CONNECTING
THE "DIVIDE":

NARRATIVES OF FIVE WHITE EDUCATORS WHO ARE CURRENTLY TEACHING IN KWAZULU NATAL, AS THE ONLY WHITE EDUCATOR IN SCHOOLS WITH PREDOMINANTLY BLACK LEARNERS.

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of the requirements for the Masters in Education Degree

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DECLARATION

I, Melissa Barnes, declare that this thesis is my own work,
unless specified in the text.
The thesis has been submitted in the School of Education
in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science
at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban, Howard Campus,
for the Masters Degree.
It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination
in any other University.

MelBarnes.
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Melissa Barnes

Durban, _____31_____ day of ___January___ 20 _06_

For my lovely daughter, Courtney

ABSTRACT

This thesis, based on a visual study of five educators in South Africa, primarily concerns itself with the experiences of white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners. More specifically, my study is an exploratory research effort, which examines three research objectives. These are: (1) what are the experiences of white educators teaching in schools with predominantly black learners; (2) why are their experiences constructed in such ways; and (3) what is the relationship, if any, between their experiences and their social identities – such as race, gender and class.

I selected ethnography as a research tool for this study, in that it encompasses the examining of visual representations for information about people, which are visual documents produced by those under study. Photographs can become stitched into the fabric of people's lives, reflecting and representing social persons and social relationships. It is therefore hoped that the visual images that the five white participants of this study take, disclose the texture of their own experiences of teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. The study participants are all currently teaching in schools within KwaZulu Natal.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
A&C	Arts and Culture
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DoE	Department of Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Act
EMS	Economic Management Science
HDE	Higher Diploma in Education
HOD	Head of Department
HSS	Human Social Sciences
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LO	Life Orientation
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SASA	South African Schools Act
SMT	School Management Team
TECH.	Technology
UNISA	University of South Africa
USAPE	Union of South African Profession Educators
UTE	Unemployed Temporary Educator
VSP	Voluntary Severance package

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter focuses on contextualizing the study where I outline my topic, rational for the study, critical questions and difficulties with terminology. Attention is then focused on the research design and format of my thesis.

1.1   Contextualizing the Study

During the apartheid era, the South African state had organized separate ministries of education for each of the so-called racial groups. Clearly, the post-apartheid state had to find new ways of operating that broke away from the previous apartheid regime's racist and authoritarian practices. During the negotiations for the new South African constitution, the ANC proposed a total transformation of the state to reform the new government and its institutions - at every level. This entailed "changing all the educational bureaucracies, their entrenched practices and personalities, in order that a single, non-racial educational system in South Africa was established" (Carrim 1998: 303).

The teacher rationalization policies were originally embarked upon to effect equity between rich and poor schools. During the drafting of the 1996 rationalization and redeployment policy, it was believed that the agreements negotiated would lead to an orderly rationalization and redeployment of the educating force. The agreement called for the compulsory transfer for excess educators who were willing to relocate

to historically disadvantaged areas. It was believed that the redeployment would finally achieve a balanced learner: educator ratio across the entire country (Chudnovsky 1998: 3).

Although there is increasing integration amongst learners, racial representivity among teaching staff compositions is lacking. In most public schools for predominantly black learners "there is little or no teaching staff deracialisation" (MacFarlane 2003: 4). Schools with predominantly black learners still consist of only one or two educators of other racial groups, due to the controversial rationalization and redeployment policy (Biyela 2001: 2).

Since occupying a state paid post in June 2003 as the only white educator in a secondary school with predominantly black learners, I have become interested in white educators' experiences of teaching in similar contexts as mine. My experience initially began with a portion of the teaching staff strongly opposed to and not in favour of accepting me into their social context. I subsequently learnt that many of the educators felt "threatened", "intimidated" and "annoyed" by my presence. Despite this, I began my new teaching post with an idealistic view that my involvement with the school would reflect the changing dynamics of South Africa and that if anything, my racial identity surely would not interfere with my professional identity. In retrospect, my thinking was largely based on the premise that if no notice was given to my whiteness, then my whiteness would loose its social power and privilege. While acknowledging white privilege (McIntosh 1993), there are also numerous challenges I cannot ignore. On occasion I experienced isolation - the feeling of not belonging and out of place, I felt outnumbered, distrusted and sometimes feared. These are just some of my experiences.

Literature that examines newly evolving, racially integrated environments is growing within the field of Social Justice (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Erasmus, 2001; James and Lever, 2001; Powell, 2001; Ramphele, 2001 and Steyn, 2001). An abundance of research conducted on race and racism amongst learners in desegregated schools is also evident (Dolby, 2001; Harber, 1998; Moletsane, 1999; Soudien, 1994; Tatum, 1997; Valley and Dalamba, 1999).

However, the above mentioned researchers do not explore the possibilities of racial tensions, or the impact of racial dynamics amongst educators. A literature search revealed that there is a gap in research on the experiences of white educators teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. This is where my study contributes to the small body of literature on the topic of the experiences of white South African educators, who are currently teaching as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners.

1.1.1 Critical Questions

Recognizing the need to uncover the exact nature of the engagement of white South African educators in schools with predominantly black learners, it became imperative to ask questions which yielded greater understanding into the individual experiences of the five white educators in my study. More specifically, my study is an exploratory research effort, which examines the following research questions:

(1)   What are the experiences of white educators teaching in schools with predominantly black learners?

(2)   Why are their experiences constructed in such ways?

(3)   What is the relationship, if any, between their experiences and their social identities – such as race, gender and class?

I would have also liked to have studied the experiences of black South African educators, who were currently teaching as the only black educator in schools with predominantly white learners; however, this would have been too large a focus for this thesis.

1.1.2 The Use of Racial Categories

I use racial categories in my thesis and perhaps, before I begin, it is necessary for me to clarify my understanding and use of race.   Under the South African apartheid system, each individual was assigned one of four population categories: african, coloured, Indian or white.   Race however, was never an absolutely stable category under this system.   It was continually reformed to define specific racial categories to justify the apartheid government's racist policies (Dolby 2001: 22), which lent itself easily to crude scientific racist genetic theories.   Drawing on the work of Manzo (1992) Dolby (2001: 22) advocates that the apartheid system was fuelled by an inconsistent application of population categorization.   In order to maintain political and economic domination, the racist government deployed race in multiple and contradictory ways which maintained and consolidated white privilege, power, control and forms of exclusion.

The categories white and black (black includes coloured and Indian), are thus part of the nomenclature of the apartheid system, and to some extent continue to shape post-apartheid understandings.   Like Dolby (2001: 133) I have utilized "black" in this

thesis as an overarching term for africans, coloureds and Indians. However, I reject the argument that the use of the term "black" reinforces the dichotomy of "black: white" that underpins racial thought. I also believe that the term "non-white" is problematic because of its negativity, as if people who are not white only have identity by virtue of what they are not. Like McMillan (2003: 114), I argue for the use of black, coloured, Indian and white in sociological description of the South African reality, and reject the racism and racial essentialism in the use of racial labels.

1.2   The Research Design

My research is a qualitative study of the experiences of five white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 148) purport that the social constructionist approach treats people as though their thoughts, feelings and experiences were the products of systems of meaning, that exist at a social rather than an individual level. It is for these reasons that the research strategy employed visual ethnography supported by semi-structured interviews - both qualitative research tools. These techniques are particularly suited for understanding the participants' experiences and why their experiences have been constructed in particular ways.

1.2.1 Participants

For the purpose of my study the following criteria was used in the selection of participants. Firstly, participants were identified as white educators. Secondly, participants had to be currently teaching in a school with predominantly black

learners. And thirdly, participants had to be the only white educator on the schools teaching staff.

1.2.2 Analysis of Data

The analysis involved a cross-case analysis for the purpose of theorizing from experiences drawn from both the debriefing and reflective interview data. The intention of the cross-case analysis is to consider the issue of transferability of the emerging themes across both interviews, and to deepen understanding and explanation of particular experiences by examining similarities and differences.

My study is organized in the following manner:

1.3   Format of the Study

Chapter Two: **Literature Review** is structured into six parts and provides an overview of some of the available literature on white educators' experiences, relevant to this study. Literature on "teacher identity" (Hoadley 2002; McLaughlin and Talbert 1994) is presented, that forms a backdrop for the discussion of white educators' experiences. Literature relating to white educators' experiences has come primarily from the United States (Dickar 1996) which urges white educators to examine the discourses on race which they deploy. The chapter then incorporates theses on Indian educators' perceptions towards african learners in a desegregated school (Bhana 1994), and black educators' experiences in the changed racial context of a formerly white school (Raghoonanan 2005). Literature on racial identity (Steyn, 2001) and social identities (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992) is then reviewed. As I am

exploring the experiences of white educators, racial identity is a critical component to my study.

Chapter Three: Socio-Historical Context of South African education, discusses the teacher rationalization and redeployment policies which were employed by post-apartheid South Africa. These are important settings to place in context the focus of my study. The purpose of this chapter is to offer an examination of the teacher rationalization and redeployment policies formulated and implemented in post-apartheid education, as a process of understanding the effects on the experiences of the five participants.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology provides substantiation for the qualitative research approach selected for my study. This chapter then gives a synopsis of ethnomethodology, emphasising ethnography and semi-structured interviews as appropriate tools for exploring the experiences of the five white educators. Justification is then given for the selection of participants, and the data collection plan which outlines the questions used for my study. The latter part of the chapter provides the data analysis technique, validity and reliability, and ethics and moral issues of the research.

Chapter Five: Mapping the Memories focuses on two of my participants' narratives undertaken in the debriefing interview. These narratives are included as a means to understand how the participants in my study, came to teach as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners. These individual narratives form an important setting for my thesis. In this chapter, I present a summary table of the five participants outlining biographical, teaching expertise and school composition

information.

Chapter Six: **Discussion** is an analysis of the data that emerged from the five white educators' visual images and narratives. This chapter is clustered into five themes that share certain patterns and reveal significant similarities.

Chapter Seven: **Conclusion** highlights the outcomes of my study. Limitations and implication for further research is then discussed.

In the next chapter, I present the theoretical review that relates to white educators' experiences of teaching within changed racial contexts.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter, structured in six parts, provides an overview of some of the available literature on white educators' experiences relevant to my study. In the first part of this chapter, literature on "teacher identity" is presented. In discussing the theory of "teachers' identity", Hoadley (2002: 46) suggests that educators' work identities are ultimately regulated through the way in which they are positioned in relation to their work. McLaughlin and Talbert (1994: 4) argue for the importance of "teacher dispositions, how teachers' think and feel about what they do, their attitudes, beliefs, feelings and values" regarding their work and who they teach. Although my study does not concern itself specifically with "teacher identity", many of the concerns that appear form a backdrop for the discussion of white educators' experiences.

The main body of literature relating to white educators' experiences has come primarily from the United States and forms part two of this chapter. Dickar (1996), in her study 'Teaching in Our Underwear: The Liabilities of Whiteness in the Multi-Racial Classroom', explores the concept of exposure which informs white educators' narratives who are teaching in schools with black learners; and who experience seeing their whiteness as strange, "no longer the norm, and no longer invisible" (1996: 1). She argues that the privileges with which white educators had experienced as normal or typical because their whiteness signified power and privileged, becomes invisible, are exposed and create challenges in the classroom. Dickar (1996: 2) points out that when white educators are faced with their realization of their own differences, they deploy discourses on race to minimize the significance of racial difference. Like

Dickar (1996), Tatum (1997) argues the importance of talking about encounters with racism. While Dickar (1996: 14) urges white educators to examine the discourses on race which frame their understanding of race and racism, Tatum (1997) iterates that white educators must teach their black learners to do so as well – opening up race, including whiteness, for critical examination.

Part three then reviews theses on Indian educators' perceptions towards african learners in a desegregated school (Bhana 1994); and black educators' experiences in the changed racial context of a formerly white school (Raghoonanan 2005). Although the racial identities of the educators' in both Bhana (1994) and Raghoonanan's (2005) studies are different to the participants of my study, they are relevant for the following reasons: (1) Bhana's (1994) study brings into focus educator discourses and the need to rework rather than reject differences that educators face in a desegregated school; and (2) Raghoonanan's (2005) study is significant in highlighting the subjective experiences of educators.

Part four and five, review literature on racial identity (Steyn, 2001) and social identities (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). As I am exploring the experiences of white educators, racial identity is a critical component to my study. Steyn's (2001) research was selected as it focuses on white South Africans who are now faced with reinterpreting their old selves in the light of new knowledge and possibility. Her research relates to my own attempts in investigating why the experiences of white educators have been constructed in particular ways. My research also aims to explore the relationship, if any, between white educators' experiences and their social identities – such as race, class and gender. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1994: 94) present the argument that racism is not a necessary prerequisite of class exploitation

although it may, like gender, facilitate it, by which the authors examine how race, class and gender intersect.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the key points of the literature that has been reviewed.

2.1   Teacher Identity: The Struggle of Identity

In this, the first part of this chapter, literature on teacher identity is presented to form a backdrop for the discussion of literature which theorises white educators' experiences. In the ongoing deliberations on educators' work and professional development (Bullough, Knowles and Crow, 1991; Elbaz, 1991; Eraut, 1985; Hunt, 1987; Miller and Fredricks, 1988; Munby, 1986; Provenzo, McCloskey, Kottkamp and Cohn, 1989) "teacher identity" is too often treated as unproblematic and singular in nature (Weber and Mitchell 1995: 25). Drawing on Goodson (1980), Elbaz (1991: 7) notes that his way of viewing the educator "represents a subject who is on the one hand depersonalized … essentially interchangeable with other subjects, and on the other hand static, seen as existing outside time or unchanging." Weber and Mitchell (1995: 25) concur, stating that this static view unproblematically scripts "teacher identity" as synonymous with the educator's role and function.

Hatch and Wisniewski (1995: 123) maintain that the educator has no fixed identity but rather assumes different identities at different times. Their identities are constantly in a state of flux. How then do we see ourselves as "teacher"? A questioning of identity necessarily involves image making. Instead, Weber and

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Mitchell (1995: 26) claim that the question should rather be what role do the images of teaching silently play in colouring the voices we use to speak our identity?

Ursula Hoadley's (2002) South African article, 'The regulation of teacher work identity: core considerations', critically reviews literature on "teachers' work", to understand the mechanisms through which educators come to define what constitutes acceptable work identities. A useful distinction in the definition of "teacher identity" is that made by Welmond (1999 cited in Hoadley 2002: 40). He defines "teacher identity" in terms of 'being' and 'doing'. Being refers to educators' rights – including their contractual arrangement, pay, and what they expect as a result of being an educator. Doing is defined in terms of responsibilities – how the functions that educators are required to conduct come to be defined. According to Hoadley (2002: 40) what we know about "teacher identity" in South Africa is the result of loose categorization that has become part of common understanding. Educators, she indicates, are often spoken about as falling somewhere along a continuum from worker to professional, which are broadly categorised along racial lines.

At the level of the school, Hoadley (2002: 41) asserts that strong differentiations are made on the basis of black-trained and white-trained educators – who collectively express different definitions of their 'being' and 'doing'. Educators' identities are ultimately regulated through the way in which they are positioned in relation to their work – at the level of the school. Similarly, Samuel (1998: 48) agrees that educators develop experiences of teaching in relation to the specific educational landscape within which they are embedded. These landscapes are therefore characterized by complex intersections of social, political and biographical influences, which are unique to each context.

The way in which educators define their identity in personal ways is derived from the fact that "teachers' work" is individualized. Educators bring personal habits, thoughts, sentiments and predispositions into their schools, although at the same time, they are constrained by the institutional structure of the school (Sachs and Smith 1988, Hoadley 2002: 48).

The school structures "teachers' work" and strategies through the limited resources available to them – such as material, time, learner: educator ratio, as well as the "characteristics of the 'clientele' with whom teachers interact" (Hoadley 2002: 49). McLaughlin and Talbert (1994: 4) concur, arguing for the importance of "teacher dispositions, how teachers think and feel about what they do, their attitudes, beliefs, feelings and values" regarding their work and who they teach.

Essentially then, what dispositions are deployed by white educators who teach predominantly black learners? It is against this backdrop, that I theorise the experiences of white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners.

2.2   Theorising White Teachers' Experiences

I was not able to locate studies in the South African context which focuses on white educators currently teaching, as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners. However, Maryann Dickar's (1996) United States study, 'Teaching in Our Underwear: The Liabilities of Whiteness in the Multi-Racial Classroom', explores the concept of exposure which informs white educators' narratives who are teaching in schools with black learners. Educators start

experiencing seeing their whiteness as strange "no longer the norm, and no longer invisible" (1996: 1). These narratives exposed multiple discourses on race, which white educators employ to address difference in the classroom to understand the educational, cultural and political work they do as educators. Drawing on the work of Kohl (1967),

... "the children entered at nine and filled up the seats. They were silent and stared at me. It was a shock to see thirty-six black faces before me. No preparation helped. It is one thing to be liberal and talk, another to face something and learn that you're afraid" (1967: 13),

Dickar (1996: 1) interprets this fear and exposure as a realization of the racial divide between white educators and black learners. White educators begin to experience themselves as the "Other", where their whiteness is viewed as strange not their learners' blackness (Dickar's 1996:2). The privileges which white educators had experienced as normal, because their whiteness signified power and privilege, become invisible and is exposed to create challenges in the classroom. When white educators are faced with their realisation of their own differences, they deploy discourses on race, to minimize the significance of racial difference.

Dickar (2001: 2) identifies and explores three discourses:

- Firstly, *'Race and Power Evasive Discourses'* - what she illustrates as avoiding race by simply not seeing race;

- Secondly, *'Discourse of Deflection'* - is discourses which she describes as deflecting racism either by clinging to other marginalised identities or by blaming others and not oneself;

- Finally, *'An individualistic Discourse'* - which she explains places the onus of

success and failure on individuals and not on institutions and social structures.

All three discourses are deployed by white educators in their narratives and generally limit a dismantling of structural racism from school systems. Dickar (1996: 3) advocates that these discourses do not function discretely, but used simultaneously in numerous ways and for different strategic purposes.

In the first discourse *'Race and Power Evasive Discourses'*, Dickar (1996: 6) describes as denying the significance of race by refusing to 'see' race or difference; and by denying the power relationships embedded within those differences. She claims that the discourse on race white educators employ in the classroom, often serve to protect the privileged position of whiteness even as they appear to be opposed to racism. With evasive discourses, Dickar (1996: 13) insists that if teachers pretend not to see difference, then they obliterate the meaning of difference. By denying that our personal and collective histories inform how we "see" and live race, these discourses deny that race is historically and socially constructed. Evasive strategies avoid naming race or recognizing the significance of racial identity, in order to avoid naming the power relationships which shape those identities (Dickar 1996: 7).

In addition to *'Race and Power Evasive Discourses'*, Dickar (1996: 8) asserts that educators cope with the liabilities of whiteness by employing *'Deflecting Discourses'*. Unlike race and power evasive discourses, deflecting ones do not deny that race and difference are significant. Rather, such discourses divert attention away from the potential racism of the speaker and place blame elsewhere. Deflecting discourses often use one identity to negate another – like using your gender identity to deflect your race identity (Dickar 1996: 8). Often this discourse takes the form of 'I can't be

racist because I'm ...' and assumes that if one is a victim of societal oppression in any form, one cannot participate in the oppression of others. Dickar (1996: 9) posits that discourses of deflection enable white people to dodge accusations of bigotry, by claiming other subordinate identities. Such strategies privilege "Victim" status – you can't be an oppressor if you are the "Victim" of oppressive forces, and inform the recent trend or right wing opponents of multiculturalism and affirmative action, who claim that white men are now an "endangered species"'. She further claims that other deployments of discourses of deflection, more specifically blames someone else or another group for racism. This strategy deflects the culpability away from the speaker and places it squarely on another's shoulders, but still functions to deflect the enactment of racism away from the speaker and to enable the speaker to avoid confronting his or her own attitudes, feelings and actions.

The final discourse that Dickar (1996: 9) explores is *'Individualist Discourse'* which permeates much of contemporary culture from political speeches to television shows. This discourse is grounded in the deep traditions of liberalism in Western culture which centres upon the free individual operating within a free market (Dickar 1996: 9). Individualist discourses de-emphasize the structures of social relations which set the parameters on an individual's life chances - like racism, sexism, classism and homophobia. At their worst, and unfortunately far too frequently, these discourses are deployed to blame the victims of structural oppression for their failure. Dickar (1996: 10) contends that when we refuse to recognize circumstances outside the individual, the only explanation for failure is individual inadequacy, even in the face of profound and sometimes obvious inequality. In many ways individualist discourses are appealing because social change is a slow process and an individual discourse offers immediate, logical and obvious solutions to concrete problems. Although these

discourses can encourage black learners to imagine their futures, to strive for goals and to take responsibility for their actions, the limitations of individualist discourses are that they leave those who employ them without a way of explaining structural oppression. Such limitations become obvious when black learners have to confront complex issues of race, class and gender but have only an individualist vocabulary to draw upon (Dickar 1996: 10). The deployment of individualist discourses may help black learners see themselves as active agents, but also function to deny crucial aspects of their experience and cultural world views. This leaves black learners confused and inarticulate. As argued by Dickar (1996: 13), class and racial hierarchies are reinforced through the assumption that individualist discourses are common sense.

In reporting her findings, Dickar (1996) concludes that by denying that our personal and collective histories inform how we 'see' and live race, *'Race and Power Evasive Discourses'* deny that race is historically and socially constructed. Secondly, *'Deflecting Discourses'* allows the speaker to avoid confronting his or her own role in the continued practice of racism. They also flatten out race by posing relationships of dominance and subordination as polar relationships – we are one or the other. Such conceptualizations also ignore the complex dynamics of our subject positions. We are always raced, classed, gendered, and sexual beings and move along a continuum of power, our intersecting identities always mediating our experiences. Deflecting discourses oversimplify the workings of oppressive hierarchies and are employed to avoid confronting our own racism or our own privileged positions. Finally, *'Individualist Discourses'* reproduce white middle class norms as common sense and leave black learners unable to explain their experiences as members of marginalised communities. These discourses leave black learners no way to understand their

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experiences outside of themselves, even though they often experience discrimination and racism because of their collective identities.

Taken together, Dickar (1996: 14) iterates that these discourses function to protect whiteness by leaving it unprobed and by simplifying the institutions of racism, removing it from a cultural context and minimizing the ways it shapes all of our lives. She maintains that if white educators are to participate in anti-racist pedagogy, they must begin by examining the discourses on race which frame their understanding of race and racism.

Similarly, but from a different perspective, Beverly Tatum's (1997) work 'Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?' explores the five stages of black racial identity development. These are "pre-encounter, encounter, immersion /emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment" (1997: 55). In the same light as Dickar (1996) who argues that white educators employ race and power evasive discourses when teaching black learners; Tatum (1997: 55) argues that in the first stage of black racial identity development, a black adolescent absorbs many of the beliefs and values of the dominant white culture. Including the idea that it is better to be white in order to find acceptance among white educators. Tatum (1997: 63) describes one such strategy as 'racelessness', wherein black learners assimilate into the dominant group by de-emphasizing characteristics that might identify them as members of the subordinant group.

Tatum (1997: 55) claims that the stereotypes, omissions, and distortions that reinforce notions of white superiority, are breathed in by black children simply as a function of being socialized in a Eurocentric culture. She asserts that black adolescents begin to

value the role models, life styles, and images of beauty represented by the dominant group, more highly than those of their own cultural group. Dickar (1996: 14) concurs, stating that the individualist discourses employed by white educators reproduce white middle class norms as common sense.

Like Dickar (1996), Tatum (1997) argues for the importance of talking about encounters with racism. Dickar (1996: 14) urges white educators to examine the discourses on race which frame their understanding of race and racism, and iterates that white educators must teach black learners to open up race, including whiteness, for critical examination. Tatum (1997: 73) concurs, by indicating that if we allow black learners to talk about issues of racial encounters this ultimately allows black learners to come to terms with their own sense of identity. This then enables white educators to understand the unique challenges facing black adolescents. If our aim as white educators is "to be able to acknowledge the reality of racism and to respond effectively to it" (Tatum 1997: 74), we need to encourage our black learners' sense of identity development instead of impeding it, by deploying Dickar's (1996) multiple discourses on race.

2.3   South African Literature: Theorising Teachers' Experiences

In this, the third part of this chapter, literature on black educators' experiences particular to South Africa, is presented. These studies do not concern themselves specifically, or exclusively to white educators' experiences of teaching black learners. However, the themes that appeared in these studies are similar to experiences and identities formed within the present shift of our educational terrain. These studies were included as a means of supplementing the small body of South African literature

available on the experiences of white educators, who are currently teaching as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners.

An exploration of Indian educators perceptions towards african learners, post-apartheid South Africa, is the focus of Deevia Bhana's (1994) Masters thesis 'Indian Teachers and African Pupils in a Desegregating School in Durban: a case of turning the Other into the Same?'. Her study is unique in that it focuses on the processes through which Indian educators constitute themselves in relation to the african learner. Bhana (1994) explores educators' perceptions about the african learner which is based upon perceived differences, and result in subtle practices of exclusion. The teachers in this study are able to legitimate their positions through different processes and discursive practices. Their own positions become dominant while the discourse that african learners present becomes marginalised.

As a limit to her study, Bhana (1994: 80) indicates her research was small and confined to one school in the process of desegregation. Bhana's (1994) research is located in the specific context of a school that was historically demarcated for Indian learners, in which the african learner is perceived as the "Other". She therefore claims that more research is needed to determine the construction of the "Other" in schools that were historically demarcated for white learners where african, Indian and coloured learners contribute to classroom dynamics.

Bhana's (1994) study has brought into focus the task for all educators to be reflective and critical of themselves and their discourses. Educators need to rework rather than reject differences that they are faced with, in the context of desegregated schools.

Reena Raghoonanan's (2005) Masters thesis 'Mapping Non-White *(sic)* Educators' Experiences in Changed Racial Contexts', focuses on newly formed interracial contact amongst educators in schools. It concentrates specifically, on four black educators who are currently teaching in an ex model C school. Her work explores the critical question of black educators' perceptions and understandings of their experiences within this school. Raghoonanan's (2005) findings suggest critical awareness of race and acts of racism amongst black educators in this context. She further unravels the subtle and insidious forms of racism into themes, while exploring relationships amongst white and black educators in her specific school site. Her findings also provide evidence that schools are hot spots for racism amongst educators and explored notions of ambivalence, progressiveness, the reconstruction of identities and spatial fights.

Raghoonanan's (2005) study is significant in highlighting the subjective experiences of black educators in a racially changed school context. Raghoonanan's (2005: 47) participants differed in the way that they approached issues of racism – some were progressive whereas others were ambivalent. She indicates that participants found themselves rethinking their identity and questioning their positions as racialised individuals in this school. However, educators differ in the way that they respond to racial contexts. Thus, Raghoonanan (2005: 50) cautions that it is difficult to justify all black educators' behaviour as a reaction to their subjugated statues and race. As a limitation to her study, Raghoonanan (2005: 50) assert that we would have to consider variables such as personality, gender, class, educational levels, sexuality and problem-solving skills, which could impact on black educators experiences. Raghoonanan (2005: 51) finds that efforts towards racial integration in the particular school site selected for research, have not yet shown desirable results.

2.4   White Identity: Confronting Whiteness from Within

A critical component to my study is racial identity as I am exploring the experiences of white educators. As we move into an age in which cultural space becomes unfixed and unsettled, it becomes increasingly difficult to deny that different people are increasingly bound to each other in a myriad of complex relationships. Giroux (1994: 40) argues that modes of representation that legitimated a world of strict cultural separation, collective identities, and rigid boundaries seem hopelessly outdated, as the urban landscape is being rewritten within new shifting borders of identity, race and ethnicity.

New cultural spaces, identities, texts and crossings have created something of a panic amongst white groups who still control dominant regimes of representation. The purpose of my study is to explore the experiences of white educators who are now teaching in 'new' terrain: as the only white educator in a school with predominantly black learners. Melissa Steyn's (2001) research 'Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be', focuses on white South Africans who are now faced with reinterpreting their old selves in the light of new knowledge and possibility. In other words, Steyn (2001: 99) proclaims that there are discourses circulating within the new South Africa. While not encouraging abandoning of white identity, these discourses do envision possibilities of new forms of subjectivity with more inclusive structures.

Steyn's (2001) research is the result of a sample of fifty-nine white South Africans who were asked their perception of, and attitudes to, being white in the new South Africa. She outlines what can be seen as the emergence of alternative and competing narratives which describe, explain and produce whiteness in the changing South

Africa. Although some of Steyn's (2001) narratives have been present in South Africa for centuries, some draw on new discursive resources. These are the white South Africans who are moving away from their whiteness in different ways.

Unlike other narratives Steyn (2001: 115) discusses in previous chapters, the narrative 'Under African Skies (or White, but not Quite), does not retain the familiar old discourses of whiteness as templates for the future. Rather, these narratives look to create and define new subjectivities by drawing on other discursive and cultural repertoires, to supplement or replace previous white identity. Steyn (2001: 115) indicates the degree to which whites feel personally empowered to perform this mutation of identity. The direction of change to which these whites aspire, does not deny personal implication in social processes of racialization. Rather, Steyn (2001: 115) claims that these narrators are characterized by both letting go and taking on. To a varying degree they tend to be aware of the "need to let go of old selves, and to take on the responsibility of who they are going to become" (Steyn's 2001: 115), as they transform along with the changes in the county. This version of white identity is where a new self must be negotiated "in the indefinite spaces between the past and the future, the old and the new, the European and the African, the white and the black" (Steyn 2001: 116). In other words, this type of white identity does not perpetuate whiteness as it had inherited it from the past; rather the opportunity to do things differently in the future is welcomed, as apposed to resented. Steyn (2001: 129) elucidates that although there are individual strains in the sample 'Under African Skies (or White, but not Quite)', the narrators are unanimous in their support of the changes taking place in South Africa.

Drawing on the work of Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) and Giroux (1997), Steyn

(2001: xxx) differentiates between whiteness as a racial ideology, and the many subject positions that are open to, and adopted by white people. Crucially, this disaggregation of whiteness allows for progressive white people to develop solidarity across racial lines; as they reconceptualize their identities in emancipatory ways. Steyn's (2001) research relates to my own attempts in investigating the experiences of white educators.

2.5   White Identity: Confronting Social Identities

My research also aims to explore the relationship, if any, between white educators' experiences and their social identities – such as race, class and gender. Race and class, cannot be disaggregated easily. Racism is not a necessary prerequisite of class exploitation although it may, like gender, facilitate it. In this light, class is therefore understood with reference to struggles of racism and sexism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992: 94).

Subsequent to this debate, I cannot ignore the ways in which gender and class differentially affect the participants in my study. Gender divisions also serve as a central organising principal of social relations. These need to be considered in terms of their connections with race. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 101) argue that gender relates to the way in which sexual difference is represented and organized, and is thus a product of social relations. Therefore, an exploration of how gender and class shapes an individualized experience of being white for the participants in my study, and how the varying degrees of power are or are not ascribed, is a necessary part of my investigation.

Analysis of the Literature Review

Although it is conceded that the review of literature is limited, internationally and locally I have been able to locate studies that focus on issues related directly to my study. As the boundaries of racial identities move and shift, they become open to reconfiguration. Reviewing the literature inadvertently exposed certain political and social identities central to my own personal experiences. It also revealed not only the individual elements of experience, but also the pervasive influences of the social group in which white people are raised. White educators cannot move forward unless they confront the extent to which their identities and personal experiences, have been shaped through asymmetrical power relations. White educators need to acknowledge the limits of racial identification. Not only focusing on how we are different from our black learners, but on how differences are created and sustained through the structure that surrounds us.

The aim therefore, would be to look at the ways in which difference is constructed. How the significance of difference shifts, how it is operational in a society, and most critically, why difference continues to matter through our experiences (Dolby 2001: 117). By clarifying and displaying those experiences that we do like, by articulating and sharing those that resonate deeply, we breathe new life into them and their power increases.

This therefore raises a number of questions for the five white educators in my study. Do they also employ race discourses? Have their experiences been constructed upon these discourses, in particular ways? How do they reproduce racial ideologies? And, do their social identities, such as race, gender and class frame their experiences?

These questions have become central to my study.

In the next chapter I discuss the socio-historical context and educational policy changes in post-apartheid South Africa, as a setting to place the focus of my study.

CHAPTER THREE: SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

The teacher rationalization and redeployment policies, employed by post-apartheid South Africa, are important settings to place in context the focus of my study. This study is about exploring the experiences of white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator, in schools with predominantly black learners. The purpose of this chapter therefore, is to offer an examination of the teacher rationalization and redeployment policies formulated and implemented in post-apartheid education, as a process of understanding the effects on the experiences of educators.

3.1   Unravelling the Rationalization and Redeployment Policy

During the apartheid era, the South African state had organized separate ministries of education for each of the so-called racial groups. The problem in education arose from apartheid's segregated schooling environment and gross inequalities in provision for the different racial groups.   Each had its own bureaucracy, curriculum, examination systems, funding (Chudnovsky 1998: 1), and modes of operation, staff and contracts (Carrim 1998: 306). State revenues, including learner: educator ratios, were therefore allocated inequitably, favouring white schools. Nicolaou (2001: 56) offers the following example: in 1991/92 school expenditure (including capital expenditure) per white learner was R 4 448 per annum but only R 1 248 per black learner (SAIRR: 1993). Moreover, levels of inequality varied between homelands,

rural and urban environments, as well as in the types of education offered. Clearly, the post-apartheid state had to find new ways of operating that broke away from the previous apartheid racist and authoritarian practices.

During the negotiations for the new South African constitution, the ANC proposed a total transformation of the state to reform the new government and its institutions - at every level. This entailed "changing all the educational bureaucracies, their entrenched practices and personalities, in order that a single, non-racial educational system in South Africa was established" (Carrim 1998: 303). This dismantling of apartheid legacies, involved a process of rereading and rewriting the legal and social contracts that governed the relationships between the state and society (Oldfield 2001: 36). As a key national project, education policies on curriculum, school governance, training and teaching were rewritten. Mahomed (2001: 126) indicated that during 1993, the Framework for Lifelong Learning document – developed by the ANC and COSATU, envisaged integration at three levels:

- Integration of a racially divided education system,
- Integration of the fragmented and under-resourced provision of training,
- Integration of two previously separated systems of education and training.

In the period immediately following the 1994 elections, Karlsson, McPherson and Pampallis (2001: 148) report that the main task facing the provincial departments of education was the creation of a single provincial system, out of the formally racially and ethnically based departments that had operated in their territories. The new education and training policies of the new national government is to be found in a number of laws and policy documents – one being the South African Schools Act

(SASA). According to Section 34 (1) the state "must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequalities". Motala and Pampallis (2001: 24) contend that the principles on which the SASA was based was echoed and reaffirmed in the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996b), which was passed to "facilitate the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one which serves the needs and interests of all the people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights." They further posit that the value and principles which drive national policy in education and training, re-affirm that education and training are basic human rights which the new state had an obligation to advance and protect so that citizens of South Africa "have the opportunity to develop their capacities and potential, and make their contribution to …society" (DoE, 1995d: 21).

However, it was also expected that those who remained on the government payroll would be offered incentives to leave their positions early, in the event that government employees chose to "opt out of serving within the 'new' South African system" (Carrim 1998: 304). These agreements later became critical to the issues of reform, redeployment and rationalization in the public education system (Chudnovsky 1998: 3).

Valley and Tleane (2001: 178) purport that the teacher rationalization policies were originally embarked upon to effect equity between rich and poor schools. During the drafting of the 1996 rationalization and redeployment policy (Department of Education Discussion Document on 'National Policy on Teacher Supply, Utilisation and Development' DoE, 1996c), agreements were negotiated and reached at the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) - which was a statutory body

comprising of national and provincial education departments as well as the major teachers' unions. It was believed that these agreements negotiated would lead to an orderly rationalization and redeployment of the educating force. Firstly, an attractive voluntary severance package (VSP) was offered to any educator in the country willing to leave his or her post - specifically to white educators who taught in white schools, where there was a relative over-supply of educators. Valley and Tleane (2001: 184) assert that this would create room for educators declared in 'excess'. Secondly, the agreement called for the compulsory transfer for excess educators who were willing to relocate to historically disadvantaged areas. It was believed that either the buy-out or redeployment would finally achieve a balanced learner: educator ratio across the entire country (Chudnovsky 1998: 3). However, the consequences of this policy were a limited redistribution of educators, and also "the departure of many committed teachers, greater financial expenditure than was anticipated, significant opposition, job security, lack of enthusiasm and low morale" (Valley and Tleane 2001: 178) among educators.

Simplifying these realities into social policy to redress inequalities has been fraught with difficulties (Oldfield 2001: 32). Despite this, inequalities in the accessibility and quality of the educational experience persist and broader problems of transformation and delivery plague the state. Although this process was a genuine attempt by the state to improve the educational situation, in practice however, the process of rationalization and redeployment has been fraught with difficulties and disappointments. Scarcely one year into its implementation, Valley and Tleane (2001: 184) indicate that the policy ran into serious difficulties, as it did not meet its cost-cutting goals or reduce inequalities. Despite these goals and principles of transformation, the process has therefore been stalled. Oldfield (2001: 42) advocates

that some constraints to the transformation of the education system lie with the state itself:

... *"the National Ministry of Education is responsible for norms, standards and policy frameworks in education. The Ministry liaises with the Department of Finance for the education budget as a whole and has access to the Cabinet and the major teacher unions and associations. The provinces are responsible for policy implementation, service delivery and monitoring of education districts. This situation has created vertical and horizontal incoherence because although the central state controls policy (from school-level curriculum and teacher employment issues to national and provincial budget allocations), it is separated from implementation and delivery at district and school levels."*

The agreement to try to equalize learner: educator ratios by redeploying educators to the areas most in need, failed quite dramatically; primarily due to three factors:

a) Many black senior and experienced educators who were teaching in disadvantaged areas took advantage of the voluntary severance packages offered and left the profession, only to be reemployed back into senior positions of the educational system (Mangena 2001: 4).

b) Educators were unwilling to be redeployed elsewhere. White educators had refused to be redeployed to township schools, with some white educators choosing to rather resign than share their skills (MacFarlane 2003: 4).

c) An immediate consequence of the insecurity generated by the policy was the mushrooming of private schools. In their paper 'The new face of Private Schooling' Hofmeyr and Lee (2004, Oldfield 2001: 45) note that the government's voluntary supply severance packages and redeployment strategies for educators created a large number of excess experienced

educators, with substantial capitals who were "approached to establish independent schools, or did so on their own initiative".

Apart from the above, and in an address to the Union of South African Professional Educators (USAPE), Mangena (2001: 5) stated that the government is increasingly facing the prospect of educator shortages. Specifically in schools for predominantly black learners which aimed to "offer specialist subjects that are generally denied to black learners" (Moya 2003: 3), such as formal art education. The teacher rationalization and redeployment policy therefore encapsulates the crisis and discontent in education today. Although initially an issue of teacher redeployment to provinces and schools with few educators and with huge class sizes, Oldfield (2001: 44) claims that the policy has resulted in the eradication of posts across the country. Since criteria was not placed on the rationalization process, often the oldest and most experienced educators took the voluntary severance packages (Oldfield 2001: 44). These severance packages were however not approved in line with subject needs. Many schools lost educators in mandatory subjects, leaving these schools dysfunctional. Poorer schools have also been left with too few educators and huge class sizes, regardless of the provincial guidelines for learner: educator ratios.

Chisholm and Valley (1996: 5) and Valley and Tleane (2001: 185) list other concerns regarding the policy:

- A number of educators from previously coloured and Indian schools felt that the policy would undermine schools that were built up against the odds under apartheid, and would effectively retrench educators who could not move to rural areas;

- A large number of educators up for redeployment were women who could not relocate their families and who therefore would have had to leave the teaching profession;

- Fears were also expressed about the reception of coloured, Indian and white educators in black townships and schools. Many educators felt their appointments to positions in black schools might block promotion possibilities for black educators;

- Some learner groupings also made their opposition to the appointment of white educators clear;

- For many white communities, the policy was a means of getting rid of the best educators to the detriment of the system as a whole;

- For many black communities, opposition to redeployment was interpreted as resistance to equity and the new government.

These concerns indicate that in practice, changing education policy was both emotionally and racially charged however "not anticipated in the forms of expression of the policy" (Valley and Tleane 2001: 186). Apart from this, Valley and Tleane (2001: 186) suggest that in some cases a blanket approach to redeployment was employed, which undermined the intended beneficiaries – historically disadvantages schools.

Although there is increasing integration amongst learners, racial representivity among teaching staff compositions is lacking. In most public schools for predominantly black learners, "there is little or no teaching staff deracialisation" (MacFarlane 2003: 4). Biyela (2001: 2) contends that schools for predominantly black learners, still consist of only one or two educators of other racial groups, due to the controversial

rationalization and redeployment policy. The redeployment policy has therefore also raised the issue of the powers and responsibilities of National and Provincial levels of schools governance. Although redeployment was seen as the only method of integrating the school system by ensuring schools did not discriminate against educators on racial grounds, it was also believed to "bring equal redistribution of teaching skills" (Valley and Tleane 2001: 191).

A literature search revealed that there is a gap in research on experiences of white educators in desegregated schools in South Africa. This is where my study contributes to the small body of literature on the topic of white South African educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator, in schools with predominantly black learners.

In the next chapter, I discuss my methodological consideration in the design of this study on white educators' experiences and describe in detail, the methods and instruments employed in this research.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

My research study represents an analysis of the visual images and narratives of five white educators who are currently teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. In order to explore the experiences of the participants and understand why their experiences have been constructed in particular ways, a qualitative research approach has been selected as my study constitutes an interpretative effort. This chapter will first provide substantiation for the qualitative research approach selected for this study. Secondly, it will outline ethnomethodology with the emphasis on ethnography and semi-structured interviews. The chapter will then provide justification for the selection of participants, and the data collection plan which will outline the questions used in my study. The latter part of the chapter provides the data analysis techniques; validity and reliability; and ethics and moral issues of the research.

4.1   Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative approach to research is one in which the researcher often makes knowledge claims, based primarily on social constructionist perspectives. Creswell (2003: 8) defines social constructionist perspectives as "multiple meanings of individual experiences, whereby meanings are socially and historically constructed" (2003: 18). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 148) claims that the social constructionist approaches, treat people as though their thoughts, feelings and

experiences were the products of systems of meaning that exist at a social rather than an individual level. Vulliamy and Webb (1992: 47) maintain that the features of qualitative research are that it firstly provides descriptions and accounts of the processes of social interaction in a 'natural setting' – this means that it engages with events as they occur in everyday life. Via observation and interviews, the researcher is allowed into the daily life situations of the participants under study, and thus enabling one to gain insights and understanding from a personal perspective. Secondly, culture, meaning and processes are emphasized, rather than variables, outcomes and products which are the focal points of quantitative methods. And thirdly, qualitative research aims to create hypotheses and theories from the data that emerges. By not having pre-conceived hypotheses, the researcher is allowed far greater flexibility concerning research design, data collection and analysis. Social constructionist methods are therefore interpretive and concerned with meaning of how understandings and experiences are derived from larger discourses (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 199: 148).

This study is based on the notion of context sensitivity – the belief that the particular physical, historical, material and social environments in which people find themselves, have great bearing on what they think, feel and experience. Research that involves human beings also requires cooperation and participation from the participants, as they know more about their own lives and experiences, than the researcher could ever hope to. Social research therefore, has to be an engagement, not merely an exercise in data collection (Banks 2003: 179). Participants need to develop subjective meanings of their experiences and these meanings are varied and multiple. This should lead the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then, is to

"rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell 2003: 8).

It is for these reasons, that the research strategy will employ visual ethnography supported by semi-structured interviews - both qualitative research tools. These techniques are particularly suited for understanding the participants' experiences of teaching in schools with predominantly black learners, and why their experiences have been constructed in particular ways.

4.2   Ethnomethodology – Researching the Details

To increase my understanding of why the participants' experiences have been constructed in particular ways, there is a need to study the finer details of their experiences.

The research approach social constructionism seeks to analyse how signs and images have powers to create particular representations of and underline our experiences with people. This is further emulated in ethnomethodology. Unlike other social research tools that deliberately filter out the details, or reconstruct social experiences into isolated fragments, ethnomethodology is the study of "how people produce and make sense of the affairs of daily life, in all their fine detail, wherever and however they are carried out" (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003: 146). Ethnomethodology encompasses a wide range of methods such as ethnography.

Rather than being a method, ethnography is a process of creating and representing knowledge that is based on the ethnographers' own experiences. However, visual

ethnography is further divided. On the one hand, there is the making of visual representations or studying people by producing images which are visual records produced by the investigator. On the other hand, there is the examining of visual representations or studying images for information about people which are visual documents produced by those under study (Banks 1995: 1). The latter method was selected for my study, which will empower the participants as the "ethnographer" to explore their experiences. Worth and Adair (1972) cited in Prosser and Schwartz (2003: 119) adopted this approach when they taught the technology of filmmaking to Navajo Indians so that they themselves could represent their traditions and rituals. Worth and Adair (1972) hoped that by offering them the means to visually depict their own culture, the Navajo would provide an emic account offering the insider's perspective.

Ethnography does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should rather aim to offer versions of the ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context (Pink 2003: 18). Simultaneously, ethnography has become more like art, although many would argue if photography is art. Janson (1991: 657) claims photography as "simply a medium, like oil paint or pastel, used to make art but having no inherent claim to being art". However, photography shares creativity with art because, by its very nature, its performance involves the imagination. Any photography then, represents both an organization of experience and the record of a mental image (Janson 1991: 657). Therefore, the subject and style of a photograph is bound to tell us about the photographer's inner and outer worlds. Just like painting and sculpture, photography participates in what Janson (1991: 657) described as "aspects of the same process of seek-and-find".

I come from a family of artists who never pursued their careers professionally. After discovering my talents, my mother through many bitter fights, celebrated when I selected Art in Standard 8 (now Grade 10). This progressed to the completion of a Higher Diploma in Education – Fine Art post-school. As a Visual Arts educator, it would therefore seem only natural that I am drawn to ethnography as an appropriate research tool for exploring my participant's experiences. I believe that all photographs and artworks are the products of human actions and are entangled to varying degrees, in human social relations.

The methods for data collection will employ photographs, followed by semi-structured interviews.

4.2.1 Researching the Things People 'Do'

Photographs are material objects with form as well as content, which "accumulate a series of linkages and social embeddings" (Banks 2003: 18). Whether we realise it or not the camera alters appearances. Photographs reinterpret the world around us, making us literally see it in new terms. Although photographs are materially in the world, they can also involve particular and specific human social relations. Visual images can therefore become inextricably interwoven with our personal identities, narratives, lifestyles, cultures and societies (Pink 2003: 18). Since photographs can become stitched into the fabric of people's lives, reflecting and representing social persons and social relationships, it is hoped that the visual images that the participants of this study take, disclose the texture of their own experiences of teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. Ethnography therefore, has its place in this research as mediating and constituting human social relationships and experiences.

Each participant was supplied with a disposable camera, and instructed to take photographs during the course of one week which reflects *'Just one week: My experiences as an Educator in Pictures'*.

4.2.2 Researching the Things People 'Say'

Ethnographers may not realise what they respond to until after they see the image that has been printed. The meaning of visual images taken by the participants will only be understood through the participants' narratives, as they are the authors of their historically and socially embedded images. The methodological rule of social constructionism is that social reality and society should be understood from the perspective of the participants, who interpret their experiences through and in social interaction. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study as it is less formal, hence allowing for open-ended questions.

The semi-structured interview has its place between completely structured and completely unstructured interviews, thereby providing versatility (Welman and Kruger 2001: 91). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 77) contend that the interviewer in a semi-structured interview is allowed to use probes to clarify topics and questions. Probes enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate, add to, provide detail for clarity or qualify their response, thereby addressing richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty that are so often the hallmarks of successful interviewing. Since the interpretive researcher studies a text, such as a conversation, they are able to extract subtle, non-verbal communication. They are able to discover meanings embedded in the subjective, personal accounts of events and social actions of participants under study.

The questions adopted were broad and general so that participants could construct their own meaning of situations. As suggested by Creswell (2003: 8), the more open ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting. In other words, subjective meanings are not simply implanted on us, but rather negotiated socially and historically through interaction with others, and through historical and cultural norms that operate in our lives.

The photographs captured by the participants will prompt memories or comments in the course of the semi-structured interview about their experiences. The interview schedule (see Appendix C) was adapted from Mitchell and Weber (1999: 84) and served as a guide for probing these memories and comments. Although I went into the interview armed with this interview schedule, this was not fixed as I was able to vary questions from interviewee to interviewee, as each participant is expected to have had unique experiences and special memories to tell. However I, as the interviewer, was very careful to avoid the use of leading questions. A leading question is one which is formulated so that it directs the respondent by suggesting certain responses rather than others (Welman and Kruger 2001: 42). As I am particularly interested in personal experience, the interviews which were audio-taped and semi-structured, allowed me to probe initial responses. The questions proposed in Appendix C, were used to guide a participant's collective reflection on the photographs, and were therefore helpful. The use of audio tape enables the researcher to focus on the actual details of one aspect of social life. Silverman (2001: 12) highlights the fact that we often can summarize what different participants have said, but it is impossible to remember details such as pauses, in breaths, overlaps or change of tone. He further explains that whilst audio taping the interview, the interviewer can concentrate on what is being said which demonstrates to the participants that their

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responses are being taken seriously.

Throughout the field work, I kept field notes in which I recorded observations about how the participants reacted to the experience of this study. Jensen (2002: 243) describes field notes as a written account of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting or reflecting on the data obtained during the study. A supporting small notebook was also used to subtly jot down phrases, summaries, key words and non-verbal indicators which I felt captured interesting aspects of what I saw during my interviews. These "jottings" were later used to write up field notes in full, were used for discussion with my thesis supervisor and were also included as inserts into my thesis.

Like Mitchell and Weber (1999), I choose to adopt visual ethnographic methods supported by semi-structured interviews, as verbal accounts and interpretations that are significant and often structure the viewing of images. Although we are all familiar with the saying 'a picture is worth a thousand words', Mitchell and Weber (1999: 79) suggest it is probably more accurate to say that a picture evokes a thousand words. Further interpretation is provided by the stories told, while photographs are shown or viewed. As Mitchell and Weber (1999: 80) write of comments made by Rae, a pre-school teacher:

> "For some time, I was quite involved in tracing my genealogy. It was fascinating for me to go back through the microfilms of the original farm censuses in Sweden to find the list of yet another large family that I was related to. But more fascinating for me still is having a chance to pore over my grandmother's photo albums, asking her once again which long-ago relative that was, or to please tell me again the story that goes with this picture."

The interpretations of the participants have been presented in the first person (see Chapters 5 and 6), as direct quotations. The motive for this is to capture the individuality of each participant's knowledge, perceptions, opinions and feelings about their own experiences. My role as researcher was to strive to see things from the perspective of the participants in the telling of their experiences, probing for responses, and to offer an analysis thereafter.

4.3   Selection of Participants

The focus of my thesis is the experiences of white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator, in schools with predominantly black learners. Since this is a small scale study, a purposive or sampling technique was used in selecting participants. Purposive sampling "is taken when respondents are selected according to a specific criterion" (Gunter 2002: 216), or participants are "selected deliberately (on purpose) by researchers, usually because certain characteristics are typical" (Vogt 1999: 227).

For the purpose of my study the following criteria was used in the selection of participants. Firstly, participants were identified as white educators. Secondly, participants had to be currently teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. And thirdly, participants had to be the only white educator on the schools teaching staff.

The important steps in formulating a study, involve identifying, locating, and gaining access to an appropriate research site and the sources of data it can yield (Prosser and Schwartz 2003: 119). Initially, three participants were identified through convenient

sampling. Convenient sampling is "a sample of subject selected for a study not because they are representative but because it is convenient to use them" (Vogt 1999: 57). Two of the above participants were identified by colleagues who are currently studying towards their Masters degree. The third participant was identified whilst talking to a mother at my daughter's fifth birthday party.

In order to locate and gain access to further participants, a snowball sampling technique was then used. Vogt (1999: 268) defines snowball sampling as "a technique for finding research subjects. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provided the name of a third and so on. This is an especially useful technique when the researcher wants to contact people with unusual experiences or characteristics."

Subsequently, 72 historically black schools were contacted telephonically within the greater KwaZulu Natal region. Is was the assumption that there was more than one white educator teaching at historically white schools, therefore these schools were not contacted for possible participants. This was a tedious task. In a follow-up email to my thesis supervisor, I recall my frustration in the following extract:

> It's been a terrible day!...I'm rather depressed, I was able to phone 72 schools today with only locating 2 schools who have only 1 white educator in each. Both these educators were unable to speak to me today - one was off, the other in a meeting and didn't return my call. I tried later and again she was unavailable… So, after a really long stressful, disappointing day I landed up crying! Maybe it was the relief that at least I have one confirmation, I don't know, it's just been a really bad day and I'm very tired.

Whereby my thesis supervisor replied:

> I am sorry that you had a challenging day. Try and see the gem in all of this…your email…captures so appropriately that

research is not neat and tidy but messy, unpredictable and at
times depressing.

Two more participants were finally located when I enquired with schools if they were able to identity white educators who were currently teaching in schools managed by black people.

Once I had identified five participants who met the selection criteria, I contacted them telephonically to establish their willingness to participate in the study. Of the five white participants identified, all five were willing and able to participate, although with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Through a letter (see Appendix B), the Principal of each participants' school was also informed of the study and ensured anonymity of the schools' and educators' name.

4.4 Data Collection Plan: Two Sides to a Photograph Containing Information or Provoking an Emotional Reaction

The interviews were conducted in three separate sessions namely orientation, debriefing and reflecting.

The purpose of the orientation was to firstly re-establish the focus and content of the study. Secondly, to orientate the participants with the disposable camera whereby the essential camera parts and functions present in a disposable camera were explained, together with basic things to consider in composing a photograph (Karlsson 2001: 29). Each of the five participants was also given a supportive 'do's and don'ts' instruction sheet for their disposable cameras. Thirdly, to pilot the interview guide (see Appendix C), before implementation. In order to assess the validity of the

interview questions, and to check on the nature of the instrument, Anderson (1990: 69) recommends the piloting of the instrument be carried out. Silverman (1993: 74) argues that it is important for each interviewee to understand the questions, and he suggests that careful piloting of interview schedules can also enhance the reliability of interviews.

This 60-minute orientation session was conducted during school hours at the participants' school, at a time that was convenient for the participants. In the same manner as Karlsson (2001: 29), I concluded the orientation session with a "portrait photo session so that the first frame would function as a marker to differentiate participants to me during the data analysis stage".

The purpose of the debriefing interview was to firstly establish the circumstances to how the participant came to teach at their particular schools. Secondly, after the photographs were developed and printed, the participants were invited to engage in what Mitchell and Weber (1999: 83) call "picture day workshop". Before debriefing began, the photographs were laid out in their filmed sequence. The "picture day" has a number of dimensions to it. In one sense, it could be read purely as an exercise in "looking back" or "going down memory lane" (Mitchell and Weber 1999: 96). Essentially, this interview was an opportunity for the participants to caption their photographs verbally. Karlsson (2001: 29) describes this process as "telling me about their photographs, who was in them and where they were taken", frame by frame. Interruptions were only made when I needed clarification or expansion, on a frame, or experiences captured in a frame.

The purpose of the reflective interview was to encourage the participants to reflect on

the meaning of their experiences that they captured in their photographs. These experiences were recreated into conversations when the photographs were viewed. Like Karlsson (2001: 25), attention was also given to the reasons why certain images were selected by the educators as reflecting their experiences. Again Mitchell and Weber (1999: 101) offer reassurance that "the value of the single photograph lies in its potential to help uncover layers of meaning". Participants were encouraged to start by assembling as many of the photographs as possible, choosing several to talk about in some detail. Assessing the content of the images does not apply simply putting labels to the experiences, instead it involves "bringing knowledge's to bear upon the image" (Banks 2003: 3). The interview guide (see Appendix C), which was piloted in the orientation session, was used as a guide through the process of this interview, ensuring an area of focus.

The last two interviews, namely debriefing and reflective interviews, were conducted after school hours to provide privacy, and lasted 90-minutes each. Both were recorded on audio-tape and later transcribed.

Schratz and Walker (1995: 72) argue that a photograph creates an immediate if vicarious sense of being there, that is stronger than most readers will get from reading just an ethnographic description or a selected interview transcript. It is through Schratz and Walker's (1995) theory to be taken on a field trip; that I hope to be invited to travel with my participants to some normally unfrequented or inaccessible place - that may describe the relationship, if any, between their experiences and why their social identities are constructed in such ways. The photographer therefore, as Schratz and Walker (1995: 74) posits "aims to capture and preserve critical moments".

4.5 Data Analysis

The data generated from the orientation interviews of the research informed the debriefing interviews, whilst the debriefing interviews motivated the reflecting interviews. Once the information had been obtained, it required a process of coding. Transcripts of the interviews were indexed according to the experiences and dispositions that the participants employed. Recurrent themes of why experiences were constructed in particular ways were also indexed for analysis. While engaging in this data collection process, I had to ensure the relevance of the data and it depended on whether or not the data could be verified.

The technique of triangulation was used to verify the data. According to Vogt (1999: 295), triangulation is "using more than one method to study the same thing". Therefore with the qualitative method, triangulation allows for data from different sources to be examined, compared and cross checked, such as photographs, interviews and documented field notes used in this study.

4.6 Data Interpretation

My intention in interpreting the data from the debriefing and reflective interviews was to pull apart and reconstruct the participants' experiences into themes that have emerged. This involved working with the data, organizing the participants into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for themes, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell the reader. Van Manen (1992: 92) elucidates that any lived-experience description is an appropriate source for uncovering thematic aspects of the phenomenon it describes. He further claims

that it is true that some descriptions are richer than others and that in our conversations or dialogues we tend to learn more about life and experiences from some people, than from others. The detailed or line-by-line approach (Van Manen 1992: 93) was adopted to uncover or isolate thematic aspects from the data. In the detailed reading approach the researcher looks at every single sentence or sentence cluster and asks "what does this sentence or sentence cluster reveal about the experience being described" (Van Manen 1992: 93).

The analysis then involved a cross-case analysis for the purpose of theorizing from experiences drawn from both the debriefing and reflective interview data. I read across the individual interview data looking for prevailing themes that I could use to classify the data, to find similar or conflicting experiences. The intention of the cross-case analysis is to consider the issue of transferability of the emerging themes across both interviews, and to deepen understanding and explanation of particular experiences by examining similarities and differences. The participants' experiences were clustered into themes that shared certain patterns or configurations which are presented in response to the critical questions raised in my study.

4.7   Validity and Reliability

Mouton (2001: 34) contends that the use of photographs, individual semi-structures interviews and documented field notes will demonstrate high construct reliability and validity. Reliability concerns the dependability and consistency of the relationship between two variables, or in the score obtained on a single variable at more than one point of time. Validity indicates whether a measure properly captures the meaning of the concept or construct it represents (Gunter 2002: 212). Yet, how should issues of

validity, reliability and sampling of ethnography be treated by the researcher? Harper (2003: 29) suggests the following questions:

- Has the ethnographer reported accurately what she or he has seen?

- Is the event reported on repeated enough times so that the single event can be understood to stand for a regularly repeating class of events?

- Do the events reported characterize the behaviour of the group?

In accordance with Harper's (2003) concerns, each of the five participants were assigned a "27 exposure KODAK FUN Flash loaded disposable camera with a 35mm film". This ensured standardisation in film quality. All participants informed me that photographic images taken were taken by themselves. As the researcher, I was consciously aware that all photographic images, despite their relationship to the participants' experiences, are still socially and technically constructed.

The individual semi-structured interviews and transcriptions were personally conducted and transcribed verbatim by myself. This provided a greater opportunity to evaluate the validity of the information, by observing the participants' non-verbal manifestations of their attitudes towards answering the questions (Gorden 1980: 56).

However, how does a researcher know if the participants are telling the truth in an interview? Following Guba and Lincoln's (1989: 234) trustworthiness criteria, Denscombe (1998: 132) also offers some practical checks researchers can make to gauge the credibility of what they have been told.

Firstly, check the transcripts with the participants. The researcher should go back to

the interviewee with the transcripts to check with the participant that it is an accurate statement. As Denscombe (1998: 133) argues, "if the interview is concerned with a person's emotions, opinions and experiences, the exercise invites the interviewee to confirm that what was said at the time of the interview was what was really meant." Although the researcher is the writer and the participant is the teller, the data was jointly constructed between two unique individuals. All five participants contributed in establishing the credibility of the research data by reading their interviews verbatim, to check for accuracy of the data and invited to influence it so that it was faithful to the meanings generated in the interview processes. The following issues emerged from the review process:

- All five participants brought to my attention corrections, for instance, misspelt names and incorrect dates;

- Three participants expressed their disapproval of their spoken English and made the necessary grammar and language corrections;

- One participant requested that I remove from her transcript certain details about her family members;

- In retrospect, two participants felt that some of the issues discussed with me were sensitive, and chose to re-write them. The following extract is an example of this:

indicates about one metre with his hands] from the Headmaster, bearing their demands. ~~They and this and they this and OR~~ Some of their demands *who shirked their* had grounds. They were against ... ~~the~~ some of the teachers ~~for their teaching~~ ed *duties* [~~teacher "thing"~~] ~~and whether they happened and~~ I tend to be very hum *was unacceptable* quite sympathetic at that stage. But ~~the~~ way that it was done. ~~... instead of~~ ~~being normal, and set up a group of kids and come to the office and speak to the~~ Headmaster ~~you know~~, they sort of amassed and they just flattened everything *small* [flowers, trees and shrubs] in their way. And they had a very aggressive attitude. ... Like that happened about three times during the course of 1993 and also '94.

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Secondly, check the reliability of the data. Some people are interviewed specifically because they are in a position to know about the things that interest the researcher. Denscombe (1998: 134) indicated that the researcher should ask if it is reasonable to suppose that such participants would be in a position to comment authoritatively on the topic.

And thirdly, look for themes in the transcripts. Denscombe (1998: 134) suggests that where themes emerge from a number of interviews, the researcher does not have to rely on any one transcript as the sole source of what is 'real' or 'correct'. The technique of triangulation was adopted and is identified under Data Interpretation earlier in this chapter.

4.8   Ethics and Morals in Research

Although ethics begin and end with the researcher, what right do we have as researchers to make any representation of others? Banks (2001: 129) argues that researchers should be concerned with how and under what conditions they negotiate and represent images.

Because educational research is about people, who have rights and feelings, issues of honesty, ethics and responsibility arise in qualitative research. When a participant agrees to take part in a research study, consent must first take place (Denscombe 1998: 109). Keeping this in mind, I gained informed consent in writing from all five participants. This form (see Appendix A) clearly explained and made the participants conscious of:

- The opportunity for voluntary participation;

- The content of the study;

- The expected tasks in which they would be expected to participate;

- The research objectives;

- The confidentiality of information and anonymity of identities;

- Their right to review transcripts;

- The opportunity for voluntary withdraw.

Because the camera portrays people clearly, "ethical issues, important to all fieldworkers, is especially important to visual ethnographers" (Harper 2003: 30). Of particular concern to me were the ethical issues involved in the ethnographic images the participants may take of their schools and people within their schools. Publishing ethnographic images within my thesis, of the participants' schools or people within their schools, would have therefore breeched my ethical responsibilities of confidentiality of information and anonymity of school and people identities. Since this was pertinent to this research methodology, each participant was reminded to also request the permission of individuals before a photograph was taken. This was important as researchers need to recognise that while the ethical considerations of each study vary, ethical concerns are particularly important in ethnography since the camera can intrude and reveal more than what was expected, as well as expose identities.

CHAPTER FIVE: MAPPING THE MEMORIES

Chapter 4 gave a detailed account of how the five narratives have been obtained and synthesized from three separate sessions namely: the orientation, debriefing and reflecting interviews. This chapter focuses on two narratives from the debriefing interview, which was acquired from one in-depth interview. These two narratives are included as a means to understand how the participants came to teach as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners. Initially, I intended to present all five narratives into this chapter. However, the length of these narratives has unfortunately prevented me from including all five narratives. It is for this reason that I only present two in this chapter.

As the researcher, I faced the complex task of constructing the narratives and as such, find it necessary to mention the following:

- I decided to write the narratives in the first person to evoke a sense of immediacy from the teller. This choice thereby reflected as closely as possible the unique dialectical variation of language usage of the particular participants, while addressing the purpose of the debriefing interview.

- While the individual narratives are presented as verbatim transcriptions, the texts are supplemented with my own narrative voice to assist readability:

  - I use either a brief descriptor such as, **"Frik explains why he was redeployed to a township school"** or an interview question such as **"Why do you think Mr. Nzimande was wary of you?"**

o I have made certain inclusions and exclusions in generating the narratives for ease of reading without compromising the meaning that the participants were trying to communicate.

For both the above, I used stylistic devices - such as bolded text and/or square brackets [ ] to capture and distinguish my voice within the narratives.

- I have included ellipsis marks ... to assist in the flow of different sections of the participants' narratives. Ellipsis marks were also included where I had omitted text because the narration was inaudible, unclear or roundabout chatter.

- Pseudonyms replaced all names of people and places for the purpose of confidentiality of information, and anonymity of identities.

These individual narratives, obtained and synthesized from the debriefing interviews, form an important setting for my thesis. If anything I would want the reader to feel that they have an understanding of how white educators came to teach as the only white educator, in schools with predominantly black learners as recounted by them.

Before I present the two individual narratives, a summary table of the five participants outlining biographical, teaching expertise and school composition is included.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS

	BIOGRAPHICAL			TEACHING EXPERTISE		SCHOOL COMPOSITION			
NAME	AGE	FIRST LANGUAGE	GENDER	POST OCCUPYING	TEACHING SUBJECTS	SCHOOL RANK	LOCATION	RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF LEARNERS *	RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF EDUCATORS *
Frik Mester	55	Afrikaans	Male	HOD for Technical subjects	Technical Drawing	Secondary School G 8 - 12	Outer West of Durban	Only African learners	Only African Educators
Anna Mienies	41	Afrikaans	Female	Post Level One Educator	Afrikaans and LO	Secondary School G 7 - 12	Inner West of Durban	Predominately African learners	Equal African and Indian Educators
Candice Spike	40	English	Female	UTE Post Level One Educator	HSS, A&C, TECH., and EMS	Primary School G R - 7	South Central of Durban	Equal African and coloured learners	Predominately coloured Educators
Kobus Lihlelight	48	Afrikaans	Male	UTE Post Level One Educator	Woodwork and TECH.	Secondary School G 8 - 12	North Central of Durban	Predominately Indian learners	Only Indian Educators
Ruth Hibbert	60	English	Male	HOD for Languages	English, Afrikaans and A&C	Secondary School G 8 - 12	Ixopo	Only African learners	Only African Educators

* Named by Participant

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FRIK MESTER

[Frik Mester is a fifty-five-year-old, Afrikaans speaking, male HOD for Technical subjects, who teaches Technical Drawing at Kunene High School – a school that was historically demarcated for african learners, offering a range of classes from Grade 8 to Grade 12. The school services a predominately african learner population of 520, who live within the surrounding lower-socio economic community - outer West of Durban.]

[I asked Frik to tell me how he came to teach at Kunene High School.] I was teaching at Steenkamp Hoër School in Rossburgh, Durban. I [had] been there for nine years and then we were told that the school was going to close down [and] we would have to either take a severance package, or ... be processed to another school not guaranteeing our seniority. I was HOD at that stage and we all decided ... to take the [severance] package. They [ex-KwaZulu Natal Education Department] gave us five years, plus the years that we had as experienced teachers and I bought back pension to the age of sixteen, [for] about three years prior to that [and] that gave me about twenty-five years of effective service. And so we got a package plus a pension.

It was a very meagre pension [pause] ... but I tried to survive for a year ... by doing contract jobs for Telkom ... to build cupboards, to service their cupboards and their shelving ... and I tried to survive by doing that but eventually I realised that it's not a very paying proposition ... and I carried on for a year - that year was 1992, doing my own thing. I survived, but it was very difficult. I had two children at school, I had a daughter in Grade 12 and my son was in Grade 10.

Then one day a friend of mine invited me to apply for posts in black [african] schools as there's a scarcity of technical teachers in black [african] education ... I went for an interview in Umtapo, Commercial Technikon for an interview and I was turned down. But the inspector ... was very impressed [and] ... said he'd phoned me back in the January ... after which he said he needed me at a small comprehensive school [outer West of Durban] ... it was Mr. Grossett [the inspector]. So that was ... the beginning of 1993, and he said I must go and see the Headmaster. I went ... [to Kunene High School] in January, and then they [the SMT] showed me what I've got to do there ... take over ... Technical Drawing. They had a hundred percent fail [rate] every year. They had this subject going since 1978 ... [and] they never had a child pass this subject so I ... had to take over from the existing teacher there. He [the existing Technical Drawing educator] was ... posted as Headmaster ... to some practical college where they do building trade for ... adult education ... then I started there [at Kunene High School] on the 5th February 1993 and I'm still here now.

... I had a fantastic Headmaster, Mr. Gcumisa. He was ... a very reasonable person ... he often had weird ideas but he was open for ... ideas ... and he liked the way that we, as white teachers, there were three of us at that stage ... approached [our work] and the way that we do our work in the class, the way that we take our books home [and] do marking at home and ... drill the kids with tests and good discipline in the classroom ... When you went to him with problems, he was always there supporting [us] ...

But unfortunately, after two years of being ... Headmaster he died of a heart attack, so the Vice Principal took over ... and [he] wasn't the same. [Why do you think that was so?] He wasn't very 'pro' white ... anyway and ... couldn't reason with him.

He wanted to do what he wanted to do. He's a young chap, very head strong ... I applied many times ... for senior posts. I was told by the first Headmaster [Mr. Gcumisa] that I must apply for this HOD post because I was a ... an experienced candidate ... he said he'd put me there as acting HOD ... And ... when I was in the process ... of applying, he died ... I went to the new acting Headmaster [Mr. Gumede] and he wanted nothing to do with me ... or my application. He didn't like the idea at all [and] he was not supportive at all. But in the mean time I was still, for about five years ... acting HOD [at Kunene High School]. I had to do everything that ... a Vice Principal ... or HOD should do. I had to do ... chores ... I wasn't paid for ... so eventually we got an Indian Headmaster ... Mr. Sookrajh. Mr. Gumede ... was just acting ... went back to being a ... HOD ... Mr. Sookrajh ... urged me on ... to apply for the post advertised again at the school ... this time through a bulletin.

I went for the interview [for the permanent post of HOD] and there were some COSATU people ... present. And when ... I walked in ... I experienced immediate antagonism ... towards me. There were two women ... not part of the Governing Body. They were people from ... the community [pause] I don't know why, but they [had] to have either COSATU or SADTU members ... there ... present at the interviews ... Now that was ... 1993. We still had strikes at school. Now those [learners] came into the independent era. I thought that things would change immediately but here you experienced hatred and children would agree, the whole class would agree not to work.

We had a difficult Grade 10 class. Now the average age of the boys there was about between 17 and 20 years ... of age. I don't know why they were so old [pause]. So it was quite a large class in those days, there were about 34 [learners], it was a large

group for those days. Today we are talking about 57 [learners] as an average class. But they [learners] would for instance, get together and start to organise a meeting during break and then they'll carry on after break - period 4, period 5 ... just carry on with their meeting... their mass meeting. They would just take one of the classrooms and they'd pack the classrooms. That's when the kids jam the classrooms. They sit on top of the desks, and some of the desks are never the same after that because they just bent ... the tops ... During the meeting ... one or two instigators ... would be ringleaders ... He [a ring leader] had a yellowish completion. He came from another school. And what we [staff] didn't know [was] he was kicked out ... of a previous school because of political uproar ... He begged the Headmaster to take him in ... But instead of Mr. Gcumisa phoning and making sure that everything is "kosher"[1] ... this ... learner ... was actually ... instigating the school ... in such a way ... [that] they should stand ... against ... discipline and ... authority.

Then they started to march[2]. Since the white teachers came [to Kunene High School] they planted flowers ... in front of the office [as] there was nothing before ... we had two ladies there who put in lovely flowers, and we started to plant trees ... and shrubs ... And then they [protesting learners] would march right through all this. I'm talking about 200 hundred children just marching right through all ... the plants ... They came right up to the office, standing so far [Frik indicates about one metre with his hands] from the Headmaster, bearing their demands ... some of their demands had grounds. They were against ... some of the teachers ... who shirked their duties ... and I tended to be ... quite sympathetic at that stage. But the way that it was done ...

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[1] The word *kosher* is used informally to suggest genuine, correct and legitimate.

[2] The word *march* refers to a practice associated with black political protest - "toyi-toyi". While not exactly a dance, it incorporated repetitive physical movements that are distinctive and easily recognizable (Dolby 2001: 136).

was unacceptable … they sort of amassed and they just flattened everything [flowers, small trees and shrubs] in their way. And they had a very aggressive attitude. … Like that happened about three times during the course of 1993 and also '94.

But one … has … to understand that these kids came through a stage … where Nelson Mandela made an open declaration before independence … he said [that] it is revolution now education later. And unfortunately thousands of kids, thousands of good black [african] children, took this thing [declaration] to heart and they were such loyal … supporters of the ANC youth. And those kids were kicked out of school … because some of them burnt classrooms down and some of them started with … heavy demonstrations, and they landed [up] on the streets and they couldn't complete their education. Because of the old system, they were not allowed to come back into the education system.

[Frik explains why he was re-deployed to a township school] It's only years later [now] that we [white teachers] experienced this problem with the new Education Department. Because before, it was black [african] education, white, coloured, Indian and that's the reason why I got back into education. Even after I had a severance package, I could [only] go back into black [african] education, not into the [ex-] model C [school], but I could go back into black [african] education … So … after a year of teaching, I could qualify for a permanent post again. And … what's interesting, about three months later, they [the new KwaZulu Natal Education Department] stopped … such applications … right there. The date was 1994, I think April… May 1994 … I applied in December 1993. I got a permanent appointment. [Talking about the learners who left school during 1993 and 1994.] No well that's the problem with those kids and many of them are still on the streets, they['re] without

education because that was ... the ... sort of ... abuse that was taking place. That[s] why I say I'm a bit conservative you know, in some aspects of life, I didn't like the idea of children been used to achieve political ... goals. Whether a child is black [african], pink or yellow, I feel a child is someone who needs guidance... positive guidance not negative guidance, and to use a child for political gain is a negative thing, no matter who or what you are ... no matter if your freedom [your] ideals are righteous or deserving.

[Frik returns to his interview for the HOD post.] ... At my interview for that post [at Kunene High School] ... fortunately Mr. Sookrajh knew the situations and summed it up very quickly and then he started to say, "Look this is the way you should approach a candidate, you should not attack him in a negative sense, this is the way you should do it, and please let's be positive" and so on ... Then he said, "Mr. Mester just inform these people what you've done for the school in the past", ... I then started to tell them what I've done for the school ... I talked about ... upgrading ... the toilets, the levelling of the grounds, the woodwork room, electrifying the school, and so on ... then these people from COSATU ... mellowed and ... became more positive as I told the panel what my experiences was in the school, and what I did for the school ... the results that I had achieved ... compared to what the results was before ... the Matric results especially ... then every body seemed to be ... more positive. There were two or three other candidates - one from outside and two teachers in our school who also applied and fortunately ... for me ... I got the post as the HOD for Technical subjects.

[Talking about his relationship with the current Principal of Kunene High School] Ja, Mr. Sookrajh ... was at the school for about ... four years ... then he left

and Mr. Gumede - which was the acting Headmaster ... became Headmaster. But by that time our relationships ... improved a lot, and he became much more positive towards me and I suppose I'm also a bit ... *"harde-kop"*, hard-headed, in some sense. We sort of, you know ... look we're not a hundred percent but we can communicate where before we could not communicate at all ... I suppose from my side it's also a question of coming into another culture, where things are happening much slower. **[Help me understand what you are saying.]** I was under the impression that independence is here ... they [african people] are the bosses and we [white people] are just there to assist and help and so on... that the feelings would change and so on. But we ... experienced a lot of antagonism which was quite interesting ... from a political point of view.

[Can you give me an example of what you mean?] Like... I'm ... conservative, I'm not talking politically, I'm talking about in my outlook in life. I believe in my church on Sunday and I believe in doing my job in my school to the best of my ability, and I believe in treating people decently ... and I expect the same back and so on, but I'm very conservative in my outlook in life. I don't believe in getting familiar with kids, going down to their level and becoming a *"chommie"* with them. That's not my idea of authority. My idea of authority is that a teacher should be at a certain level and a child should know ... who's the boss there. There's no *"boetie-boetie"* for me. There are times that you take a child one side and you have a chat with him, and you discusses his problems and so on. But basically, I'm very much for discipline and unfortunately through the years this was being undermined by the authorities [Department of Education] ... I was very much in favour of corporal punishment because it worked like magic. I found that if a child didn't work you just tell him, "Look boet, I'm going to give you some flaps if you don't do the homework." So the

next day the homework is done. If it's still not done, you give him his flaps. Its five seconds and it's over. You give him his three flaps on his hands; they liked to be flapped on the hands. But now with the ... lengthy detention systems where the teachers are punished with the kids, it's quite a different story because what I've found is that the children enjoy been away from home. Because at home they ... have to polish floors and ... wash dishes and they ... have to do washing up and so on ... So if they can arrive home late, they do not have to do all these chores, [their] mothers ... do it.

And now they hang around at school, sitting doing detention, frustrating the teacher on duty. To me that's easy for them [policy makers] who tried to work it out ... who sat in their little air conditioned office working out these ... rules. But for us [educators] who's ... on the field, and you've got to *"chew the cud"*, that's another story... because you've got to do the actual detention with the child. And especially in our school, you've got teachers living in Umlazi. They ... have to take a taxi from Umlazi to Durban, then ... a taxi from Durban to Pinetown, and then a taxi from Pinetown to the school. That's three taxis. In the afternoon they've got to go back the same route, takes them two hours. Now to get [to] school it takes them two hours and to get home it takes two... that's four hours shot.

You can imagine the inspector says the time should be lengthen now, where we left school in the past at 2.30pm, now you ... have to ... stay until 2.50pm. And these people ... who travel far ... are the ones I'm sorry for. One doesn't mind ... sport ... or extra mural ... activities taking place. But if you're just ... sit[ting] at school. O.K. if there are study activities fine, I use it for ... my Grade 12's, if they ... do not have ... Maths ... and Science extra classes after school ... or sometimes ...

Woodwork also. But the rest of the staff sits there and they don't know what to do because the other children are not interested in studying after hours ... they are tired. They [learners] have had five long hours of work without a break ... there is one break ... a three quarter of a hour break, but that's when they have their lunch and ... they go do all their toiletries ... then it's expected that they [learners] carry on for another two hours after school, which I don't think is fair.

RUTH HIBBERT

[Ruth Hibbert is a sixty-year-old, English speaking, female HOD for Languages, who teaches English, Afrikaans and A&C at Novukuza High School – a school that was historically demarcated for african learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12. The school still services an african learner population of 650, who live in the surrounding lower-socio economic community - Ixopo.]

[I asked Ruth to tell me how she came to teach at Novukuza High School.] [At] the end of 1993 ... the old KwaZulu Education Department centre for this area, was at Bizana. And ... all the KwaZulu [Education] Departments had been told that they should try get people to coach the Matrics on how to answer the paper, because they wanted to improve the KwaZulu Educations schools results. So I ended up helping the English teachers at three schools. I got employed for ... three months, even though I was only going to teach [for] one month. And I had to travel around to different schools in that area. There was one outside Dannydooks and one half-way between Dannydooks and Bulwer, and the other one was past Christon. And I went to these three schools and I was absolutely appalled at how little they had. I couldn't believe it. I'd lived in the area my whole life. I'd driven past; I didn't even know the

schools existed [pause] never saw them. And when I did get there, all they [the schools] had was chalk and a black board ... and just these hundreds of kids crammed into these bare walls [pause] and no ceiling, no electricity, and no... a couple of the schools didn't have telephones. And I just couldn't believe it. [pause]

[What couldn't you believe?] I had no idea that these [schools] existed. And the thing that I noticed about them [learners] was that they were so hungry for what I had, and I didn't know ... that I had something. I just thought I was a very ordinary child, who had gone to ordinary schools and gone to training college and then I studied a bit at UNISA afterwards. But I had no idea that I ... had anything special. But according to these people I had. It was like I was coming from heaven, with manna. And they were just eating every word I said. The teachers would sit there with their note books [and] the children all sat there and listened... with all ears to what I could show them, and I was just so ashamed that I had taken so much for granted.

Anyway, I kept on saying, "People are so hungry for what I've got". And unbeknown to me, this inspector, Mr. Ndaba, had appointed me permanently... on the permanent staff. Because he knew that the school [Novukuza High] where I'm teaching at now was going to become a high school. It was a Junior Secondary at that stage, going up to Standard 8. But ... the following year they were going to go to Standard 9 and then Matric. So, he just appointed me there. He wanted me to teach English. So when I went to ... get my salary cheque in December, she said to me, "You're appointed to Novukuza High School". I said, "What's that?" She said, "It's a school near you, near Ixopo." And it is fairly near me because it's on the same side of Ixopo, but it's about 20 kilometres from my home and about 20 kilometres from Ixopo ... I said, "Well that's ridiculous; I didn't apply to be on the permanent staff." My son Mark

was four years old then ... and I thought, "No, I don't want to teach. I enjoyed that little bit but I don't think I need to teach." [Then] Geoffrey [Ruth's husband] said, "Why don't you go teach there?" ... So I hummed and hahed the whole holiday, and eventually in January I went to the Circuit Office ... I found out where it [Novukuza High School] was and I was still wondering if I should go or not, because I really didn't want to go ... I think it was on the 18th January that year. And, I just lay in bed and I said, "Lord I'm not getting out of bed until you give me a clear sign that I must go and teach there." And the bible reading for that day was Isaiah chapter 58 ... and it said, "If you spend yourself on behalf of the hungry"[3], and I just knew... that hunger I'd know. I just thought, O.K. Lord, O.K. I'll go. So I went and ... it was the beginning of the election year... 1994 and, "Oooh", everybody said, "you're going to what? You're going to teach where? How can you possibly go teach in a black [African] school?"

When I first got there ... in Bizana, in the offices, the black [African] people were very suspicious of me. The Principal of Novukuza High said to me, "Why do you want to come to my school? What do you need in my school?" He was very wary of me coming to his school. **[Why do you think Mr. Nzimande was wary of you?]** Because of the elections. I think because of the political situation. I think he didn't know whether I was ANC coming there, whether I was IFP, or whether I had some other political motive. And I said to him, "I'm a Christian and I feel God's asked me to go [to Novukuza High]." [pause] but he was still very suspicious of me. But anyway he let me come.

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[3] 9 "When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond. If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; 10 if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon." Isaiah 58, Verse 9 – 10 (Good News Bible 1979: 726).

And another funny thing was... sitting [at] this circuit office. Because there we all had to sit on benches. Everybody. There were streams of teachers trying to get an appointment, [and] in the old ... Education Department ... this is how they operated. And there would be ... I don't know how many teachers waiting to be interviewed. And now you sit on the bench and then you ... shift up, and then the next lot, so you shift up a bit, you shift up more ... next thing you're jammed in there ... And you know with us [whites] with our sort of space. No space, everybody's jammed and the others are just standing waiting. And then when I'd been in they said, "Ha, here's your Missis" ... they were teasing him [the Principal of Novukuza High]. I could hear them saying in Zulu, "Ha, this your Missis" ... its sort of got lots of connotations that means your "Baas", this is your "wife", this is, you know [pause] "Missis" means a lot. It has a lot of meanings. And they sort of scorned him a bit. He felt embarrassed, I think. And I felt embarrassed that I was embarrassing him, just by being me ... just by being white with him.

But anyway, so ... I said to him, "When must I go to school." [And] he said, "Be there about nine o'clock." So that day I went down to the school [Novukuza High] and it had been raining so I parked my old white Mercedes ... down at the road. The road wasn't that good I tell you, in those days, but it had dried a bit ... I parked on the road and I walked up in my gum boots into this school ... it was just mud. Even today, there's still ... nothing there. And then there were some goats, and there were some classrooms with no doors on, and the goats had been sleeping in the classroom. People had made a fire in the one classroom and burnt a hole in the [pause] desk. And then there was one other teacher there, a black [African] teacher [pause] ... a woman. And the rest there, were a few kids, in uniform, and they are waiting. So ... then you know how they clean the desks and clean the chair and everything? So the

teacher called another one [learner], and they bring a desk, they take out their little bit of toilet paper and they clean the place for me to sit on and I sat. And we waited and eventually some other teachers came. Really, just lovely people and they also ... wondering "What am I doing here?" Most amazed to see me in that valley ... I was amazed to be there too, because I'd never ... seen that valley. I've driven past that valley ... thinking, "Well who on earth would even go down there?" .... How do those people live down there? How do they get in and out of there? I've only been there ... once ... [and there] seems to be no road ... I got a little bit down and it was very steep there, gosh it was scary. Anyway that's the day I went down, and it's steep and I went at least another five kilometres down ... and there was my school. It was run down. So I started teaching, and these kids came to register and we started recording their names and everything. And the next day [when] we went back ... it was registering some more, because in those days ... [in] that Education Department, people registered for about two weeks and then they finally started on a certain day ... It was very casual.

[Did you begin your permanent post at Novukuza High in the beginning of 1994?] Yes ... state paid. [When] I joined that staff; I think ... I taught Natural Sciences that first year, as well as English to Standard 8 and 9. Well the Standard 6 class ... there were only four classrooms [and] Oooh... they were badly made and the contractor had rushed and pushed off half way through. Then they added another two classrooms with blocks towards the end of that year. There's ... like [a] local history about that ... The chief was assassinated two years before I was here, in Ixopo. And so his wife continued being the chief and is still the chief ... he wanted that school [Novukuza High] to be built down there where it was, in the middle of the location. This is not a good idea, especially where it's situated ... where there's ... still no

water. So it's a very bad decision on his part. They've since got a hall there and a crèche. There's supposed to be a crèche and a community centre that's been built there. They still have to use the crèche. The community centre at last, is been used now ... 11 years later. **[Is the community centre and crèche part of the school?]** No, the hall was only built ... about six years ago. Ja... it's below the school and the schools above the road and that's [community centre and crèche] below the road, and ... we love the hall. We use it ... a lot. We use if for exams and for ... culture days ... So, it's [a] wonderful thing to have the hall for us ... although ... it's a very bare-bones hall.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This thesis explores the experiences of white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator in schools with predominantly black learners. More specifically, my study is an exploratory research effort, which examines three research objectives.

These are: (1) what are the experiences of white educators teaching in schools with predominantly black learners; (2) why are their experiences constructed in such ways; and (3) what is the relationship, if any, between their experiences and their social identities – such as race, gender and class.

The five white educators in my study provided a kaleidoscope and multiplicity of interpretations to experiences captured ethnographically. Data drawn from both the debriefing and reflective interviews were clustered into themes that share certain patterns. These themes concurrently reveal significant similarities and visible forms of social oppression, functioning and operating within the daily experiences of the five white educators in my study. This is evident in the conscious or careless systematic discrimination, personal bias and social prejudice that saturates the narratives of the participants in my study. In giving an account of their experiences, the five white educators made apparent internalized domination, reverse racism, horizontal oppression, white privilege, internalized subordination and transformation.

6.1 Conceptual Considerations

There are various concepts or terms, which need to be defined in order to promote understanding of the research findings. The terms oppression, internalized domination, internalized subordination, horizontal oppression, reverse racism, white privilege and transformation are defined as follows:

- **Oppression:** According to Bell (1997: 4), the term oppression is used to emphasize the pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions, as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression therefore signifies "a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups" (Bell 1997: 5).

- **Internalized Domination:** Bell (1997: 12) maintains that the normalization of oppression in everyday life is achieved when we internalize attitudes and roles that support and reinforce systems of domination without question or challenge. Members of dominant or privileged groups internalize the system of oppression and through their collusion with the system, operate as agents in perpetuating it.

- **Internalized Subordination:** For members of subordinate or targeted groups, internalized subordination consists of accepting and incorporating the negative images of themselves fostered by the dominant society (Bell 1997: 12).

- **Horizontal Oppression:** Bell (1997: 13) points out that members of

dominant or privileged groups also engage in horizontal hostility toward members of their own group who challenge the system of oppression. For example, white people who challenge racist practices may be labelled by other white people as troublemakers, extremists, or bleeding hearts.

- **Reverse Racism:** Wijeyesinghe, Griffin and Love (1997: 97) conceptualizes reverse racism as "whites who discount examples of cultural or institutional racism as atypical or exemplifying the over-sensitivity of black people". It is Wijeyesinghe *et al.* (1997: 97) experience that some white people may charge that there is reverse racism in education and employment as a result of affirmative action or non-discrimination policies; or that that slight increase in the number of black people in positions in government, the media, or other professions are indications of the end of racism.

- **White Privilege:** According to Wijeyesinghe *et al.* (1997: 97), white privilege refers to the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that white people receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin colour in a racist society.

- **Transformation:** As a result of experiences and information that challenge the accepted ideology and self-definition, white people entering transformation reject earlier social positions and begin formulating a new world view (Hardiman and Jackson 1997: 26).

Unpacking the data collated suggests that all participants in my study display the

power to define and determine what is normal, real or correct, within the changed

racial contexts of their schools. This is evident in the attitudes, behaviours, thoughts

and feelings of all five white educators, when they speak of their experiences while

assembling and thinking about possible meanings to their photographs. These

dispositions are perpetuated in the following five themes: (1) The great "Divide"; (2)

Whiteness as "Victim"; (3) The Costs of Connecting the "Divide"; (4) The "Invisible

Knapsack of Privilege"; and (5) Bridging the "Divide".

6.1.1 The great "Divide"

The data suggests that the experiences of the five white educators is constituted

through the discursive mode of binary oppositions - "us: them" reflecting the power to

name. As evident in Bhana (1994) and Raghoonanan's (2005) studies, these

bipolarities provide the possibility for the educators in my study to create the primacy

where "Same" is a privilege opposite to "Other". In positioning themselves in a

superior framework in relation to their schools, educators said:

> "That drives me crazy, it's so un-western!" [Ruth]

> "Look at photograph 11, 12, 22, 23 and 24. That's when teachers are
> supposed to be in their classes teaching. You see why I say it's a chaotic
> place? [Anna]

Schools with predominantly black learners are seen as "them", by the white educators

in my study who view themselves as part of "us". However, my thesis moves beyond

bipolarities and reveals stereotypes in "them" that the participants of my study use to

rationalize and maintain racism. The data revealed a focus on deficiencies and

inadequacies of "them" and "they". Ruth and Anna reflect this mindset while

describing photographs of colleagues:

> "Zulu people hate to be the only ones to be sticking out, to make a decision or anything." [Ruth]

> "In my experience, African people don't have self discipline. They can't make a decision on their own." [Anna]

Ruth and Anna's negative commentaries disclose racial predispositions. In recalling her experiences of the week, Ruth points out:

> "And it's so typical of that rural school! I'm used to the thoughtless way things are done ... chaotic organization or organized chaos."

Bhana (1991: 57) states that this kind of talk is an oppressive tool in that it emphasises difference. Rather than working with differences, Ruth places difference under surveillance and attempts to close it off. It is myopically accepted that schools managed by black people are the only ones who must change.

All five white educators' responses indicate that they see the under achievement of the black learners as the responsibility of the learner:

> "Half of them failed last year ... They didn't even show up today! I think one of them showed up. I couldn't care you know." [Kobus]

The participants do not see themselves to be at fault; instead they deploy "Individualist Discourses" as described by Dickar (1996: 9). Individualist discourses de-emphasize the structures of social relations which set the parameters on an individual's life chances. At their worst these discourses are deployed to blame the victims of structural oppression for their failure. Dickar (1996: 10) argues that when

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white educators refuse to recognize circumstances outside the black learner, the only explanation for failure is individual inadequacy; even in the face of profound inequality.

The data suggests that the participants display an obsessive concern about the work ethics of educators and SMT's in schools with predominantly black learners. These attitudes are clear in the following comment:

"Photograph 3 is our Principal [who] is either disorganised or he's always away at other meetings." [Ruth]

Repeatedly, the white educators in my study criticize black SMT's for lack-of hard work or planning, as though hard work and planning was not already part of black SMT's repertoire. Part of white racial mythology seems to involve transforming the white self into one with a superior work-ethic morality. Hoadley (2002: 40) concurs by claiming that black and white South African educators are often spoken about as falling somewhere along a continuum from worker to professional, which are broadly categorised along racial lines. Whites' articulation of the work ethic ideology often consequently tends to present white as virtuous. This mindset is emulated by Anna:

"All the whites I've come across will do a little bit extra ... Where as, they [black educators] don't do that."

Notice how racism can insinuate itself as Anna has strong feelings that black educators are somehow not like white educators. This is evident in the notions that black educators do not work as hard as white educators, which reinforces the sense of white superiority. The stereotype which operates in Anna's narrative reflects the "Same" adhering to the demands of white superiority, whereas "Other" is not

expected to produce.

By deploying "Individualist Discourse" (Dickar 1996: 10) the white educators in my study reproduce white middle class norms as normal, real and common sense. This impacts on black learners who absorb many of the beliefs of the dominant racial group, in order to find acceptance from the white educators (Tatum 1997: 55). This is indicated in Anna's experiences of comments made by her black learners while she was taking photographs for this study:

> "Photograph 24 and 12 [is of] my Grade 11's [who] were sitting with me and they asked me, "Now why are you doing this Miss?" And they actually wanted me to take more photographs because they're also tired of this chaos. I told them I was taking photos of the chaos outside, and then they said, "Miss, you must take many more photographs."

Here Anna's black learners assimilate into the dominant white group by de-emphasizing characteristics that might identify them as members of the subordinant group. Freire (1970), cited in Hardiman and Jackson (1997: 17), identifies this behaviour as playing "host" to the oppressor. Anna's learners colluded with their own oppression. Their comments demonstrate that they devalue their racial group by internalizing their oppressed condition and colluding with Anna's racial group.

The participants therefore, construct their whiteness around the belief that whites are in a position to define themselves and the "Other" more or less unilaterally (Steyn 2001: 59). That intervention needs to take place on "white" terms, for the good of "black" learners. Educators in desegregated schools may therefore "be motivated by self-interest in ending racism, with a patronizing agenda of 'wanting to help those poor black people" (Wijeyesinghe et al. 1997: 98). Non-racialism is contingent on

developing and uplifting black learners within these teaching contexts. Comments made by the participants revealed that they construct schools with predominantly black learners and teaching staff as a "lack" or "deficit". The participants in my study believe that they are able to provide a better system of education and so invest themselves as the "better" educator, and places the black learner and educator as the "Victim":

> "They had a hundred percent fail [rate] every year. They had this subject going since 1978 [and] they never had a child pass this subject, so I had to take over from the existing teacher there." [Frik]

This form of "black upliftment" is presented as contributing to the transformation of society. Steyn (2001: 60) asserts that this endeavour to bring "blacks" up to the level of "whiteness" is foreclosed. It only serves to perpetuate difference and to reinforce the privileged status of whiteness, keeping the system of domination in place.

The participants in my study lump black learners and educators together to which certain stereotypes are applied, placing blame on the "Victim" and reinforcing oppressive practices (Bell 1997: 10).

6.1.2 Whiteness as "Victim"

The changed racial teaching school contexts appear to pressure the five white educators of my study to give thought to their whiteness. The data provided a rare look at the participants' complicated ideas and feelings on racial issues that fill their everyday experiences of social isolation. This is fed from misunderstandings and suspicions, partly because the five participants feel like "Victims" in their changed

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racial teaching contexts. Resentment and discontentment are emphasized in all the participants' experiences, for some more painful than others:

> "This photograph is [of] our relief timetable and somehow my name always appears on there, and [sigh] it's hard to handle. I'm very unhappy!" [Anna]

> "Photograph 1 ... [is] a teacher [who] seems to delight in contradicting whatever I do. Secretly I think the other staff members enjoy it if she puts me down because I think it's a black-white thing. I think there's a special racial twist for me, I honestly find [it] very difficult." [Ruth]

> "I think there is discrimination. I think it's because I am white. If I walk out of here [classroom], then a learner standing over there [will] shout "LIHLELIGHT ... LIHLELIGHT!" But why [aren't] they doing that to the other [black] teachers? I just feel like [I] just don't want to be here anymore." [Kobus]

These sentiments impact on the relationship between the white educators in my study and their black colleagues and learners. All the participants express feeling targeted, harassed and victimized; they feel they have lost social power and privilege.

In addition, experiences of sexism and classism were accentuated by two participants. Anna and Ruth experienced acts of sexism by black male colleagues:

> "[The Principal] came to me the one day and said, "I will allow you to smoke in the staffroom if you blow the smoke into my mouth and kiss me." And what do you do in [those] circumstances? He's your Principal. Since that day he made my life a living hell!" [Anna]

> "He'd [the Deputy Principal] never moans about the men either, and then the Principal attacks the rest of us [female educators]." [Ruth]

Both Anna and Ruth comprehend personal experiences of harassment and

discrimination. Although I acknowledge that both participants have been painfully victimized by gender discrimination, I cannot ignore that whiteness still grants them "the right to assume the role of the oppressor in relation to black women and men" (Black and Solomos 2000: 375). Although I acknowledge the reality of the sexist victimization expressed through these experiences, Anna and Ruth attempt to minimize their belonging to the dominant racial group and employ "Deflecting Discourses" (Dickar 1996: 8).

By further employing "Race and Power Evasive Discourses" (Dickar 1996: 6) Anna protects the privileged position of whiteness even as she appears to be opposed to racism:

"I never caused apartheid [and] I never applied apartheid to anybody."

Anna's comments are imbued with feelings of apprehension and uncertainty as she cannot understand the reaction of "Others"; she "never caused apartheid" and "never applied apartheid to anybody". Her comments indicate she feels morally convinced, but personally unaccomplished. Steyn (2001: 119) asserts that these feelings of self-perception and ineptitude reinforce feelings of separation, alienation, and isolation. By denying that our personal and collective histories inform how we "see" and live race, Anna denies that race and racism are historically and socially constructed. These evasive strategies avoid recognizing the significance of racial identity, in order to avoid naming the power relationships which shape those identities (Dickar 1996: 7).

Likewise, Ruth copes with the liabilities of whiteness by employing "Deflecting

Discourses" (Dickar 1996: 8). Unlike race and power evasive discourses, deflecting ones do not deny that race and difference are significant. Ruth explains her relationship with her Principal:

> "I've had lots of persecution from him just because I'm a woman. And I think it's made worse by the fact that I'm a white woman."

Deflecting discourses often use one identity to negate another; like Ruth uses her gender identity to deflect her race identity. Such strategies privilege "Victim" status – you can't be an oppressor if you are the victim of oppressive forces, and more specifically blames someone else for racism. This strategy deflects the culpability away from Ruth and places it squarely on her Principals shoulders, but still functions to deflect the enactment of racism away from her and to enable her to avoid confronting her own attitudes, feelings and actions.

Similarly, race and class are inextricably connected and intertwined. Race is still the mode in which class is lived. This is evident in Anna's description of a photograph of her car:

> "We're driving a Land Rover and people think we've got money and all that. They don't know where we came from, and how we struggled to get here."

Anna's experience is based on her belief that the South African economic system is fair and open to anyone who was willing to work hard to get ahead. This belief supports the dominant myth that we live largely in a classless society (Yeskel and Leondar-Wright 1997: 232). Anna's narrative fails to indicate the interconnectedness between race and class.

These experiences of "reverse racism" or whiteness as "Victim" are significant. However, the negative resentment, discontentment, sexual discrimination and prejudices emphasized in all the participants' experiences, consist of judgements made by black colleagues and learners, and are not the equivalent of racism.

6.1.3 The Costs of Connecting the "Divide"

To a varying degree the participants in my study tend to be aware of the need to let go of old selves; to take on the responsibility of who they are going to become as they transform with the changes of the redeployment policy. The consequence however, is the experience of a split between one's cognitive and affective grasp of this change:

> "When I first got there, [they] were very suspicious of me. The teachers would sit there with their note books [and] the children all sat there and listened with all ears to what I could show them." [Ruth]

Ruth's feelings of ambivalence and duality, was experienced by all five white educators in my study. These feelings display an awareness of complexities, of the way in which one and the same thing can be both positive and negative (Steyn 2001: 116). The participants begin to experience themselves as "Other", in that their whiteness is viewed as strange, not their learners' or colleagues' blackness (Dickar 1996: 2). The feeling of fear and exposure expressed by Ruth is interpreted as the realization of the racial divide between white educators and black learners and educators.

White people's perception of violent schools that were historically demarcated for black learners played a significant role in Anna and Ruth's experiences:

"People always say, "Oooh, you [teach] in that twonship, it's so terrible!"
[Anna]

"Oooh", everybody said, "how can you possibly go teach in a black school?"
[Ruth]

These racial attitudes are imbued with consternation as the participants' teaching posts seem bizarre and alien to other white people. The heavy price of teaching in schools with predominantly black learners is horizontal oppression. Other members of dominant or privileged groups engage in horizontal hostility toward the participants in my study, who challenge the system of oppression. The participants challenge the apartheid structures of "who" teaches "where", which is still evident in South African schools.

The narratives reveal a stereotypical view of black people's propensity for serious crime and deviance. Images of dangerous schools, that were historically demarcated for black learners, are not based on Anna and Ruth's experience. Instead, are based on myths rooted by members of dominant or privileged groups, due to a history of segregated teaching patterns. In reporting the views of other white people, these narratives express racial thinking and attitudes that keep the system of racial segregation in place.

6.1.4 The "Invisible Knapsack of Privilege"[4]

The data implies that all five white educators in my study do not think reflectively about white privilege. "White privilege refers to the benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society which

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[4] McIntosh (1993: 90)

whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin colour in a racist society" (McIntosh, 1993, Wijeyesinghe *et al.* 1997: 97). Examples include the ability to be unaware of race; the security of having their voice heard in a group in which they are the only member of their race; and the ability to be late without having the lateness reflected upon their race (McIntosh 1993: 91).

Black Deputy Principals and Principals perceive power to reside in the hands of white educators. Frik's illustrates this mindset:

> "He [the Headmaster] liked the way that we, as white teachers, approached and the way that we do our work in the class, take our books home [and] do marking at home and drill the kids with tests and good discipline in the classroom."

Frik's experience describes how the participants in my study project social reality so successfully that their views are accepted as common sense, as part of the natural order, even by those who are in fact disempowered by it (Bell 1997: 11). The five white educators in my study benefit from access to social power and privilege not equally available to black educators and SMT's. Frik's experience effectively secures white privilege by not reflecting on his racial position.

The data revealed an embedded notion that the five white educators in my study were "fairly sure of having their voices heard" (McIntosh 1993: 91). Their experiences conceals white privilege under the guise of alleged disadvantages. This sentiment is expressed as Frik explains photographs of his new classroom:

> "When the new classes were erected, I wanted ceilings and they [Ntuli's School Project] said they won't do it. I said we've got to! Why can all the [ex-] model C schools have ceiling[s]? They agreed."

The normalization of power occurring within this experience is achieved when Ntuli's School Project internalizes Frik's argument without question or challenge, reinforcing white privilege (Bell 1997: 12). Although the major energy in the participant's experiences is directed towards gross inequalities, the narratives spoken are reliant on concealing white privilege - the authority to speak and be heard. Bhattacharyya, Gubriel and Small (2002: 24) posits that the tactics of concealment include "universalisation", where the dominate group is able to speak for everyone but in fact represents the views and interests of a privileged minority.

Under the camouflage of white privilege, racial predispositions were again projected negatively by the participants of my study. Ruth's comments allude to this when discussing a photograph:

"It's like a Zulu thing that you just don't keep time!"

Based on Ruth's socialisation as a white woman, her lack of keeping time "would not be reflected upon her race" (McIntosh 1993: 91) in the manner she reflects in this narrative. This form of power to shape values is institutionalized and systematic, and becomes embedded in what is normal behaviour for "keeping time".

It is clear from Ruth and Candice's narratives that English is a language of privilege and exclusion. Internalized subordination is perpetuated through two participants' experiences, as black learners and educators unquestioningly accept that Ruth and Candice are qualified, talented and deserving of their credentials (Hardiman and Jackson 1997: 21). This is reflected in Ruth's comments of a photograph of past learners:

"They always like my English and I know I write good testimonials for them, I know a lot of them have got jobs because of the testimonial I gave them."

Such conceptualizations question the credentials or abilities of black educators. Ruth and Candice's narratives function through unconscious attitudes and behaviours of the dominant group's ideology that express internalised notions of entitlement, and privilege (Hardiman and Jackson 1997: 21).

Consequently, the white educators of my study learn to look at white privilege as representing "normal and universal" (Bell 1997: 13), rarely acknowledging the invisible knapsack. White privilege exists precisely in its capacity not to be named.

6.1.5 Bridging the "Divide"

An interesting narrative among three of the female white educators in my study, is that although they are negotiating their futures in the changing circumstances in which they find themselves, they are working on accepting the present. Their experiences bespeak white educators who are prepared to live closer to the edge, "where edge does not signify an abyss, but the transition where familiar and unfamiliar meet" (Steyn 2001: 116). Steyn (2001: 115) expresses the following comments made by a respondent in her study:

> "The old elitist white society is breaking down and starting to merge with black ... society due to increased exposure and interaction."

As educators who are engaging in transformation, the three female participants have made the transition much more easily than the male participants in my study. In his observation, Jansen (2004: 121) asserts that women make closer friendships across

racial lines, and on their own initiative, far faster than their male counterparts. Facing the truth about the past, distressing though it may be, is a necessary part of moving beyond whiteness for these three female participants:

"This photo is Mr. Jagernath. He's actually taught me that Indians are not cowards, and he taught me that I am not a coward." [Anna]

"It's a different culture, and I'm so scared of treading on someone else's toes. But I feel much more relaxed with her [black colleague]. [Ruth]

"The staff is very lovely and very supportive, so the atmosphere at the school is friendly and positive." [Candice]

It is imperative to acknowledge that although all five participants in this study reproduce conventional racial attitudes, three participants are challenging the system of oppression. The three female participants are not waiting for associations with "Others" to come their way, but start with the relationships that are at hand. As Steyn (2001: 136) advocates, personal growth comes only with personal exertion and accepting mutual accountability for relationships. Anna, Ruth and Candice's commitment to friendship and shared pasts enables them to identity the role they played in maintaining the dominant racial group, as well as the price they pay for privileged status in an unequal hierarchy (Bell 1997: 13). Consequently, these changes reverberate not only within the small circles of friendships that the three female participants have, but through out the school, "as others watch the emerging patterns and follow them" (Dolby 2001: 92).

Conclusion

This chapter provided a kaleidoscope of the participants' experiences, which vary

significantly in that they are encountered personally and individually. The analysis of data outlined five themes that expose multiple discourses on race, which the five white educators of my study employ whilst teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. Themes revealed issues of social oppression, highlighting issues of internalized domination, reverse racism, horizontal oppression, white privilege and internalised subordination. Despite difficult experiences, in 'Bridging the Divide' three participants in my study envisage positive engagements with their schools by embracing transformation.

In the final chapter, I will highlight the outcomes of my study, limitations of this research and highlight implications for further research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1   Conclusion

The focus of this research was to explore the experiences of five white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator, in schools with predominantly black learners. More specifically, it had three aims, that are imperative to the changed racial contexts that educators face: (1) what are the experiences of white educators teaching in schools with predominantly black learners; (2) why are their experiences constructed in such ways; and (3) what is the relationship, if any, between their experiences and their social identities – such as race, gender and class.

This thesis has been significant in highlighting the dispositions of five educators' attitudes, beliefs, feelings and values regarding their work and who they teach, as crucial sites that define white educators' social identities. Ethnography was employed as a research tool based on the perspective that visual images can become inextricably interwoven with personal identities and narratives; as a resource to reflect, represent, mediate and constitute human social relationships and experiences. In asking five white educators to take photographs of their experiences, I hoped to attain insight into how their knowledge, perceptions, opinions and feelings shape their narratives, and why their social identities have been defined in such ways. The qualitative approach for this study relied on social constructionist perspectives, which explores multiple meanings of individual experiences, where meanings are socially and historically constructed. In this study the literature review (Chapter 2) and the socio-historical context (Chapter 3) provide a backdrop for understanding the experiences of the five white educators of my study. The cross-case analysis of the data enabled the

discovery of recurring themes presented as a discussion (Chapter 6), which I will discuss in the section that follows. In analysing the data, I was curious to find out what the experiences of the educators are telling us and what lessons we can learn from this study. My thesis highlights the following key points:

- In giving an account of their experiences of teaching in schools with predominantly black learners, the five white educators in my study employ discourses on race to minimize the significance of racial difference. This allowed the participants to avoid confronting their own role in the continued practice of racism.

- From the interviews it became apparent that the five white educators of my study often re-established hegemonic norms through their narratives. Their narratives oversimplify the workings of oppressive hierarchies and are employed to deflect, deny or avoid confronting their own privileged positions. The participants hold on to the importance and power of whiteness, without the recognition that whiteness is fragile as a repercussion of its dependency on the "Other". All but one participant avoids the pain of acknowledging the personal ramification of early socialization that accompanies white power and privilege.

- The experiences of all five white educators in my study both mock and challenge the racial harmony promoted by the rationalization and redeployment policy, which serves to plaster over the festering racism that still exists in schools. Desegregation is an important step in countering racism, but it is not an end in itself. Attitudes, beliefs, feelings and values that inform

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educators' social identities, do not disappear when new and competing policies are implemented. All the participants in my study are not trained to cope with the changed racial school context that they now find themselves in; nor has their training sufficiently prepared them to embrace new roles. This is supported by research conducted for the Human Sciences Research Council that "teachers were unable to deal with the changing school landscape" and "were not really learning about diversity or how to handle it" (Bolowana 2005: 5).

- Transformation begins to be possible with the three white female participants in my study. The data reveals that although the female educators are not abandoning their white identity, their experiences have created possibilities for more inclusive relationships by bridging the "divide".

7.2   Limitations of the Research

My study is small and restricted to the experiences of five white educators only. It is therefore difficult to generalise all white educators' experiences within changed racial school contexts. Thus, the findings cannot be claimed to represent conclusions for all white educators who are currently teaching as the only white educator, in schools with predominantly black learners.

7.3   Implications for Further Research

This thesis explores an under-researched area within educational research in the South African context. It focuses on the crucial area of white educators' experiences, and

the impact on their social identity during an era of reconstruction in post-apartheid contexts. However, a more deliberate investigation needs to be conducted exploring white student teachers' experiences who teach in schools with predominantly black learners.

In the beginning of this thesis I made mention of my own experiences of teaching as the only white educator in a school with predominantly black learners. I acknowledged the race discourses that I too have employed. After interviewing my participants, I could not help feeling despondent and deeply depressed, and recall complaining bitterly to my husband that, "These were not necessarily my experiences!"

After analyzing my data, I realized my ideology as a white educator had shifted, when I so desperately wanted to confront some of my participants' oppressive opinions and attitudes. Of course, I would not do this as it would have breeched my ethical responsibilities and severely damaged the relationship I had so carefully built with my participants. The awareness however, leaves me feeling negative towards and isolated from my own whiteness, questioning why some of my experiences have not emulated my participants.

I present the following possible reasons for examination:

- My age. I have lived half my life under apartheid and half my life under democracy. My participants are minimum ten years my senior;
- My gender (Jansen 2004);
- My disposition, although this leads to stereotyping (Lund 2004);

- I chose, and was not forced, to be redeployed to my school;

- My Principal, Mr. B. C. T. Ndlovu, is an avid transformation leader. He has attended the same Social Justice courses I have;

- Or, is it due to my four years of Social Justice Educational training which has allowed me to confront my own role in the continued practice of racism.

During many deep conversations on "racism" and "social oppression", a close colleague expressed a year after my employment:

> *"Oh Mel, I must confess. When I heard a white women was coming to fill the Art post I visualized a middle aged, white women, who would just 'sit on the fence', pointing to all the wrongs in our school. Yet, from the first day you arrived, you became part of the success and the mess."*
>
> - Sandile Mohlakoana, Grade 9 Technology Educator

These have been some of my experiences.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

'Just one week: My experiences as an Educator in Pictures'.

Dear Participant,

My name is Melissa Barnes and I am a Masters candidate in the School of Education, at the University of Natal, Durban. For my dissertation I have designed a research study to explore the experiences of white educators who are currently teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. As one of approximately 5 participants, I have taken the liberty of writing to you to seek your assistance in acquiring information about your experiences relating to the research.

Kindly review and sign the following form to signify your willingness to participate in this study.

- As part of this study you will participate in an orientation session, debriefing interview and a reflecting interview.

    1. Orientation Session -   Re-establish the content of the study,
                            -   Disposable camera orientation with do's and don'ts instruction sheet,
                            -   Pilot interview guide (for use during Reflective interview).

    Concluded with a portrait photo session as a marker to differentiate participants

    2. Debriefing Interview -   Circumstances of teaching post,
                            -   Picture Day Workshop: caption photographs verbally (tell me about photographs, who was in them and where they were taken).

    3. Reflective Interview -   Reflect on meaning of experiences – using interview guide.

    Both interviews will be approximately 90 minutes in length.

- The experiences, which you recount during the interviews, will be included in the thesis. These experiences will be presented in a number of ways, including photographs taken by yourself, direct quotations and stories of your own experiences in your own words. However, the name of your school, your name and the names of people that you mention will not be used nor will you be identified in any way or at any time.

- The information you discuss in the interview will be included in my Masters thesis and may be included in manuscripts submitted for publication to academic journals.
- You may request to review the transcripts of the interviews and withdraw your consent to having specific sections of the transcripts included in the thesis.
- You may withdraw from participating in this study at any time.
- In signing this form, you are authorizing me to use the material collected as described above. In addition, you are acknowledging that all documents, including photographs taken by yourself, audiotapes and transcripts will be the property of myself.

I, _____ have read the above statement and agree to participate in this study under the conditions stated above.
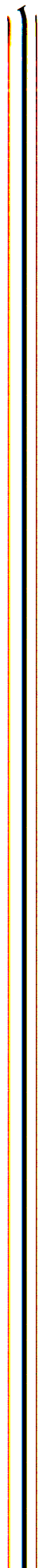

_____   _____
Participants Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researchers Signature   Date

If you have any further information please feel free to contact the supervisor of my study, Dr. Dennis Francis on (031) 260 3490.

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

School Name
School Address

Date

Dear (Name of Principal),

My name is Melissa Barnes and I am a Masters candidate in the School of Education, at the University of Natal, Durban. As part of the fulfilment for the requirements of the Masters of Education – Social Justice, I am required to carry out a dissertation. For my dissertation I have designed a research study to explore the experiences of white educators who are currently teaching in schools with predominantly black learners. As one of approximately 5 participants, I am requesting permission for (name of teacher) to assist me in my research.

As part of this study (name of teacher) will participate in:

- Two in-depth interviews. Each interview will be approximately 90 minutes in length which will take place after school hours, at the convenience of (name of teacher).
- The goal of my research is to rely as much as possible on the educator's views of the situation being studied. It is for this reason that the research strategy has employed visual ethnography. Each educator has been supplied with a disposable camera and instructed to take photographs during the course of one week which reflects their experience of teaching in a school with predominantly black learners.

I would also like to reassure you that the name of the school, name of the educator and names of people that the educator mentions during the interviews, will not be used nor be identified in any way in the writing up of my study.

If you have any further information please feel free to contact the supervisor of my study, Dr. Dennis Francis on (031) 260 3490.

Kind regards,

_____

Melissa Barnes

APPENDIX C

Interview after the course of one week which reflects:

'Just one week: My experiences as an Educator in Pictures'.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

a) What can you remember generally about this week?

b) What photographs best describe good or positive experiences for you.

  ▪ Describe them.

  ▪ Why do you think you have such feelings about these experiences?

c) What photographs reflect difficult or hard experiences for you?

  ▪ Describe them.

  ▪ Why do you think you have such feelings about these experiences?

d) Do you remember making any special preparations for a photograph

  ▪ For example was there a certain look that you wanted to achieve?

  ▪ Why?

  ▪ Do you remember details regarding preparations?

  ▪ What comments were made by other people (for example, by other teachers or your pupils) before, while or after you were taking the photographs?

e) Do you have any specific memories of the photographs themselves?

(Adapted from Mitchell and Weber 1999: 84)