besides the personal demands which most trainees experience to a greater or lesser degree, she found herself struggling in her placement for practicals in a township. She had worked in the township for about two years as a teacher and so was surprised that her placement in the counselling clinic should present her with such a struggle as she was now experiencing.

Working as a counsellor/ psychotherapist in the township was a very different experience from that of being a teacher. The teaching process was highly structured: there was common language and a shared understanding of the roles of those involved in the activities in the classroom and around the curriculum.

As a psychotherapist in the township she found that her clients seldom came with any clear idea of what they expected of her, often language was a problem for communicating, clients never ceased demanding of and needing her. The sessions did not end at a particular time like the lessons did, clients turned up at any time of day and sometimes expected her to visit them at home late in the evenings or attend rituals with them over weekends. Sometimes, more and more so, she found that even though clients may not necessarily expect or demand all these things from her, she had developed a need to give them anyway.

She questioned what she was doing, why she was doing it and where she was going. She found no answers and found no one who seemed to understand. These questions spilled over into her personal life as she examined her past and her present and questioned her future. She fought off criticism from close friends who told her that in their opinion she was making a mistake in studying for a career change while her children were very young.

It was about ten months into her twenty-four months training that she began to be aware of the pains in her stomach. About the time when she realised that they were constant and quite severe she began to think of consulting a medical practitioner. She delayed this, though, as she was afraid of the examinations she may have to undergo if the doctor thought that it was an ulcer.

One day during this time she was introduced to a *prophet*[3] in the township. She met him as part of a group and fell back among the crowd. Thus, she was never personally introduced to him. At this stage she was feeling somewhat overwhelmed with new information and experiences and so the visit did not make a great impression on her.

A few days later, a visiting American girl with whom she had become friendly, asked her to take her to say her farewells to the prophet. The American girl was returning to her home in the US. The young healer took the American girl to the prophet on the day before her flight home.

The prophet met them at the door. He seemed delighted to see them and took them inside to his living room. The American girl requested a message to take home with her. The prophet told her that he was too excited right then, being so delighted to see them, that he could not receive a message for her to take home. Suddenly the prophet turned to the young healer and pointed to her saying:

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3 Prophet: A traditional African spiritual healer usually connected to an 'African' church. See chapter five for further discussion.

"You must come back to see me next week because you
have a sore here in your stomach [he touched his middle]. I
will heal you."

The young healer was astonished. She had told no one, not even her
family or close friends, about the stomach pains. She returned the following
week out of curiosity.

Out of this encounter, the young healer and the prophet developed a
relationship. He gave her bottles and bottles of *muti* (traditional medicine) until
she asked for no more. The pains had already vanished after the second bottle.
Each bottle was two litres and lasted about three weeks. She asked how he had
known about her pains. He told her that her ancestors had told his ancestors
and that he was in constant contact with his ancestors.

During this time in which they talked, she asked about his practice and
his powers. She visited his church on Sunday where the drums were played.
She took him to a friend's farm where they walked in the veld and he gathered
herbs. He told her that he always knew when she was coming before she came.
He wanted to train her and offered to take her in. He gave her special herbs to
inhale which would sharpen her healing powers. At this point she had come to
realise that she needed her own way of healing, her own way of working with
people, she needed to find her own answers to her questions, and most
importantly of all, she realized that she could do all of this. Previously, she had
been desperate for answers to be provided; she had felt like an alien in a foreign
territory and wanted to be taught the language and the ways. Her relationship
with the prophet both released her from her anguish and gave her permission to
be in the township doing what she needed to do.

She could not understand how he was able to "know her illness" but she
felt relief that he knew, she trusted him and allowed herself to enter the healing
relationship.

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This story differs from those already told in this study in that the young healer was healed outside of her usual context of living and meaning. However, the healing process came at a time when she was struggling to understand the people she was working with at the clinic in the township. She experienced it as the opening of a door into an alternative world of meaning. At this point in time she was not only willing but also needed to enter the space beyond the open door. It is interesting that after this experience she was able to return to her own world of meaning taking with her a new insight of the world of the community she worked in, although not always a complete understanding of it.

Concluding Other Stories

Chapter seven will pick up threads from The Stories in the light of the discussions from previous chapters. The deliberations around The Stories will focus on the narratives as stories set in contexts of meaning with discussions from previous chapters providing some information on the ecological environment.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE ECOLOGY OF MINDS IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

> *It is remarkable how several workers writing from diverse interests and theoretical positions have converged on the notion of a divided self. In different ways they moved from a recognition and delineation of the "divided self" to formulations about cleavages in the collective experience or consciousness of large groups.* (Manganyi, 1977, p. 97).

This chapter explores the ecology of indigenous helping and coping methods from the platform of observations made by the author in her roles as a counsellor and an academic working within a particular cultural environment, different from her own. This environment included the township, Mamelodi, where she ran a counselling unit for several years, although the boundaries were not restricted to this. However, all of the persons who contributed to Other Stories explored in chapter three and to The Story in chapter one, appertained to the local community in some way. What follows is a description of the township Mamelodi as a typical South African township, the local position of which is situated within a larger global context. Processes resulting from the interaction of these two positions are considered.

The Context of Practice: The Township

The research draws from narratives given by clients, counsellors, and students, presented in chapter three. Some of these people live in Mamelodi or other townships. Townships are a lingering legacy of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Mamelodi is a township outside Pretoria, the executive capital of South Africa. Townships are areas which were created artificially from the latter half of the1940s by the government of the time, and in which the black

population was confined to reside. At the height of the apartheid era black people were often relocated from traditional areas of living and forced to live in such townships. Simplistically and superficially stated, these townships were usually located close to white towns and cities so that the black population could have access to their places of employment in the white areas. While forced township life frequently led to disconnectedness from traditional ways of life, over a period of about forty-five years, a rich, distinctive township culture has emerged among those who live there permanently. At the present time of writing, a large section of the population are also people who have relocated from rural areas to seek work and opportunity in the townships. Township culture typically blends traditional indigenous customs and rituals with modern western urban ways. This is the social context in which the research is set (Walker, van der Waal, Chiloane, Wentzel & Moraloki, 1991; http://home.worldonline.co.za/~afribeat/archiveafrica.html; http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/documentaries/storyville/sophiatown.shtml; http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/classroom/pages/projects/grade9/lesson1/unit3.htm).

Socio-Political Flux of the Context of Practice

1994 saw the official end of the apartheid regime of government in South Africa and the ushering in of a new freely elected democratic government.   Since that time, South Africa has been undergoing a process of intense social transformation for several years with the changed political situation in the country. In addition to local political changes, processes of westernisation and globalised technology, which are world wide phenomena affecting societies (Maynard & Mehrtens, 1993; Oberholzer, Greyling, Moller & Munnik, 1989), have been making impressions on the social structures and dynamics of this country for some years. The dawning of democracy, South Africa's re-entrance into world politics and consequent upgrading of resources for the previously disadvantaged in South Africa have escalated this process for all, and especially for the previously disadvantaged (Bakker, Blokland,

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Fouché, Korf, May, Pauw, Petersen, Ratnam, Vermaak & Viljoen, 2000). The younger generation particularly, who are the first generation of black students freely admitted into a unified education system supposedly equally available to all, feel compelled to achieve, given opportunities formerly denied to their parents. Different social and cultural groups manage the demands of the changes in varying ways and with varying effectiveness. For some groups it would appear as if the fabric of their culture is being rendered apart and they are thrown into a conflictual situation of feeling pressurised to abandon their ethnic traditions in favour of western ways (Donald, 1991; Eskell-Blokland, 2001; Evans, 1997; Fullinweder, 1996).

<div align="center">Culture</div>

The term culture in this study refers to that which evolves in the relationships between people (Bateson, 1985; Capra, 1997). It subsumes phenomena such as religion, art, language and so on. Culture from this perspective consists of integrated and complex systems of values, beliefs and rules of conduct for human social behaviour as a result of networks of communication (Capra, 2003). Defined so, culture is an essentially human process outcome, socially constructed, and is not identified by single factors such as race, ethnicity or language groups.

<div align="center">*Falling Through the Cracks in the Culture*</div>

In her encounters with clients in the township, the author identified a phenomenon that she came to refer to as *falling into the cracks in the culture* (Eskell-Blokland, 2001).   This referred to the process identified in counselling/ psychotherapy in which clients seemed to be trapped between their traditional belief systems and a modernising, westernising world (Moghaddam, 1987) for which they were unprepared.

Typically, in the author's experience in a community clinic within Mamelodi (Eskell-Blokland, 2002), and as reported by other mental health workers in similar settings (Bodibe, 1990; Henning, 1990; Lifschitz & van Niekerk, 1990; Rankin, 1999; Wittstock, Rosenthal, Shuda and Makgatho, 1990), clients present for counselling or helping of some kind due to complaints of psychosomatic symptoms (Henning, 1990), proclaimed spirit afflictions (Janzen, 1984), vague feelings of dis-ease or, alternatively, with accompanying social problems of such magnitude that the situation often initially appears to the counsellor/ health worker as completely hopeless and often ultimately overwhelms the counsellor/ health worker (Eskell-Blokland, 2002; Swartz & Gibson, 2001).   The author, together with clients, has previously attempted to explore the context of the symptoms from a systems point of view and found some common issues in the background of the various presenting problems. The possibility of multiple descriptions of reality proposed by systemic thought (Duncan, Parks & Rusk, 1990) has been found useful in that many of the clients may have experienced internal conflict regarding their passing between two very different cultures - the traditional and the modernised western. In addition, the counsellor has found herself confronted with the different ways differing cultures (and thus sometimes differing epistemologies) have preferred to explain the problems of the clients, and thus offering different possibilities of dealing with them. The challenge became for the counsellor to integrate the differing perspectives into a framework for a way forward. This challenge is one that other practitioners have also acknowledged as a result of their work in South Africa among the economically underprivileged and in contexts other than western (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Freeman, 1988; Henning, 1990; Janzen, 1984; Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001; Peltzer, 1998; Rankin, 1999; Seedat, Cloete & Schochet, 1988; Swartz & Gibson, 2001).

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Criticism of Psychology in Africa

This challenge to accommodate the cultures of communities outside of western mainstream contexts is one that extends beyond the borders of Africa. The criticism of the form, role and relevance of modern mainstream psychology in non-European or non-American countries has been a long on-going dialogue among psychologists worldwide (Atal, 1990; Azuma, 1984; Carr & MacLachlan, 1993; Davidson, 1993; Enriquez, 1989; Marsella, 1998; Moghaddam, 1993; Nixon, 1990; Nsamenang, 1995, 1997, 2000; Peltzer, 1998). This dialogue has been extensively documented and changes to ways of thinking and working in the discipline have been debated by writers in journals and published books, as well as being presented to the fraternity at conferences (Bakker et al., 2000; Enriquez, 1989; Fouché, 1996). Among others, Bakker (1999) concludes that in Africa "this transformation is essential and long overdue" (p. 162). She further reports that

> the colonial heritage of psychology in Africa has been documented extensively (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Bakker, 1996; Ezeilo, 1992; Fanon, 1967; Nsamenang, 1993; Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998). Psychology has been accused of serving imperialist and colonial powers (Bulhan, 1993a, 1993b; Hickson & Kriegler, 1991), of having supported apartheid (Nicholas, 1990, 1993a; Nicholas & Cooper, 1990), of remaining an élitist profession (Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Seedat, Cloete & Shochet, 1988), and of exploiting rather than serving the needs of African communities (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Bulhan, 1993a). (p. 3)

Chief reasons for psychology's suggested failure to take hold in Africa and other non-European-American countries (Abdi, 1985; Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Butchart, 1993; Liddle & Kvalsig, 1990; Nell, 1992; Nsamenang, 1993,

1995, 2000) encompass arguments that academic psychology remains rigidly attached to the underpinning principles of its roots and thus, Eurocentric (Akhurst, 2001; Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Biesheuvel, 1991; Brownell, De Jager & Madlala, 1987; Dawes, 1986; Ezeilo, 1992; Fouché, 1996; Manganyi, 1991; Nell, 1990; Nsamenang, 1993, 2000); that psychology has pandered to the colonial philosophies and tenets upon which the colonial regime was built (Enriquez, 1989; Ezeilo, 1992; Fanon, 1967); and that the western scientific knowledge base is foreign and yields information often limited in use to the African world view (Abdi, 1985; Bassa & Schlebusch, 1984).

Just as the criticism of psychology in Africa is diverse in its views, remedies offered to construct a more relevant, appropriate and useful psychology are varying. This ranges from calls for indigenisation (Bodibe, 1993; Kottler, 1990; Mashegoane, 1998; Vogelman, 1986); for Afrocenticism (Bulhan, 1990; Kriegler, 1993); for spiritual, holistic approaches to healing (Bodibe, 1993; Bührmann, 1981); for a community-strategies approach (Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998; Peltzer, 1998); and for a socio-political action position of the liberationists (Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat & Statman, 1990; Seedat, 1997) rather than the western individualistic focus (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001; Hamber, Masilela & Terre Blanche, 2001). Among the advocates of the varying solutions there exists disagreement and debate on which tactic could best be justified and operationalised with desirable effect. The common ground in all of these debates is the silence of the subjects under consideration. In chapter three, some voices from one of the communities in which these people live were presented.

Indigenisation as an Approach

The indigenisation of psychology is one approach that many non-western countries have adopted in their efforts to meet the challenges of bringing a more relevant psychology to their home contexts. This process has

gained ground in countries as far afield as the Philippines (Atal, 1981, 1990), China, Turkey and Mexico (Moghaddam, 1987).

In the Philippines a system of "cultural validation" attempts to replace western psychology theories and practice (Enriquez, 1989, p. 25).   "Cultural validation" appears to be a radical form of indigenisation and overtly politicised, as South African liberatory and critical psychology researchers such as Derek Hook (2001) advocate.   Enriquez (1989) in the Philippines refers disparagingly to uncritical Filipino students and practitioners of mainstream psychology (which is perceived as imperialistically western). He repeats the description of his colleague Bulatao (1979, in Enriquez, 1989, p. 25) who has referred to them as "pious pupils of Piaget"; "daring disciples of Drucker"; "fervent followers of Freud"; and "scientific students of Skinner". Furthermore, Bulatao calls for posted ministerial signs at tertiary institution libraries to warn students that when they read the 95% western published textbooks in psychology, they should be aware that "...the behavioural conclusions of these articles are true for the American population but not necessarily true for Filipinos" (p. 25). The Filipino's discomfort at using what they perceive as western dominated psychology is obvious when they refer to it as a "borrowed consciousness" (p. 24).

It is clear that in the Philippines the universality of western produced psychology is decidedly questioned (Enriquez, 1989), contrary to the views of some local South African psychologists such as Freeman (1991); Lifschitz and van Niekerk (1990); Lifschitz and Oosthuizen (2001); and Nell (1990), who still believe there to be some applicability of universal extractions from mainstream psychology. However, the debate in the Philippines is less centred on philosophical issues but is rather driven by the practical urgent needs of the underdeveloped and hungry community (Enriquez, 1989).   Perhaps it would not be out of place to suggest that the ecology of the Philippines has determined this attitude in an evolutionary process taking psychology from the

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luxury of philosophy to the hard and heard demands of empty bellies and hungry minds and hearts.

Perusing the literature on processes in psychology across the globe, it appears as if indigenisation takes stronger hold in those non-western countries where the population is largely culturally homogenous, such as Mexico, the Philippines, China and Turkey, for example. In these contexts academia emerges from the same cultural population as the common people. However, in countries such as South Africa, where the majority of the academic elite are of a markedly separate cultural group, indigenisation is not generally regarded as a viable solution to the problem of the ill fit of psychology as an applied discipline. It is also interesting to note that in South Africa the cultural group from which the academic elite emerge, is in the minority, yet dominant in the arena of formal knowledge. The major cultural group remains predominantly disadvantaged socio-economically, and also still silenced, waiting to be spoken for.

Indigenisation as a Polarising Process

Generally speaking, the search for indigenous psychologies beyond and within the borders of the African continent is a movement that has gripped especially third world developing countries where it is argued that the ill fit of the still dominant discourse of main-stream positivist psychology is most keenly felt (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Atal, 1981, 1990; Azuma, 1984; Dawes, 1998; Holdstock, 1982). In his address at the XXVII International Psychology Congress in Sweden in July 2000, John Adair (2000), in speaking on the subject of indigenous psychologies, discussed typical patterns of progress and development in this field. He identified four stages typical in the spread of psychology in the world. First, theories and practices of psychology are imported to lesser-developed countries intact from abroad. Second, returning scholars implant theories and practices of psychology. The third stage is the indigenisation process that is embarked upon by the developing countries. This

process originates in the recognition of the ill fit of mainstream positivist psychology from whence a discourse of critique emerges: - adaptation begins and a shift from textbook topics to culture specific topics is initiated. The final stage is when the indigenous psychology developed by a community becomes a mature, self-sustaining discipline through the development of a critical mass of research scholars and, it is here suggested, practitioners.

There is debate among local practitioners and researchers as to whether indigenisation is an appropriate or desirable direction to take in making psychology more relevant for the local South African context. If South Africa is to move towards indigenisation, it would appear as if it is chiefly somewhere between Adair's second and third stages of the development of indigenous psychologies. In South Africa, for some years, there have been marginal movements in the discipline of psychology as a whole towards indigenisation, evidenced by the criticism of psychology practice as it occurs generally in the country (Bakker, Blokland, Fouché, Korf, May, Pauw, Petersen, Vermaak & Viljoen, 2000; Foster, Nicholas & Dawes, 1993; Fouché, 1996; Gilbert, 1989; Jacobs, 1991; Nell, 1990).

Arguments for Indigenisation

The proponents of indigenisation in South Africa view the process as necessary for economically underdeveloped, non-western local cultural groups who up till now, have been deprived of psychological services (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Freeman, 1988; Peltzer, 1998; Seedat, Cloete & Schochet, 1988). Inaccessibility can be attributed to two major factors: the paradigm differences as discussed above, and economic differences. The South African government still fails to recognise the significant role to be played by psychology in primary health care and socio-economic development, and thus provides a dearth of posts for psychologists in public institutions. This in turn impacts negatively upon local research activities in psychology, setting up a cycle of further marginalisation of the discipline.

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For some years the criticism has pointed out that the vast majority of South African practitioners in the field are white (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Peltzer, 1998). Up until the present (2004) the matter of the proportion of white to black trainee intakes at local universities remains an item of concern to the Professional Board for Psychology (Professional Board for Psychology, 1999, 2001, 2002). It is advocated that white, middle class and western practitioners are unable to meet the needs of other cultural and socio-economic groups within South Africa. This is attributed at times to a lack of understanding of the cultural differences between their own way of thinking and that of the local African communities (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Peltzer, 1998), and partly due to their inaccessibility to the underprivileged majority (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Peltzer, 1998; Seedat et al., 1988).

This has led to accusations of psychology being an elitist profession and a supporter and maintenance of the apartheid regime in at least a passive role (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Dawes, 1986; Seedat & Nell, 1992; Yen & Wilbraham, 2003). These critics suggest that identification with the local cultures is essential for effective practice (Vogelman, 1986) and that clients struggle to relate to practitioners of cultures other than their own (Swartz & Gibson, 2001).

Arguments for Universality

One of the problems posed by the indigenisation of psychology is the potential reification of an alternative paradigm. This would in effect be contrary to what much of indigenous psychology critique of mainstream positivist western psychology concerns itself with. The argument suggests that it would amount to the establishment of another form of imperialism in psychology, rendering practitioners immobilised by differences (Nell, 1990; Oosthuizen, 1995).

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Thus some local practitioners are of the opinion that psychology as a discipline is based on ideas and universal skills which, used sensitively and skilfully, can be beneficial for all (Freeman, 1991; Lifschitz & van Niekerk, 1990; Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001; Nell, 1990). The general argument from this opinion is that psychology deals with a universal humanity and does not need to fragment its tenets to suit differing cultural views. To do so would be to reify culture into content bound factions of knowledge, setting up dogmatic, ethnocentric pockets of ethnopsychologies (Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001; Nell, 1990).

In an attempt to avoid the establishment of a conceptual dichotomy between *western* and *African* perspectives, Bakker (1999) advocates a search for multiple-knowledge in a process of evolving a healing art among African healers as opposed to scientific truth in psychological theory and practice. Similarly, Gilbert (1989, 2000) advocates diversity and multi-perspectives.

This research is an attempt to explore whether local processes of knowing about human psychology can be nurtured in a western academic context in order to evolve a useful dynamic knowledge for praxis.

Local Institutionalisation Processes: Alienation?

More recently, two particular processes have prompted the profession of psychology to engage in a self-reflection of its relevancy and position in a changing society.

Firstly, educationists in tertiary institutions are being required to engage in transformation processes also called for by the South African government's Higher Education Act of 1997. This Act is characterised by processes that include the call to make education and training more accessible to all sections of the South African society in a manner that redresses past

discriminations and responds to and promotes diversity of cultural values. Departments of psychology are being prompted to engage in self-reflexive processes for curricula and for the profession as a whole.

Secondly, and of particular concern at this point in time (2004) is the current revision and restructuring of the Professional Framework for Psychological Practice in South Africa (2001). This includes the setting of standards for the profession by the Standards Generating Body for Psychology.

These two processes are going ahead in leaps and bounds with little, if any, reference to the debates of relevancy and appropriate practice in a modernising, developing and non-western society. In fact, the profession would seem to be moving towards more conservatism in practice regulations, more control by the Professional Board and all of this in line with conventional western practice forms designed and used in Europe and the United States.

The new Professional Framework does speak of the need for primary health care and the particular needs of the country and a suitable service provision for South Africa. However, this seems to pertain to mode of service delivery, frequency and access for local and rural communities, all very necessary issues to be addressed (Professional Board for Psychology, 1999). It would seem as if the Professional Board and psychologists in general in South Africa are not talking in professional body circles about alternative ways of practising, ways that may integrate indigenous and local knowledges about healing. It has been debated, nevertheless, in academic circles, that psychologists and other health professionals could confer with traditional healers in offering a health care delivery service (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999; Freeman, 1988; Kottler, 1990).

Outside of the professional bodies and inside local professional journals and academic circles, a decades-long debate continues around the need for relevancy, indigenisation, social action and liberation in psychology

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(Dawes, 1986; Foster et al., 1993; Fouché, 1996; Gilbert, 1989; Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Holdstock, 1981, 1982; Jacobs, 1991; Kriegler, 1988, 1990; Van der Ryst, 1995; Whittaker, 1993).

While it is true that in South Africa an urgency may have been imparted to the process by the dictates of new legislation, one can also view the present debates in the discipline of psychology as part of a larger, global movement questioning the usefulness of entrenched approaches, philosophies, epistemologies and content of the discipline of psychology (Durojaiye, 1993; Fukuhara, 1989; Kim & Berry, 1993; Marsella, 1998; Matarazzo, 1987; McNicol, 1988; Meade, 1994; Melseater, 1991; Moghaddam, 1993).

Globalisation- Particularisation

These movements of change in psychology, both locally and globally, occur as part of a larger globalisation movement in the world today. Juxtaposed against the globalisation movement is a debate on how small local communities fit into this picture.   A concordance between local communities and globalisation may seem like a paradoxical notion especially if it is believed that the principles on which the Enlightenment was founded have shaped the globalisation movement (Giddens, 1999).   These principles include prominent western notions of using technology and knowledge to control the world and thus direct the future and create a history based on rationality rather than the perceived irrational forces of dogma and superstition as previously. Global control was the driving idea that has pushed Western civilisation to become a global civilisation (Giddens, 1999). The Enlightenment movement thus does not promote the preservation of local and traditional cultures and globalisation conceives of a world without borders, referring not only to monetary economies but specifically also to knowledge and information economies. The globalisation process threatens to promote the disappearance of traditional systems (Giddens, 1999).

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However, while globalisation threatens local traditional systems, it is also difficult to separate discussions on globalisation from considerations of sustainability. Now, sustainability concerns itself with preserving the planet, improving the quality of life for all and reaching the full potential of the planet and all human life (World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation, 2002.). Thus, sustainability must necessarily be a globalised effort but cannot be successful without careful consideration of and respect for local communities, as the many references, in the latest World Summit document, to local ecologies, environments and social systems testify. Thus, while a movement towards a globalised sharing of world resources, information and governance is afoot, a counter movement that acknowledges and legitimises local contexts and ecologies accompanies it. It is apparent that in a true ecology of sustainability these movements would find a harmonious accord. The tension between these two movements, calls for an attempt to discover a balance or an ecological fit between the two.

In the midst of globalisation pressure, paradoxically, the psychologist-practitioner is being drawn increasingly into local communities of developing countries where modern western psychology is being challenged to find a relevant message to bring to these communities in a diversity of voices. It is this dilemma which Gilbert (2000) refers to in his paper "Localizing the global and globalizing the local: Some insights out of Africa".   It is essentially these situations that typically prompt psychologists to recognise the ill fit of modern western psychologies to communities that are different from the contexts within which psychology has largely evolved. In an attempt to address this, some researchers in the field have focussed on the need for contextualisation in making the profession more relevant for local practice and theory (Gilbert, 1989; McAllister, 1998; Nell, 1990). The acknowledgment, understanding and addressing of the role of cultural variations in behaviour and experience within psychology has been viewed as a neat way of resolving the dilemma (Marsella, 1998) as simultaneously, the discipline is pressurised to maintain and/ or discover universal and global frameworks (Danziger, 1994; Dawes, 1998).

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Similarly, Gilbert (2000) discusses the need to promote diversity, disjunctions and multi-perspectives in the "global connectedness along with the rootedness in local practices and contexts" (p. 3).   Other scholars remind the discipline that the perspectives of black psychologists are non-unitary (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999).

The as yet western dominated globalisation movement on the other hand seeks to unify and thus control the world in common understandings and shared knowledge systems (Giddens, 1999). The effects of this are often to subvert local cultures in a homogenising process (Fals-Borda, 2000). Thus, although liberatory movements have begun in various parts of the world to free psychology (Said, 1978, 1989; Simone, 1990, 1993) from western hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991), it is questionable whether they can separately challenge and influence the global movement afoot. They find themselves faced with the dilemma of avoiding re-entrapment in a different paradigm and knowledge system due to their very nature, through some kind of collective movement, but needing to make themselves visible in the globalising force.

As has been mentioned in chapter two, there has begun a counter movement, much of it from the south (Capra, 2003; Fals-Borda, 2000) to recognise specific cultures and survival needs of human societies that may be different from unifying technological advances. Survival needs of specific cultures go beyond a need to simply survive and live, but imply a need to sustain identity through cultural beliefs, values and modes of living. All of these are communicated through social networks and are in response to particular environmental demands passed on through generations of local knowledge. Globalisation movements ignore this at the peril of alienating particular cultures from their very identities which give meaning to their existence as social beings (Capra, 2003; Fals-Borda, 2000; Giddens, 1999; Merry, 2000). The way forward may not necessarily be to stop globalising forces which may be unstoppable, but that "hands and minds should move in

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tandem in a new world alliance to reconstruct societies through humane globalising initiatives" which would be accountable to diversity (Fals-Borda, 2000, p. 633).

The Local Position

This research attempts a penetration of these issues in the discipline at a critical time for local practitioners, trainers and researchers. Yet, while in present literature much discussion is engaged in around the merits or demerits of directly addressing specific cultural issues (possibly corresponding to Adair's stage three mentioned above), relatively little literature is available detailing research which exposes local African cultural conceptualisations in the primary area of practice of the discipline: counselling/ helping and related forms of intervention. The inability, to date, of African psychologists to find a fit for psychology, as it exists in the mainstream, to the peculiar African context, may be the reason why psychology has failed to become established as a major service resource in Africa (Eze, 1991; Peltzer, 1998; Nsamenang, 1995, 2000). At the same time, apart from the specific cultural clashes that may occur, modernisation brings its own psychosocial disorders that are not always amenable to treatment by traditional healers. Such psychosocial disorders may require some form of psycho-intervention that combines modern psychology and the knowledge/ belief systems of the communities being healed.

Alienation Within the Community

Dick Auerswald, ecosystemic thinker and social scientist who devoted much of his working life to be among the less privileged of his own world, visited South Africa in 1990. He subsequently wrote on his impressions of what he observed and heard while he was in the country, during a time when apartheid was not yet dismantled. Auerswald commented on possible effects of apartheid at a community level according to his own interpretations.

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Auerswald (1991) broadens the meaning of apartheid by redefining the concept to denote the states of apartness in the relational domain. He suggests that institutionalised apartness such as apartheid results in relational hunger, isolation, which, like somatic starvation, leads to intellectual constriction, emotional dulling, and dereistic thinking. He defines dereistic thinking as "private unshared thinking that is not subjected to consensual validation...(and is) usually associated with psychosis" (p. 39). Auerswald goes on to maintain, controversially, that the differences in language between blacks and whites, exacerbates the differences between these two racial groups. The language of whites is embedded in mechological thinking, as opposed to the languages of the blacks which is embedded in relational thinking: - a fundamental aspect of 'African worldview'. Mechological processes could be defined as those that emphasise the lineal cause-effect dynamic, while relational processes give more focus to the circular, the rhythmic and the patterned nature of dynamics.

Essentially, however one defines or analyses the dynamics of the situation, a young black person leaving a traditional home for a western education enters a potentially isolated space of being with few resources for coping with the transition between cultures. Many young black people cope healthily with the transition, but others, in the author's experience (Eskell-Blokland, 2001), are vulnerable and present at counselling centres and other health care centres for treatment, or display various ways of not coping with daily life. Sometimes clients display several signs of psychotic-like behaviour. At times, psychological interventions have shown a dissipation of the psychotic-like symptoms.

Eskell-Blokland (2001) has described how she explored alternative ways of conducting the counselling process with college students presenting at a community centre in Mamelodi. This included extended single sessions, extending the notion of "client" to include persons other than the individual, and a search for healing among cultural relational issues. As a number of practitioners have done previously (Bodibe, 1993; Buhrmann, 1981; Freeman,

1988; Rankin, 1999) she also suggests that the South African indigenous knowledge system be engaged to access healing for indigenous peoples.

Mainstream western treatments for problems in living (known in the discipline as psychological problems or psychopathology) focus on the individual and tend to view the problems as being located within the individual. This is especially true when the possibility of a psychiatric diagnosis arises. However, when the cultural context is carefully considered the counsellor is reminded that psychology (and psychiatry) is a western product associated with the concerns and interests of western colonisers, which are still predominantly individualistic. On deeper exploration of alternative meanings behind the symptoms, it is suggested that it is possible to co-discover empowering meanings enabling the clients to move forward. One of the major challenges for the therapist may be not so much to think about the problem ecologically, but to think about the solution ecologically.

Evolutionary Processes in South African Psychology

Psychology as a discipline today (2002) almost straddles the hard sciences and the humanities. Denzin and Lincoln (2000c) refer to the "blurring of disciplinary boundaries" between the social sciences and humanities in a "quiet methodological revolution" (p. ix) as social science leans more and more towards interpretive and constructionist knowledge and theories in new paradigms. The move has been away from a dominant position of acceptance of the hypethetico-deductive model of science that tends to disguise the paradigm from which it operates (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), unlike the newer paradigms that are more explicit about the stances in which they evolved. Similarly, psychology's development as a social science needs to be seen against the backdrop of contextual knowledges and social climates. These influence the paradigms in which new knowledge is evolved and in which observations are languaged - the nature of the discourses. "Background

knowledge tells us what exists, how to understand it, and - most concretely - how to study it" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 3).

Historical Development of the Context

The contexts within which the discipline of psychology developed intensely at critical stages of its evolvement can give some clues as to how and why it took the forms and shapes it did with, up until recently and still widely so, emphases on normality-abnormality, and behaviour change (engineering) in the individual. Since the inception of psychology as a modern discipline some one hundred and twenty-five years ago, "contextual forces" (Schultz & Schultz, 1996, p. 9) influencing the development of psychology included the sudden need for applied psychology especially in education and wartime phenomena. Researchers indicate how *contexts of justification* yield very different knowledges from knowledges created by researchers working within *contexts of discovery* (Morris, 1989; Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). The former, characterised chiefly by use of hypothetico-deductive models of research, stay more passively within a paradigm. The latter, characterised chiefly by newer interpretive, constructionist paradigms, tend to explicitly account for values, belief systems and contextual histories.

Alienation Through Prejudice

The theoretical bases and practices of psychology emanate largely from academic studies and research. However, in the United States of America, where psychology was taking the lead, widespread prejudice excluded blacks, Jews and women from advanced academic studies until well into the 1960s (Schultz & Schultz, 1996). While the situation may have improved since then with regard to admission to postgraduate studies and possibly appointments to posts, research and focus in psychology had already developed and evolved within the discipline with little regard for these and other marginalized groups (Anonymous, 1986; Dawes, 1985; Lazarus, 1985).

Evidence of this prejudice is still to be found in mainstream psychology (Fouché, 1996; Seedat, 1997) and hinders progress in psychology studies in the developing world. Attempts at alternative viewpoints or approaches are sometimes regarded with suspicion and they remain generally under-funded, under-published and sit on the fringes of academic teaching programmes (Gergen, 1997; Gergen & Gergen, 2000a). It is precisely this context of recognised prejudice that has led directly to a context of discovery in which researchers seek to be explicit about their values, belief systems and contextual histories in order to discover knowledge that can continue to define and refine the paradigms from within which they are operating.

This standpoint approach has led to the development of a number of alternative methodologies in research (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999). And so it has come about that marginalised groups such as feminists, homosexuals and blacks have adopted and developed a still much marginalised research approach (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999).   Thus, research and writing in the context of discovery of liberatory psychology everywhere, and also in South Africa, tends to take an alternative stance in its attempt to 'discover' its own paradigm and promote its beliefs overtly (Hook, 2001). In South Africa, the movement, in its search for relevancy, appropriateness, and cultural fit, also challenges what it perceives as the institutionalisation of psychology in the alienating ideological western scientific mode. Liberatory psychology openly seeks emancipation from what it perceives as its hegemonic predecessor (Enriquez, 1989,1997; Ka Sigogo, Hooper, Long, Lykes, Wilson & Zietkiewicz, 2004; Seedat, 1997; Seedat & Nell, 1992). Liberatory psychology research seeks to promote social action and transformation (Fals-Borda, 1997, 2000; Fals-Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2003) rather than personal promotion of the individual academic as has been conventional in mainstream academia. The researcher or practitioner may be expected to take a communal approach to the problems presented, rather than the role of the expert consultant holding privileged knowledge (Bakker, 1996; Eagle & Pillay, 1988; Van Vlaerenden, 2001).

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Stories of Alienation Within the Profession

This section discusses what the author refers to as the institutionalisation of psychology. By this it is meant that the discipline has tended to avoid ecological evolvement, preferring to remain faithful to mainstream entrenched academic principles - resulting in some measure of stagnation and entropy. This has filtered through to the practice and resulted in a sense of alienation in practitioners especially.

Among those South African psychologists who have expressed this personal sense of alienation explicitly are Bodibe (1990), Manganyi (1973, 1977, 1981) and Seedat (1997). Mahommed Seedat, a psychologist of Asian origin, classified black in the previous government regime, working and living in South Africa, expresses his alienating experience in his studies in psychology at a major university of the country. His words display an acuteness of experience that would be lost in a summary and thus they are repeated here in full:

> The crisis and sense of alienation relate to the lack of confidence among black and white progressive psychologists in Euro-American psychology's ability and potential to articulate the psychological experiences of those other than Euro-American. When I entered the discipline as a master's student, I felt estranged from the arsenal of psychological concepts that held the false promise of explaining familiar psychological experiences. In dialogue with other black students and psychologists, I discovered that they shared my scepticism in the ability of Euro-American psychological concepts to explain the psychological world of black and female South Africans and of those

other than Euro Americans the world over. During my training, the process of becoming acquainted and familiar with unfamiliar and 'foreign' psychological concepts proved to be an emotional and intellectual dislocating learning experience. This experience does not refer to the process of intellectually mastering the technical language and jargon of the discipline and their translation into an arsenal of clinical, conceptual or analytical skills per se, or to the emotional and cognitive self-reflection that a clinical psychology trainee in particular has to exercise during the intensive training period, as much as it speaks to the methodological and conceptual ethnocentricism inherent in psychology as a discipline. The process whereby eurocentric psychology endeavours to explicate and universalise its concepts in the rendering of psychological services, scholarship, research and training programmes in a culturally heterogeneous world, is an emotionally and intellectually estranging experience and a source of early disillusionment for black and women psychologists and those operating in low income contexts. (Seedat, 1997, p. 261)

While the institutionalisation of psychology may have served to isolate and thus alienate psychologists generally in non-Euro-American countries, the situation in South Africa has been particularly devastating. During the apartheid era, for more than forty years, people have been separated along racial and cultural lines. Any attempts at change or transformation have been regarded as dangerously dissident and have been suppressed. The overall effect has been one of extreme institutionalisation. It is no surprise then that sectors of society have become marginalised and psychologists, already in a

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marginalised profession (Blokland, 1992; Seedat, 1997) have felt it keenly and many feel particularly alienated (Auerswald, 1991; Seedat, 1997).

It is this author's opinion that it is a South African characteristic to create rigid boundaries between itself and the rest of the world. This may be an effect of apartheid but it has also left itself feeling isolated, uncertain and suspicious of its own resources. Never having learned to find connections at home, South African people generally reach out to the outside world.   This could go some way towards explaining why the profession, given the opportunity to transform, embarks on a process of replicating American and European models.   A similar process can be seen when local tertiary institutions measure their worth through foreign recognition. This is the opposite from what is happening in countries such as the Philippines where internal "cultural validation" becomes their own benchmark (Enriquez, 1989). Probably either extreme has its drawbacks and can lead to alienation of different sorts, but it is suggested that a balance between the slick *globalisation* approach of South African psychology praxis as it currently generally exists, and the grass roots *particularisation* approach of the Philippines would yield a healthy ecological context for the development of a young discipline in a developing world.

Liberation from the Institution

In response to alienation processes, at various levels, of the institutionalisation of psychology, some psychologists have turned to a liberatory movement. This is occurring both outside (Enriquez, 1989) the borders of South Africa and within (Seedat, 1997). Liberatory movements occur with differing goals and in reaction to varying dominant discourses within psychology from social action movements, to queer, and critical race theorists (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). Within South Africa, a liberatory movement for the positioning of local knowledges and relevancy in psychology, for contextualisation and political freedom from oppression and

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dominance by the colonisers, has been gaining ground as evidenced by literature on the topic (Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat & Statman, 1990; Gilbert, 2000; Manganyi, 1973; Nell, 1990; Nicholas, 1990; Seedat, 1993, 1997; Whittaker, 1990). Various groups and formal organisations have formed around the notion of a liberated and liberatory psychology, such as the Apartheid and Psychology Committee; the Organization for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) (Nicholas, 1990; Vogelman, 1987); and the Research and Authorship Development Forum (Seedat, 1997). The agenda of such a liberatory psychology has been debated as writers consider ways and means psychologists could intervene both from a socio-political perspective and/or from a personal one (Seedat, 1997).

Generally in psychology, liberatory movements from political oppression tend to focus on local knowledge and cultural systems, pertinent to local communities (Enriquez, 1989; Seedat, 1997). A focus on local knowledge and culture is what is referred to as the "particularisation" approach of the social sciences (Maharashtra, 2001; Preyer, 2000). Some researchers and psychologists working within the field and acknowledging psychology as the "progeny of the Euro-American ethnosciences" (Seedat, 1997, p. 261) deem it essential to return to cultural philosophical roots in order to liberate psychology from the western dominance (Anonymous, 1986; Gobodo, 1990; Muller & Cloete, 1987; Nsamenang, 1997, 2000; Seedat, 1993; Seedat & Nell, 1990; Turton, 1986; Vogelman, 1987).

Well-Being and *Psychopathology* in Context

Liberation from western hegemony necessitates an interrogation of major assumptions and claims of mainstream psychology especially with regard to western notions of well-being, psychopathology and psychological intervention. Earlier and positivistic approaches tend to follow a medical model of identification of pathology according to a classification system (diagnosis), prognosis and treatment plan. This is a reflection of the

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hegemonic medical domination that influenced developments within psychology for several decades and still wields a powerful influence over the health professions (Nell, 1992).   More recently, postmodernism has brought more approaches to the study of human behaviour and the helping professions with strong emphases on the context and text (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Richardson, 2000). Among these can be included critical hermeneutics (Habermas, 1971), radical hermeneutics (Caputo, 1987), desconstructionism (Derrida, 1987), hermeneutic and existential phenomenological approaches (Ricoeur, 1971; Schutz, 1967), narrative approaches (Sarbin, 1986) and social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Postmodernism arose post war and post cold war in a climate of disillusionment with perceived constraints of scientific claims of positivistic social scientists, from which personhood and existential reality seemed to be absent. In the context of this shift to the local, and the stretching of conventional mainstream boundaries regarding ideas about what constitutes legitimate knowledge, some writers have questioned mainstream conventions around psychopathology and well-being. This questioning will be taken up in the following section and also in chapter five of this document.

In a breakaway from the traditional medical model of psychopathology, there is now widespread recognition of the relational influences on human behaviour and therefore also psychopathology and well-being. These are views adopted by practitioners who advocate more interactional (Mischel, 1986) and systemic (Bateson, Jackson, Haley & Weakland, 1956; Bowen, 1978; Dell, 1982; Jackson, 1959; Jackson & Weakland, 1971) explanations for human behaviour.

Within the postmodern movement generally (Gergen, 2001; Kvale, 1992b), social constructionism in particular (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992; Fruggeri, 1992; Gergen, 1991; Kenwood, 1999; Parker, 1999d; Shotter, 1993), and the narrative psychology movement (Epston, White & Murray, 1992; Shotter, 1992; Shotter & Gergen, 1988) relational ideas about psychopathology

and therapy have been taken to the point where psychopathology and therapy are considered to exist as creations or constructs in human language and stories about lives and meanings. As such they become de-reified as stand alone concepts but are seen as descriptions of behaviour in a context.

From this position, Parker (1999d), in a critique of traditional mainstream views of psychopathology as being located within the individual, and in a call for a dialectic approach to this critique, maintains that psychopathology has been subject to a process of social mystification (p. 3):

> Counselling, psychotherapy and even psycho-analysis sometimes can, in certain circumstances, provide settings for the deconstruction of psycho-pathology.… Instead of being located firmly inside the person as an enduring personality trait, the problem is situated as the product of the historical relationship the person has forged with others. Instead of being something discrete and distinctively abnormal, the problem is positioned in relation to the many varieties of action and experience that structure the 'normal' everyday world. And instead of being solely the property of the person who attends the session as client or patient, the problem is re-specified as being as much to do with the reactions of the designated professional and what goes on between the ordinary person and the expert.

> Theoretical descriptions of family systems and narratives of deficit have each, in various ways, confirmed the idea that psychopathology lies on a continuum with what normal folks do and that those professionals who pretend to be free from psychopathology are likely to do most damage.

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Knowledge Base and Psychopathology

Parker (1999d) further discusses how a mainstream approach perpetuates both the system of constructs of psychopathology itself and how the constructs in turn perpetuate the social values out of which they emerge (p. 7):

> [What we read and write about psychoanalysis is] first, not only about psychoanalysis, but works within psychoanalytic reasoning, inhabiting it and turning it back into a form of cultural critique. Second, not taking psychoanalysis as a privileged system of knowledge which comes from the outside and unlocks the secrets of culture but embeds it in the culture. Third, not treating psychoanalysis as a mysterious metanarrative but treating it as an historically material product and resource, as the tool and result of critical inquiry. Fourth, not treating psychoanalysis as a disconnected expert system but as a form of narrative which is accessible to, and accessed by the subjects created by it. Fifth, not treating psychoanalysis simply as a clinical practice devoted to the amelioration of symptoms, but as a system of symptoms which is structured by and which structures culture.

Parker states his perspective strongly by referring to "abstract and concrete aspects of psychopathology which govern psychiatry as a culturally-located historically-specific regime of truth" (1999d, p. 6). Taking Parker's (1999d) definition of psychopathology as being located, not within the client as an independent discrete phenomenon, but as being a less-fixed manifestation of socio-historic events of inter-relationship tempered by power

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and social control issues, then by extrapolation, the healing process must focus on relationship, cultural patterns and social dynamics of oppression. If one is to take such a view seriously, or certain aspects of it, it would seem to be inappropriate to use a discourse of sickness and health in such a discussion. Rather than refer to 'healing' perhaps it would be more appropriate to refer to emancipation, liberation, disentanglement etc. In this manner, a discourse of liberation from the oppressive nature of mainstream and largely biomedical psychology would be more appropriately adopted.

It is suggested here that such a socially contextually situated inter-relationship view of psychopathology may be viewed as an ecological process. Then healing, or change, would lie within the socio-ecological dynamic and the description of such change processes could be one of a sort of ecological intelligence.

However, generally in mainstream psychology, while psychotherapy and counselling have travelled a long road since its inception, with many by-roads being discovered along the way, the major focus remains a modernist enterprise of the healing of psychopathology. This is backed not only by the abundance of literature on the topic but also by the continuing heavy emphasis on psychopathology and psychodiagnostics in both undergraduate and graduate programmes (Fouché, 1996). The almost universal approach from this mainstream modernist position is one of classification using western scientific empirical knowledge to establish categories. Even the more recent shift to salutogenesis or psychofortology (Wissing & van Eeden, 1997) attempts to empirically "operationalise...models and constructs" (p. 3) along diverse dimensions.

In contrast to the western traditional reification of human problems presented as psychopathology, Parker (1999d, p. 4) refers to psychopathology as "a construct, storied into being". He goes on to attribute the traditional substantiation of psychopathology to "expert knowledge" and suggests that

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such knowledge plays an "oppressive role" in the lives of modern people. The attempts of these same people to make sense of their lives and the problems which are inevitably experienced as part of the human condition, are dismissed as unfounded on any empirical ground or recognised theory - recognised by the experts of the discipline which has colonised the field. "Expert knowledge" within psychology becomes a driving force around which all conceptualisations of human behaviour, even difference, is centred (Parker, 1999d). However, according to Parker (1999d, p. 4):

> But it is not. When we become experts upon our own lives, as reflexive self-conscious skilled practitioners of the discourse which bears us, as those who are paid to listen or pay to speak, we have also become theoreticians.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to deconstruct the whole field of psychopathology as Parker may appear to attempt to do in his various writings, but to show the possibility of viewing human problems and their solutions from alternative paradigms. It will also be useful here to highlight the paradigmatic constraints of any discussion of psychopathology for the purposes of showing how such discussions are both bound by and support the discourses from within which they emerge.

In order to achieve this it becomes necessary to critically examine knowledge bases around human behaviour, problems in living, healing/ change and conceptualisations of human behaviour, and the effects of these knowledge bases in cultural contexts. It is the usefulness of embedded knowledge bases within cultural diversities that could lead to alternative ways of conceptualising psychological healing/ change through processes of counselling. The healing/change processes of mainstream psychology, such as the kind of counselling which emerges from accredited professional training institutions within western oriented tertiary educational systems, can be seen as historically

material products and resources of a particular culture - the western modernist, scientific one. This suggests that western mainstream psychology can be universalised only within the paradigmatic constraints to the extent that these constraints can be imported, stretched, adapted or transported.

Parker's (2000) view that modern western persons are trapped into psychopathological discourse because modern western psychological theory is already intricately part of the texture of modern western culture, is supported by the social constructionist perspective which claims that the subject matters which psychologists study are created in the very process of identifying them (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999). Foucault (1980) in his search for understanding the origins of 'knowledge', criticises psychology for establishing "regimes of truth" through discourse identified as 'knowledge'. Bakker & Mokwena (2000) draw parallels between social constructionist ideas of the social origins of knowledge and the African perspective of knowledge as being created through community interaction. In fact, knowledge of self can change within African society, as the community changes and evolves in passing through various social stages (Bakker & Mokwena, 2000).

Psychologists have thus been variously criticised for espousing to an epistemology accused of allowing them to objectify clients with little regard to the "otherness" implied in any form of relationship. The question is what is it that is woven into "other" cultures and how does the trained psychologist enter the "other" discourse in order to effect a change process for problems which are manifestations of human interactions and the origins of which lie between living people?

Parker (1999d, p. 14) suggests "that discovery [of the change process] comes about through treating subjectivity as a resource rather than as the place where psychopathology lurks".   A social constructionist approach accesses such resources by focussing on the narratives which occur between clients and psychotherapists/ counsellors, and uses the narratives to initiate a

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change/healing process (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999). It is important to point out here that Parker and other producers of social constructionist ideas (and other theoreticians generally) refer to "individuals" and the "subjectivity" of individuals. It is suggested that it is possible to extrapolate and refer to *communities* in the place of individuals and the "subjectivity" of communities.

This is particularly important when it is considered that much of the African sense of self is achieved through community interaction such as occurs in, for example, the African churches. Traditional African churches carry a significance for the communities in which they are situated, which transcends being simply being places of worship. Traditional African churches serve as community gathering places, take on social leadership functions, become places of safety for women and children, are places of healing for the sick in body and soul (or mind) and provide resources for living (Bakker, 1989).

Seedat (1997), in advocating a liberatory psychology in South Africa, reminds us of Butchart's caution (1990, in Seedat, 1997, p. 8) that:

> Because liberatory psychology may hold certain mainstream assumptions about psychic pain, its intervening formulations may well recreate biomedically dominated mainstream ideas of traumatisation, patienthood and victimisation.

Seedat (1997) refers to a "growing body of literature" (p. 9) which recommends that the practitioner recognise that people using psychological services also consult indigenous traditional practitioners whose knowledge base, and thus discourse, of illness and problems of living, differ from western practitioners. In order to deliver an effective psychological service local indigenous knowledge bases must also be taken into account in offering treatment.

Conclusion

Processes with regard to the impact of globalisation on local positions having been considered in this chapter, the next chapter will turn to explorations of what might constitute traditional African cultures, some philosophical underpinnings of African perspectives as identified by various scholars, and some perspectives on the notion of 'African psychologies'. How such notions have evolved within the South African context in particular is discussed. These descriptions and discussions flow from issues that arose out of the narratives (Other Stories) in chapter three, and form a background to further discussions of The Flow in chapter seven.

CHAPTER FIVE

KNOWLEDGE BASE AS CULTURAL CONSTRUCT

What will follow in this chapter is a look at some themes from literature, relevant to this study, expounding on *African* and *blac*k psychology and philosophy. These are themes that have emerged from the culture, - and culture as a social construct, is seen to be inextricably intertwined with knowledge. Thus the themes could be viewed as forming part of local knowledge of the context.

The purpose of presenting these ideas here is to sketch the one end of the knowledge continuum western – African, from whence rise some arguments for indigenous knowledge in an African context. The notion of a knowledge continuum in itself serves to reify the dialectic approach to knowledge. However, it is not the intention to further this dialectic, but rather to present some dissenting voices from the other side coming from the modernist frame, as a background to further dialogue of an alternative approach. Much of this study has to do with voice and voicelessness, sound and silence, and so it seems only proper and congruent to give space to these ideas that contribute to the call for more inclusivity in a western dominated psychology.

It needs to be noted that this consideration of African cultures is made from a western perspective, which is where the author stands. Sometimes the concepts will be discussed comparatively.

Several writers and thinkers of African and black origin have attempted to draw parallels between African/black knowledge and psychology and philosophy. For this reason and also because of their common roots, both psychology and philosophy are considered as sources although they are both western notions in themselves.

Writing and the Oral Tradition

Considering the voicelessness of the marginalized African peoples (Fanon, 1967; Fanon, in Bulhan, 1985; Seedat, 1993) it is ironic to begin with a discussion of the oral tradition. However, it appears as if the western academic community was reading and so did not hear the words of the African peoples speaking about themselves. What was then first written by African authors was largely criticised both by westerners and other Africans for various reasons. Probably one of the most compelling reasons for the criticism has to do with the fact that the voices from both sides took the form of dialectic rather than a search for a dialogue.

According to Asante and Asante (1985), African culture was until fairly recently mainly described in literature by western scholars and, they claim, that it was the publication of Cheikh Anta Diop's book "African origin of civilisation", in 1971, which made way for a *true* African transformation in histiography. The varying arguments for the "true", claim Africa has preserved its stories in an oral tradition (Boadu, 1985; Nöthling, 1989; Serequeberhan, 1991; Wiredu, 1991) and those searching for some measure of purism often criticise scholars and writers of African texts as being either non-African themselves (Hountondji, 1983), or having lost their African-ness to a western education (Oyéwùmi, 2002).

Some disparaged the oral tradition itself. Early ethnophilosophers such as Placide Tempels (Hountondji, 1991; Masolo, 1994, Oruka, 2002), Alexis Kagame and Tannen (Biakolo, 2002), took the oral tradition to be a sign of primitiveness, an indication of the savagery of the early African people, referring to them as *pre-literate* and *inferior*. This attitude was also embraced by early anthropologists such as Lévy-Bruhl, Frazer, Tylor and Morgan who, additionally, placed the white man (sic) at the pinnacle of rational and abstract thought:

> With the primitives, thought and language are of a
> character almost exclusively concrete.… In a word, our
> mentality is above all 'conceptual', the other barely so.
> (Lévy-Bruhl in Irele, 1983, p. 13)

Irele (1983) and Hountondji (1983) were among later African writers who rejected this denigrated view of African peoples.   Hountondji (1983) believes that African thought should, can and does connect to the scientific world through the development of its own philosophy. He rejects contemplations on African ways by non-Africans as ethnophilosophical texts which serve to interpret and explain African thinking to other non-Africans. He maintains that it is the African self alone who can reflect on African ways and systems. Hountondji (1983) calls for a liberation of African discourse by Africans.

Among others, Wiredu (1991), counters voices such as Hountondji's and Irele's. These others are of the opinion that certain elements of African traditional thought may serve to hold back development and impede modernisation.

Through these deliberations and countering the ignominy of being referred to as primitive, runs an assertion of pride in being African and allegations of supremacy, flouting the western claims to this position. This assertion views Africa and Africans as the origins of civilisation with a direct line descending from the Ancient Egyptian culture. D. K. Koka (1996) and Cheikh Anta Diop (in Koka, 1996) suggest that western Europeans have wrongfully claimed this descendancy and that the Ancient Greeks acquired what knowledge they had from the Egyptians but failed to improve on it (Koka, 1996). The words of Diop express both pride and the anguish of the marginalised (in Koka, 1996, p. 49):

Greece, Mother of the best in European civilization, was a child suckled at the breast of Ethiopia, which itself had evolved from the complex womb of the Afrikan Motherland.

The history of Black Africa will remain suspended in air and cannot be written correctly until African historians dare to connect it with the history of Egypt.

Dialectics of African Traditional and Western Scientific Thought

Continuing in the dialectical of African versus western thought, comparisons have been drawn between traditional African thought and western scientific thought. Some of these will be discussed below.

Masolo refers to African traditional thought process as a "world of magical beliefs" (1994, p. 129). He presents the work of Robin Horton who claims that for the traditional African, words and reality are inextricably linked such that they become identical. This is in contrast to the modernist western scientific notion of words being tools to represent, explain and predict reality. Even social constructionism draws a line before it reaches the notion of *reality*. For the traditional African the identitification of words with *reality* opens a window to the magical, the spirit world and personal spiritual explanations. This is typical of the dynamic at play in some African traditional ceremonies such as the *naming ceremony*[1] and in the significance of the role of spirituality in the African traditional way of life. Ephirim-Donker (1997) suggests that it is believed that the very existence of a person depends on the successful completion of the naming ritual.

The social power and authority held by the churches of Africa testify to the important place spiritual life plays in traditional and modern African

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[1] Naming ceremony: Traditional ritual whereby a newborn child is given his/her names. The names carry significance for the person throughout life.

culture beyond the narrow delineation of *religion* (Bakker, 1989; Nöthling, 1989; Nsamenang, 1999; Peltzer, 1995; Setiloane, 1989). The present day African Independent Churches (Goba, 1988) are mostly Christian in origin but the confluence of African spiritual traditions with Christian dogma, have mutated these churches to social structures of a unique form and flavour (Goba, 1988). They have moved beyond places of worship alone, to places of physical and mental healing, ancestral connection, social support and, in Masolo's words, places of "magical beliefs".

Very often the religious services and the healing services integrate inextricably and are conducted by persons known as *prophets*[2]. These same prophets lead church congregations in spiritual matters and ceremonious ritual but also hold special powers of healing, bestowed on them by the *ancestors*[3]. These spiritual healers are called to the healing profession through a process of *thwasa*[4]. This process usually takes the form of an illness that resolves during the training process of the healer (Campbell, 1998).   The induction to becoming a healer involves becoming attuned to the voices of the ancestors whose powers the healer draws on in the healing craft.

The link between spirituality and healing is also found in African Islam practices (Bakker, 1996). With more than 40% of Africans south of the Sahara following an Islamic tradition, Islam shows itself to be a significant influence on present day African thinking and in turn has been influenced by traditional African practices.

Horton, (in Masolo, 1994), proposes that traditional African thought remains undisturbed by new explanations such as scientific explanations of the twentieth century, for example medical diagnoses and treatment. According to him the traditional African thought typically does not reject its own

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[2] Prophet: Refer to chapter two
[3] Ancestors: Deceased relatives who continue to play a role in the lives of the living
[4] Thwasa: Process whereby a traditional spiritual healer is called by the ancestors to the healing profession. This is often accompanied by a sickness which resolves during the training.

explanations nor, necessarily, the new ones, but accommodates the new ones. This, too, is in contrast to the western scientific way of viewing theories of reality as adversarial. Once again, it is not being suggested here that either western or traditional African thought systems are in any way unitary, but that the notion of an "accommodative" (Masolo, 1994, p.130) thought process is useful in further considerations of African adaptation to the pressures of modernisation and westernisation. The reader is reminded of the description of Mamelodi in The Story, chapter one, where the Day Hospital lies across the road from the *sangoma*[5]. The one accommodating the other's presence and the patients making easy use of both simultaneously for the same afflictions.

Modernity and Hegemony in Philosophy

Entering the fray of modernistic dialectics has left some Africans with a sense of voicelessness. The African philosopher, Tsenay Serequeberhan (1997), comments on and laments the apparent surrender of an African sense of reality to European modernisation. He accuses the western, European world of denying African reality, perceiving it as an "*unreality*" when compared with their own dominant and "superior" reality (p. 142). He further equates modernity with empire and colonialism. Serequeberhan quotes the French philosopher, Jean-François Lyotard who expressed this idea so succinctly:

> Modernity...whenever it appears, does not occur without
> a shattering of belief, without a discovery of the lack of
> reality in reality - a discovery linked to the invention of
> other realities. (In Serequeberhan, 1997, p. 143)

Edward Said (1980, p. 78) likened the European initiative to bring modernisation and western development to Africa as an attempt to create "little Europes" all over Africa (and elsewhere). The result is an impression of

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[5] Sangoma: Refer to chapter two

alienation for African peoples, extensively discussed by Frantz Fanon (1986) in his text "Black skin, white masks".

Alienation Through Social Change

Masolo (1994, p. 195) describes the recent African condition as

> one of the most basic facts of our current existence: double alienation - alienation from history, alienation into cultural staticism and anachronism, alienation into under-development.

The resentment that emanates from Hountondji's writings, resentment chiefly targeted at the non-African scholar who presumes to interpret African ways and systems of thought to other non-Africans, also criticises the African who toes the line for the non-African coloniser.   Frantz Fanon (1963) refers to these two positions as that of the "substantialist" and the "turncoat" respectively.

The first chapter of Hountondji's book "African Philosophy: Myth and reality" is entitled "An alienated literature". Perhaps it would be more appropriately named "An alienat-*ing* literature".   Hountondji calls for a renewal of pride in African identity as opposed to a toeing of the line as he sees it:

> We thus remain unwittingly, prisoners of Europe, trying, as ever, to force her to respect us and deriving naïve pleasure from declaring for her benefit what we are naïve enough to regard as our philosophical identity.   In a completely sterile withdrawal we go on vindicating our cultures, or rather, apologising for them to the white man,

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> instead of living fully their actual splendour and poverty,
> instead of *transforming* them. (Hountondji, 1983, p. 50)

The angst of the non-western indigenous peoples subjugated by colonialism is further reflected in the words of Chief Kabongo of the Kikuyu:

> We elders looked at each other. Was this the end of everything that we had known and worked for? (In Serequeberhan, 1997, p. 144)

Making Sense of the World: A Question of Knowledge Base

Any knowledge base has its roots in an epistemological ground, which forms the base for further knowledge production.   The proposal that the African epistemological sense of the world is different from the western one is one of the chief motivations referred to in the call for a critical examination of psychological practice, as it currently exists in developing societies in Africa. This notion of an African knowledge base as distinct from and different from a western knowledge base in a broad sense has been purported by many writers in this field and has become a battle ground for power at a formal knowledge level at least. A discussion of this notion and its ensuing issues is considered useful for the purposes of this study and is presented here. The further section of this chapter will examine some psychological concepts from this perspective.

Truth, Power and Knowledge

Foucault (1972, 1980) explored and commented extensively on the relationship between truth, power and knowledge. It is beyond the parameters of this thesis to discuss these issues in any great depth but it is considered important here to mention that Foucault referred to socially recognised

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institutions (e.g. university, military, writing or media) as political and economic apparatuses. He recognised that issues of truth, power and knowledge form the matter of ideological struggles.

Sociologist Edward Shils, during his more than fifty years as an academic, took a particular interest in, and expressed himself extensively on, matters of higher education, the learning process and academic ethics. Edward Said (1994) cites him in his 1993 Reith Lectures, where he takes a meta-view of the process of knowledge validation in societies:

> In every society... there are some persons with an unusual sensitivity to the Sacred, an uncommon reflectiveness about the nature of the universe, and the rules which govern their society. There is in society a minority of persons who more than the ordinary run of their fellow-men, are inquiring, and desirous of being in frequent communion with symbols which are more general than the immediate concrete situations of everyday life, and remote in their reference in both time and space. In this minority, there is a need to externalize the quest in oral and written discourse, in poetic or plastic expression, in historical reminiscence or writing, in ritual performance and acts of worship. This interior need to penetrate beyond the screen of immediate concrete experience marks the existence of the intellectuals in every society.
> (Shils as cited in Said, 1994, pp. 35-36)

An interesting aspect of Shils' expression above, is that it moves beyond the idea of knowledge production being the realm of formally educated intellectuals (in the western world this would be mainly university educated persons) to a more inclusive acceptance of what constitutes valid knowledge. Ndaba (1999), an African philosopher and academic, concurs with this view by

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stating that ways of knowing include imagination, intuition, mythology, and feelings, and as such are not restricted to reason. The concept of knowledge itself is stretched beyond the commonly understood parameters of western institutions - usually the written word in specific format, having been validated through prescribed processes. In the quote above, Shils refers to the "sacred", to "symbols", and shares the opinion with some African philosophers that these may be expressed in a variety of forms which include the oral, the poetic, performance, ritual, music and other forms of a more artistic, aesthetic and intangible (Ndaba, 1999; Ntuli & Smit, 1999) or even ephemeral nature than the empirical documents of the western institutions.

Ntuli and Smit (1999, p. 3), in a critique of what is considered to constitute valid knowledge and in a challenge to South African intellectuals, imply that "traditional" societies such as the healers, the *izinyanga* [6], *izanusi*[7], *abalozi*[8], as well as writers, poets, artists, government policy makers, the media and students, and others, should be included among the recognised intelligentsia of Africa. This would be congruent with identified traditional African thought systems which, in pre-colonial times, looked to "healers, divine queens and kings, priests, healers in initiation schools and secret societies" (Ntuli & Smit, 1999, p. 5).

Asante (in Oyebade, 1990) refers to the oral tradition of the African-Americans as *nommo* and describes it as such:

> The power of the spoken word is well articulated among African-Americans. But this rhetorical power in speech, song, and myth is a carryover of the ancestral practice. When enslaved Africans arrived in America, they carried with them the African power of oral expression which

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[6] izinyanga, [7]izanusi and [8]abalozi: Traditional African healers

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they expressed in drumming, story telling, and praise singing. (p. 236)

Oyebade includes "sermons, lectures, raps, gospel songs, and poetry" (p. 236) in this repertoire of oratory through which history, culture and protest messages were communicated and transposed.

Western Dualism in Knowledge

Polkinghorne (2000) discusses a particular characteristic of western knowledge which is that it has generally accommodated a split between the secular and the spiritual since the early centuries AD: for example, Aristotle conceived of the world divided into the sublunar and the supralunar. The sublunar world consisted of the material, while the supralunar world consisted of the divine. Concomitant with this more recently has been a conception of a dualism between the human body and the mind, especially exploited by modernist philosophers (Polkinghorne, 2000). This dualism originated in Europe during the eighteenth century in what has come to be known as the Age of the Enlightenment (Christians, 2000). This age saw the rise of science and reason which came to dominate knowledge production in the west and during which time science challenged the authority of the church.

This duality has plagued Western thought ever since. As observed by the French philosopher Jean Wahl, the history of Western philosophy is, on the whole, an unhappy one, characterized by perpetual oscillations between the world as an automaton and a theology in which God governs the universe. Both are forms of determinism. (Prigogine, 1997, p. 2)

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Approach to Knowledge

Traditional African approaches to knowledge have been described as being characterised by an holistic perspective which allows the religious, spiritual and lived experience to be an integral part of recognised knowledge (Sinha & Sinha, 1997). Ndaba (1999) suggests that certain later western philosophers - such as Heidegger (1889-1976) with his phenomenological, existential philosophies; Gadamer (1900-2002) and Ricoeur (1913-), with their phenomenological hermeneutic theories examining ontological experience in the face of written text as sources of knowledge - possibly resonate to some extent, to what he refers to as an *African* understanding of knowledge as lived experience. Senghor expanded on the concept of *négritude*, whereby he conceived of a "negro soul" such that all peoples of African origins shared a spirituality distinct from that of westerners (Irele, 2002; Deacon, 2002; Soyinka, 2002).

Thus, there does seem to be a merging point for what is often designated as an *African* perspective, with some western thought trends. The existential-phenomenologists, in varying ways, questioned the rational foundation of dominant modernist western thought and emphasised the significance of individual lived experience. Here we can also include Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) the existential phenomenologist, who stressed the role of the active, involved body, the lived experience, in all of human knowledge. Ndaba (1999) suggests that this may be a starting point for a collaborative philosophy or at least a dialogue across the epistemologies. In a similar vein, Polkinghorne (2000) points out recent shifts from western dualism in psychology and advocates a more holistic approach from practitioners to the mind-body-environmental aspects of the human condition:

> The exchange between a practitioner and client is an
> interaction between embodied existences. Descriptions of
> practice as simply "talk therapy" in which the words

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clients use to think about themselves and the world are changed, understate the importance of bodily presence in human relationships. The idea of practice as simply talk is a reflection of what has been the dominant view of Western thinking; namely, that human existence is primarily a mental affair. The notion that thought is separate from body is being challenged by contemporary philosophers and cognitive scientists.… Although this challenge is not a consequence of Dewey's view that human existence should be understood as an organism/environment exchange, it is complementary to it. (para. 1)

Considered to be essential to the holistic or non-dualistic approach of traditional African thought is the non-distinction between the knower and the object of knowledge, which has pervaded formal western knowledge systems for the large part at least in modernist times. In contrast, Ndaba (1999, p. 2) refers to the African philosopher Senghor's explication of the "African" notion of lived experience and mystical experience as knowledge:

In dark Africa, people always dance because they feel, and they always dance someone or something. Now to dance is to discover and to re-create, to identify oneself with the forces of life, to lead a fuller life, and in short, to be. It is, at any rate, the highest form of knowledge.... The reason of classical Europe is analytic through utilization, the reason of the African Negro, intuitive through participation. (Senghor, in Ndaba, 1999)

Afrocentrism

The dialectic of African vs. western knowledge bases is often named Afrocentrism vs. Eurocentrism. Out of this dialectic there has emerged, among certain students of black and African scholarship, the opinion that in order for African knowledge to be best understood and interpreted, Africans themselves must disclose this to the rest of the world, from an *Afrocentric* perspective (Asante, 1980, 1987, 1988; Keto, 1989, Okafor, 1991; Oyebade, 1990).

While Afrocentrism promotes the idea that it is distinct and "*other*" from general Eurocentric approaches, it is noted that it is not necessarily unitary or unique: its claims may diverge from region to region and may be common to other cultures, not African. On the other hand, Eurocentrism frequently seems to refer to those western theories that developed from within a modernist epistemology.

Oyebade (1999) names Asante and Keto as two leading exponents of Afrocentric research, and he describes how Afrocentricity, in contradistinction to Eurocentricity, emerged as a theoretical concept in the 1980's in America. Asante quotes Keto on the need for Africa to assert itself intellectually:

> In the history of intellectual thought, the Eurocentric paradigm has often assumed a hegemonic universal character, and European culture has placed itself at the center of the social structure, becoming the reference point, or the yardstick, by which every other culture is defined. For instance, the Western definition of civilization has become the standard of what constitutes a civilization. The Eurocentric worldview has become so dominant in the contemporary world that it has overshadowed other worldviews. The Afrocentric perspective seeks to liberate African studies from this

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Eurocentric monopoly on scholarship and thus assert a valid worldview through which Africa can be studied objectively. (Keto, 1987, in Asante, 1990, p. 234)

Ncgobo (1999) believes that this virtual obscuring, to date, of African intellectual views threatens the social fabric of the African people. In a paper in which he blames the high levels of crime and violence in South Africa on "mass psychological depression, personal worthlessness and social despair" (p. 139), he refers to the nihilism of the black South African's frame of morality and sense of social values:

Nihilism here refers to the 'monumental eclipse of hope, the unprecedented collapse of meaning, the incredible disregard for human and especially black life and property' in much of Black South Africa. (p. 139)

Ncgobo (1999) proceeds to describe how the Radical Black Psychology movement that arose out of the Afrocentric school of thought, conceived of, and articulated, an African personality core profile. According to him, this consists of

African Self-Extension Orientation (ASEO) and African Self-Consciousness (ASC) which derives from the former and engages in mutually interactive process. These psychological components are rooted in and reflective of African culture or an Africa-centred worldview which is characterised by three basic concepts: 1) holistic spiritual unity; 2) communalism; and 3) proper consciousness or self-knowledge. (p. 140)

The following section of this text attempts to present some previously identified *Afrocentric* psychological concepts and perspectives, although to do

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so may already be assuming a Eurocentric paradigm. The task in itself is probably paradoxical and highlights the dilemma of the researcher in the social sciences attempting to uncover an 'African discourse', if this should indeed be possible. Where appropriate references will be made to other non-western cultural paradigms, other than African. Some of the arguments and viewpoints of Afrocentrism are presented in the following section, in juxtaposition with the dominant western modernist perspective on psychological concepts.

Considering Psychology in the
Socio-cultural Context

The concept *psychopathology* is fundamentally a product of the paradigm of western medicine and originates in the notion of illness and disease residing within the individual (Lopez & Guarnaccia, 2000; Parker, 1999d; Seedat, 1997). Illnesses are categorised and treatments, in the form of psychotherapy (and/or medication) to rid the individual of the illness or disease, are formulated. In such a framework, it is the role of the psychologist to assume expertise to the patienthood of the one seeking help (Seedat, 1997).

As has previously been discussed above, it is impossible to separate notions of psychopathology and notions of well-being from their socio-cultural contexts. Even within their own systems, categorisations, disorders, symptoms and desirable/undesirable traits are subject also to historical contexts. For example, homosexuality was dropped from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) when it became more socially acceptable; other, new categories have been added over time to the same system - post traumatic stress disorder; attention deficit disorder; while others have changed names as the categories have been redefined - e.g. psychopathy became firstly, sociopathy and later, anti-social personality disorder.

Non-medical paradigms view the same problems in human living from a variety of different conceptual perspectives. As examples, interpretive,

narrative, and systemic approaches to psychological issues reject, to different extents, the notion of an inherent psychopathology.   Accordingly, each framework, even within paradigms, advocates different ways of working with individuals in order to help them. Some even come quite close to the Africa-centred worldview as referred to by Ncgobo (1999), above. Schools of thought in applied psychology dance to the historico-socio-cultural demands of the contexts in which they evolve. An example of this is the Family Therapy movement that developed post World War II after families had been left shattered by the devastation of war. This was a time when society in Europe and America strove to re-attain the Euro-American ideal of the primary family unit (Miller & Janosik, 1980).

Liberatory psychologists call for an examination of local socio-cultural conceptualisations and practices in dealing with problems in human living (Enriquez, 1989; Nsamenang, 1997, 1999; Seedat, 1997).   Seedat suggests that one way to attend to this matter is to increase dialogue between indigenous healers and western trained health professionals:

> Since human subjectivity and trauma cannot be separated from the sociolinguistic context in which people are located, liberatory psychologists will enhance their discourse if they remain sensitive to ordinary, other-than-western discourses of illness, psychosomatic symptomology, trauma and disease (Levett, 1989; Lock, 1990). A growing body of literature (Buch & De Beer, 1990; Chavanduka, 1978; Farrand, 1984) that supports this view, indicates that health consumers utilise indigenous and western biomedical concepts in their beliefs about disease and health related problems. In an exploratory study of health consumers' perceptions of health care resources in Alexandra, an African township north of Johannesburg, Letlaka-Rennert, Butchart and

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Brown (1991) reveal that although patients initially favoured health care groups from within the biomedical systems, such as doctors, nurses and pharmacists, they consistently, consulted indigenous faith healers in their subsequent choice of treatment options. (Seedat, 1997, p. 269)

Use of Metaphors in Culture

Metaphors are sometimes used as cultural expressions of wellness or not-wellness (Egwu, 1996). Seedat (1997) and Enriquez (1989), both non-western psychologists, emphasise the importance and usefulness of acknowledging the language metaphors which people bring to the health care settings.   These metaphors can give clues as to how the persons can best be helped to recover their well-being or to continue to maintain it, as the case may be.

Enriquez (1989) presents an example of a culture specific language metaphor of the Philippine people: A cultural metaphor states that (undesirable) animal instincts are transferred to babies through cow's milk. Enriquez explains that this is a metaphor to promote the merits of breastfeeding. The western trained psychologist uses different, scientific, explanations to advocate the same practice.

Ephirim-Donker (1997) discusses a West African interpretation of what Europeans and North Americans term psychopathology. Such a state of being, according to the Akan, is a result of a grieving soul due to "bad acts" performed during the maturational process of the child. The successful resolution may occur when the family performs certain prescribed rites:

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Expected by loved ones to be well and happy, the individual responds. The ceremony focuses a family's attention on the subject and helps him or her to regain behaviour. (p. 72)

Healing and Ritual

The strong connection between ritual and religion would appear to be a universal phenomenon. In the western mind, according to Jacob Needleman (1983), religion yielded to modern psychiatry/psychology when Freud's works first impressed their influence on western society. It is possible, but still debatable, that religious goals and aspirations in the form of enlightenment, grace and eternal spiritual happiness, were replaced for some, by goals of self-actualisation and a sense of psychological wholeness.

However, the universal importance of ritual in the lives of human beings has always been noted and continues to pervade social interactions, from the rituals of greeting, communal eating, romantic courtship; to the holding of judicial courts, parliaments and other forms of national leadership gatherings. In religion, ritual is overt and performed sometimes seemingly for its own sake. In other aspects of life rituals can take a more subtle form but bring a sense of community and order, necessary for a sense of well-being in the people participating in the performance.

Even western psychologists have pondered the role of expectation and ritual in the healing of the psyche in western traditional therapy (Kvale, 1992a; Smail, 1993; Welwood, 1983). Indeed, the ritual of a one hour appointment with a socially recognised healer of the psyche (psychologist), during which personal lives are probed, intimate thoughts shared, family secrets divulged, childhood memories revealed and so forth, in the space of a semi-formal office, creates strong expectations to be healed. Rituals of psychotherapy may extend beyond activities held within the consulting room, to assignments to be

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performed between sessions. Sometimes medications are prescribed to be taken in addition, just as the traditional African healer may prescribe *muti* (herbal and other medications) to his/her patients. It is suggested that for ritual to be effective, it must have meaning in the lives of those joined in the practice of the ritual (Turner, 1969). Ritual would need to reflect, in some way, the ecology of the performers.

The rituals of psychotherapy could be viewed as those of a secular modern technological environment (Kvale, 1992a) and as such echo the ecology of the majority of the clients who present for psychotherapy. This may not mean that the majority of the clientele is non-religious, but that the present day environment compartmentalises aspects of peoples' lives, for example, the secular from the spiritual. Thus, the professional woman, comfortable in a scientific environment, may not relate to the possibly seemingly whimsical probings and treatment provided by a psychodynamic therapist who focuses on early childhood experiences and delves into the unconscious. Rituals of psychotherapy for this woman may more appropriately involve cognitively rational conversations and affirmation of her own reasonings of the situation, or a correction of this where it could help her - as she sees it.

According to writers on the traditional African *worldview*, life is approached with the intertwining of the spiritual with daily life (Durojaiye, 1976; Ephirim-Donker, 1997; Fadipe, 1970). Fadipe (1970) writes of the Akan people, describing their holistic approach to physical life and spirituality. He suggests that this holistic approach is apparent in the African notion that links the physical body to the soul e.g.: for the Akan people, *ahom* or *honhom* (the continuous process of inhaling and exhaling breath) is evidence of the soul (Fadipe, 1970).   Similarly, the heartbeat and the blood in the veins are viewed as being linked to the soul so that to cut the throat of an animal or a person will allow the soul to escape together with the blood flow.

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Generally, rituals in all cultures, universally, are rich with tradition and heavy with spiritual elements. In traditional African cultures, ancestors play an important role and so rituals often include ancestors. Healing in traditional African cultures is abundant with prescriptions of overtly spiritual ritual, while western cultures have generally replaced this with a different kind of ritual prescribed by science and modernist theories.

Seeking an Afrocentric 'Sense of Self'

The social cognitive theorist, Walter Mischel (1986), in his text "Introduction to Personality", discusses the perspective of self as a cultural construction, implying that the concept *self* varies across cultures. In addition, as such, the concept *self* must be dynamic as not only shifting cultural issues, but socio-historical and political influences mould the sense of self for individuals, and indeed, collectives. As a situationalist, Mischel recognised the role of the other in interpersonal situations and the consequent influence on perception of self. From this perspective, a sense of the self occurs in relation to others and to the socio-cultural situations in which interactions take place (Carver & Scheier, 1996; Hergenhahn, 1994; Mischel, 1986).

According to scholars writing from an Afrocentric perspective, values of traditional African cultures influencing the concept of self within those cultures, are characterised by communalism (Mwamwenda, 1999; Ndaba, 1999; Nsamenang, 1997, 1999; Olowu in Akotia & Olowu, 2000; Wiredu, 1991) or collectivism (Mwamwenda, 1999; Nsamenang, 1999), dependency (Mwamwenda, 1999;) or interdependency (Nsamenang, 1999), non-competitiveness (Evans, 1997) and successful assimilation into the community (Akotia & Olowu, 2000; Evans, 1997; Mwamwenda, 1999; Nsamenang, 1999). This is contrary to the Euro-American values permeating psychology and psychotherapeutic theories. Goals of such therapies typically include self-realisation, the building of ego strength and boundaries, personal achievement and individualism, independence and successful leaving of the parental home.

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According to the Afrocentric view, the notion of interdependency has been said to manifest in a tendency to act in accordance with the needs and wishes of the community (Mwamwenda, 1999) to an extent that Durojaiye (1976, in Mwamwenda, 1999) refers to as "symbiotic" (p.5).

Markus and Kitayama (in Mwamwenda, 1999) describe what they see as a lesser need for boundaries between Africans:

> Africans ... view the world and others as extension of one another. The self is viewed not as a hedged closure but as an open field. (p. 5)

And expressed similarly by Ephirim-Donker (1997):

> The [African] ... sees himself/herself modestly as part of the great stream of life that transcends his/her own self. (p. 27)

Olowu (1997, in Akotia et al., 2000, p. 8) borrowed this description of interpersonal relatedness from Mbiti:

> I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am. (Mbiti, 1971, p. 109)

Aspects and Stages of Selfhood

Scholars of psychology from the Afrocentric view, find themselves alienated and neglected by mainstream psychological texts.   Nsamenang (1999), for example, criticises the discipline of psychology for largely ignoring aspects of developmental psychology such as ancestral and spiritual selfhood: - aspects he identifies as important to certain traditional African cultures. Major texts refer almost exclusively to social development and indeed, to social

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development within a western setting and holding western values (Nsamenang, 2000).

Nsamenang (1999) mentions three phases of selfhood: ancestral, spiritual and social. According to Nsamenang human social development is identified among West African people as moving through between seven (1999) or nine (2000) stages or cycles, namely: period of the new-born, social priming, social apprenticing, social entrée, social internment, adulthood, old age, and death.   This is a process for social self only and does not include ancestry and spiritual selfhood that would take their own processes.

Psychological Development and Intelligence

According to Nsamenang (1999, 2000), these stages are of importance to the African whose emphasis of value is on social intelligence rather than technological or cognitive intelligence as in the West. He mentions concepts such as communitarian ethic, multiple social enmeshments, encompassing social relationship, rhythms of collective life, and the subordination of individual identity. Akotia et al. (2000) refer to the concepts of practice and harmony as having been identified and recognised as important elements of an African intelligence. These are all advanced as being important cultural threads holding together traditional African social life.

The Naming Ceremony and Sense of Self

Several African scholars state naming the newborn as a particularly significant ritual marking an important early stage of socialisation in the life of the child:

> Children are not thought to belong to this world until they
> have been incorporated into the community of the living
> through naming. (Nsamenang, 1999, p.27)

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Nsamenang (1999) further describes how it is believed that children enter this world with special links with the spirit world. Children who die before the naming ritual are sometimes not mourned in West African societies:

> Naming is an ontogenic event of primal importance because it marks the dawn of human...social development. Naming initiates the socio-ontogenetic destiny of the individual. (p. 28)

Likewise, Ephirim-Donker (1997) describes how the naming ritual is considered sacred among the Akan people in Ghana (p. 63):

> The name is the final seal of a complete person, without which the individual cannot exist…. Upon receiving his or her name, the individual is counted among the human family.

According to this process, expectation is put on the child to achieve a good name for posterity as the name is passed down through generations. The child is expected to emulate the character of the one whose name he or she takes. However, several names are given the child, names after the day on which he or she was born (soul names), praise names as well as the family names usually on the paternal side of the family.

> The names and their inherent strengths and attributes ensure unity of the person with his/ her soul. (Ephirim-Donker, 1997, p.65)

It is described how careful and elaborate rituals involving the whole community are held within the first eight days of the child's life. Should the infant die before being named he or she is not mourned in the same manner as

a named child would be. The significance of the naming ritual would seem to play an important role in the formation of a sense of self for those incorporating this ritual into their lives.

> The child first hears and responds to a specific sound that permeates its inner being. As the child grows it associates and identifies with its name.… Every person lives his or her name, that is, their destiny. (Ephirim-Donker, 1997, p. 65)

An Afrocentric 'Sense of Community'

As has been stated above, communalism and collectivity are considered two significant aspects of a traditional African *sense of self.* The "symbiotic" nature of the relationship of the individual within his or her social context (Durojaiye, 1976, in Mwamwenda, 1999, p. 5), the de-emphasis placed on boundaries, as discussed above, all render the *sense of community* an important aspect of traditional African life. The strong sense of community is perceived to influence decision-making, effectively binding individuals together in an interdependent network. N. A. Fadipe (1970) in his study of the sociology of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, noted some effects of a community oriented way of life among these people:

> The average Yoruba...maintains contacts of a more or less intimate character with a much larger circle of blood and affinal relations, neighbours and friends than does the average Englishman [*sic*] or North American.   These various relationships have a way of bringing together a very large group of people whose opinion the individual must take into account in his behaviour. (p. 309)

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Sindima (1995) suggests that the bonds between persons go beyond a social networking and it is inferred that the sense of community is intricately linked to the sense of self:

> This sense of being connected, bonded in one common life informs human relationships and defines behavioural patterns. The African concept of community also arises from...the feeling of being in the network of life.... People belong to each other...consciousness is not consciousness of the self but always consciousness of the flow of life in the community and the world. (p. 127)

And also:

> African traditional society deals with the totality of persons...in African thought the concept of person is related to the meaning of life. (p. 125)

This intricate linking of *self* with a sense of community is noted by other African scholars including Akotia et al. (2000), Asante (1985), Baldwin (1976), Mwamwenda (1999), Nsamenang (1997,1999), and Senghor (1965).

The characteristic diffusion of boundaries within traditional African societies presents implications for the focus of analysis of psychopathology and wellbeing in African communities as opposed to those in western individuals. In western psychology signs of concern include a lack of boundaries, the diffusion, enmeshment or weakness of boundaries; while ego strength, independency and the ability of the individual to function autonomously in the world, drawing on his/her own inner resources, are promoted. In traditional African societies, the sense of self, intricately linked to the sense of community, moves in the opposite direction to the western ideal, largely of individualism.

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From Tradition to Multiculturalism

In his paper "A Key to Multiculturalism, Citizenship, and the Knowledge Society", Peter Merry (2000), discusses the global shift towards multiculturalism with the explosion of technology leading to knowledge-based societies. As a multiplicity of religions, political systems, cultures, healing cults and social transformations exert their influences; diversity within nations and communities becomes the new order.

Merry writes that the "patterns in our minds reflect the patterns of power in our culture" (p. 6). Culture is dynamic and perhaps it can be stated that it is the collective mind (as in culture) which determines the individual *sense of self*, rather than the sum of individual selves that determine culture. As such traditions are not impervious to change and the above discussions on philosophy, culture and traditions are not intended to be reified but rather to serve as a background and platform to further discussions on psychology in South African local conditions.

It is also important to reflect here that while particular cultural characteristics for specific socio-cultural contexts have been identified and continue to be so, it does not necessarily mean that these characteristics are present in any 'real' sense. These characteristics may be universally present in all human societies, but the difference and significance lies in the value attached to these characteristics by the different cultures. So, as individuals 'buy' into the collective mind, so they adopt the values and the characteristics of that culture. This idea will be expanded on in chapter seven as a discussion around an *ecology of mind*.

The following chapter will explore an ecological map of the western mainstream academic world of research approaches and attempts to situate this study in that map.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH PARADIGM CONSIDERED

The simple fact is that no measurement, no experiment or
observation is possible without a [paradigm].
(Ilya Prigogine, 1982)

The intelligibility of our accounts of the world derive not
from the world itself, but from our immersion within a
tradition of cultural practices…. If our accounts conform
to these conventions of intelligibility they will make
sense; if they violate the traditions we cease our
participation in the tradition. Thus, it is from our
relationships within interpretive communities that our
constructions of the world derive.
(Gergen & Gergen, 2000b, p. 1026).

This chapter explores the current theoretical context of mainstream psychology in order to justify an appropriate contextually sensitive approach to present a discussion of the various stories which is given in the next chapter.

The Climate of Research Methodologies

Social science, a set of disciplines originating in the western world, has for the large part in the past, in terms of knowledge production, relied on hypothetico-deductive methods whereby empirical data is used to either support or falsify previously formulated theories (Schwandt, 2001; Terre-Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The general idea is that, over time, certain theories will stand as being "true", not having been falsified. This method is based on logic, objectivity and empiricism.

This scientific method works fairly efficiently for establishing and

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developing a knowledge base within a particular paradigm. Problems arise, however, when the perspective, or paradigm from within which the research is conducted, changes or differs from the epistemology of the observed population. Different observations can be made, different results obtained and different conclusions drawn depending on the perspective of the researcher. Thus, questionable results may be obtained from research when the researcher and target population operate from within different epistemologies. This is how knowledge bases can affect the production of knowledge within different cultures or communities. Also, it can be said that the usefulness of the particular approach taken by the researcher depends very much on the purposes of the research. The recognition of this has led, more and more, for contextual influences on research to become prominent considerations especially in the social sciences (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Nevertheless, research in psychology continues to produce knowledge on a paradigm continuum ranging from the positivism and certainties of the hypothetico-deductive empirical methods favoured by the natural sciences; to the uncertainties, "quantum leaps" (Naisbitt, 1982, in Lincoln & Denzin, 2000) and restless art (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Richardson, 2000) of the interpretative and socially responsive methods. Yvonna Lincoln and Norman Denzin (2000, p. 1062) have named this latter approach "civic sociology" - a trend they predict for the future whereby researchers interact intensively with communities in order to effect changes in societies as well as knowledge production. Knowledge production by this latter approach would yield less generalisable results but far more relevant, specific knowledge useful for the communities within which such research is undertaken. However, currently researchers tend to polarise on the continuum and there remain critics at both ends - of both ends.

Researchers working within a western paradigm, with western populations, have generally leaned towards a scientific method, it being western in origin; while those working outside the western paradigm, or with non-western populations, generally prefer or seek methods more congruent with the home cultures.

One such researcher, Enriquez (1997), working in the Philippines, critical of western dominance in psychology, calls for a move away from natural scientific methods in psychological research, finding them inappropriate for developing and producing psychological knowledge:

> As the science of man [*sic*], psychology models itself after the natural sciences but it is part of the cultural sciences tradition. Wilhelm Wundt, the 'father of scientific psychology', observed that psychology is heavily conditioned by language, custom and myth...thus clearly illustrating the limits of the uncritical use of natural science methods in cultural research (p. 40).

Furthermore, it is chiefly knowledge produced by natural science methods, through formal research, which obtains endorsement from socially recognised institutions such as universities, professional bodies, publishing houses and peer reviewers. However, in the absence of similar institutions, non-western cultures have devised other ways of acknowledging the validity of new knowledge within their own cultures. Some of these other ways are intimated briefly below.

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Research Approaches and Approaches to
Research in Africa

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Research in psychology during the modernist era of the 1950s and 1960s in southern Africa entrenched the Euro-American domination in the discipline (Bakker, 1999; Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998).   In the period thereafter, a post-colonial approach began to emerge which opened up debates over the ideological issues but has not really defined alternative and more appropriate methods of research to fit prevailing socio-ontogenic contexts from within which research emanated.

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The development of the discipline of psychology in Third World countries and, in Africa specifically, has probably been hindered by the lingering effects of colonisation and further impeded by the ensuing political instabilities that have rocked these nations. Researchers have noted traditional and folk wisdom to have been sidelined by Euro-American domination of psychology within research and training institutions in the sub-continent of southern Africa (Nsamenang, 1995, 2000; Peltzer, 1998), and, indeed, globally (Lira, 2000; Prilleltensky, 2000; Sampson, 2000; Sloan, 2000; Ussher, 2000). It is here suggested that precepts and phenomena of traditional and folk wisdom may be inaccessible to western scientific techniques and it has been recommended that ethno-sensitive methods be employed to tap into 'African' knowledge (Gergen, Lock, Gulerce & Misra, 1996; Nsamenang, 1995; Peltzer, 1998). It is also here suggested that even the more recently developed qualitative methods may not necessarily fit with the epistemologies of the context of this study, their having been developed from within the Euro-American paradigm. Researchers have called for the development of a new appropriate philosophy of psychology theory, research methods and assessment techniques (Nsamenang, 1995; Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998; Peltzer, 1998). In a discussion on the role of cultural context in the social sciences, Gergen et al. (1996) call for "further efforts at opening psychology to diverse traditions at all levels of inquiry, particularly in the areas of epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and praxis" (p.8).

Praxis

Praxis is defined by Joseph Dunne (1993, in Schwandt, 2001) as a

> Type of human engagement that is embedded within a tradition of communally shared understandings and values, that remains vitally connected to peoples' life experience, that finds expression in their ordinary linguistic usage, and that, rather than being a means through which they achieve outcomes separate from themselves, is a kind of enactment through which they

constitute themselves as persons in a historical community (p. 207).

Praxis has elsewhere been defined as a relationship between practice and knowledge in a mutually reflective interaction (Freire, 1970; Potter, 1999), and a catalytic one (Kelly, 1999).

The kind of knowledge pre-requisite for praxis is termed *phronesis* (Schwandt, 2001). Schwandt explains phronesis as being "intimately concerned with the timely, the local, the particular, and the contingent" (p. 208).

A Reflexive Approach and Learning Posture

In accordance with these concepts, Agar (1986, in Nsamenang, 1995) proposes that appropriate research methods for "an African psychology" (p. 735) may require intense personal involvement on the part of the researcher. This notion of closer personal involvement is more generally reflected in later postmodern writings (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Postmodernism will be discussed in greater detail below. An intense personal involvement in the context of study, on the part of the researcher, would also fit with the communal living approach generally found in many African societies (Mwamwenda, 1999; Ncgobo, 1999; Ndaba, 1999; Nsamenang, 1999; Wiredu, 1991). Such an intensely involved approach on the part of the researcher may require a shift away from the rigorous scientific and objective approach of mainstream quantitative Euro-American research methods. Again, this is congruent with a postmodern position.

Among various suggestions for an alternative appropriate research framework come those of both a cultural-psychology and an eco-cultural framework (Nsamenang, 1995). Nsamenang suggests that either of these could contribute to the indigenisation of psychology and also to the development and enrichment of the discipline of psychology as a whole. However, Nsamenang also goes beyond this in calling for

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a kind of innovation that defies the status quo...the adoption of a learning posture...an abandonment of traditional scientific control, an improvisational style to meet situations not of the researcher's making (1995, p.735).

Bakker (1999, p.167) criticises writers in the field for continuing to deliver arguments from within the western modernist paradigm and, in a search for a relevant psychology, calls for the hearing of the silenced voices of Africa:

The dominant view of "Africa" in this discourse is often that of traditional Africa - a discourse about the lives and "worldviews" of ordinary people, but filtered through intellectuals of whom most were trained at western universities. The dominant African discourse of resistance against western domination has emerged from "the margins of African contexts...its axes as well as its language have been limited by the authority of this exteriority" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 176). Mudimbe (1994) draws our attention to its "unconscious" (p. xiv) - the primary, popular, local discourses of African peoples that have been silenced, converted, or translated by conquering western discourses. At the centre of efforts to liberate them, the mute remain largely mute.

Echoing this view is Nsamenang (2000) who also bemoans the fact that, in his opinion, contemporary Africa has been swayed by academic acculturation, implying that current researchers may already be successfully colonised by Euro-American ideologies. Successful colonisation results in the non-critical emulation of the colonisers by the colonised.

On the whole it can be read that two central ideas emerge from debates on psychological relevance in cultures other than Euro-American. One is that

appropriate approaches need to be developed for both research and practice; secondly, the hegemonic voices of the western dominated disciplines need to make space for the local voices to be heard.

A Postmodern Position

A brief discussion of postmodernism will follow. The purpose of this section is not so much to define postmodernism as to present and discuss the theoretical and attitudinal context within which this study is situated.

As has been briefly mentioned in chapters two and four of this study, the intellectual period known as modernity, has its roots in the Enlightenment, and ended some time around the 1960s (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a). Modernity had as its cornerstone an attempt to describe the world and to view knowledge in rational, empirical and objective terms. It was characterised by a positivistic search for a truth and an accumulation of knowledge (Kvale, 1992a) that could be uncovered, in variously prescribed ways, especially through the scientific method.

Postmodernism, as its name suggests, is generally considered to have emerged as, and manifested in, movements beyond modernism, sometimes in contradistinction to (Olesen, 2000), and sometimes inclusive of, modernism (Richardson, 2000). Denzin & Lincoln (2000a) identify it as "a contemporary sensibility, developing since World War II, that privileges no single authority, method, or paradigm" (p. 24).

On the whole, postmodernism can be said to be that *sensibility* (to use Denzin & Lincoln's term) which rejects the positivist confidence of the modernist era of knowledge (Agger, 1991; Jameson, 1991, Kvale, 1992a; Richardson, 2000). Postmodernism is generally not regarded as a style (Jameson, 1991) nor a paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a), but as "a cultural dominant: a conception which allows for the presence and coexistence of a range of very different, yet subordinate features" (Jameson, 1991, p. 2).

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Conceived of as such, postmodernism becomes a historical term rather than a defining style or paradigm. However, certain themes run through the various paradigms that are sympathetic to postmodernism and some of these occur frequently enough to have become almost synonymous with post-modernism, although they may not in themselves comprise postmodernism. These themes include a rejection of what Lyotard (1984) referred to as the *grand-narrative* (Agger, 1991; Gamson, 2000) or *meta-narrative* (Sey, 1999), a rejection of the totalising tendency of positivism into universal truths (Agger, 1991; Kvale, 1992a; Richardson, 2000; Sey, 1999); a focus on the cultural other, the oppressed and marginalised (Sey, 1999) and the local (Agger, 1991; Richardson, 2000). Agger refers to Lyotard's position on the subject of post-modern social theory thus:

> One cannot tell large stories about the world but only small stories from the heterogeneous "subject positions" of individuals and plural social groups (Agger, 1991, p. 109).

This position implies that a unifying social theory about people in the world is problematic, but that the diversity, multiplicity and different subjectivities should rather be recounted from the transparent perspectives of the researcher, in culture and time. The perspective of the researcher takes on a different significance in the postmodern position. The epistemological stance of the researcher moves from a scientifically objective and detached observation of the positivistic position (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999) towards a suspicious, overt political, and constructionist position of the postmodern (Richardson, 2000; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999); in a more interpretive and reflexive orientation (Lyotard, 1984; Sey, 1999); or as what Cromby and Nightingale (1999, p. 9) refer to as "relativism", as opposed to the "realism" of positivism.

In the light of the above discussion, notions of "African" versus "western" form part of a meta-narrative dialectic, that belongs to the modernist frame. Using the dialectic as platform this study proposes a shift to a dialogue wherein the smaller local stories are able to be spoken.   The academic stories of chapter five are seen to form part of the local stories although they are still

positioned within the dialectic opposite the more globalising universal academic stories of chapter four.

A Postmodern Position for a Context of Discovery

As previously stated in this thesis, the objective is not to iterate and reify an alternative hegemonic paradigm for psychology in Africa, but to open possibilities for a more inclusive epistemology for praxis, as defined earlier in this chapter.

Having discussed, in chapters four and five, the effects of western hegemony on development, cultural practices, African philosophies and debated psychologies in Africa, the usefulness of a postmodern position may become more apparent to the reader, as it has become to the author.

Bakker (1999, p.169) recommends a postmodern approach as being appropriate for the researcher exploring the complex African context of modernising flux:

> The postmodern world is characterised by a process of decentring and of a multiplicity of relationships, where each individual forms part of multiple communities and cultures, and where what is considered to be real varies between these contexts. This also applies to Africa, where people are exposed to different realities and move continuously between them.

It has been stated above that postmodernism in the social sciences promotes the notion of multiple subjective voices, rather than the positivistic approach of a universal voice – that which Lyotard (1984) refers to as the grand metanarratives of western reason. The universal voice, or metanarrative, effectively silences the voices which fall outside of the predominant mainstream (Bakker, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 2000), credentialed culture (Agger, 1991), through the promotion of class, race, and gender biases (Agger, 1991). Agger

(1991, p. 111) refers to this as "secret partisanship" through "universal reason". From this aspect, the paradigms of postmodernism are able to challenge the universal voice of western science in creating space and recognition for the local and subjective to be discovered.

Methodological Issues in Postmodern Research: Pros and Cons

Because postmodernism is not a paradigm in itself, and if it is accepted as an historical perspective, a cultural dominant, seeking to present diversity and multiplicity, it can inclusively embrace aspects of modernism, positivism and reflexive paradigms. According to Agger (1991, p.112) "this has the advantage of challenging singular methodologies, whether quantitative or qualitative. It would seem to argue for multiple methodologies".

In reaction to the positivist ideal of neutrality and objectivity of the scientific text, the postmodern text allows the deliberate transparency, subjectivity and creativity of the researcher. There are those postmodern authors who proclaim to expose institutionalised science for using methodology to disguise bias (Feyerabend, 1985; Foucault, 1972). Such authors suggest integrity is to be gained in approaching methodology as amplitude to the discourse of the text itself (Chenail, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1995; Feyerabend, 1975; Foucault, 1972).   Such authors recognise and acknowledge the reciprocal legitimising relationship between the data of the text, and the paradigm employed to gain it.

Criticism of Postmodernism

A body of criticism has been built up against the hegemonic positivist approach to psychology as can be noted in any qualitative journal or books containing research writings purported to be alternative to the mainstream (Phillips, 1987). Positivism is sometimes criticized for remaining largely associated with the distant objective researcher seeking fundamental truths from within a rigorous scientific framework. However, the alternative paradigm researcher working within the newer epistemologies of systems thinking and the

postmodern movement is associated with and criticised for a lack of rigour, a lack of methodological sophistication, non-generalisable findings and questionable results (low validity) (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Vydich & Lyman, 2000). That this dichotomous approach to the discipline is still taken by some writers is apparent.

Ironically, criticism of the postmodern approach has included commentary on the detachment of the observer from predominating social norms and values, and the marginalisation of the researcher from his/her subjects. Vydich and Lyman (2000, p.59) call Spretnak's critical comments on postmodernism "comprehensive and useful" while presenting this quotation from her writings (in Vydich & Lyman, 2000, p. 59):

> A sense of detachment, displacement, and shallow engagement dominates desconstructive-postmodern aesthetics because groundlessness is the only constant recognised by this sensibility. The world is considered to be a repressive labyrinth of "social production", a construction of pseudoselves who are pushed and pulled by cultural dynamics and subtly diffused "regimes of power". Values and ethics are deemed arbitrary, as is "history", which is viewed by deconstructive postmodernists as one group or another's self-serving selection of facts. Rejecting all "metanarratives", or supposedly universal representations of reality, deconstructive postmodernists insist that the making of every aspect of human existence is culturally created and determined in particular, localized circumstances about which no generalizations can be made. Even particularized meaning, however, is regarded as relative and temporary.

While a postmodern attitude and post-experimental research methods may go some way towards addressing the concerns prompted by a traditionally

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scientific approach to research, Lincoln & Guba (2000) regret that certain texts in and beyond the postmodern, in the future, may never reach general academic readers, as they will be produced for local indigenous purposes only. The price of postmodern texts, in their search for local relevancy through interaction with the objects of research rather than the use of conventional scientific methodologies, which do reach scholars, may remain "messy" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p.184), uncertain, private and unscientific (Kvale, 1992a).

Beyond the Criticism

Yvonna Lincoln (2000) argues that the traditional focus on the (western) scientific method in psychological research has led to a schism in psychological knowledge. She identifies a divide between research and praxis come about through the history of psychology due to the quest for objective knowledge in the laboratories. The consequences of this quest has been the severance of any great focus on the unobservable - "the most beautiful in human life: feelings, emotions, 'callings'" (Lincoln, 2000, p.5). The need to dissolve this division and move towards alternative methods of knowledge creation in psychology has been a movement growing for some decades (Bakan, 1971; Chenail, 1990b, 1992; Gelso, 1985; Keeney & Morris, 1985a; Keeney & Morris, 1985b; Lincoln, 2000; Misra & Gergen, 1993; Newton & Caple, 1985; Tomm, 1983). This need is acknowledged for reasons varying from a perception of the limited usefulness of the scientific method in the social sciences (Bakan, 1971; Chenail, 1990b; Lincoln, 2000; Misra & Gergen, 1993); a call to integrate praxis with research (Chenail, 1990b; Gelso, 1985; Keeney & Morris, 1985a, 1985b; Lincoln, 2000); changing world views (Newton & Caple, 1985; Tomm, 1983) and a changing world (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000), to name a few.

However, postmodernism has paved the way for true post-experimental research and a move ultimately to a more spiritual, ethical and morally responsible mode of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Fals-Borda, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Describing their vision of future (beyond 2000) social science research, Denzin and Lincoln (2000a), as does Kvale (1999a),

foretell a certain measure of local relevancy and social action as opposed to the modernist search for knowledge for knowledge's sake. Departing from Spretnak's (referred to above) 'detached' perspective of the postmodern approach they predict that "the future ... is concerned with moral discourse, with the development of sacred textualities.... The social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 3)

A Postmodern Paradigm for Research:
Social Constructionism

Postmodernism developed in contradistinction to the purism and analytical clarity of the positivist scientific trends of modernism. As such, postmodernism leans toward eclectism and has evolved a strong constructionist thrust. Burr (1995) and Gergen (1999) describe how social constructionism illuminates the idea that the content of psychological study is created in the very process of identifying it, like the snake that eats its own tail. Constructionism rejects traditional empirical research methods in favour of a transcendence of orthodox schools and models effecting the crossing of disciplinary boundaries to a freedom of thinking not possible within traditional paradigms. Conducting the research from within the postmodern framework will permit the study to move towards its stated aims while avoiding the epistemological constraints of traditional research models.

As social constructionists began questioning conventional scientific texts, some turned to the narrative, the interpretive and storytelling, to uncover local realities. These postmodern scholars adopted a stance as participant-observers (Vydich & Lyman, 2000) in a search for *thick descriptions* (Geertz, 1973) of lived experience through the deconstruction of texts and discourse.

Initially, social constructionists confined their focus to language in its various forms (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999). Later social constructionists (Parker, 1999a) extended their relativist arguments about the nature of

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information and our knowledge of the world, to include both verbal and non-verbal (Burkitt, 1999; Nightingale & Cromby, 1999b Parker, 1999a), or, as Vivien Burr puts it - the "extra-discursive" (1999, p. 113), or "knowledge-in-performance" (1999, p. 119).

Narrative Approaches

In writing of *life history* (as a postmodern challenge) as a strategy for inquiry in social science, William Tierney (2000), advocates the use of the *testimonio* to give voice to the silenced populations of oppressed cultures, whether they be gay, lesbian, black, women or disabled or any other marginalised group, either by identity or circumstance. He refers to John Beverley (1992, in Tierney, 2000), who

> has observed, the *testimonio* "is by nature a protean and demotic form not yet subject to legislation by a normative literary establishment" (p. 93).

Life history and the testimonio, as forms of narrative within the postmodern tradition, seem to be particularly suited to exploring areas which lie to the 'other' of the researcher and general mainstream social science domain (Beverley, 2000; Tierney, 2000). Other marginalised paradigms using strategies of inquiry in the postmodern framework also emphasise the importance of avoiding reification and entrenchment of delimited perspectives, in favour of bringing forward the particular and subjective as unique stories: cultural studies (Frow & Morris, 2000); critical ethnography (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000); critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 2000); and queer theory (Gamson, 2000).

Positioning the Study

If this research is to attempt to reflect congruent research methods for the area of this study, it was projected that a largely improvisational, flexible and innovative approach needed to be adopted.   Also, because psychology as a discipline remains in a nascent stage in Africa, the selection of appropriate

research methods would need to be largely experimental. Lincoln & Guba (2000), refer to an experimental approach by feminists such as Laurel Richardson. Thus, in the process of re-searching for indigenous coping processes, it became necessary to search simultaneously for a fit-ting methodology that would be determined by the social and human ethics of the context. In this way research methodologies would emerge from the very heterogeneous cultures in which the study re-searches. Such an approach implies the engagement of communities in participatory re-search through the "adoption of a learning posture", as recommended by Nsamenang, above. Bakker (1999, p. 179) supports the suggestion of a participatory research design in the quest for African relevance in psychology:

> This psychologist [the researcher] is personally involved as a person among other persons, not as an élitist expert who objectifies others. He or she would include, rather than exclude, persons of all walks of life in the task at hand, and work with others towards the construal of resolutions to problems that are co-defined by all participants.

Knowledge gained through the employment of specific methods is inevitably limited to the bounds of the epistemology out of which the methods were evolved. It was considered desirable that the emergence of "other" philosophies, methods and perceptions needed to be enabled. While it is recognised that to presume to 'work outside' an epistemology is paradoxical, the challenge for this study was not to attempt to 'outwit' any epistemology, but to record in a participatory manner meanings from the contexts themselves. It is suggested that this approach enhances the integrity of the study by promoting congruency and isomorphy within the research. As a starting point from which to approach the study it seemed proper to take a post-modern/critical psychology stance and draw on participatory research principles and methods. This tentative approach is supported in the literature:

Other qualitative researchers feel that particularities of
each research project are so unique that they require a
distinctive method for every study. They may identify
research tradition(s) which inspired their method for a
specific project, but they will also allow each study to
have its own project-specific method which emerges
from the special characteristics of the project. (Chenail,
1992)

Gergen, Lock, Gulerce, and Misra, (1996) suggest that their call for
diversity in all areas of psychology may be served by more interpretive and more
practical orientations to the research process. Bakker (1999, p. 177) proposes
that a relevant research would turn to the community context itself, forsaking the
academic history (narrative):

It requires focussing on the specific situation at hand, not
the rituals, preconceptions, and doctrines of either
psychology or the field of "African studies". It calls for a
new kind of psychologist.

The Research Process

To inform it, the study draws from stories told by members of the
community in which the researcher has worked. This includes academic stories
in chapters two, four and five, and narrated stories such as The Story in chapter
one and the Other Stories of chapter three. The Stories are presented with some
artistic licence by the author who also makes allowance for artistic licence in the
narrating. That is not to say that the stories are fictional, but an imaginative
approach is taken in their presentation rather than an attempt to replicate the
'truth'. Gergen and Gergen (1997) suggest that a more literary form of research
reporting may stimulate dialogue among a wider audience, leaving the audience
some leeway to interpret meanings for themselves.

Such methods have been recognised as valuable and informative for

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qualitative research by researchers such as Chenail (1992). Fals-Borda (2000), commenting on his own explorations of local relevant knowledge among the marginalized common peoples of his native Colombia, notes that artistic expressions carry and contain the emotionalism necessary for the retention of human dignity and cultural recognition.

Locally, examples of such literary and artistic methods have been explored over the last five years through the initiatives of a group of qualitative researchers. Together with several international researchers this group have evolved the "Loose Methods" approach which is not a formulated methodology but rather alternative approaches emerging from a forum of researchers exploring philosophies of knowledge (Hook, Bowman, Smith & Terre Blanche, 1999). This study has drawn inspiration from this approach that would seem to partly address some of the concerns raised by this study.

In exploring 'otherness' in a philosophy of knowledge, the Loose Methods group have drawn extensively from Foucault's discourses on the relationship between knowledge and power. The Loose Methods approach is unconcerned with uncovering scientific truth but rather seeks to produce 'political usefulness' in a quest for new forms of knowledge. These authors further state that method, as the platform for knowledge production, may allow for the emergence and operationalisation of new concepts and practices when new methods are employed:

> New systems of process and method are as important as an awareness of the ideological functioning of unquestioned and un-interrogated means of practice. (Hook et al, 1999)

In formulating conclusions from the research information provided by The Story and Other Stories, this researcher interacts with the material through reflective eco-systemic descriptions in chapter seven. These reflections are made in an inter-cultural dialogical fashion. Ultimately, it is anticipated that this inter-cultural recursive dialogue will allow the researcher to peek into the

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cultural cracks.

In terms of the narratives, existing information as well as new information has been drawn on in contracting the research process. Existing information takes the form of narrative case notes from several years of counselling in a South African township and adjacent communities. While these case notes were compiled from within the researcher's epistemological methods at the time, the cases evoked many of the questions culminating in the proposal of this study. New information has been drawn from other narrative material in consultation with members of community and some is autobiographical.

The Narratives of this Study

Three of the Stories are presented as much as possible in the words of the participants themselves. Other stories are autobiographical and others are case reports. All of them are prefixed by some form of diagnostic explanation from a positivist frame. This has the effect of allowing multiple voices to be heard in the text so that they may be contrasted with each other in content and approach in terms of their usefulness. Multi voicing (Gergen & Gergen, 1997, 2000a) avoids presenting a single dominant voice, facilitating varying ideas to emerge. The idea that language (voices) can possibly never completely represent the territory under study because they emerge from within particular historical cultural contexts (Gergen & Gergen, 1997, 2000b) gives credence to a multi voiced text.

A link to Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a collaborative approach to research, rather than a methodology, such that researchers and subjects participate outside the traditional expert/subject hierarchy.   The fundamental principles of PAR address many of the concerns discussed above with regard to paradigm and ecological issues. Thus, it is regarded as important to present PAR here in some detail.

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A fundamental assumption of PAR is that it contributes to social improvement and the general enhancement of the human condition especially within the Third World where PAR has been used to combat oppression (Bhana, 1999; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). That PAR has been used at times as an activist's tool is a fact that distinguishes it from most other research paradigms.

PAR is seen to have evolved out of Action Research, introduced by Lewin and made increasingly popular among social science practitioners since the 1940's (McTaggart, 1997b; Montero, 2000). One of the primary aims of Lewin at the time was to include an attempt to become closer to the research subjects (Montero, 2000). When Action Research was implemented in Latin America in the 1950's, the distance between researcher as both expert-knower and owner of the research process was relinquished to the full participation of the community in which change or knowledge was to be sought. Along with the participatory element of PAR, Action Research as the research process was then known, was used to effect social change and so the emancipatory value of PAR was emphasised. Researchers such as Fals-Borda in Colombia in the late nineteen-fifties rejected an 'epistemology of distance' in research and in so doing further evolved the new research paradigm in which PAR embeds itself (Montero, 2000).

Montero (2000, p.132) quotes Fernández Christlieb on the 'epistemology of distance':

> 'Subject and object are two separate instances, two things apart from the other, distinct and alien.' And in that distinct relation, one of the poles knows, has ideas, intentions and will, while the other one is an object to be known, therefore inert, quiet, thoughtless and without ill and feelings.

In Latin America and France in the late nineteen-fifties and sixties, social science researchers working within the PAR paradigm took up a political commitment in their practice allowing a rejection of the ideological neutrality of

science to be made more explicit. In particular Montero (2000) refers to the works of Cordoso and Faletto in Latin America, and to Lucien Goldman and Joseph Gabel, two Hungarian Marxists living in France. These contributions sharply aided the development of a distinctive PAR paradigm. Later writers such as Paulo Freire working in the nineteen sixties and seventies in Brazil introduced dialogical elements into PAR and gave identity to his participants who usually remain anonymous in the research report writings (Montero, 2000).

Implementing PAR

While opinions on what characterises PAR as a distinctive research process is reasonably consensual, recommendations as to how to operationalise PAR differs to some extent among writers on the subject. Greenwood & Levin (2000) warn against an assumption that action research be equated with exclusively qualitative techniques. This emanates from a still widely held assumption that the methodology determines the paradigm, while, Greenwood & Levin argue, it is the paradigm that might suggest a methodological approach but would not necessarily prescribe one.

Major Principles of PAR

Without any attempt to be comprehensive or totally inclusive, several major principles from the sets of principles and guidelines identified by major theoreticians in this field (Goodley & Parker, 2000; Granada, 1991; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; McTaggart, 1997c) are found to be common and useful as principal (and principle) guidelines for PAR in this research:

1.   Knowledge is social: PAR leads to the creation of new knowledge and the co-creation of knowledge & learning through social interaction.

The participants in the narratives of this study were all approached for their everyday experience and not for any perceived *expertise* on their part. The conversations held with them were informally structured. Where case notes were drawn on it was to

present information gained during personal dialogue. The researcher was provided with information, during each of the conversational processes, which can be considered social knowledge as opposed to expert or formal knowledge.

Other knowledge included in this study to inform the discussions in chapter seven is taken from 'African' authors drawing from their writings on customs within their own cultures. This may be described as a more formal contribution to local knowledge discourse.

2. Communication is central: there needs to be a mutual exploration between researcher and community participants of the discourse of communities. The significant social role played by language is recognised.

The Stories shared by the participants and presented in this study formed part of a dialogue between the researcher and participants. Some of them explicitly included The Story and some included aspects of other stories in a mutual exploration of and search for further useful meaning.

Some of the information emerging from The Stories linked with information gained through the discourses explored in chapter five.

3. The power of the expert knower is relinquished - power relationships are equalled out.

The researcher entered the dialogues with the participants from a position of humility in the face of knowledge not yet available to her such as in the "learning posture" of Nsamenang (p. 735, 1995). The researcher remained aware of the fact that her position was that of an 'other' in a cultural sense, but also that of an equal in a human sense.

4. The process is aimed at real social change, political values are central – political neutrality is not possible.

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This fourth idea is central to the study which aims to give voice to the silent in the academic dialectic of relevance in psychology in South Africa. Through allowing the voices to be heard it is anticipated that a dialogue may replace the dialectic.

McTaggart (1997c) stresses that principles identified as such are guiding principles only. To enforce them would prove contradictory to the philosophy of the participative co-creation of the process.

The Spiral Process of PAR

Several authors refer to a "spiral" or "cyclical" process characteristic of PAR. Among these are:

- "a spiral of self-reflecting cycles",   Kemmis & McTaggart (2000, p. 595)
- "spiral design of action and research", Karlsen (1991, p. 155)
- "critical subjectivity...[develops]...through the cyclical process of co-operative inquiry", Reason (1994b, p. 46)
- "process of action-reflection-action" and "assessing-reflecting-deciding", Montero (2000, p. 138-139).

The Story of chapter one can be said to have initiated the study, some fourteen years ago. The Story is autobiographical of the author's early experience of working in the township. The Story acted as a perturbation to a critical reflective thought process for the author that in turn inspired further conversations, actions and more reflections.

The Other Stories in chapter three, are narratives occurring inter-spacedly over the next fourteen years. Three of them were the result of conversations held with this specific study in the making. All of them were held

in some point of a long cycle of action-reflection-action process of psychology praxis in the township community.

Knowledge as Part of the Spiral

Kemmis & McTaggart (2000) expand on what they mean by the "spiral of self-reflective cycles". Because knowledge, action, change and new knowledge are all deemed to be social according to the PAR paradigm, all of the stages of the process of PAR need be validated by social consensus. This is where local knowledge, language (discourses) and an understanding of local social structures (cultural, economic, political) play a significant role in determining the further progress of the process. Fals-Borda (1997, p. 108), refers to this social consensus as a

> rite of communion between thinking and acting human beings, the researcher and the researched. The usual formality and prophylaxis of academic institutions had to be discarded and given space to some sort of down-to-earth collectivizaton in the search for knowledge. This attitude I called *vivencia*, or life-experience (Erlebnis).

More distinguishing of the paradigm than any specific methodological processes are the ethical principles behind PAR. Reason and Bradbury propose some of these principles:

> A primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives. A wider purpose of action research is to contribute through this practical knowledge to the increased well-being – economic, political, psychological, spiritual – of human persons and communities, and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet of

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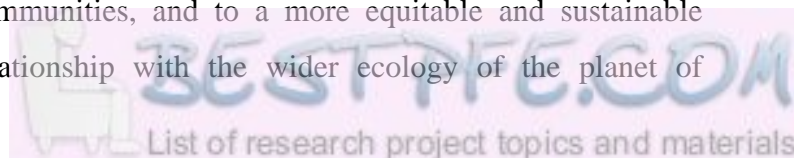
> which we are an intrinsic part. (Reason & Bradbury,
> 2001, p. 2)

From the above it can be inferred that central to the tenets of PAR is the critical co-exploration of local knowledges.   In addition, the two adjectival components of the name of the research paradigm give evidence to its focus: participation and action, or some form of community or collective pro-activity, as opposed to the more usual passive recording of observations in a traditionally non-obtrusive style (Cole, 1991). This pro-active participation is frequently aimed at elevating the condition of socially low ranking communities through their full engagement in the research process (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Goodley & Parker, 2000; Kelly & van der Riet, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Montero, 2000; Potter & Kruger, 2001; Reason, 1994b; Whyte, 1991). Numerous projects employing PAR (Reason, 1994a; Whyte, 1991) have shown how this alternative research paradigm, which effectively eradicates the traditional hegemony of the social scientist, renders simultaneously new information as well as real system change.

Processes Discovered

In her winding path along the process of this study, the researcher looked for new knowledge to inform her further praxis within this community. There were times when she searched in libraries but her conclusions were that the content nature of information in mainstream books was not as useful as the descriptions of processes she found in writings from the margins. These issues have been expanded on in the previous chapters of this study. The writings of persons working in similar circumstances inspired her to recognise her own marginality of praxis and to allow the ecology of the context to inform her.

Some discussion on the value of an ecological approach has been presented earlier in this thesis. It is suggested that many of the guiding principles of PAR allow the research process to emerge from the ecology of the context of the study at hand. Part of the ecological sensitivity is the recognition

given to local knowledge, or popular knowledge (Fals-Borda, 1997).

Local and Popular Knowledge

The relationship of traditional African knowledges to western hegemony in academia, and knowledge establishment in general, was introduced in chapter four. Here local or popular knowledge is referred to in the context of PAR and other previous research writings where it takes on a significant relevance. The nature of local and popular knowledges will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Introduction to Local Knowledge

Local knowledge as a concept is said to have originated from Russian cognitivist psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the nineteen-twenties (Kelly & van der Riet, 2001). Vygotsky was of the opinion that all higher mental functions, - and among these he includes knowledge acquisition, skills and survival strategies, - are socially determined.

By virtue of many of its fundamental assumptions, PAR (and its recognition of local knowledge) can be placed very much inside the postmodern movement. As has already been discussed above, the postmodern position brought an attempt to break from the traditionally entrenched positivist empiricist image of psychology and in particular that of psychological research (Phillips, 1987).

Orlando Fals-Borda (1997) explores the relationship between knowledge and reason. While he acknowledges that western mainstream science has in a Newtonian tradition placed what he refers to as artificial parameters on legitimised knowledge, he recalls that there is an older tradition in western thinking which gave cognisance to "common people's knowledge (popular or folk science), based on practical reason and communicative sociability" (p.108). Fals-Borda recalls that this opinion was shared by Galileo, Descartes and Kant. In relinquishing the dominance over knowledge, through his work in

Colombia with the peasants and common people, Fals-Borda found that a commitment to the social values and the natural order of these people led him to "look for and respect the wisdom [of] peoples who had been forgotten, neglected or despised by academia and elite groups in general" (1997, p. 108).

Fals-Borda's work in this area, and his examination of similar work by other researchers in other countries, led him to propose that PAR opened a new paradigm for the social sciences.

The Relationship Between PAR and Local Knowledge

Kemmis & McTaggart (2000, p.572) state that PAR developed as a deliberate resistance to what they refer to as a "colonization" of research and science by power structures existing within agencies and lodged within policy agendas not involved with the communities in which the research is done. McTaggart is particularly clear in his criticism of social science research as having taken a hegemonic political stance up until now promoting predominantly positivistic approaches (McTaggart, 1997b).   Orlando Fals-Borda (1997, p. 107) describes how, in his search for a "concept of science, more ethical and pertinent to the daily vicissitudes of the common people" he resigned from the constraining strictures of his university post where he found little understanding of the dialectics between theory and practice. He claims that the academic world of Colombia of the nineteen-seventies had fallen "victim to the fatal belief in science as a fetish with a life of its own" (1997, p. 107). Fals-Borda came to the conclusion that the traditional schism between theory and praxis, thought and action, was artificially imposed by academia and that the natural order of things was to see practice as theory-in-action. Fals-Borda, echoing the predictions of Lincoln, Guba and Denzin (referred to above), takes an ethical stance on this view in reminding the academic world of Sir Francis Bacon's words: "science, like the life of a just man, can be judged mainly for its deeds" (1997, p. 108).

Debunking Formalities and Elitism Around Knowledge

Anil Chaudhary (1997) discusses her own realisations about the role of knowledge in economies and maintaining and controlling social strata. India has its own history, similar to other Third World countries, of using knowledge as a power instrument for the benefit of the protection of the privileges of the elite. Chaudhary describes how in our current technological age knowledge provides a gateway to better paid jobs, money and the privileges and power that wealth brings. In the past formal knowledge was openly kept from the under-classes and women through laws. Democratic government policies have supposedly changed this, making knowledge available to all. However, the reality is that formal knowledge still remains exclusive to some, but the gatekeepers of the present have taken on different personas from those in the past. If it is not money, gender or class that bars the gate to formal knowledge in the present age, then it is language or culture (Chaudhary, 1997). Chaudhary criticises the formal knowledge institutions for pandering to the demands of big industry most of which have strong western links and thus funding is directed to those projects and curricula that expound the contents and themes pertinent to large scale developed-world industry. In this way local needs are not met and local knowledge is bypassed.

Yet, Chaudhary maintains (1997), local knowledge continues to exist parallel to formal systems of knowledge, and local knowledge is generally passed on in some form of oral tradition.   In the passing on of common, or local knowledge from generation to generation the knowledge adapts itself to the current social situations and times. Thus, local knowledge is enhanced through the process of transference. Chaudhary refers to formal knowledge and its use as the "dominant mode" and the local knowledge as the "popular mode" (p. 118). Knowledge found in mainstream psychology texts would be the dominant mode of professional psychologists, and was the one used by the protagonist of The Story in her practice at the time. The researcher, through a spiralling process of reflexive praxis, incorporated more and more popular knowledge into the practice of her discipline. This is apparent in stories such as Alice and Doozy in chapter three.

Clear differences characterise dominant knowledge and popular knowledge according to Chaudhary and she identifies several thematic differences, which are presented below.

- *Dominant knowledge is isolating while popular knowledge is interactive.*
    This isolation is directly apparent in the stories told by persons such as Seedat (1997) and Alice (Alice and Doozy).

- *Dominant knowledge is an individualistic pursuit while popular knowledge is collective.*
    The author's experiences were such that her private academic learning did not adequately prepare her for working with the people of Mamelodi. The knowledge she gained from interacting with clients in the township led her to embark on this study. The narrator of The Story found herself in a similar position of not having enough knowledge from the context in order to be able to engage in a more useful therapeutic relationship with Lesaka.

- *Dominant knowledge is accumulative while popular knowledge is disseminative.*

- *Dominant knowledge is concerned with abstract issues and sectional interests while popular knowledge is concerned with concrete and common issues.*
    The narrator of The Story discovered that she lacked popular knowledge at the time of the events of The Story. Cabangile showed herself to be well immersed in the needs and expectations of her community. Her wish to find solutions for the healing need she saw in the community in which she lived, threw her into ambivalence. She sought answers in academic texts and western professional rules of game.

- *Dominant knowledge is controlled centrally while popular knowledge is situated within the community where it is formed and used.*

- *Dominant knowledge perpetuates its own 'status-quo' while popular knowledge seeks transformation.*

Chaudhary (1997) concludes that PAR has its epistemological roots in popular (local) knowledge production. Any transformative process addressing issues such as enablement, empowerment and accessibility must take a consultative form. A transformative process in psychology must therefore consult with popular (local) knowledge. The stories of this study attempt to tap into some popular knowledge about local understanding of human behaviour.

Beyond the Knowledge Agenda of Research

Because much has been said in the literature about power relationships and knowledge, and because this thesis seeks new knowledge from among the previously politically disenfranchised, the currently economically disempowered, and the educationally marginalized, it would be unethical to omit discussions around politics, knowledge and research. Thus, some of these issues are presented below.

In his discussion of PAR as confronting western traditional scientific methods, McTaggart (1997b) describes PAR as a "church", "movement", or "family of activities" (p. 1). All of these terms carry connotations of solidarity, morality, the intensity of personal involvement and commitment as well as the idea of political agenda that he asserts that all research carries. According to him research methodologies, by their nature, redefine power relationships between researcher and the researched communities. Often this power manifests itself in the hearing of the research results, the control of the channels of publication.

While the subjects of the PAR project shift to becoming involved participants, the researcher herself is also required to shift: from a neutral stance, to a take on an activist role of a positioned participant (Cole, 1991). Reason

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(1994b) refers to his own work in human inquiry as "an approach to living based on experience and engagement" (p. 9). He completely rejects the notion of a neutral researcher in his assertion that "complete personal engagement, passion and profound risk-taking are central to inquiry, and that science and life are not separate" (p. 9).

Reason (1994c) argues that participation (as in PAR) goes beyond mere political co-operation to, what this author infers as the realms of the co-creation of consciousness. Reason (p. 16) quotes Mumford:

> Every transformation of [the human species]...has rested on a new metaphysical and ideological base; or rather, upon deeper stirrings and intuitions whose rationalised expression takes the form of a new picture of the cosmos and the nature of [humanity].

Reason takes up Mumford's idea in suggesting that his (and by implication all) PAR writings seek not to establish truth, but to "fashion a myth" (p. 16) which is to be used as a map for collaborative researchers to find their way through the territory of their researches, and is to be distinctive from any "positivist truth" (p. 16). He describes how he distinguishes three phases of development of consciousness of humanity to the present date. The first phase saw humankind merged with primeval forces of irrationality and nature. In the second phase, the modernists separated themselves from their environments in an attempt to make sense of the world and gain some control by seeking scientific truths with which to deal with immediate world problems. However, Reason reminds us that human consciousness associated with modern science is founded on "an essential foundation of tacit knowledge" (p. 16). This kind of consciousness is typical of present mainstream western thought and leaves the individual alienated from community and environment. The third phase which Reason suggests is at this stage more intimated than actual, will see a new intentional and reflexive participation with the world. It is this form of participation that Reason suggests researchers should strive for in PAR.

When participation takes on the value of the nature of human consciousness as advocated by Reason above, in the third phase, then neutrality becomes impossible. Thus, the researcher finds herself living the research by adopting an activist's role. It is this value that prompted this researcher to search out the dissenting voices in the literature, and to present the stories which could not fit into a mainstream paradigm of psychology with any real success as far as treatment is concerned.

Cole (1991) makes the point that while it could be argued that, in accordance with the Heisenberg Principle, the act of participatory (or non-participatory) observation will influence the research results, thus nullifying the PAR argument, thorough commitment to the research process calls for total involvement. He uses a quote from C. W. Mills to describe and justify his own activist role as researcher in organisations:

> The most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community...do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other. (Cole, 1991, p. 160)

This sentiment is echoed in Cabangile's story as she immerses herself in her work in psychology, and also Founder who could not go on living in his work in the old way. He felt impelled to seek a new way of working which was different from the mainstream.

(Local) Knowledge, Research and Responsibility

Despite the criticisms aimed at a postmodern position (these have been discussed in an earlier section), some postmodern researchers view relevance as taking priority over rigour especially in a search for knowledge useful to the practitioner (Argyris & Schön, 1991; Reason, 1994b). The still dominant mainstream psychology (Goodley & Parker, 2000) is criticised for separating out practice from research aspects (Poetter, 1997) thereby hindering any real

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progressive transformation of the discipline.

Writing from a research perspective, Greenwood & Levin (2000) are uncompromising in their criticism of mainstream university academia which they believe maintains the distance between social change and university research programmes. They advocate that social science researchers either adopt an action research approach or make their distance overt and thus relinquish any social responsibility.

Local knowledge plays a major role in various types of action research besides PAR. In a discussion on the origin of universities as institutions of knowledge, Greenwood & Levin (2000) acknowledge the potentially mutually enriching dialogical relationship between formal knowledge such as is created and disseminated by universities, and the popular knowledge of the common people when used in action research:

> Action research is built on an interaction between local knowledge and professional knowledge. Whereas professional social research and consulting privilege professional knowledge over local knowledge, action research does not. Action research is based on the premise that professional knowledge is important and can be valuable, but local knowledge is a necessary ingredient in any research. Only local stakeholders, with their years of experience in a particular situation, have sufficient information and knowledge about the situation to design effective social change processes. Action research does not romanticize local knowledge and denigrate professional knowledge. It is a cogenerative research process precisely because both types of knowledge are essential to it (p. 96).

The Stories in this study present some popular understandings and locally created meanings for making sense of human problems. The author

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presents these in a context of academic discourse. The effect of this is to contrast local and professional knowledge leading to an opening of a dialogue between the two paradigms in an attempt to facilitate new useful knowledge for praxis in local contexts.

The Relationship Between Knowledge and Control

Parker (2000, p. 2) explains how academic control over information minimises possibilities for new, different and 'other' information and knowledge:

> The psy-complex as a web of theories and practices to do with the mind and behaviour and how they may be governed contains many surfaces of emergence for the recombination of old ideas and the production of new ones (Ingleby, 1985; Rose, 1985). Psychological journals are one such site, and the rules that govern them determine what can be written and said and how we write and read things, and absorb or dismiss them.

Foucault (1980) refers to this process as the establishment and perpetuation of 'regimes of truth' through discourse. It is Lacan (1991, in Parker, 2000, p. 5) who takes this criticism of hegemonic discourses a step further and takes the notion of discourse beyond language to the realms of relationship, particularly in reference to the bureaucratic relationship between the university and cultures of knowledge:

> Lacan makes it clear that discourse is not something that should be reduced to speaking and writing. It is, he says, 'a necessary structure that goes well beyond speech', and it 'subsists in certain fundamental relations'. These fundamental relations are maintained by language, but they are, he argues, much larger, they go much further than effective utterances. (p. 2)

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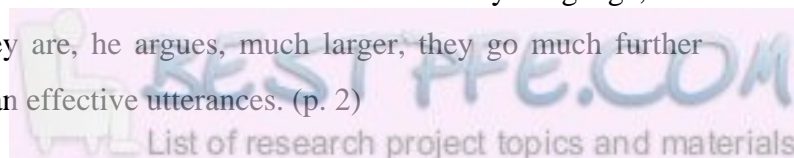
The academic discourse of universities and mainstream research not only controls knowledge production, but also establishes rules of etiquette for the expression of new ideas. Effectively, change on a paradigmatic level thus happens within strictures. It becomes apparent that the potential for such changes is minimised. As Parker (2000, p. 16) frankly states it:

> (The university) is the kind of disciplinary apparatus that strips ideas of their radical potential. The university will speak of sexuality but in the best possible taste and it will study revolutions as long as it does not have to reflexively position itself in a revolutionary process. 'Paradigm revolutions' in psychology have actually, as you may know, been the most genteel of affairs.

Ownership, Production and Recognition of Knowledge

This hegemonic control over knowledge by university administrative systems and funding institutions is one that operates beyond language and is a relatively recent development (Greenwood & Levin, 2000). Universities as they exist today were first established by Humboldt around the turn of the eighteenth century in Prussia. Primary to Humboldt's establishment was the freedom of thought and inquiry, un-reined by political or religious strictures. However, in its attempt to maintain independence from state and church, universities set up what Greenwood & Levin refer to as "autopoetic" research circles (2000, p. 88). Thus the schism between the research circles of the universities and the broader society was founded.

Since the establishment of universities, the development of knowledge and science has come to take on a life of its own, as Fals-Borda's "fetish with a life of its own", referred to earlier in this chapter. Vygotsky (2001a) identifies five stages of development of scientific knowledge (in psychology, here; and detailed further down in this text) that expand on his idea:

It can be said of any important discovery in any area, when it transcends the boundaries of that particular realm, that it has the tendency to turn into an explanatory principle for all psychological phenomena and lead psychology beyond its proper boundaries into broader realms of knowledge (p. 11).

Vygotsky (2001a, p. 11) explains this patterned development by referring to three links from which he suggests that all knowledge arises:

(1) The general sociocultural context of the era; (2) the general conditions and laws of scientific knowledge; (3) the objective demands upon the scientific knowledge that follow from the nature of the phenomena studied in a given stage of investigation (in the final analysis, the requirements of the objective reality that is studied by the given science).

The five stages identified by Vygotsky are summarised as moving from an initial significant factual discovery (an idea) of magnitude enough to influence adjacent areas of knowledge from within which it lies, to take on, in the second stage, an abstraction, while simultaneously weakening its links with its contextual origin, becoming an idea or concept with a life of its own as a verifiable scientific truth. During the third stage the idea permeates the discipline and in so doing becomes itself changed to some extent as a formulated principle acting "in concert" (p. 12) with the entire discipline and fighting for supremacy among other disciplines. According to Vygotsky (2001a, p. 12), at this stage "the fate of the idea is completely tied to the fate of the discipline it represents and which is fighting for supremacy."

Eventually, in the fourth stage the idea transcends its boundaries to become possibly a worldview included in a philosophical system. Vygotsky (2001a, p. 13) describes the conclusion as such:

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> This (idea), inflated into a world view like a frog that has
> swollen to the size of an ox, a philistine amidst the
> gentry, now enters the fifth and most dangerous stage of
> development: it may easily burst like a soap-bubble.… It
> is only now, when the idea has entirely separated itself
> from the facts that engendered it, developed to its logical
> extremes, carried to its ultimate conclusions, generalised
> as far as possible, that it finally displays what it is in
> reality, shows its real face. However strange it may
> seem, it is actually only now, reduced to a philosophical
> form, apparently obscured by many later developments
> and very remote from its direct roots and the social
> causes that engendered it, that the idea reveals what it
> wants, what it is, from which social tendencies it arose,
> which class interests it serves...it reveals its social
> nature...which...was hidden under the mask of the neutral
> scientific fact it impersonated.

It is possible to acknowledge this process in action in the now
frequently referred to concepts "African worldview", "African philosophy" or
"African knowledge", as if the label "African" defines a unitary paradigm for all
of Africa. This inflated worldview originated in the notion that there are local
knowledges and traditional ways of thinking in Africa that are different from
recognised mainstream western ways. However, the idea of a unitary African
worldview is possibly just another "swollen frog" remote from the sociocultural
roots which spawned it. A more useful picture of what exists in Africa as
knowledge may be one of a fecund pond whose ecology supports the varying life
cycles of many different species of frogs. In order to understand the frogs better
they need to be studied in the field, within their ecologies.

When Alice was diagnosed with and treated for allergic asthma and
Thabo with PTSD, only certain aspects of their problems were addressed. Their
problems needed to be addressed with an awareness of the dynamics of their

ecologies so that they could successfully adapt when returning to them. It can be said that the problems indicated perturbations within the ecologies.

Researching for Relevance

Vygotsky, along with other notable writers who will be discussed below, places his optimism for the future relevance of psychology as a discipline, on applied psychology. He writes (2001b, p. 1):

> The leading role in the development of our science belongs to applied psychology. It represents everything of psychology which is progressive, sound, which contains a germ of the future. It provides the best methodological works. It is only by studying this area that one can come to an understanding of what is going on and the possibility of a genuine psychology.

At the time of his writing in 1983, Clifford Geertz, foretold a shift away from the social sciences, as hard science, to a more accepting recognition of the significance of cultural systems as holding relevant research. Geertz (1983) lists among those who reject a "technological return" to the social sciences, the philosophers Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and social scientists Burke, Frye, Jameson, Fish, Foucault, Habermas, Barthes, and Kuhn.

This opinion echoes the voice of Vygotsky as discussed above, in that Geertz does not foresee the social sciences unifying into a discipline with clear fundamental principles, in fact he declares that it "is scattering into frameworks" (1983, p. 4). A scattering of frameworks suggests a focus on diverse phenomena, to some extent only loosely linked theoretically. There are merits other than those of scientific analyses that bring enrichment to the examination of local knowledge. The researcher, when working with foreign cultures, needs to realise that her understanding is limited by her personal epistemologies. To subject cultural observations to scientific analyses from a western mainstream epistemology may be much like assessing other cultures with foreign

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psychological tests and expect the results to be comparable to the results of the normed population.

Working with other cultures therefore begs the study of local knowledge and an acceptance of local knowledge as being the key to understanding, intervening, collaborating and introducing change. Geertz (1973) takes a semiotic approach to the study of culture.   He is of the opinion that people co-create their own cultures within a societal context and the researcher's task is to decipher these societal contexts.

> …man [*sic*] is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geertz, 1973, p. 5).

Chapter three presented the narratives (Other Stories) of research participants from contexts that form the majority of learners, clients and, possibly in the future, practitioners, of professional psychology in South Africa. As has been explained above, the oral tradition is firmly entrenched in Africa as a recognised way of establishing and communicating knowledge. The narrative methodology, thus, through a link in the instrumentality of stories and histories, arguably fits well with the context of establishing knowledge in this thesis. The words of Mary and Kenneth Gergen are repeated below in support of the decision to take a narrative approach:

> One of the most widely employed means of sharing authority is by enabling research subjects to speak for themselves - to tell their own story. Narrative methodologies are now many and varied (see, for example, Josselson & Lieblich, 1993; 1994; Lieblich & Josselson, 1995; Sarbin, 1986; Sarbin & Scheibe, 1983). Some researchers will feature the single autobiography; others will interweave the voices of several participants,

and still others may draw selective fragments of discourse to generate a more variegated theoretical tapestry. (Gergen & Gergen, 1997, p. 4)

Conclusion

Having explored possibilities for an analysis of the stories in this chapter, chapter seven will take up a discussion of the stories in a way that may prove useful for thinking about reflexive practice in psychology especially in non-western communities. This particular notion will be expanded on in the following sections of this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPLORING THE FLOW

One should stop worrying about whether what one believes is well grounded and start worrying about whether one has been imaginative enough to think up interesting alternatives to one's present beliefs.
(Rorty, 2000, p. 34)

Accounts of "experience" seem more adequately understood as the outcome of a particular textual/cultural history in which people learn to tell stories of their lives to themselves and others. Such narratives are embedded within the sense-making processes of historically and culturally situated communities. (Gergen & Gergen, 2000a, p. 1027)

This chapter begins with a summary of The Flow to this point. The Story in chapter one presented what can be referred to as the perturbation for the study. This was the experience of the author as a young trainee trying to implement theory as she found it in a context foreign to the theory – as she found it. Her further and later experiences as a psychologist in the township context developed into a conviction that mainstream theories of psychology of the present had to be modified to fit the context in which she found herself practising. These experiences are reported on in Other Stories in chapter three.

Chapter four presented a critical discussion of mainstream psychology in the present, while chapter five presented ecologies of ideas in the literature around *African* notions of psychology and meaning of being African as reported on by some African writers.

Chapter six explored some research possibilities that may be useful to non-western contexts.

The question thus arose as how to make sense of working as a psychologist in a non-western and in particular an *African* context. The author found herself seduced into positioning herself on the western – non-western continuum whilst realising that this approach was not useful. Taking a position as such would serve to further reify the polarities of the continuum rather than finding a way forward in terms of a more universal approach that is able to take account of socio-cultural contexts.

The author then sought a language that could discuss something approaching universalities for the discipline of psychology in describing and understanding human behaviour and human problems. The language of psychological theories presented problems in achieving this without re-entrenching the discussion in dialectic. In her search for what could be termed a *meta* position (or possibly more aptly an 'other' position) from the west-non west continuum, the language of ecological processes seemed to provide this. Theorists who have integrated studies of ecological processes from the natural sciences into explorations of dynamics in the social domain include Fritjof Capra, Werner Heisenberg and Humberto Maturana – often together with Francisco Varela. The biologist/ anthropologist Gregory Bateson has contributed to this discourse with his ideas on ecology and evolution in human systems. The works of these authors, especially those of Capra, Bateson and Maturana, are largely drawn on in the following discussions.

Tools for Analysis

This chapter sets out to examine the stories of the participants in this study using ecological descriptions from the writings of the authors mentioned above. Since ecologies are dynamic and evolving continuously, it is difficult to consider processes ecologically without touching on the accompanying evolutionary processes. The interplay of ecologies and evolution will be

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discussed to the extent that it is necessary to make sense of the ecological view in terms of its complexities.

The very process of describing psychological phenomena from the meta (or other) position of an ecological perspective, de-reifies symptoms, mental illness, and psychological disorders from whatever paradigm they may have been originally described in. This will be made explicit in the following analyses of the texts presented in the document so far.

Generally, the approach of the analyses will be to read the presented texts ecologically: to see behaviour as a text within a context presented for deconstruction (Derrida, 1981). The purpose of this will be to arrive at a narrative structuring and meaning interpretation as envisaged by Kvale (1996) and referred to in chapter six of this study. The reader is invited, together with the author, to engage in movement towards a dialogical exploration of the texts, rather than a more restricting dialectical analysis. However, the stories presented in the literary way as they have been, also speak for themselves to the reader, as has been suggested possible in chapter six. Thus, no final interpretation of the stories is considered necessary to the process of this study.

Reflecting back to a statement made in chapter two, an attempt is made here *to use a different set of tools which may not be tools at all in any conventional sense in psychology.*

Making the Shift

According to the typical approach in psychology, the psychologist starts at the presenting problem with a definition, or diagnosis (in the case of psychotherapy), and moves out to view the context – to a greater or lesser extent. In most well recognised models of psychology the psychologist holds the power, expertise and control through acquired academic knowledge. This dynamic of power relations is also very much the pattern applied in the medical model.

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As can be expected, this was the approach taken by the medical practitioners in both Alice's and Thabo's stories. This may be seen to be an appropriate approach for a medical model, which makes a scientific examination of the biological ecology of the human body and does this generally effectively by approaching the human body as a closed system. This approach could be said to belong to the realm of what Heisenberg (1959) referred to as practical or dogmatic realism and holds a valid and as yet essential place in the natural sciences. However, as was shown in the dialogical exploration (The Narrative), different information provided a view into an ecology beyond the physical body with which to work and intervene, using a different paradigm. There are inherent dangers in isolating particular aspects of living systems in trying to understand them, as was done in the diagnostic analyses. Unfortunately for scholars of the human sciences there remains a far stronger emphasis on and recognition for studying entities in isolation rather than networks of relationships (Bateson, 2000).

The networks of relationships around living systems and parts of living systems include the observer. Thus, one of the dangers implied by isolating entities under study revolves around the idea put forward here that perception is an active rather than a passive process (Berger & Mohr, 1982; Keeney, 1979; von Foerster, 1976; von Glasersfeld, 1988), and thus, what we observe in nature is not nature itself (Capra, 2003; Gribben, 1996; Heisenberg, 1959; Maturana, 1988), "it is a part of the interplay between nature and ourselves; it describes nature exposed to our method of questioning" (Heisenberg, 1971, in Capra, 1997, p. 39). As mentioned above, when dealing with living systems and trying to *understand* them, the focus is on *meaning,* and in human living systems what becomes important in the study of them is the embodied meaning in social structures (Capra, 2003).

According to an ecological picture, the psychologist reads behaviour in an ecology of existence that holds meaning for the client. Meaning emerges from a context of interpretation and does not exist in and of itself (Capra, 2003; Fals-Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2003). Gergen (1998, p. 119) refers to an

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"interpretive community" and "conventional understandings" in a similar argument for recognition of the influence that frameworks have to bear on meanings extracted from texts. This process requires the collaboration of the client to interpret the ecology of the context as the client conceives and perceives it. Understanding the stuckness, or problem which the client brings, entails the event-in-context being brought into the consciousness of both the client and the psychotherapist. Maturana's meaning attached to consciousness is referred to here:

> According to Maturana, we can understand human consciousness only through language and the whole social context in which it is em-bedded. As its Latin root – *con-scire* ('knowing together') – might indicate, consciousness is essentially a social phenomenon. (Capra, 1997, p. 283)

The extended narratives presented in Other Stories, allows for such an interpretive process between psychotherapist and client, or between research participants. Contrasting with this is the medical model or positivist view that ends the therapeutic conversation with the psychotherapist's (or doctor's) pronouncement of how the problem may be interpreted. Bateson, (1985, p. 436) suggests that this approach embodies inherent dangers: "the error of purposive thinking… disregards the systemic nature of the world with which it must deal."

From an ecological perspective, the stuckness or problem resists taking on a value but is read as a punctuation in the ecology. The punctuation, however, is sometimes experienced as psychic pain in individuals. The problem becomes identified not as an error per se, but more as an indication that something no longer *fits* in the context. Ernst von Glasersfeld (1988), with a focus on cognition in the theory of Radical Constructivism, has described this process as a failure to *assimilate* in the Piagetian sense. Here the focus is rather on the ecology than the cognitive processes of the individual.

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The ecology is disturbed, and because ecologically and evolution-arily, changes initiate with disturbances, the challenge lies not so much in identifying the problem ecologically, but in identifying the solution ecologically in order to facilitate that change (Eskell-Blokland, 2001) – but not necessarily to stop it. This sentiment echoes that of other authors writing from non-western cultural contexts (Fals-Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2003; Mariotti, n.d.). In discussing social problems Bateson comments, (1985, p. 437): "The problem is systemic and the solution must surely depend upon realizing this fact."

Systemic Punctuations

In this section, the Stories are discussed and in each case the problem is viewed as a systemic event punctuating the ecology in evolution. The "purposive" or diagnostic approach is contrasted with the dialogical alternative.

The systemic punctuations revealed in the stories presented in this study include Lesaka's physical assault on his two year old brother (The Story), and from Other Stories: - Alice's allergic asthma, Thabo's high anxiety, Cabangile's ambivalence, Founder's struggle with his practice, and the young healer's physical pain. The individuals in each case found themselves in ecologies that mismatched their own personal ecologies of knowing, or consciousness. In order to interpret meaning from the stories presented, the psychologist needs to deconstruct the story from within the ecologies of both the client and the context. The solution may be found in discovering a way forward comprising ecological meaning for the client and ecological fit with the context.

Because not all the stories presented in chapter three are client cases, stories are discussed below as appropriate.

The Story

In Lesaka's case it is possible that his psychotherapist failed him. Perhaps the failing was not as severe as it could have been if, for example, he had been sent to prison by the justice system. The psychotherapist may have been too passive in engaging with the ecological context in which Lesaka found himself. As the story is told here, she was focussed on helping him meet the demands of the social environment so that he could "get on with his life" in terms of finding employment and all that goes with it. Her thinking was purposive. On the surface, this was what was required.

The psychotherapist did not get to know Lesaka's personal ecology of ideas. Thus her explorations with him went no further than her own western approach to life – the need to be a registered citizen with an education and a job, a place to stay and a social circle. Through the process of working with Lesaka, she learned some lessons about the way of life on the streets and the potential role of interpreters in psychotherapy. However, her own lack of knowledge about Lesaka's ecology left her disconnected from him and resulted in her feeling disempowered and more like a social worker than a psychologist.

Alice and Doozy

Alice's medical treatment for asthma did not have the desired long-term effect. Perhaps the point here is not whether it was asthma or not, but that just as the body becomes ill in a context so the body must heal in a context. This is especially so in the case of psychosomatic disorders. The context includes both the physical environment and the ecology of thought or mind (Bateson, 1979). The psychotherapist's challenge is to find the dis-solution of the problem within the ecology of the client.

The psychologist who dealt with Alice, was able to put aside the meanings of the punctuation as they appealed to her own epistemology. She began by asking questions about Alice's ecology, which may have had answers

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from Alice's epistemology. This opened up the possibility for dialogue characterised by a focus on ecologies, thus facilitating the emergence of her client's epistemology for the psychologist to read.

Ideas from Alice's epistemology that proved to be useful in initiating a therapeutic dialogue included: involving a broader community than her individual self; the African tradition of the naming ceremony; and a possible calling to *thwasa*[1]. The bringing of these ideas to the dialogue facilitated a "knowing together" for client and therapist. This process of "knowing together" distinguishes the diagnostic conversation from the therapeutic dialogue. The meaning emerging from Alice's ecology is important for psychological healing without reifying the ideas themselves.

The reader is referred back to a discussion on the significance of the naming ceremony in chapter five, as an idea providing meaning within some traditional African ecologies. Kokomogo was the name that Alice was given at her naming ceremony. This was, according to her cultural traditions, the person she was expected to be, this was the name that validated her existence in her ecology. With the history of name changes she had experienced, it could be expected that Alice was experiencing some kind of identity confusion.

Alice languaged around her name changes as the punctuation of what she was experiencing in her world. Among all her multiple identities (Gergen, 1991; Lincoln, 2000), there was at least one which she was not yet ready to encompass. It did not fit at this point into her ecology. Addressing this issue seemed to be paramount to her healing process.

The calling to *thwasa* is raised here as a possible interpretation of Alice's dream. This interpretation of the dream is facilitated given the context of the family from a community rich in traditional healing practices and by the grandmother, now an ancestor, who was a sangoma. The offering of a tray of

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[1] Thwasa: refer to chapter two

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objects could be seen as symbolic of Alice being called to take over the traditional healer role.   This interpretation as a possible factor in Alice's illness was kept open between client and therapist. The reader is also reminded of the strong connection between illness/healing and spirituality in traditional African thinking discussed in chapter four. Whether thwasa was an aspect of the problem here would be a matter to sort out between Alice and her sangoma.

Here the focus has been on discovering ecological values (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a) in an attempt to find a dis-solution ecologically. Denzin and Lincoln refer to the significance of ecological values in conducting research:

> The emphasis on inquiry that reflects ecological values, on inquiry that respects communal forms of living that are not Western, on inquiries involving intense reflexivity regarding how inquiries are shaped by our own historical and gendered locations, and on inquiry into "human flourishing", as Heron & Reason call it, may yet reintegrate the secular in ways that promote freedom and self-determination. (p. 185)

Thabo

In the case of Thabo, the psychologist used a similar approach to that used in Alice's case. PTSD is a well-recognised disorder in the western epistemology and excellent ways of handling it have been devised. This helped Thabo up to a point, but if the treatment had stopped there, his progress, as Alice's was with medical intervention alone, may have been superficial and possibly temporary. The symptoms of PTSD came as a punctuation of his disturbed ecology which became the focus of work in psychotherapy.

The reader is referred back to the discussion in chapter four, on the way a sense of self has been explained in the view of many African peoples. For Thabo it was not enough to gain a sense of achievement as an individual. It seemed as if his sense of self was inextricably linked to his community. Thus,

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he felt obliged to sit with his black peers at work, he clung to the notion of his success being the success of his community: - not his alone. Without community recognition, his achievements would mean little to him. He experienced the assault as a strong message of rejection and alienation from his own community. Thabo feared that this was a process that was now irreversible. His healing lay in finding a way to rediscover and reconnect with community to bring back a sense of congruence to his ecology.

A Young Healer's Story

The young healer experienced herself struggling to match her own western epistemology and her personal ecology of ideas, with the ecology in which she found herself training. The tensions created within herself manifested in psychosomatic pains.

An interesting aspect to this story is that the prophet's method of communicating to his client (the young healer) could be said to be purposive, diagnostic and employing a power relation with the young healer. However, the ensuing relationship between the two of them, allowed a connection that dissolved boundaries such that a new ecology of relationship was formed. This new ecology took on a flavour of communicating and discovering each other's different ecologies. This process of relationship required an acceptance and entering of the other's ecology of mind. Once again the reader is reminded that an ecology of mind has been defined as a socio-cultural construction. With the trust that served to connect the prophet and the young healer, they each became open, responsive and receptive to each other's meanings to enable this process. From a "knowing together" a therapeutic relationship evolved and tensions and anxieties for the young healer dissolved.

With regards to how the prophet 'knew' her illness, this is something that neither the young healer nor the author found a satisfactory explanation for in words outside the prophet's ecology of ideas. It seemed to the young healer that he had an ability to connect in ways other than spoken language.

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Communication, Consciousness and Human
Adaptation (mind in ecology)

And in life, meaning is not instantaneous. Meaning is
discovered in what connects, and cannot exist without
development. Without a story, without an unfolding,
there is no meaning…when we give meaning to an event,
that meaning is a response.
(Berger & Mohr, 1989, p. 89)

In contemplating the role of *consciousness* in human adaptation,
Bateson (1985) considers consciousness as an important component in the
coupling of three homeostatic systems: - the individual, society, and the larger
ecosystem. He suggests that errors may occur when these are divorced from
each other. He also warns that human consciousness in itself is not infallible
and it is through human consciousness that information about systemic events is
processed, and then used for further adaptation. Distortions of view in
consciousness may lead to destructive thinking and behaviour (Bateson, 1985;
Capra, 1997, 2003; Maturana & Varela, 1987).

The diagnostic approach to the stories presented, tends to focus on the
individual system at the price of ignoring the social system to some extent, and
the larger ecosystem to a greater extent. It has already been stated above that
including considerations of the social -and larger eco- systems may yield bigger
pictures, but the question is whose social- and whose eco-system?
Epistemologies, personal or otherwise, assist us in seeing the world and making
sense of it, but also determine the content of cognition and consciousness. The
recognition of Maturana's notion of consciousness (referred to above in Capra,
1997; Maturana & Varela, 1987) as being a collaborative affair, assists in the
avoidance of epistemological dominance.

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Similarly, Capra (2003), in addition to viewing consciousness as a biological phenomenon, views it as a social one. This recalls Bateson's (1985) proposal that mind and consciousness are processes, in opposition to the earlier Cartersian view of mind as *a thing* (Capra, 2003). Like Bateson, Maturana focussed on the processes of mind, consciousness and cognition, describing cognition as "the process of knowing" (Maturana & Varela, 1987). According to Capra (2003) consciousness is a complex state of cognition. Maturana, together with Varela formulated the Santiago Theory of Cognition whereby the processes of cognition are identified as the processes of life itself (Capra, 1997, 2003; Kenny, 1989).

To take the argument of the previous section forward, it can be said that the clients in the Stories formulated their descriptions of their problems in a language which emanated from their cognitions or consciousness of their ecosystems. To impose an alternative meaning, divorced from context, to the punctuations brought to the psychotherapist could result in alienation of the client at least, or damage to the client at worst, especially if the psychotherapist assumes a position of authority at the level of epistemology. The experience of psychosis is one in which the individual finds no consensual validation for his/her experiences. Because there is no difference to the individual between the immediate cognitive experience of an hallucination, and an experience which others share (sometimes called 'reality'), to have any of one's experiences invalidated is surely a psychotic event and potentially damaging.

If the client has previously experienced a lack of validation of his/her cognitions about his/her world, the client is likely to be hesitant to bring these cognitions to the conversation. This is apparently what Alice's experience had been with the medical practitioners prior to her encounter with the psychologist. Once she realised that information as she knew it about her systemic events could be consensually engaged with, she entered a dialogue in an engagement of consciousness with the psychologist. This was similar to the process which occurred between the prophet and the young healer. A "knowing together" emerged and allowed for a therapeutic conversation.

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A sharing of consciousness did not occur in The Story. The psychologist remained unaware of the significance of epistemological differences (or even that there were such differences) in the understanding of a series of events. However, she opened her own ecology of ideas sufficiently to allow a perturbation to occur and which led to further thinking about her practice in a context different from her own.

Cabangile found herself attempting to bridge two very different worlds of cognition as she spanned the divide between the western consciousness of the academic world of Judeo-Christian saturated psychology and that of the African spiritual domain of ancestors and witchcraft. She experienced what we call ambivalence. This is apparent in Cabangile's renunciation of the African spiritual domain of ancestors and witchcraft and yet her obvious simultaneous recognition of its power both in her own life and in the lives of others.

Thabo's traditional African epistemology included his sense of self not separate from his community. His consciousness of himself in his ecology was shaken when this was invalidated by the assault event which informed him that he was no longer perceived as part of that community. He was alienated from his ecology by the event, resulting in acute anxiety and presenting in classic symptoms of PTSD according to the DSM classification.

Founder recognized the need to change his cognitions about his practice in order to meet the consciousness of the people he came to work among in the township. Unless he was able to do this he would not have been able to meet the community in useful dialogue. The questioning of his own consciousness was experienced as a struggle.

For Alice, the validation of her own existence, her self-consciousness was connected to her culturally formed cognitive understanding that this came to her through her name. The changing of her name perturbed her knowing of herself to the extent that her sense of being in the world was threatened.

In each of the cases above an adaptive process was demanded by the disturbances in consciousness and cognitions. To different extents each was challenged and some managed more than others to achieve a measure of adaptation. Those individuals who presented themselves to the author in her role as psychologist, entered a process of ecological adaptation through communication.

The Relationship Between Evolution and Ecology

Bateson (1985) discusses the implications of form, substance and difference in evolutionary processes within ecology. Prior to the development of theories of evolution, the world of living organisms was conceived of as being hierarchically arranged, with Mind (Bateson, 1985) being the impetus for all that followed. Mind often took on a supernatural connotation, being conceived of as for example, deity. The early evolutionists, beginning with Darwin, then reversed the order of living organisms by placing the smallest of living organisms at the beginning of process (Dennett, 1996). The question of *mind* was sidelined as evolutionary theories of the time focussed on survival by natural selection – the survival of discreet organisms (or species of organisms) through responding to environmental demands. Thus, the unit of evolution according to this framework is the organism itself. An important question in such a framework of explanation is "what is it made of?"

Without getting entangled in the dialectical arguments of evolutionary theories themselves, it is suggested that for the purposes of this thesis it is important to recognise the usefulness of the earlier order, the pre-Darwinian order, whereby *mind* is seen to direct evolutionary processes (Bateson, 1985). Mind becomes the unit of ecology that drives evolution in social systems. Mind in this sense, is not dissected or reduced in any biological sense, but advances a more complex, in-context approach to ecology and evolution.

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Mind in Ecology

The diagnostic approach to the stories matches these earlier descriptions of evolution as mentioned above. It suggests that there would be something *inside* Lesaka, Cabangile, Thabo, Alice, Founder and the young healer that would determine their individual survival of external demands by adapting that which lies inside them. The focus is on inherent characteristics or individual patterns of mind of the individuals. Psychologically speaking this would be intra-psychic processes.   It is not suggested here that there is no value in intra-psychic processes or inherent characteristics of individuals as humans, as these also play a role in broader ecologies. However, the intrapsychic approach tends to leave questions unanswered, such as how does the individual continue in the context? What lies beyond the immediate survival after the event? These individual patterns of mind have evolved themselves within a context to fit with that context and in which they will generally continue to live. As Bateson (1985, p. 451) suggests the unit of survival is the "flexible organism-in-its-environment".

Thabo and Alice felt their very survival threatened by the mismatch of their each personally evolved consciousness with the information they were receiving from a new socio-cultural environment. The effect was, as reported by Seedat (1997) and presented earlier in this text, an unbearable sense of alienation. The diagnostic approaches did not address the sense of alienation for Thabo and Alice, as it also would not have done so for the young healer, and so help from this source alone could only be very limited.

Relevance of Patterns of Organization
for Psychological Practice

An ecological approach to evolution, such as Bateson's, suggests that a more useful question than "what is it made of?" (as in the earlier theories of evolution) is "what is its *pattern*?" (1985, p. 449). Pattern distinguishes the mind in ecology. According to the Batesonian approach evolution driven by

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mind in ecology is characterised by cybernetic system processes. Mind (capital M) consists of subsystems of minds to which individual minds belong. The units of mind are ideas which emerge from information of differences. In this framework, it would be inconceivable to attempt to offer psychological help outside of the interaction between individual mind and contextual mind. Bateson (1985) warns specifically against this: "I suggest that it is … monstrous - and dangerous - to attempt to separate the external mind from the internal. Or to separate mind from body" (p. 464).

Thus it follows that successful treatment of psychsomatic illnesses as experienced by Thabo must address both the personal patterns of mind and the contextual patterns of mind as well as their interaction. It is then in the relationship between the different levels of mind wherein lies what we call psychological problems or wellness.

Founder attended to this relationship not only with regard to his clients at the community centre, but also in terms of his own situation in his personal ecology and the forging of a relationship between his personal ecological system and that of his clients. In speaking of his practice in Mamelodi he used the words "other ways of working" and clients bringing "news of difference". His referring to his work in Mamelodi as being "out there" indicates recognition for the difference in ecologies and thus his struggle to "appreciate the ecology". *Crisis* is a word which he used frequently in his conversation during the interview. *Crisis* is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as "turning-point" and "moment of danger or suspense". His frequent use of this word in talking about his practice "out there" emphasises his acknowledgement that his practice had to change in the ecology of the township in order to be effective. He suggests that it becomes the responsibility of the reflective practitioner to channel this "news of difference" through the universities but despairs at their "stuckness" in their own self-reified ecologies of ideas.

Patterns of Organization in Other Artefacts

Capra (2003) suggests that the central focus of a systemic analysis is the notion of organisation, or "pattern of organisation" (p. 79) of the structures which comprise the system. In social systems, structures are nonmaterial and material. The social system, or network, is sustained by processes of communication. These generate shared meaning and rules of behaviour (culture) and knowledge. The structures of a social organisation are materially embodied (documented) in the artefacts of the culture, - artworks, written texts, music, psychotherapy, healing processes and so on. These are the embodiments of the shared meanings generated by the culture's networks of communication.

Cognition and Communication in Ecology

Taking all the above into consideration, in debating "Mind", Bateson (1985) concludes (p. 461) that the immanence of Mind in the ecology subsumes the individual mind, which is a subsystem of the Mind. Generally, intrapsychic psychologies consider mind as very much consisting of the individual mind and all its processes including conscious, unconscious, and influencing autonomic systems of the body. In contrast, the ecological approach discussed here expands this notion of mind to include the entire ecosystem in evolutionary processes. These contrasting views have implications for theories of cognition and communication.

Capra (2003) criticises views of cognition which define the unit of analysis (of cognition) as being the body and mind of the individual. He reminds us that these bodies and minds do not exist in isolation, but are in continual interaction with other bodies and minds within communities of organisms: "These interactive processes are crucial to understanding the level of cognitive abstraction that is characteristic of reflective consciousness" (p. 45).

According to Maturana (1988; Maturana & Varela, 1987), communication is a result of co-ordinations of behaviour between organisms, rather than the transmission of information, a view shared by other authors in the field (Capra, 2003; Dell, 1987), the result of which is mostly unpredictable (Kenny, 1989; Mariotti, n.d.). Language and conversation belong to a social domain, bringing forth ideas in an ecology of mind.

Knowing in an Ecological Sense

Referring back to Keeney's reminder of the etymological meaning of the word diagnosis being "to know", Maturana's definition of knowing as a consensual event implies that there are those who have arrived at a consensual body of knowledge around the categorisation of diseases and pathology. This is generally the world of those who prescribe to a medical model in which diagnosis is useful and in which a restricted interpretation of certain human problems is facilitative. However, the ecology of knowledge taken in a broader sense allows for other interpretations that may be useful for other types of interventions in human problems.

If one starts at human reason from which cognitive knowledge emanates in ecology, then

> human reason does not transcend the body…but is shaped crucially by our physical nature and our bodily experience. Capra (2003, p. 53)

Discussing the phenomenon of cognition, Capra (2003) explains the cognitive scientific notion that living organisms categorise (know the world) depending on how they are embodied (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Mariotti, n.d.; von Glasersfeld, 1988). It is the self-conscious experience of the human body that directs the knowing of the world outside the human body – the environment or context, through physiological make up of the body. Many of the categorisation processes occur at an unconscious level and are acquired in

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early experiences (Capra, 2003; von Glasersfeld, 1988). These categorisation processes lead to the formation of abstract thought as a result of a process Capra refers to as "metaphorical projection" (p. 55). Capra gives the example of the metaphorical abstract idea of a "warm friendship" originating in the early bodily association of the physical warmth of being held closely.

> Our thought and language contain hundreds of primary metaphors, most of which we use without ever being aware of them…they originate in basic bodily experiences…. In our abstract thought processes, we combine primary metaphors into more complex ones, which enables us to use rich imagery and subtle conceptual structures when we reflect on our experience. For example, to think of life as a journey allows us to use our rich knowledge of journeys while reflecting on how to lead a purposeful life. (Capra, 2003, p. 55)

If Maturana's idea of communication as a socio-cultural phenomenon is accepted, then cognition must also be socio-culturally determined through knowledge being communicated in socio-cultural networks. The notion of metaphorical projections has significance for communication between the psychologist and her client. The language used by the client to describe the problems presented will allow the psychologist entry into the ecology wherein lies the solution.

The Process of Interpretation

At this point it may be useful to reflect on the interpretation/ translation processes between the psychologist, Lesaka, Rasta and Catherine in The Story. Again, drawing on Maturana's sense of communication as occurring in a consensual domain of meaning, conversations between persons

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of different cultures suggest a greater complexity than those that occur between persons of similar cultural backgrounds. The implication is that persons in communication from similar cultural backgrounds would relate more easily to language being used that reflects metaphorical projections emerging from a consensual domain. When working across different cultural backgrounds, it becomes necessary to listen more carefully to more complex possibilities, taking cues from outside the immediate conversation – as meanings are read ecologically.

Capra (2003) presents a definition of interpretation as "conceiving in the light of individual belief, judgment, or circumstance" (p. 73). Thus the process of interpretation or translation would seem to be a highly complex one involving far more than merely substituting one language for another. In the interpretation process, the idea of consciousness as a "knowing together" enters not only between the client and the psychologist, but also between client and interpreter, and between interpreter and psychologist. It is suggested that just as in a therapeutic process one psychotherapist cannot substitute for another, in a cross language conversation, one interpreter cannot substitute for another, without changing the context of the conversation. Changing the context of the conversation changes the conversation.

The psychologist in The Story became aware of the differences in the conversations she was having with her client depending on who was acting as interpreter. As communication flows reciprocally, meaning interpretation happens on both sides of the process. Meaning making also goes beyond reception and interpretation, - it includes making decisions on how to respond. The process begins with the individuals involved taking note of the messages or deciding what are messages at all. As Capra (2003) states in discussion on the communication process:

> What people notice depends on who they are as individuals, and on the cultural characteristics of their communities of practice. A message will get through to

them not only because of its volume or frequency, but because it is meaningful to them. (p. 97)

Part of the interpretation process would include the meaning making dynamics within the triangle of client-interpreter-psychologist. A different dynamic occurred when the interpreter was Catherine or Marley as they each picked up on and responded to different messages in different ways, impacting on Lesaka and the psychologist's responses and communications. In addition each member of the interpreting team would have brought individual influences such that the "knowing together" took a different direction with different players. In addition to her cognitive differences, her different ecology of ideas, Catherine brought her female-ness, her motherliness and her blackness, for example. Marley brought other influences such as stemmed from his youth, his maleness, his trendiness as well as his blackness.

The above discussion suggests that interpretation cannot be a neutral process and perhaps should be used in the practice of psychology as a tool with potential for intervention. It also has implications for interpretation processes that occur within the same language but across the socio-cultural ecologies of individuals. In such instances the client-psychologist team could interpret the messages for each other as part of the therapeutic or research intervention. Such a process contributes to the "knowing together" of the effective conversation bringing added dimensions of complexity and enrichment to a professional dialogue.

Mutual interpretation of socio-cultural ecologies is an aspect of what happened between the young healer and the Prophet. To a greater or lesser extent this occurred in each of the Other Stories with little of it happening in The Story- leaving the client feeling isolated and the psychologist ineffective.

Perhaps it could be said that recurring significant messages within a culture contribute to the creation of local knowledge. It is these recurring significant messages that create a web of traditional beliefs, myths and

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cognitions within which individuals come to know themselves and their world. This idea refers back to Barnhardt's quote (2002) in chapter two of this text, wherein he states that local knowledge is characterised by its context-bound nature, its utilitarian value, and the fact that it is arrived at through direct participation in real-world activities, ultimately forming a distinct world view.

As has been previously suggested in this thesis, local knowledge may not reflect the way *reality* is for specific cultures, but rather that specific cultures "know together" in certain ways as a matter of survival.

Thus, as Capra (2003) has suggested, there is a "fundamental unity to life" (p. 70), it is not that westerners do not experience the need for communalism or that Africans do not have the urge to compete individually, but that the "knowing together" prescribes otherwise priorities for the survival of the individuals within the culture. It could be said that the extent to which the individuals of the culture incorporate the ecology of ideas of their socio-culture norms into their personal ecologies of minds that they are able or not to accommodate *other* ideas.

Cabangile struggled with this, as did Founder, but both were able to some extent live with the resulting ambivalence. The young healer floundered until she made the shift with the assistance of the prophet who provided the "knowing togetherness" she required to ameliorate her sense of alienation.

Alice seemed unable to assimilate the new information from her new socio-cultural context with her personal ecology of ideas acquired from her cultural ecology of mind. The rejection she experienced from the medical world of her own consciousness became a psychotic-like experience. A sense of consensual cognition with the psychologist allowed her to explore her ecology of ideas more openly and together Alice and the psychologist found a way forward. A similar process occurred with Thabo.

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Change in Social Domains

There is a fundamental unity to life…different living
 systems exhibit similar patterns of organisation…they are
 always variations on the same basic themes.
(Capra, 2003, p. 70)

The above idea applied to social networks involves complexity. Social networks are first and foremost networks of communication involving symbolic language, cultural constraints, relationships of power and so on, as have been discussed in sections above.

Ecological theories presented here (Capra, 2003; Kenny, 1989; Maturana, 1988) suggest that the way to effect change in social systems is through perturbations or disturbances rather than through mechanistic control. This idea of perturbation follows from the discussions of cognition, communication and meaning making, above. Thus, perturbations in an ecology give rise to punctuations which define psychological problems, but the dissolution lies in further perturbations (for change) which may be more ecologically congruent. Because of the unpredictable nature of much of communication and meaning making and therefore behaviour (Gergen, 1997), especially across different ecological contexts, it is not always easy to direct or predict change in living systems. Capra (2003) stresses that it is the meaningfulness of the perturbations for change that are important in effecting change.

This idea emphasises the importance for the psychologist to enter into meaning-full conversations with clients or research participants so that meaningful perturbations may be delivered into the communication system.

An important aspect of psychology training programmes is some form of self-development or personal growth in the trainees. Reflecting on Seedat's (1997) description (presented in chapter four) of his own professional training

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experience, it is likely that training conversations did not speak to his personal socio-cultural context. Meaningful perturbations, intended to disturb his personal ecology into personal change, did not reach him. He was left feeling alienated. The training conversations existed in a closed cultural network of meaning, other than his own.

<div align="center">The Ecology of Healing</div>

Why and how healing takes place in relationship between a psychotherapist (or healer, shaman, prophet) and the client is possibly more clearly explained by Maturana's theory of autopoiesis (1988) and the structural coupling of systems, than it is by Bateson's notions of ecology of mind or Capra's theories of connections between living systems. The above discussions have shown that relationship is crucial to the process of healing and the following section will attempt to suggest some explanations from Maturana's theory of ecology.

A reflection on Maturana's explanation of love and falling in love from his theory of Living Systems, inspires the proposal that this can be used to discuss processes of healing. According to Maturana (1988), each living system, in this case individuals such as Alice or Thabo, has a unique and closed structure that characterises it from any other individual. These living systems exist, or drift (Maturana, 1988), in a medium with which they need be congruent in order to survive. Living systems, existing or drifting in ecological proximity to any other individual, form part of the medium for that individual. As has already been stated there must be congruency between living systems and their medium, or context. When there is not congruency then there follows an adaptation process until mutual survival is possible. In this way persons influence each other to change. When two individuals fall in love they change in a way that they are able to share a domain of existence for the time that they are in love. They exist in a state of mutual acceptance (Maturana, 1988). Kenny explains Maturana's conception of love as being "a path of (structural)

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drift together. Within this co-ontogenic drift new phenomena will arise immediately" (Kenny, 1989, part 1, para. 2; Maturana, 1988).

It is possible to draw parallels between the social condition called love and the social, coordinated domain of activities entailing mutual acceptance (Maturana, 1988), called healing. The therapist is required to have skills that allow her to facilitate the relationship, through conversation, within the bounds of its purpose. However, for the duration of the therapeutic relationship the therapist and client continue in a co-ontogenic drift in which new phenomena are encouraged to arise although the predictability of exactly when, how and what, may be low (Kenny, 1989).

Attributing causal factors to psychopathology is, according to Kenny, reductionistic and the categorising of psychopathology owes more to the "consensual confines of …[the] observer community" than the behaviour of the observed (final section, para. 8). According to Maturana, healing happens spontaneously within the client when the conditions of the relationship environment are conducive to change. This implies a mutual acceptance and, in lay terms, a connectedness within a shared understanding.

Conclusion

The Stories and in places other texts presented in this thesis have been explored from an ecological perspective. The focus has been on therapeutic and research possibilities in psychology. The explorations seem to have yielded more fit-ting possibilities offering congruent solutions to human problems in socio-cultural contexts. The following chapter will provide some concluding comments to the study.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Concerning the ways in which methods circumscribe the possible constructions of research subjects, the power relations inherent in the positioning of subjects, and the distribution of benefits from the research, outcomes should be of focal concern.
(Gergen & Gergen, 1997, p. 33)

Each versum of the multiversa is equally valid if not equally pleasant to be part of, and disagreements between observers, when they arise not from trivial logical mistakes within the same versum, but from the observers standing in different versa, will have to be solved...through the generation of a common versum through coexistence in mutual acceptance. In the multiversa coexistence demands consensus, that is, common knowledge.
(Maturana, 1986, p.14).

The closing discussion that comprises this chapter will reflect on the process of the study and to where the flow of thought has taken the author. As has been previously stated the study began with a perturbation in the ecology of ideas of the author as she attempted to practice her discipline in a context foreign to her own. This is perhaps the reverse of what more commonly happens in South Africa at present when still many more white and black westernised psychologists, and those black psychologists who are not westernised before training, become westernised practitioners through it, practice in the local context. Very few psychological services are available outside the still dominant white areas of living spaces at a high fee for most and thus psychologists tend to see only the few who can afford private services

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either through costly medical insurances or out of their own pockets. Non-western persons who either buy or are appropriated into such services, enter a western dominated domain encompassed and constricted by its conceptual structures. Yet the majority of the people of South Africa continue to live somewhere between the two ecologies. Practitioners trained in similar paradigms of practice provide the very meagre state sponsored services. While the focus of this study has been set on the situation in South Africa, it is suggested that the findings of this study could be useful to any other context in which psychology as a western discipline is being practiced among non-western peoples. In fact, when it is considered that each conversation is a cross-cultural event (Lifschitz & van Niekerk, 1990), the ideas emerging from this study may be useful to any therapeutic process.

This author found herself an estranged practitioner in an alien ecology trying to reach people who conceived of the world differently from the way she did. For a long time she firmly believed that it was a question of language and that learning to speak a new dialect was important for her to be effective as a practitioner in that context. What she did not fully realise at that stage was that languages really are more than words and semantics. The language that she needed to learn did not consist of words so much as it did of ideas forming mind in ecology.   Even her own self-reflection and personal development kept her locked in her own ecology of ideas.

Training and Epistemology in an Ecology of Mind

There is no place in psychology, or even discursive psychology, for critical work to start. A critical psychology has to be construed from theoretical resources, life experiences and political identities outside *the discipline.*
Ian Parker (1997, in Fox & Prilleltensky, p. 298)

Training in psychological practice occurs from within a rich context of western thought that is most often self-critiqued and seldom critiqued from the

outside. Thus, shifts happen within the western epistemology of psychology but by its very nature, epistemology perpetuates itself. Reviewing the more recent history of psychological theory for practice, some of the few major shifts in thinking have been effected by theorists from outside the field (Kaye, 2000; Parker, 1999c). The reasons for this may be suggested in the preceding discussions of ecology of mind; by the controlling role epistemology plays in theory formation. In this role, epistemology can be likened to the eco-evolutionary structures described by Capra, Maturana, Bateson and other natural science authors discussed in the previous chapter when describing the limitations of sensory perceptions of the world. Just as sensory preceptors of organisms determine the limits of what may be perceived, epistemology contracted by mind prescribes limitations to what may be known.

Feral children raised by wolves become unable to speak human language after a while (Kenny, 1985). Similarly, students and trainees in psychology in the mainstream evolve academic 'ears' and 'eyes' for the western ecology of mind. Like the feral children who, after being introduced to human society, "never learn to speak, although they may know a few words" (Kenny, 1985, part 1, para. 17), such students are probably not easily able to acquire the language of the *other*, the non-western.

Because of the power differentials between west and non-west expressed in the arrogance and hegemony of the west, it is usual for the westerner to expect the non-westerner to make the change, to do the learning, to acquire the language. Contrarily, it is the contention of this author that precisely because the psychologist holds a possibly inescapable measure of power in a client-psychologist, or research participant-researcher relationship, the psychologist is accountable and responsible for reaching the other. The questions to be posed thus are how do psychologists do this and how do trainers train students to do this? When psychologists and trainees are required to work in settings other than their own, it becomes the psychologists' or trainers' task to facilitate the softening of epistemological boundaries. Some proposals on how this could be approached are set out in a further section below.

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Approaching Diversity

*The challenge has been to accept and celebrate the diversity, the ambivalence, the uncertainty, the **unknown**, the changing, the hidden and the visible.* (chap. 2 of this text)

Interrogation, if not suspension, or deliberate subversion of one's own beliefs, myths, and knowledge in one's own personal and cultural ecologies of ideas may be a necessary pre-requisite to making any meaningful contribution to knowledge production or practice in areas of psychology which operate outside of the mainstream Euro-American world. Such an attitude would allow the psychologist researcher or practitioner to be sympathetic to Parker's view when he states, "we do not discover psychology but live and *produce* it" (Parker, 1999c, p. 13). What the psychologist may need to recognise is that she does not live it and produce it for herself alone, but for the target group of her practice. When that target group is different from her own then she needs to question her life and her work.

Psychology – A Discipline for Change?

It is necessary to refer back to the notion that psychology as a discipline, seemingly and ironically, does not take easily to change. It has often been left to outsiders to introduce new ideas into the discipline (mentioned above). Changes in socio-political arenas such as homosexual rights, gender equality, racial equality and non-discrimination, and so on, have not been effected so much by psychology, as they have been by politics and economics, mainly.

Indeed, psychology has often been criticised for its reluctance to take a moral and ethical social position, the discussion of which has been presented in earlier sections of this thesis. In the name of neutrality (non-political affiliation), the overall effect has been the evolvement of an insular, self-serving discipline. Part of this is probably a result of the strong focus on the

individual in mainstream psychology – a mainstream interest - and only recent interest in the socio-cultural context, as has been discussed. Accompanying this shift of interest is an imperative to research the relationship between people, - both as individuals and as human systems, - and their contexts.

As psychology turns its gaze outwards, adopting new ways of thinking about humanity in terms of networks, systems, cognitive and communication processes, and social dynamics, a kind of second order cybernetic (Capra, 2003) stance impels it to recognise its own impact on human systems. This awareness thus awakened insists on a deliberate position. The psychologist can no longer consider herself a neutral observer of human behaviour, but must recognise herself as a player, as an agent, as a proactive member of a human system, both subject to and protagonist of the rules of the processes she describes.

Taking a Meta Level for Globalisation and Diversity

It has been suggested earlier in this study that harmony between globalisation movements and local ecologies should be sought. The study has explored issues around both approaches and suggested that either end of the continuum is not useful in finding a praxis mode for psychologists in a multicultural world. In chapter seven the study took what could be referred to (metaphorically) as a meta position to examine processes and relationships in terms of ecological dynamics. The engagement and dialogues that occur in psychological practice emerge from a local level and are saturated in content. However, there is a danger that if these dialogues are not reflected on at a meta level the content of the dialogues becomes reified. Thus it is important to distinguish between the levels of involvement of the psychologist with her clients and research participants when she works with them, and then when she reflects on her work. At the first level she functions as a helper, a change agent or a consultant, subjugating her power as expert to the relationship process. At the meta level she reflects on her activities in the role of a responsible,

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accountable expert in her field who minimises the distinction between *practicing* psychology and *producing* it.

The meta position allows the psychologist to disengage from the content of dialogue as practitioner and researcher, while reflecting on the process of her work. Watzlawick (n.d.) has stated that "nothing inside a frame can state, or even ask, anything about that frame". While engaged in the content of dialogue, the psychologist remains within the frame, or epistemology, of the dialogue and thus is unable to critically question what happens inside it (Parker, 1997). In order to effectively critique practice, which subsumes knowledge and methodology, the practitioner must take a position outside the frame of practice.

It may be argued that the meta position of ecological and evolutionary processes emerges from a western ecology of ideas. However, the fact that this framework allows the researcher to comment on both western and non-western frames independent of content, suggests that it may not really belong to either, but has the potential to transcend both. It is not in any way being suggested here that this is a unique position, nor without recognition that the concepts used may be subject to their own critique, but rather that the lenses being proposed here in this meta (or outside) position may be useful. This advantage facilitates a process of validating the other's world, seeking a solution from within the ecology of ideas of that world, and thus finding or creating solutions with a measure of ecological validity.

The meta position of ecological and evolutionary processes is the level at which the reflection of practice has been taken in this study. Thinking about content in terms of ecological and evolutionary processes can be universally applied to human social systems and thus the processes may be said to be global in nature. The processes include the practitioner as an integral part of the dynamics, and without a clear recognition of this fact dialogue on the local (content) level will remain disengaged. The psychologist and the other can only dialogue meaningfully within a shared ecology of ideas. The notion of a shared ecology of ideas implies a committed personal involvement on the part

of the psychologist to learn about the other's ecology of mind and to question her own.

Training in psychology as a discipline often engages trainees intrapersonally intensively at the local level. Trainees learn the language of psychology and most often this is from within an ecology of ideas already familiar to them. The challenge is to enable trainees to learn to "know with" their clients or research participants through learning how to learn languages of other epistemologies.

Psychotherapy Practice and Ecology of Mind

Major models of psychotherapy practice continue to rely much on psychodynamic and psychoanalytic foundations. Exceptions to these processes have emerged with systemic therapies and narrative approaches especially popular in new world countries such as Australia, New Zealand and to some extent, South Africa (Parker, 1999c). However, training in South Africa at major universities remains largely focussed on traditional theories of psychotherapies. In an attempt, possibly to ameliorate the ill fit of traditional approaches, some practitioners have turned to the newly developing field of community psychology (Ka Sigogo, Hooper, Long, Lykes, Wilson & Zietkiewicz, 2004) that aims to address problems more broadly than only in the individual. Other sympathetic theoretical frameworks include those of cross cultural psychology and cultural psychology. These have, however, also been criticised for remaining subject to western metatheories (Gergen & Gergen, 1997).

What this study has attempted to achieve is to suggest a shift in the meta-reflection of where dis-solutions to problems lie. Psychotherapists working from even systemic approaches may do so without addressing the ecological origins of conscious human experience. The embeddedness of consciousness in ecologies of mind has been discussed in chapter seven and the importance of "knowing together" for psychologist and client has been discussed. Theories, methodologies and techniques all form part of the

knowledge bank that psychologists use in practice whether it be in the fields of psychotherapy, assessment or research. The question must now be posed as how to facilitate the shift in thinking for trainees and psychologists.

Connecting with the Context

An initial task for psychologists may be to critically explore an understanding of what Mind means in terms of consciousness and conscious experience. This could be accomplished on a very practical level in training. A self-reflexive process may be recommended. Questions to deliberate on may include the sort of questions suggested below:

- What is consciousness?
- What constitutes knowledge?
- Does knowledge differ from myth, belief, custom, and value, and how?
- Do these concepts play different roles in the lives of people?
- What constitutes ideas?
- How do ideas and knowledge interface with each other?
- How do ideas and knowledge interface with consciousness?
- Contemplate the notion of an ecology of ideas; mind.
- Do the concepts myth, belief, custom and value play different roles in the ecologies of minds?
- What is my own ecology of mind?
- How does my own ecology of mind sustain my living in my ecology?
- How does my own ecology of mind facilitate the acquisition of knowledge that is disseminated in my academic institutions (or not)?
- What kinds of knowledge alienate me?
- What kinds of experience alienate me?
- What is my personal experience of alienation?
- How do I know what I experience?

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- What is experience?

- How do I language about experience?

- How does my language reflect my knowledge and experience?

- How does my experience inform my language?

- How does my language reflect the myths, beliefs and customs of my culture?

- Can I language in any other way?

- How do all of the above close me from the *other* in a multi-cultural society?

Knowledge and Academia

It has been observed that it is possible to complete entire programmes and courses at South African universities without ever reading one book by a *black African* author (Maluleke, n.d). 'Black African' is used here to suggest the frame of reference of the authors as being of an African perspective as opposed to a western one. It is probably just as possible to escape reading even one journal article or published paper, or even unpublished paper by a *black African* author. While it is not being suggested that so-called *African* knowledge content is essential reading, it does give some indication that students generally have little opportunity for exposure to the thoughts of scholars other than western in South Africa. Reading the thoughts of scholars other than western permits sensitisation to different traditions of dialogue, to the ways in which other "intelligibilities enter into cultural life and are used by people to sustain, question, or abandon certain patterns of cultural life" (Gergen & Gergen, 1997, p. 33).

What have been presented in this study are some voices of the South African people who have previously been kept apart from general psychological services. As stated above, the voices of non-western scholars or scholars with non-western ideas are also generally kept apart from the mainstream of the discipline as it is practiced in South Africa. Thus, because trainees are generally prescribed texts only from western authors, trainees and

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psychologists become locked into the western ecology of mind: insulated from ecologies of ideas of *otherness*.

Students in almost all disciplines (other than psychology) are expected to become familiar with the contexts in which they study. How is it then that psychology trainees are not required to acquaint themselves with the cultural ecology of the majority of the population of the country in which they train and aim to practice?

It is not surprising then that ten years into democracy (the time of writing), appropriate psychological tests have not yet been developed for the majority of the population. The majority of the population being non-western is still considered *other*. Ten years into democracy in South Africa finds many psychologists still convinced that interventions, practice theories, research methodologies and teaching of the discipline, as it has been developed in the west, is universally appropriate for all students of all cultures.

> Psychology...will achieve a more effective stance toward the culture at large when it comes to recognize that the folk psychology of ordinary people is not just a set of self-assuaging illusions, but the culture's beliefs and working hypotheses about what makes it possible and fulfilling for people to live together.…   It is where psychology starts and wherein it is inseparable from anthropology. (Bruner, 1990, p. 32)

Final Word

It is hoped that, through the exploration of the local texts presented in this study, some of the above may have been achieved. It is also hoped that, through some of the suggestions made above for the training of future and even existing psychologists, more will go some way towards achieving the above.

It is hoped that this thesis may contribute in some small way towards ensuring that in psychology in a globalising world, diversity does not become monoculture; ecology is more than engineering, and that life is far, far more than a commodity.

It is hoped that globalisation will in future be designed to be "inclusive, ecologically sustainable and respectful of human rights and values" (Capra, 2003, p. 187), and that "the new politics will be a cultural politics that…connects to values and issues that spring from peoples' life experiences" (Capra, 2003, p.193).

It is hoped that this document has gone some small way towards *accepting and celebrating the diversity, the ambivalence, the uncertainty, the **un-known**, the changing, the hidden and the visible* which challenges the practice of psychology in local communities in South Africa in the present.

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