Teachers' Stories on Race, Racism and Race Relations in a Primary School in KwaZulu-Natal

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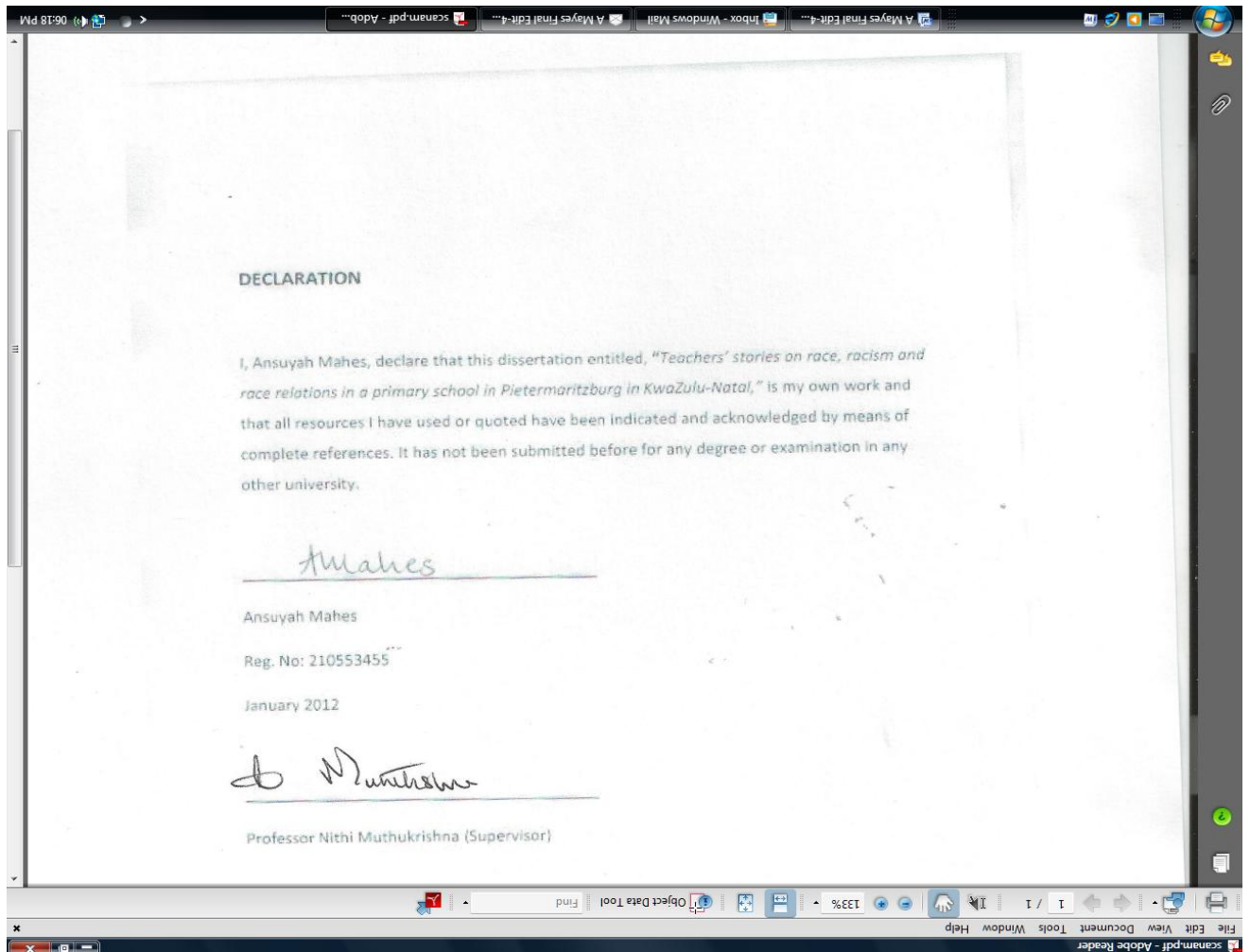
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DECLARATION

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I, Ansuyah Mahes, declare that this dissertation entitled, *"Teachers' stories on race, racism and race relations in a primary school in Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal,"* is my own work and that all resources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored teachers' stories on race, racism and race relations at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal. Internationally, race is a complex and challenging issue. A qualitative research design was used. The research methodology was narrative inquiry. Data was collected through individual interviews with 6 teachers: 3 females and 3 males. The participants were from three race groups designated as Indian, African and Coloured. The theoretical framing was Critical Race Theory and the theory of oppression. The study revealed the complex ways in which race and race relations play out at one desegregated school despite education legislation and policies that have been promulgated in South Africa to address racism at individual and institutional levels.

The study identified key themes: who holds power?; 'a monster that lurks in the dark'; institutional racism at play; teacher emotionality and racism; and strategies of oppression, resistance and coping. A common experience that emerged is the exclusion and marginalisation of minority group teachers by the dominant group, evident in their everyday experiences at the school. Everyday racism is experienced by teachers as repetitive and accumulative, serving to maintain power in the school. The study revealed that the power of the dominant group is embedded in institution through the rules, norms and habits of the school. Institutional racism at the school allows those in power to limit opportunities and information to target groups. Teachers seem powerless in the face of institutional racism. Often oppressive practices reflect the intersection of race, gender, language and religion. This study highlighted that teachers take up multiple subject positions in the face of oppression. The stories of the teachers reflect that their experiences of racism and race relations at the school evoke strong emotions which include anger, hurt, fear, suspicion and vulnerability.

This study contributes to the body of literature that has used Critical Race Theory to show how racism and race relations operate in schools. This study points to the need for further research into the de-racialisation of schools in South Africa in their various permutations. Research is needed to examine the complex ways in which teachers live, challenge and conceptualize racism in their individual, unique ways and within their situated contexts.

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CHAPTER 1:   CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

The study presented in this dissertation explored the issues of race, race relations and racism in a school in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Bandura (1986) suggested that there is a need for researchers within the social sciences to investigate issues of 'race' and racism in the context of social institutions. Stevens, Swart and Franchi (2006) explain that research into discourses of race, race relations and racism aims to identify points of oppression that may exist in order, to challenge them and to enhance meaning-making without ignoring structural inequalities in society.

Many studies have been conducted in South Africa and internationally on race, race relations and racism (Daniel, Southall, & Dippenaar, 2006; Duncan, Stevens & Bowman, 2004; Durrheim, 2005; Kohli, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Mandaza, 2001; Melvin, 2004; Winant, 2004). Melvin (2004), a white American teacher, discusses the racial tensions he experienced with his learners of colour. He experienced guilt because of his White privilege and the culture of power in which he was embedded (Melvin, 2004). On reflection, he argues that his White privilege was invisible for him, and surfaced only when he began his career as a teacher; as a result he faced many tensions and challenges which made him feel uneasy and uncomfortable (Melvin, 2004). When he came to terms with his White privilege, he interrogated the schooling system and its impact on learners of colour and found that the school in which he worked failed to recognise the knowledge that learners of colour brought to school with them (Melvin, 2004). The dominant culture of the school was imposed on learners in subtle and overt ways through the curriculum; the learners resisted this and displayed intimidating behaviour towards White teachers (Melvin, 2004). Through his critical

analysis of the school as an institution, Melvin (2004) began to transform his teaching practices, in particular to affirm learners' lives and tap into their strengths.

Similarly, Kohli (2008) provides an analysis of the personal narratives of nine women of colour enrolled in an undergraduate programme in the USA who reflected on their experiences of schooling. They revealed discriminatory experiences in their own education, and expressed ways to address and break cycles of racism in classrooms (Kohli, 2008). The narratives of the women revealed similar tensions to those experienced by Melvin (2004). The women in Kohli's (2008) study had experienced racial, cultural, or linguistic discrimination throughout their schooling years. These experiences with racism led them to internalise feelings of racial, cultural, or linguistic inferiority to the dominant White culture and the privileged language of English, Kohli (2008). Kohli (2008) concludes that teachers need to realise that students of colour in the USA constantly experience oppression within school cultures, including low expectations, stereotypes and a curriculum that privileges the White culture and values.

In South Africa, Durrheim (2005) examined race relations on a beach and in the dining hall of a university and concluded that racial divisions continue to exist in South Africa. Duncan et al, (2004) highlighted he deep-rooted emotional scars among black people in South Africa and the negative perceptions these people have of their cultural backgrounds. In their article, Duncan et al, (2004) argue that race as a subject of conversation is sensitive and that there is no prescribed recipe for discussing race as there could be severe risks involved in attempts to talk about race, race relations and racism. Stevens, et al. (2006) further argue that there are many challenges faced by South Africans in understanding race, and contend that even de-racialisation policies and strategies continue to divide society. Even though political redress is occurring, any attempt to de-racialise has to refer to race, which

has a history that is rooted in oppression Stevens et al, (2006).These debates have implications for research into issues of race and racism as they highlight the complexities inherent in this research. The findings of a Human Sciences Research Council Study on the social and political views of South Africans reported by Daniel et al., (2006) suggested more positive attitudes towards race and race relations. Fifty-five percent of participants indicated that race relations in South Africa had improved, with the majority of participants (54%) stating that there was no racial group in the country that they disliked, compared with (39%) of participants who stated that there were racial groups that they did not like (Daniel et al., 2006). The study also showed that the White population was the most distrusted; however, in the Western and Northern Cape, provinces which have a large proportion of coloured people, black Africans were most distrusted (Daniel et al., 2006). Sixty-seven percent of the participants in this study indicated that they were prejudiced on the basis of their race (Daniel, et al., 2006).

My review of literature indicated that the issues of race, racism and race relations in South Africa in the context of schooling and schooling contexts remain under-researched. I envisaged that my study would contribute to the debates that have emerged in the existing body of research on the topic.

1.2   Focus and purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to document teachers' stories about race, race relations and racism at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal, which I shall refer to as 'Canyon Primary School' (a pseudonym). I explored the use of 'stories' as a research method. Bell (2002, p. 209) argued that storytelling is "a bridge between individual experience and systemic social patterns."

Bell (2002) further contended that analysing teacher stories would provide a means of developing a critical consciousness about social relations in our institutions and in our society.

1.3   Rationale of the study

Race is a critical and complex social identity in South Africa. I have taught for twenty-five years in a former Indian school. Currently I am a teacher at a former Coloured school that has been undergoing desegregation since 1994. Presently, the school has a largely African student population, with Coloured, Indian and African teachers. The learner population is 1030, of which 60% (609) are black African and 40% (420) are 'Coloured.'[1] English is the language of teaching and learning. Afrikaans is the first additional language and isiZulu is the second additional language.

Drawing from my experience as a teacher at this school, my view is that racism and race relations are played out in complex ways in this newly desegregated schooling context. There have been stories of overt and subtle forms of racism on the one hand, and positive race relations amongst learners, on the other. In the South African literature, I was able to locate studies on race, race relations and racism conducted in desegregated schools in South Africa (for example, Nkomo, McKinney & Chisholm, 2004; Sekete, Shibulane & Moila, 2001; Vally & Dalamba, 1999).the intention of my study was to contribute to this body of research and to current debates on race, racism and race relations in schools.

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[1] I use the term 'Black' to refer to those classified as "Coloured", "Indian", and 'Black' or 'African' in the apartheid nomenclature. While the use of racial terms persists in South Africa, I consider "race" to be a social construct that is deployed and re-deployed for ideological purposes.

I was interested in understanding how race is discussed and manifested in schools. Tajfel & Turner (1986) remind us that discussing race issues involves engaging with one's identity. The salience of identity in conducting research on race is evident as people of colour are named, identified, categorised and labelled as such. Dei, James, Karumancery, James-Wilson and Zine (2003) state that as researchers we do not want to disturb the peace in the school, what we want is to disturb the silence. I was, however, fully aware that race talks are often resisted (Dei et al., 2003; Kempf, 2010).

This study uses 'stories' as an innovative research method. Bell (2002) explains that the stories we tell about race, race relations and racism draw upon our situated lives, that is, our social, cultural and historical lives.

1.4   Key research questions

The following were the key questions in the study:

1. What stories do teachers tell about race, race relations and racism at their school?
2. How do teachers' live, conceptualise and challenge racism?

1.5   Research Methodology

I used narrative inquiry as my research methodology. Narrative inquiry enabled me to understand the social and cultural contexts of behaviour patterns in a particular educational context, as suggested by Aoki, (2008).

Narrative inquiry requires participants to tell stories and the researcher to make sense of these stories of participants' life (Creswell, 2009). Storytelling is an analytical form of discourse in that a story has a description of a series of events (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Furthermore, as suggested by Creswell (2009), as a narrative researcher I can reflect on my

own experiences by listening to the stories of my participants and use this to analyse my own engagement with race, racism and race relations in the context of a school.

1.6   Myself in my study

Some narrative researchers prefer to place themselves in the foreground of their research (Aoki, 2008; Clandinin & Murphy, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Wiebe, 2008). The view on this approach is that the researcher's personal background, experiences and worldview affect their identity and their relationships with their participants (Creswell, 2009). Ellis (2004) supports this view by stating that narrative researchers build special relationships with their participants because they understand the issues at hand.

Wiebe (2008) agrees that narrative researchers may use their own personal experiences as a 'lens' a way of coming to a better understanding of the participants' similar, yet different narratives. In my study, I acknowledge that this would have occurred as I am a teacher at the school where my research was conducted. Creswell (2008) explains that narrative researchers have the ability to weave their own stories with the experiences of their participants. Giddens (1993) argues that a person's own reflexive understanding of their set of race, race relations and racism narratives tell a story of which they are and how they came to be that way. As a novice researcher, I also hoped to search for myself in my study.

Research scholars within the social sciences often find themselves making links with their personal experiences, and generating subjectivity and biases (Bhavnani & Harraway, 1994; Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2001). By using narrative inquiry, my study challenged the traditional views of neutrality in research which, in the view of some writers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Holt, 2003; Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Mattis, & Quizon, 2005; Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2001), often silences the voice of the researcher. In other words, no research is value-

free (Burman, 2001; Fine, 1997; Sandelowski & Barasso, 2003). A researcher's own history and identity play a significant part in narrative inquiry and storytelling. To me narrative inquiry became as Creswell (2008) described, a very powerful tool. My own experiences enabled me to gain insight into race and race relations, and to develop a greater understanding of myself. I do, however, agree with a number of authors (Bhavnani & Harraway, 1994; Bryan & Aymer, 1996; Suzuki et al., 2005; Swartz, Gibson, & Gelman, 2002) that my own subjectivity may be seen as having an influence on the findings and research method.

I included myself in my research as I felt '"present"' in all the stories my participants told me. My personal encounters with race, racism and race relations at the school and my own worldview affected my relationship with my participants. Ellis (2004) and Chase (2005) argue that narrative researchers may recount their own personal experiences with the research topic to the research participants. This may be done in order to build rapport, open communication and come to a mutual, deeper understanding of issues (Creswell, 2008) or events on race, racism and race relations. Stories from the researcher and the participants, therefore, are blended in different forms (Wiebe, 2008).

When I applied for a post at Canyon Primary School as head of department, a promotion for me, I believed in building bridges with teachers of all race groups. Canyon Primary is a former Coloured school. I did not believe in the 'divide and conquer' mentality. As an Indian teacher belonging to a minority group in South Africa, I wanted to be an agent of social change. I applied for the post because I knew that the Department of Education's goal was to transform the racial ethos of the former Coloured School. I wanted to be a truly 'South African teacher'. I had read the work of scholars such as Bell hooks and Paulo Freire. I was interested in how teachers of a minority group might help to construct educational contexts that are inclusive of the entire school community. hooks (1994) and Freire (2007)

suggested that a pedagogy that liberates teachers requires teachers to be reminded of their own position of power and privilege.

I faced many challenges as I was the first woman of colour to join this school's management team. On arrival at the school, I was told that I had 'stolen' the post from a very senior Coloured teacher who 'did more for the school than I could ever think of doing'. This very same 'race' teacher wanted the female toilets for teachers to be designated according to race, with separate facilities for Coloured, Indian and African teachers. One of my management colleagues was also a challenge. She often ridiculed me, and made me feel incompetent as a teacher of literacy. She questioned and criticised my pedagogy. I felt I began to internalise my racism, and my target status.

I found I also, in turn, began to ostracise other teachers, and disconnect from them. My rationale was that this would protect and cushion me. I must admit that at times a feeling of hopelessness consumed me. I felt vulnerable and whenever I had the opportunity to verbally attack another teacher, I did. I showed my anger and I did not hesitate to lash out at them. The patterns of internalised oppression began to restrict my effectiveness as a teacher. I felt undermined and experienced a lack of power to function effectively as a teacher. Decision-making, allocation of classroom resources, and setting the standards for Canyon Primary rested in the hands of the dominant Coloured racial group. Despite the 'pull-her-down' syndrome, I vowed to remain at the school to prove that I was deserving of this promotional post. I was not going to quit.

I was trained to become a teacher at Springfield College of Education, in Durban. In the apartheid era, this college specifically trained Indian teachers to teach Indian children. The rector of this college and the senior lecturers were White. They were paid a 'tolerance

pay,' over and above their salary. The motivation for this 'tolerance pay' was that they had to teach a black race group, that is, Indian students. This really incensed me throughout the years I studied at this institution.

Racism existed in an overt and often subtle way at Canyon Primary School. Race relations had invisible tensions. According to Hemson (2006) here are three levels of oppression present in institutions: institutional, individual and structural racism. African and Indian teachers faced racism daily. The institution was riddled with past privileges held by one race group. For example, resources were made available to Coloured teachers as a priority.

Prior to my arrival at the school, an African woman was acting in my post. She resumed her post at her former school and the position at Canyon Primary was then advertised. My new principal seemed suspicious of me; he did not greet me, and practically ignored me. He knew that an Indian female would get the position as he was involved in the promotion process and five Indian females were short-listed. There is little doubt in my mind that he resented my appointment.

Each day, I arrived at the school very early to avoid the morning traffic. The cleaner of the school and the two Coloured female heads of department each had a gate key and a stock-room key. I was not given a key so, when I arrived early, I had to wait on the road outside the school until someone opened the gate for me.

Apart from racism, religion was also an issue at the school, which emphasises the Christian religion. At the assembly, only Christian hymns are sung. Although there are teachers whose religion are Hinduism and Islam, no mention is made of these religions. There is no religious policy at the school.

I felt that my management, leadership and administrative styles as head of department were always under the spotlight. I was often undermined by a junior head of department. At first I thought this would stop and chose to ignore it but the situation became worse as she received support from other management members. I became confused. I had no support. Most teachers were very cautious about the issue of racism, and generally there was silence around the issue. Thornhill (1989) argues that institutional racism has the power to cloud our minds and blur our vision.

The situation changed somewhat when a new (male, Coloured) principal was employed at the school. He gave me a key to the gate as well as to my classroom so that I could enter my classroom instead of waiting in my car each morning. I was not, however, given a key to the stockroom.

My relationships with my learners, both Coloured and African, are special and positive. I try my best to affirm all my learners. Parents have complimented me on my teaching. One story that comes to mind is that of a little boy, Kirsten. He came to me in Grade 3 from a neighbouring ex-Coloured school, not knowing how to read, write or spell. His grandmother came in once a week to see me as she wanted Kirsten to learn to read and to pass his assessments. We worked on a programme that I learnt at my teacher training college, known as Breakthrough to Literacy. Canyon Primary was not using this programme. Kirsten began learning core words and constructing sentences. I gave him individual remedial attention. Kirsten won the most-improved learner award that year. I also check on my learners from previous years and if they are falling behind, I counsel them.

I do share a very good relationship with all the African and Indian teachers. A few of the Coloured teachers prefer to keep to their own group. They choose not to look at you, greet or smile at you. So I stay out of their way. I want it this way as I fear controversy.

This is my narrative. I know it is unique. I know it can be interpreted in many ways and can mean different things to different people, depending on the life circumstances, relationships, values, beliefs, social and cultural context of the reader, as stated by, (Pinnegar and Daynes 2007). I lay my narrative open to interrogation. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out that reflexive narrative researchers like myself can help to safeguard the validity of their study by, identifying and telling their own story.

In this study, my aim was to listen to the stories of teachers in my school setting. I wanted to engage them in a reflective process to understand how they, as social actors, experienced and made meaning of issues of race, racism and race relations at the school. I was eager to give them a voice.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have located the study in current debates in literature. I also present the focus, the rationale for the study, the research methodology, and the key questions. I foreground the 'self' in the study as I am aware that my own personal experiences will serve as a lens to understand my participants' narratives. Chapter 2 will present the literature review on the issues of race, race relations and racism, as well as the theoretical frameworks of the study. In Chapter 3, I discuss the methodology used in my study, the research setting, research design, the pilot study as well as ethical issues surrounding this research. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the study. Chapter 5 presents the conclusion and implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2:   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I review literature that examines issues of race, race relations and racism relevant to my study. My research questions are: What stories do teachers' have to tell about race, race relations and racism at their school? What discourses shape teachers' narratives of race, race relations and racism?

In this chapter, I first examine the work of scholars who have interrogated the concepts of 'race,' racism and race relations. I then explore studies that have focused on teacher and learner stories of social struggles against the oppression and inequality that arise from race and racism. Finally, I discuss South African legislation and education policies that govern race, racism and race relations.

2.2   The notions of 'race', 'racism' and 'race relations'

Race, racism and race relations are complex concepts to define and discourses around them are equally complex. It is well documented that people avoid speaking or discussing race, race relation or racism (Bhui, 2002a; Cardemil & Battle, 2003; Clark, 2001; Sanchez-Hucles & Jones, 2005). Some people are afraid to talk about issues of race, race relations and racism, others are afraid of saying too much, and some are afraid of being construed as racists. Race can evoke negative emotions in people. At the same time, race can be an origin of pride, purpose and identity.

After many years of struggle for equality, race still remains a source of different lifestyles, opportunities and experiences in South Africa. Debates around issues inherent to an unequal society and an inequitable social system, including an unequal schooling system, are examples of South Africa's struggle to develop an egalitarian state (Seekings and Nattrass,

2007; van der Berg, 2008). Winant's (2004) view is that there is no other construct that is more central in society than race. Winant (2004) adds that it is a concept that is controversial. In the section below, I explore what recent scholars have been written about these issues.

2.2.1   The concept of 'race'

2.2.1.1 Race as a myth

A myth is not a scientific fact. It is generally captured by the emotions of people. However, it can chain the minds of individuals so that they can believe in it. It is a delusion or a faulty explanation of a concept (Oxford dictionary). Decades ago, Ashley Montagu published numerous articles questioning the validity of race as a biological concept. His most famous were the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), *Statement on Race* (Montagu, 1972) and *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (Montagu, 1942).

Montagu (1972) presented a report to UNESCO that attempted to problematise the concept, 'race.' The report argued that 'race' is not a useful classificatory tool for understanding the differences between human beings. Montagu (1972) made important points about the concept, 'race', and its use. Firstly, he contended that 'race' is a concept that is deeply flawed and argued that it should not be used to organise human beings because this leads to prejudice, privileges for some and unfair discrimination against others (Montagu, 1972).

In his book *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race,* Montagu (1942) argued that race is neither a 'myth' nor a 'fallacy.' Although he accepted that race exists, Montagu (1942) stated that the concept of 'race' denies the democratic principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect. This denial allows the superior race to perpetuate racism as a

tool for one type of oppression, social injustices and social inequality (Montagu, 1942). Secondly, Montagu (1942) asserted that no scientific knowledge could conclude that intellectual and emotional development can differentiated according to race. He argued that 'race' is a meaningless anthropological conception. Thirdly, he argued that, while people have different biological traits, no 'race' is privileged to be greater than another (Montagu, 1942). Leading on from the above discussion, Winant (2004) agrees that 'race' is not a scientific concept that is rooted in biological differences. Montagu (1942) concluded that 'race' is not a biological phenomenon, but is a social myth. Fourthly, Montagu (1942) argued that genetic differences are of little significance in determining a dominant race and that it is scientifically unethical to conflate human beings into races. People who have mixed genes from a mixed heritage cannot be classified into a single 'race' category Montagu, (1942). Montagu (1942) concluded by arguing that if the human population had mixed heritages there would be no dominant race, hence there should be no discrimination on the basis of race.

In fact, recent scholars have argued that 'race' is a socially constructed ideology that is driven by power, economics and oppression (Freire, 2007; Young, 1990 Bhui, 2002b). Biologist Lucien Febvre (1982) contended that the concept of 'race' is obscure and it divides people. Febvre (1982) urged that we should not become prisoners of our own vocabulary. Winant (2004) notes that an effort must be made to see race as an unstable and complex concept that is constantly being transformed for social and political gain by some people. Marable (2000) argues that a definition of 'race' should recognise class oppression and explains that there are challenges with de-linking a person's national identity, race, class and male privilege from a definition of race.

The body of literature above shows that 'race' is a confusing, inconsistent and scientifically unsound concept. The literature points out that the biological reality of race, that

is, the thinking that each race has its own genetic characteristics that can be clearly determined, is a myth that has served to justify one group's domination over another. It has been argued that racial oppression is based on conceptions of race that are myths or fallacies.

2.2.1.2 Race as a socially constructed notion

Machery and Faucher (2005) suggest that constructions of the concepts 'race' do not take place in a vacuum but in a social environment. This social environment determines the nature of diversity in a society as being something that is socially learned (Machery and Faucher, 2005). Social constructionists believe that culture and the times we live in vary a great deal; hence 'race' varies across cultures. It is, therefore, flawed to think of 'race' as merely skin colour (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez & Peck, 2007). Skin colour is often used is a primary determinant of race in many contexts. The colour of a person's skin becomes a tool of power, according to Bhui (2002b), who suggests that skin colour is used as a 'powerful badge' and 'master label' to oppress particular target groups.

Winant (2004) contends that the concept of 'race' means different things to different people. Winant (2001) explains that the meaning of 'race' is determined by the time and place in which it is considered. Others scholars argue that 'race' does not exist, (MacDonald, 2006; Duncan, et al., 2004). Prah (2002) argues that there is no pure race, so there is no such thing as race. Taking the argument further, MacDonald (2006), Posel (2001b) and Winant (2001) have identified race as a product of contemporary social arrangements based on particular ideologies; in fact, these scholars argue that race is a political tool. A commonly held view among certain scholars is that race is meaningful in the context of particular social and political contexts (Bhui, 2002c; Gilroy, 2000. Winant (2001) explains this by citing three racial distinctions:

i.   Ethnicity-orientated, which locates 'race' within a framework of shared cultural characteristics;

ii. Class-based theories, which locate 'race' as subsumed under class and place emphasis on economic differences and competition;

iii. Nation-oriented theories, which favour drawing of geographical boundaries between groups. (Winant, 2001, p. 178).

Winant (2001, p.178) suggests that a new theory on race should address '"the persistence of racial classification and stratification."'Any new theory should also link '"the micro and macro aspects of racial signification and racialised social structures, and should include the newly pervasive forms of politics in recent times'" (Winant, 2001 p. 181).

Thus, one can see that the concept 'race' is a complex, social construction. In other words, it is socially engineered as it opens itself up to many interpretations (Bandura, 1986; Shefer & Ratele, 2006; MacDonald, 2006; Speight, 2007).

2.2.2   The concept of 'racism'

Racism occurs when one race dominates other races for "material or expressive reasons" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 6). The dominant group becomes the agent and the victims become the targets, involved in oppressive relations, according to Hemson (2006). Scholars have highlighted different levels of oppression which may be linked to relations of power in the context of racism (Frye, 2005; hooks, 1994; Hemson, 2006; Freire, 2007; Young, 1990). In the sections below, I discuss key issues in debates on racism.

2.2.2.1 Racism as oppression

Drawing on Young's (1990) theory of oppression, racism and its related oppression has the potential to render the target group powerless, and to subject it to deprivation of material and social resources. Racism can lead to a denial of opportunities to the target group by the group of people in control of power (Young (1990). Young (1990) would view this kind of oppression as a systemic constraint on a group or an individual which may be experienced as deep injustices in everyday life. Exploitation can occur when unfair advantage is taken over someone of a particular racial group (Young (1990). Young (1990) explains cultural imperialism as occurring when the dominant group renders the perspectives of another group invisible. Views of the dominant group are guided by stereotypes and mark the target group as the 'other' (Young, 1990). In the case of racism, the culture of the dominant group is established as being the norm upon which a society is judged (Freire, 2007). Kelly (2010) and Kelly and Brandes (2001) highlighted how teachers tried to address cultural imperialism by drawing the learners' attention to the omissions in their textbooks that render the target group invisible, discussing the reasons for these omissions and bringing in the marginalised perspectives.

The work of Young (1990) suggests that equalising educational opportunities for all race groups requires elimination of oppression. Eliminating oppression requires a perspective that welcomes differences by dismantling and reforming structures, processes, concepts and categories that are impartial, neutral and colour-blind in educational institutions (Young, 1990). All social categories that define social groups must be seen as socially constructed and power-laden. Decision making should include the disadvantaged social groups (Young, 1990). However, Kumashiro (2002) argues that anti-oppression education is about learning about us and our educational institutions, it is not just about understanding and celebrating different people. It is about examining the power relations within educational institutions in

the context of race and racism (Kumashiro, 2002). Teachers who are committed to anti-oppression education should treat each lesson as an opportunity for an ongoing struggle for personal, institutional and societal transformation (Kumashiro, 2002). A structural analysis of oppression must also interrogate the intersections of race, class and gender to unmask the power relations that afford privileges to certain groups in social institutions (Kumashiro, 2002; Freire (2007) argues that education should allow the racially oppressed to regain their humanity so that they can overcome their oppression. However, he acknowledges that in order for this to take place, the oppressed have to take the lead in his or her own liberation (Freire, 2007). The key goal of education for diversity is not so much about academic successes, as it is about empowerment (Freire, 2007). Empowerment means learning how to be vigilant and to struggle against the oppression of the dominant culture (Freire, 2007). Likewise, the oppressor should be willing to rethink his or her beliefs and practices so that they can examine their role in oppression (Kincheloe, 2008).

2.2.2.2. Racism as a colour-blind ideology

Research has documented a blind ideology perpetuated in many social institutions (Tatum, 1997; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2003). Colour-blind race talk avoids racist terminology or talking about race issues and adheres to the '"I am not a racist"' argument (Tatum, 1997). From this perspective, it could be argued that within school settings racial categories do not matter in the school's culture and curriculum (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2003). The key point that Tatum (1997) made is social categories should be ignored, and everyone should be treated as an individual.

Tatum (1997) interviewed several teachers who claimed they ignored race in their classroom. Tatum (1997) argued that adopting a colour-blind approach to teaching and

learning is a form of oppression that can produce and reproduce racism and unequal relations. Ignoring the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of their learners can lead to teachers not understanding the needs of all learners (Tatum, 1997). In fact, the study found that teachers held back certain learners who were labelled as 'learners with disabilities' Tatum (1997).

2.2.2.3 Types of racism

Various scholars have identified different types of racism. Todd (1991) distinguishes three types of racism: institutional racism, individual racism and structural racism. *Individual racism* maybe defined as racism perpetuated on one human being by another (Todd, 1991). This kind of racism is concerned with attitudes and actions that are used to evaluate people negatively on the basis of biological traits such as skin colour, hair and physical features, may be expressed in an overt manner, or through subtle, everyday behaviour (Todd, 1991). Examples of individual racism are: avoiding contact with members of another race group; ignoring, silencing, shunning and belittling individuals of another race group; making offensive jokes, writing graffiti, sending e-mails and displaying posters that target particular groups; name-calling, hurling insults, verbal abuse and threats against persons because of race, colour and religion, and hate crimes and violence against persons because of race, colour and religion (Todd, 1991; Essed, 2002).

Institutional racism maybe defined as racism that occurs in an institution such as a school (Balibar, 1991; Therborn, 2003). It is concerned with routines that restrict resources and exclude or disadvantage certain groups (Essed, 2002). Institutional racism manifests as unequal treatment, and unfair policies, practices and opportunities based on race (Essed, 2002). A school that treats teachers of colour unequally promotes segregation, and provides privileges on the basis of race, promotes institutional racism. Patterns of behaviour of teachers can also maintain privileges of a dominant race within an institution. On the surface

teachers may seem neutral, but they can negatively affect the unprivileged group of teachers (Balibar, 1991). The dominant group tends to normalise their behaviour and their impact in a way that silences and makes invisible the disadvantaged group (Therborn, 2003). Institutional policies and practices can silence the unprivileged group of teachers (Duncan, et al., 2004; MacDonald, 2006).

Graham and Robinson (2004) conducted a study on institutional racism in a British school to solicit reasons for black learners underachieving in their classrooms. Parents of the male students were concerned about the underachievement of the Black boys, so a deep sense of urgency was accorded to this study (Graham & Robinson, 2004). The authors argued that a continuous denial of race and racism existed in the British education policy (Graham & Robinson, 2004). The learners voiced their experiences of what it means to be a Black male in Britain in 2004, and the findings of the study challenged educationists to review the way in which schools responded to the needs of local communities that they served (Graham & Robinson, 2004). Graham and Robinson (2004) argued that schools need to find community-focused strategies and solutions for re-engaging young Black boys in education, and motivating them to value education. A first step should be to listen to Black boys' experiences of institutional racism in their schools (Graham & Robinson, 2004).

Many scholars, researchers and educationists have drawn attention to the catastrophe prevalent in British schools which is evident in the way teachers continue to fail Black learners. Studies show that teachers blamed the poor results on exclusionary school structures, education processes and the differential treatment of minority groups (Gillborn, 1995; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Rasool & Morley, 2000). Several studies showed that discrimination on the basis of race took place at many levels at these British schools, and that Black learners generally belonged to a lower-ability group and were not only subjected to

greater disciplinary measures but also received different types of punishment compared to other learners (Connolly, 1998; Mac an Ghail, 1988; Wright, 2002). Young (1990, p. 41) pointed out that such tensions and exclusionary practices, which have an impact on oppressed groups, are sometimes '"unquestioned norms, habits and symbols in the underlying institutional rules'."

Structural racism is concerned with patterns of social injustices and inequality in society related to, for example, work, housing or education. The caste system of India is a powerful and holistic example of structural racism. Structural racism may be defined as racial bias across an institution and a society. Many factors that promote structural racism- where one race is privileged and other racial groups are at a disadvantage. Discrimination and racial inequality are the result of structural racism. Structural racism results in the normalisation of racism in our everyday lives; it legitimises and reinforces racism (Marable, 2000). The dominant ideas and myths of structural racism perpetuate racial hierarchies (Essed, 2002; Sears & Kinder, 1971)**.**

Providing a further perspective on racism, Todd (1991) and D'Souza (2002) also define three types of racism: systemic racism, cultural racism and individual racism. *Systemic racism* can be defined as taking the form of the practices, customs, rules and standards of an organisation, including governments, which unnecessarily disadvantage people because of their race, colour or ethnicity (Feagin & Vera, 1995). *Cultural racism* is based on the thinking that a certain group is superior not on the basis of race but of culture. In other words, cultural differences make it natural for certain groups to form closed communities as they share a unique cultural identity. Cultural racism justifies the exclusion of 'others' on grounds that they are culturally different (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). *Individual racism* can be described as

believing in racial stereotypes, sometimes resulting in violence, name-calling, bigotry, belittling a social group and jealousy (Todd, 1991).

Gillborn (1995) describes two types of racism: popular racism and institutional racism. *Popular racism* means that a particular race group is seen as unequal to the dominant group, and links to Todd's (1991) definition of individual racism, which is said to be the worst type of racism. Gillborn (1995), McLaren (1998, and Troyna (1993) share the same opinion about *popular racism.* Gillborn (1995) and McLaren (1994) argue that the practice and belief of *popular racism* is that the social groups in power are intellectually, morally and culturally superior to others (Frederickson, 1981). Troyna (1993) argues that *institutional racism* may be embedded in education policies that may perpetuate and entrench racial inequity. *Institutional racism* can be seen in policies that deliberately exclude certain groups from school governance, for example (Gillborn, 1995).

The above perspectives on racism helped me to make sense of the nature of racism at Canyon Primary. The question I asked was: what are the complex ways in which racism and race relations play out at the school? I understood that racism and race relations may be multifaceted, deeply embedded in the ethos and cultures of institutions, and taken for granted in the power relations that exist in these institutions.

2.2.3   The concept 'race relations"

Race relations can be defined as an account of a group of people who share a common culture and context so that a connectedness develops between the groups of people (Durrheim, 2005; Wale &Foster, 2007; Bekker, 2001). Internationally, studies have been conducted examining the issue of race relations in diverse societies and contexts. An overview of some key studies and their findings is given below.

Durrheim (2005) conducted a study on race relations on a beach in South Africa Durrheim (2005) concludes that Black beachgoers stereotyped White beachgoers as being racist, while White beachgoers stereotyped Black beachgoers as being aggressive and lacking in manners and social skills. This study suggests that race relations in post-apartheid South Africa are complex and still characterised by segregation, racial division, racial hierarchies and exclusion.

Painter and Baldwin (2004) concluded from their study that informal racial divisions continue in a very powerful way at universities in South Africa. Bekker (2001) contends that race is still a major issue in present South Africa. Wale and Foster (2007) support these findings and argues that although South African Whites have lost their political power, they still hold a race privilege in the economic and cultural fields. Most White South Africans search for ways to justify their White privilege and perpetuate their 'Whiteness' by defending White privilege (McIntosh, 1989). This is evident in discourses of denial and of a 'just world' in which is embedded the thinking that 'you get what you deserve in life,' therefore, Whites should enjoy a wealthy lifestyle because they have a better work ethic compared to people of the other races (Wale & Foster, 2007).

In South Africa, we live in a stratified society. In my study, examining race relations within the school was a key focus. I explored the question of which patterns of racial relations existed at the school, from the perspective of the teachers.

2.3 Racism and education: debates and perspectives from the South African context

2.3.1 Introduction

In this sub-section, I examine some of the key debates on racism and education in the South African context.

2.3.2 Racism and South African education legislation post-1994

The South African democratic government adopted a new constitution in May 1996 with a political agenda that was very progressive. The new constitution was based on the principles of human rights and social justice and espoused, a non-racist and non-sexist education system that would assist in addressing past inequities (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act no. 108 of 1996.)

The first paragraph of Chapter One of the South African Constitution reads as follows:

The Republic of South Africa is one sovereign democratic state founded on the following values:

- *Human dignity-the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom.*

- *Non-racialism and non-sexism.*

- *Supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law.*

    (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act no. 108 of 1996.)

The preamble to Chapter Two, commits to the following goals: '"to heal the divisions of the past" [and] "improve the quality of the life of all citizens and free the potential of each person," (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, p. 1).

The first democratic South African government aimed to get rid of all forms of discriminatory practices, so political and legal transformation were given priority (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Many new policies and strategies were prioritised such as affirmative action, desegregation in schools, and abolition of apartheid segregation (Pandor, 2004; Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Soudien, 2007).

The South African Schools Act No. 84 (SASA) was passed in 1996. The main goal of this Act was to rid the education system of the race-based educational inequalities of apartheid education. The South African Schools Act sanctions quality education for all learners in the system, irrespective of diversity, Department of Education (1996). The Act promotes democratic practices in school education and endorses the idea that quality education for all citizens is necessary for advancing the democratic transformation of society. Learners and all teachers of all races in South Africa are protected by SASA. SASA's goal is to eliminate racism, sexism and unfair discrimination within the schooling system (Department of Education (1996). Racism in the South African educational context: analysis of key empirical studies

Since 1994, a body of research has emerged in South Africa that has examined the issues of racism in schools. Key studies that have links to this study are discussed below.

Moloi and Henning's (2006) study, *A teacher trying to live within and without bias: making sense in a 'desegregating' place of work,* examines the experiences of a Black teacher, 'Thandi', who searches for her professional identity in a previously White, Afrikaans-medium primary school in an industrial town in South Africa. The researchers document how Thandi faced up to and engaged with the power struggles within the school, how she struggled to take ownership of responsibilities in her school, and how White teachers

were not prepared to relinquish power and control (Moloi & Henning, 2006). Thandi felt 'not empowered' despite being very capable and holding a management position (Moloi & Henning, 2006). The study found that, while teachers are trained for curriculum and management changes, no training was done to assist teachers like Thandi with the historical bias that affected race relations at the school (Moloi & Henning, 2006). However, what was most alarming in the study was that although Thandi was a very competent teacher, she made no reference to her expertise in professional pedagogy or curriculum delivery; uppermost in her lived experience as a teacher is her identity as a victim of racism, and this, according to the researchers 'disables' Thandi (Moloi & Henning, 2006). The researchers argue that Thandi needs to be freed from the 'victim image' that she carries with her (Moloi & Henning, 2006).

The above study suggests that in order for teacher development programmes to be successful, the teacher needs to be researched or developed at her transformative desegregated school in order, to capture his or her meaning making within the culture of schools. An analysis of meaning making could be used to build the activist one who is empowered to act as a change agent in the teacher.

South African studies have also highlighted the issue of institutional racism. Ndimande (2009) in his journal article, *It is a Catch 22 Situation: The Challenges of Race in a Post-Apartheid South African Desegregated school,* found that school desegregation has had only a partial victory as most Black children still experience racial and cultural problems in desegregated schools in South Africa. Although policies are put in place, desegregation is still a challenge (Ndimande, 2009). Ndimande (2006) found that racism at White schools does compromise educational opportunities for Black children, and it affects the Black children in adverse ways. According to Ndimande, (2006) social inequalities are perpetuated

through the education system and the need for continuously challenging racism exists. Ndimande (2005) also conducted a study in Gauteng to examine the choices Black parents made for their children's schools. Focus group interviews were conducted with 122 Black parents in three different sites. The study found that internal segregation was evident in schools, and that White learners received preferential treatment (Ndimande, 2005). Ndimande (2005) argues that racial tension in schools still exists despite the National Department of Education's efforts to promote racial integration and social cohesion.

Motala (2006) argues that Black parents chose ex-Model C (an ex-Model C school is a former White school under the House of Representatives, during the apartheid era) schools for their children because of the resource discrimination of apartheid. Whilst facing a shortage of resources in Black schools, parents chose former White schools for their children (Motala, 2006). The study found that although parents faced blatant and subtle racism in rich White schools daily, this did not stop them from sending their children to these White schools in their quest for quality education (Motala, 2006).

Jansen (2001) argues that White parents, through School Governing Bodies (SGB), try to block the desegregation of White schools using the zoning policies because they prefer to keep their White race as the dominant race in the school. Vally and Dalamba (1999) suggest that race relations are far from being progressive at these schools. Nkomo and Vandeyar (2009) also conclude from their study that school desegregation policies are not working.

An encouraging finding is found in a study by Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) which provides an example of a sense of belonging and social cohesion in a desegregated, former House of Delegates (Indian) school. According to Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010),

social cohesion can be defined as a sense of belonging to a group in which learners feel comfortable accepted and as if they 'fit in'. One aspect of social cohesion is that learners and teachers identify with a school and so have a sense of belonging irrespective of their race. Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) found that when learners have a sense of belonging they can connect with and respect other learners, develop trust, and make friends across groups. Acceptance into a group is an important criterion for social cohesion to succeed (Tabane and Human-Vogel, 2010).

Similarly, Dolby's (2001) study focused on the psychological aspect of racial integration by examining a learner's sense of belonging in a school environment. While this study seems to conclude that racial integration has an impact on a personal sense of belonging and makes a contribution to the body of knowledge on social cohesion, Dolby (2001) is concerned about the silence around social cohesion between Black and White learners and the complexity of this relationship. The study also points to the importance of racial identity as a sense of belonging, suggesting that racial-identity belonging can assist learners to engage positively in schools with a diverse learner population (Dolby, 2001). The study found that some of the Black learners experienced positive emotions which played a significant role in their learning (Dolby, 2001). The school playground was found to be a space for racial integration to flourish (Dolby, 2001).

Racial discrimination of marginalised people is a challenge throughout the world. Winant (2001), Ladson-Billings (1995), Dyson (1996), Pollock (2006) and other critical race scholars have shown how race and racism operate in schools. Gray (1992, p. 35) reiterates '"Racism lives – it morphs its way through the structures and systems that shape our lives. We need to be shaping back, all the time."'

The above literature on racism in schools had relevance for my study. The majority of South African studies examined desegregation from the perspective of learners and teachers in former White schools. My study context is also a desegregated school; however, it is a former Coloured school into which black African learners have been admitted. I was keen to examine the dynamics in this unique school culture.

2.4   Conclusion

In this chapter I have interrogated key concepts relevant to the study to show the complexities inherent in their constructions, and to foreground that they are socially constructed concepts. To locate my study in current research, I have reviewed key studies in South Africa and internationally on race, race relations and racism within schools as institutions. I have examined how different levels of oppression which may be linked to relations of power in the context of racism as explained by key scholars in the field. The next chapter describes my research methodology and research design.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology and design of the study. Firstly, I examine the research paradigm and the research approach. The context of my study, rationale for my choice of participants as well as the actual data collection processes will be considered. An explanation of data analysis will also be given. The focus of my study was to explore the lived experiences of six primary school teachers of race, race relations and racism in the context of the school at which they work.

3.2 Research methodology and design

3.2.1 Paradigmatic issues

My study is qualitative in nature. One of the strengths of the qualitative approach to research is the richness and depth of description inherent in the data (Maree, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) add that qualitative research involves the 'why,' 'what' or 'how' questions that give meaning to the social experiences and the way they are created. Maree (2007) argues that qualitative research involves the collection of rich, descriptive data, and is concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns. Maree (2007) explains that the aim of qualitative research is to see through the eyes of the participants so that certain phenomena can be described in terms of the meaning these phenomena have for the actors or participants. Mason (2002) notes that qualitative research approaches are interested in the way people interpret or experience the world. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that a qualitative study is value-laden, as it answers questions about social experiences, thereby giving meaning to them.

Narrative inquiry is interpretivist by nature. It gathers data through storytelling and seeks an interpretive analysis. The aim is to understand the storied lives of people, that is, the ways humans experience the world. However, my study moves beyond the interpretivist paradigm – and was located in the space between interpretivism and the critical paradigm. My assumption was that my study on race and race relations was bound to uncover issues of power, and engage in social critique. The study without doubt was concerned with issues of power and justice, and the ways in which dominant ideologies and embedded discourses interact to construct social institutions. I also believed that the study would have implications for transformation in desegregated schools.

As a researcher I also believe that reality is not out there to be discovered, and that it can never be fully understood. Guba (1990) pointed out that a critical researcher is not satisfied with understanding multiple perspectives of reality but seeks to challenge and transform social power relations. A researcher located in a critical paradigm analyses and discloses the power relations within social contexts under study (Guba, 1990). It was my view that the findings of my study had the potential to make a contribution to debates on how to transform social relations within desegregated schooling contexts in South Africa.

3.2. 2 Narrative inquiry

The study is a narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is unique because, in its study of life experiences, an emphasis is placed on a story or a narrative. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) define narrative inquiry as a study of stories or a list of events. Josselson (2006) explains that narratives are gathered to seek to find out how complex human lives are. Josselson (2006) further elaborates that narrative inquiry is based on the premise that as human beings we come to understand and give meaning to our lives through our stories. Geelan (2003) contends that the constructing of stories is powerful as it takes cognisance of the current

practices, past lives and experiences of individuals. I decided that narrative inquiry was most appropriate as I aimed to explore and understand multiple experiences of teachers with regard to racism and race relations. Giddens (1993) argued that a person's own reflective understanding of their lives can tell a story of who they are and how they came to be that way.

Clandinin and Murphy (2007) indicated that narrative inquiry or narrative research has grown in popularity internationally as a research methodology in the field of education. Researchers have identified key characteristics of a narrative inquiry research method. Narrative inquiry asks questions so that the researcher can look for a deeper understanding of life experiences (Schwandt, 2007). Narrative inquiry is argued to be a flexible research approach (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), researchers use questions to direct their participants' stories. Thus, the interview questions and purposes may change as the inquiry progresses.

One of the goals of narrative inquiry is to listen to the stories of people who have not been heard of before (Creswell, 2008). The aim of such inquiry is to give them a voice. Like most qualitative research, narrative inquiry explores lived experiences and analyses these experiences using the language of story. The researcher role is to analyse and interpret these stories. A story is retold in that it is categorised into themes. Thus, a new story is structured around a series of events which can describe an individual's past, present and future experiences.

Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) suggest that narrative inquiry develops a relationship between the researcher and her participants. Creswell (2008), and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that this relationship helps to negotiate meanings around the stories and to

cross-check emerging stories. Many narrative researchers emphasise the importance of learning from their participants. This results in highlighting key life experiences and finding direction through the stories.

More recently, a few narrative researchers have focused on the idea of '*small stories*' in narrative inquiry (Bamberg, 2004, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Clandinin & Murphy, 2007; Clandinin, Pushor & Murray Orr, 2007; Georgakopoulo 2006). They differentiate between 'small stories' and 'big stories'. 'Big stories' are sometimes criticised as they are structured narrative of a person's past experiences, (Bamberg, 2006). 'Small stories' are important as they capture the everyday conservations and interactions of the participants (Georgakopoulou, 2007). The idea of 'small stories' was introduced by scholars such as Bamberg (2004; 2006) and Georgakopoulou (2006). Bamberg (2006) argues that 'big stories' use a formal research interview technique that focuses on past lived experiences. A 'small story' may be non-narrative, factual, a critical incident, a message or even a telephone call (Bamberg, 2007).

Georgakopoulou (2007) argues that in a 'small story,' telling or retelling, refusing to tell or deferring to tell are equally important. This helps participants to orientate their story so that they can decide to tell a story in the specific environment. A 'small story' intensifies a constructive dialogue between a narrative inquiry and narrative analysis around the issue. A 'small story' is about recent happenings that are shared immediately (Georgakopoulou, 2007).

The relationship between a researcher and the 'small story' teller is a powerful concept of small stories. The narrative allows the researcher to understand the 'self' of her

participant. Norton (2000) argues that every time a teacher or a learner speaks about the classroom or the community, an identity is associated with their language.

In my research, I explored the use of 'small stories' as a methodology. I was keen to capture the everyday conversations about and interactions of the participants around issues of race, racism and race relations. I wanted to understand the 'self' of my participants in the context of a particular school. I was particularly interested in critical incidents they reported and how they made meaning of these incidents.

3.3 Research context

My study was conducted at Canyon Primary School[2] in KwaZulu-Natal. Canyon Primary was a former Coloured school under the Group Areas Act (77 of 1957). The school was officially built as a temporary structure in 1970, with prefabricated classrooms and asbestos roofing. It is now 41 years old. Since 1994, when the new democratic government came into power in South Africa, the school began to desegregate to accommodate teachers and learners from all races.

Currently, the school has 609 black African children (60%), 420 Coloured children (40%) and one Indian learner. Many learners come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The school nutrition programme is well supported by the learners. For some learners, this is their first meal for the day.

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[2] pseudonymn

The school has 18 Coloured teachers (55%), 11 Indian teachers (29%) and 5 black African teachers (16%). There are five non-teaching staff members: four are Coloured and one is a black African. The Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises three Indians and three Coloureds. The School Governing Body (SGB) has five parent members; two are black African and three are Coloured. The SGB has employed two Coloured teachers who are paid from school funds.

The language of teaching and learning at Canyon Primary is English, the first additional language is Afrikaans and the second additional language is isiZulu. The religious ethos is based on the principles of Christianity despite the fact that the school has learners and teachers from diverse religious groups. Bible scriptures are read and hymns are sung at the morning assembly. The school's mission and vision policies do not reflect this religious ethos. No one has questioned this.

3.4 Research participants

I selected six teacher participants for the study: two Indian teachers, two Coloured teachers and two black African teachers. I engaged in purposive sampling as I was looking for stories on race, race relations and racism from teachers from the three race groups. Maree (2007) explains that purposive sampling occurs when participants are selected for a particular research topic. I was looking for experience, knowledge and information on racism and race relations at a school from a diverse group of teachers. Thus, purposive sampling was necessary. From the group of teachers who indicated their willingness to participate, I selected the six using stratified random sampling (stratified by race group). Bernard (1999), and Lewis and Sheppard (2006) explain that a researcher decides who should participate in

her research because of the participant's willingness to provide information as well as their knowledge or experience. Creswell (2008) states that a sample has to satisfy the objective of the study, and that there is no 'best' sample.

3.5 Data collection

My data collection tool was the interview. I conducted one interview with a teacher from the school who was willing to participate as my pilot study. This enabled me to assess whether my interview approach was realistic and workable, and to identify any logistical problems. Collecting this preliminary data enabled me to ascertain to what extent my research questions could be explored through my interview approach. This pilot interview drew my attention to the importance of careful probing to obtain rich, in-depth data. I also found that at times my probing questions were unclear, at times leading and ambiguous. I had to pay attention to the kinds of questions I put to participants.

Data collection occurred in two sessions. The aim of the first session was to obtain background information, for example, demographic information such as qualifications, and teaching experience. At this interview, I fully explained the study to the participants and the implications of their participation.

The second session involved fairly unstructured interviews. I began by asking teachers to tell me stories about race relations at the school. I was an attentive listener and looked for opportunities to probe responses. Probing has to be done if the story seems superficial, as explained by Polkinghorne (2005). Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

3.6 Data analysis

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) provided me with ideas for putting together a portrait from the narratives through the data analysis process. One approach is to take the narratives and put them in a chronologically connected portrait (Creswell, 2008). To construct a portrait for this study, I explored the ways in which the story had been structured. This involved content analysis. Looking at how the story was organised, developed, began and ended, as stories can go forward and backwards at times. Sometimes the stories conveyed different types of information. I identified narrative strings that made particular themes or patterns in the data explicit. Using my theoretical frames and related literature, I tried to make sense of the meanings embedded in the themes and patterns. My search was for multiple meanings in teachers' experiences of race, race relations and racism.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Patton (2002) defines the criteria for judging qualitative research as being: dependability, trustworthiness, transferability and credibility.

Interviews were audio-recorded. To ensure *trustworthiness*, teachers read the transcribed interviews to ensure that their views and experiences were accurately captured.

To address *dependability* I tried to report in detail the research methodology and design processes that I have used so that future researchers can make sense of my study.

I made provisions for *transferability* by describing the context of my study. I also provided a detailed description of the phenomenon under study. Transferability of findings,

according to Merriam (2002), is enhanced when a researcher uses descriptive words, that is, 'thick' descriptions with in-depth information to facilitate the replication of a study.

As a researcher I have acknowledged that I have brought my own biases and assumptions to my research process. I have tried to be reflective at all stages of my research.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Before I began my study I obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I also obtained permission to undertake the study from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. I gained informed consent from the school principal.

Neuman (1997) contends that ethics starts and ends with the researcher. I obtained written, informed consent from my participants. They were fully informed about every aspect of the study and their role as participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Remembering a story from the past on racism and race relations, and keeping it alive, is tied to the teller's memory and can be very emotional. However, I was also aware that stories have the power to heal old wounds. I was an empathetic listener in the course of data collection.

Pseudonyms were used for participants. I also obtained permission from the teachers to have their interviews audio-recorded. The participants were given the option of withdrawing from the study at any given time if they wished to do so.

Transcriptions of the audio-tapes were presented to the participants so that they could assess whether their stories were accurately depicted. An acknowledgement letter was signed after the transcriptions of the stories were read and approved.

3.9 Possible limitations, challenges and risks

The study is limited in scope. It involved a limited number of research participants from one school. There are no White teachers at the school.

I have mentioned the complexities around my positionality in the study. I am a researcher and, to some extent, a participant as I am a teacher at the school. I am researching my own school context, and participants are my own colleagues. I have also experienced complex race relations and racism and continue to make meanings of racism at my school. To attempt to address this, I wrote my own story and attempted to make explicit my own experiences of racism and race relations at my school.

A further issue is that narratives can be told in many layers and truth can get distorted, which can lead to bias and subjectivity (Josselson, 2006). A complex question to ask, according to Josselson (2006), is: What should the assessment criteria of narrative research inquiry be? The narrative inquiry methodology does not have a standardised set of technical procedures. In my study, I did not search for one truth. I tried to explore the multiple meanings of participants. In addition, Starratt (2004) argues that stories *can* distort and falsify our experiences. The remedy for this is to listen to more stories from different story tellers, and approach I took in this study.

Race is still a volatile and sensitive topic in South African society, and discomfort is felt around discussions of race relations and racism. In this study, I had to be very skilful to ensure that this discomfort did not give me data that is 'politically correct.' I built a level of trust and openness with my participants throughout the data collection process.

On reflecting on my study, I believe that although researching race, racism and race relations is complex, the study also presented an advantage. The teacher participants indicated that they were given an opportunity to reflect on issues of race and race relations in what they felt was a safe space. Critical self-reflection was viewed by them as a very valuable pedagogical tool for teacher professional development.

3. **10 Theoretical framing**

My study explored race, racism and race relations through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens and the theory of oppression. I argue that CRT and the theory of oppression offer the possibility of unmasking, exposing, confronting and understanding issues of race relations and racism within a particular educational context.

3.10.1 The theory of oppression

3.10.1.1 Introduction

Since oppression exists universally in present societies, every person may become enveloped in an oppressed or oppressor role, or both (Freire, 2007; Young, 1990 Hemson, 2006; Frye 2005). Societies maintain oppression by generally securing the co-operation of people in oppressing one other (Frye, 2005; Bishop, 1994; Gill, Mayor & Blair, 1994; Goodman & Lesnick, 2001; Mullally, 2002). Oppression may be effected in various ways, including through prejudice, discrimination, sexism, classism and racism (Freire, 2007).

Oppression hurts and invalidates, forcing a person to 'agree' or 'accept' when he or she is pushed or forced into a particular position, often becoming submissive and subordinated (Young, 1990). From here, a pattern of oppression may follow in which, the

oppressor dominates, exploits, marginalises and manipulates in order to hold onto power starts (Young, 2000; Hemson, 2006). The oppressed may develop a pattern where agreement or acceptance grows (Hemson, 2006). In other words, the oppressed do not challenge this pattern because of fear or loss of something (Freire, 2007). Frye (2005) reminds us that many people are socialised by restrictions and limitations which are internalised and monitored so that people adapt to what is required of them through oppression.

According to Young (1990) and Frye (2005), an oppressive society may be controlled by propaganda, discrimination of all kinds and miscommunication. In South Africa, oppression was understood and experienced as the loss of one's freedom and liberty in the post apartheid era (Jansen, 2001; Vally and Dalamba, 1999).

However, according to various scholars, oppression has a much broader understanding. Oppression, as Young (1990, p. 271) contends, can also refer to '"systematic and structural phenomena that are not necessarily the result of the intentions of a tyrant'". Mullaly (2002) defines oppression as occurring when powerful people dominate the powerless or subordinate groups within society. Power is vested in politics, economics, social and cultural manipulation (Mullaly, 2002). Goodman and Lesnick (2004) define domination as the systematic control, manipulation and usage of people to justify one's own gains.

Jean Harvey (1999) in her book *Civilized Oppression* drew my attention to subtle and overt forms of oppression in society. Many feminist researchers have claimed that women throughout the world are oppressed in various overt and subtle ways (Harvey, 1999). In many societies, women live confined lives because of the patriarchal system and their cycle of socialization (Harro, 2000). In order to understand our society better we need to recognise all types of oppression.

Oppression and domination are processes that exist between individuals, class, groups and societies (Gill, 1995; Mullaly, 2002). However, Bishop (1994) believes that the relationship between oppression and domination is embedded in societal values of separation, hierarchy and competition. People need to struggle to compete for equity, redress and co-operation (Young, 1990).

The discourse of power is seen as integral to an understanding of oppression (Young, 1990; Freire, 1969; hook, 1994). When power is unequally distributed, it is used as a weapon of domination over others. In support of this argument, McIntosh (1989, p.31) explains that White privilege in the context of American society is used as an '"invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear and blank checks."' White people in many countries used their race as a privilege and a weapon of domination and oppression (McIntosh, 1989). Bell (1987) refers to this 'weightless knapsack' as structural privileges. Dominant groups look at themselves through a vision of distortion, and come to believe that their structural privileges are normal and acceptable (McIntosh, 1989).

Oppression is evident through social interactions (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007). Oppressive relationships are expressed through race, gender, age, religion and class. All forms of oppression are interconnected since human beings are complex and can take on roles of being an oppressor or oppressed. Race is an oppressive construct as one race group exploits another on the basis of skin colour, ethnicity and other defining characteristics (Freire, 1969, Young, 1990).

As can be seen from the discussion above, many scholars and researchers have attempted to theorise oppression, including Paulo Freire, Iris Marion Young and Ann Cudd. I

shall introduce their seminal books and discuss their theoretical lenses below. The works of selected theorists have provided me with insights with which to make sense of the data in my study.

3.10.1.2 The work of Paulo Freire

Freire (2007) in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* has a very general view of the theory of oppression that can be applied to various situations. This theory presents education as a liberating process Freire, (2007). Freire (2007) uses the method of consciousness through which people can discover and recreate themselves and refers to three levels of consciousness: *magical consciousness,* which refers to people who accept the injustices done in their lives because they are docile and silent; *naive consciousness*, which refers to gaining insight and becoming aware of one's own problems, but not getting the outside world involved, and *critical consciousness*, which refers to people looking at problems as being structural problems, making connections by examining reality and recognising the contradictions. My study aimed to raise a critical consciousness amongst participants and in me, the researcher.

One of the most important ideas in Freire's (2007) theory of oppression is the 'culture of silence.' Freire (2007) maintains that oppressors silence the oppressed by overwhelming them with the values, norms and myths of the agent group; the power of this pressure makes the oppressed internalise the myths. The oppressor can then manipulate the oppressed; the oppressed become dependent on the culture of the oppressor (Freire, 2007). The oppressors become viewed as the 'experts' and in this way the oppressed feel devalued and inferior. Freire (2007) explains that cultural action that promotes the goal of freedom can assist the oppressed to escape the 'culture of silence.' People need to see the truth and their

own reality (Freire, 2007). According to Freire, (2007) one of the main reasons for indoctrinating the oppressed is to give them negative images of themselves, so that they become dehumanised and remain silent because they choose to be so.

Another mechanism of the oppressed is 'false consciousness,' according to Freire (2007). False consciousness can be defined as a 'myth' which, according to Freire (2007) is created by cultural invasion. Myths benefit the oppressor and are a way of keeping the oppressed silent (Freire, 2007); for example, the myth that women's place is at home, and that her sole function is to take care of family. In many societies, women have internalised these roles and young girls are conditioned to fulfil these roles. The effect of making women experts at home gives way to making men experts in the society. This is the reason, for men in many societies having dominated historically in politics, industry, law, medicine and education (hooks, 1994; Leach & Humphreys, 2007).

The ideas and concepts from Freire (2007) discussed above helped me to interrogate and make sense of teachers' stories of racism and race relations in my study. Freire (2007) believes that that thinking critically about issues can break the cycle of false consciousness, in turn creating a critical consciousness and awareness that has the potential to liberate.

3.10.1.3 Iris Marion Young's theory of oppression

Iris Young's theory of oppression is articulated in her book, *Five Faces of Oppression* (Young, 1990). Young (1990) delineates five categories of oppression: exploitation, marginality, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. *Exploitation* occurs through a process whereby some people work hard but do not benefit from their hard work; instead, others reap their reward (Young, 1990). *Marginalization* occurs when a whole category of people is not allowed to participate in their own social life; their skills and work are considered of less worth and value when compared to the dominant group Young (1990). These people are deprived of material gain on the basis of a category of differences, for example, race and gender, which leads to the group of people feeling unvalued, unimportant and invisible as individuals (Young, 1990). A sense of *powerlessness* becomes embedded in oppressed people, resulting in them lacking a sense of self and, exercising little judgement or innovation in their work (Young, 1990). *Cultural imperialism* refers to a situation in which the experience and culture of the dominant group are viewed as the norm; for example, within the media and educational institutions (Young, 1990). The dominant group renders the 'Other' invisible; at the same time the powerful group stereotypes the oppressed group and marks it as 'Other', which is constructed as inferior (Young, 1990). *Violence* is the last category in Young's (1990) theory of oppression. Violence occurs when people experience systematic and legitimate violence; the members of target groups live in fear of random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property Young, 1990). The sole aim of such attacks is to humiliate or destroy the target group (Young, 1990).

Young (1990) stresses, however, that oppression is not a unified phenomenon but is experienced in diverse ways by each group. For example, she explains that the experience of

oppression of a working-class White woman will be different to the oppression experienced by a middle-class African-American male in the USA (Young, 1990).

Young (1990) elaborates that oppression is the systematic inhibition of a group in everyday life through attitudes, daily practices, behaviours and rules. Oppression is often experienced as structural, ongoing and systematic (Freire, 2007; Young, 1990). In my study, I used Young's perspectives to analyse the experience of race and racism at the school, in particular how the faces of oppression may be evident in attitudes, practices, structures, behaviours and the culture of the school.

Muthukrishna and Ramsuran (2007) conducted a study which examined the layers of oppression and exclusions experienced by adult and child learners in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Young's (1990) five categories of oppression were used to make sense of the data that emerged. The findings concluded that oppression was systematically produced and reproduced in the everyday lives of these learners, their families and their teachers and that Young's (1990) five faces of oppression answered 'why' questions of oppression (Muthukrishna & Ramsuran, 2007).

3.10.1.4 Ann E. Cudd

Ann Cudd (2006) identified a unified theory of oppression. She presents four criteria to help one conceptualise and understand oppression. The first is that oppression must involve some sort of physical or psychological harm (Cudd, 2006). Harm can be justified or unjustified (Cudd, 2006). Oppression is a harm that restricts one's freedom in one's society, (Cudd, 2006).

Her second criterion refers to harm being inflicted on one social group by another social group (Cudd, 2006). The harm has an impact on self-image (Cudd, 2006). Cudd's (2006) view is that people cannot be oppressed at an individual level. The group which a person belongs to is oppressed; individuals are therefore oppressed as members of that group by another group (Cudd, 2006).

The third criterion refers to the benefits received by privileged group (Cudd, 2006). This means that not every person in the privileged group is an oppressor, but the whole group benefits from the membership of that group. Therefore, members of a dominant group do not challenge the system because the system benefits them, (Cudd, 2006). Cudd (2006) argues that people often reinforce the oppressive status quo and particular social norms without intending to harm anyone else, or without even being aware that they are colluding to do harm to others.

Cudd's (2006) fourth criterion states that oppression includes coercion or force. Coercion implies that oppression does not allow a person to have a choice. Cudd (2006, p. 27) reminds us that coercion is not an 'absence of all choice, but a lack of the right kind of choice.'

Cudd's (2006) theory conceptualises oppression as a harmful act that can be perpetuated by teachers, for example, without them realising that they are oppressors. In turn, the oppressed may accept their oppression without realising it either. Once teachers go through a process of deconstructing these realities, they can take control to free themselves from their own oppression.

3.10.1.5 Summary

The above discussion shows the complexity of the notion of oppression. It was my view that some of the key concepts and ideas on oppression provided by the theorists presented above would help me make sense of race relations and racism at the school. A crucial feature of oppression and the way it operates is its specificity of form, content and location. I hoped the theorists would provide me with lens through which to obtain a contextual understanding of teacher stories. The various criteria suggested to enable one to recognise and categorise oppression helped me understand positive race relations at the school.

3.10.2 Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory is both a theoretical framework and an analytical tool for understanding racial oppression in society. CRT places race and racism as central themes to all social, political and educational experiences (Lopez, 2003; Crenshaw, Peller & Thomas, 1995). Lopez (2003) asserts that racism is so prevalent in daily life that it 'becomes' normalised and is often taken for granted. Further, CRT rejects the notion that 'race' can be neutral and objective (Crenshaw, et al., 1995). Critical race theorists also theorise about other forms of subordination and the intersectionality of racism, classism, sexism, ableism and other forms of difference (Crenshaw, et al., 1995).

CRT is concerned with racial subordination, prejudice, and inequity, and presents the view that race is socially constructed and discursive in nature (Graham, Brown-Jeffy, Aronson & Stephens, 2011). Graham et al., (2011) draw attention to the view that CRT aims to present stories about discrimination and oppression from the experience of subordinated racial groups, and to address and eradicate racial oppression and injustices in society based on race, class, sexuality or any form of difference.

In other words, CRT challenges the legitimacy of racially oppressive structures, practices and behaviours in society. CRT explores, for example, how systems of culture, privilege and power are related (Delgado, 1989). It considers how the construction of race benefits certain groups, and it examines the historical context of uneven power relations (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado & Crenshaw, 2003). CRT rejects the idea that racism is merely an individual act of discrimination and, suggests rather that it is the systemic, historical and ideological abuse of power to protect, preserve and maintain privilege for one group (Delgado 2000; Harris 1994). It is also considered a social movement with an activist component that aims to further the transformation of social institutions (Delgado & Stefanic, (1997).

Recently, many scholars have linked CRT to education contexts (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lynn, 1999; Solórzano, 1998; Tate, 1997). Yosso (2005) defines CRT in education as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism affect educational structures, practices and discourses. Further, CRT is conceived as a social justice project that works toward the liberatory potential of schooling (hooks, 1994; Freire, 2007). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define CRT as a framework of pedagogy, methods and perspectives that can be used to understand and transform structural and cultural aspects of educational institutions. CRT asks questions about the processes that institutions and organisations use to maintain ethnic, racial, gender and other forms of subordination (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). CRT acknowledges the contradictory nature of education in that schools often oppress and marginalise while they have the potential to emancipate and empower (Yosso, 2005).

There are at least five tenets that form the basic perspectives, research methods and pedagogy of CRT (Solórzano, 2002). The first tenet argues that race and racism are central

and endemic to finding out how a society functions (Yosso, 2005). There are multiple layers of racialised subordination based on various forms of diversity and their intersection, for example, gender, accent and, sexuality (Solórzano, 1997). Tenet 2 challenges dominant ideologies that oppress certain groups in society. CRT refutes the argument that educational institutions are neutral and objective spaces that provide equal opportunity for all (Yosso, 2005). Embedded in Tenet 3 is the commitment of CRT to social justice, liberation, transformation and addressing oppression based on class, gender and racial oppression (Yosso, 2005). Through Tenet 4, CRT stresses the importance of experiential knowledge, lived experience and storytelling of People of Colour or other subordinate groups. The principle is that such knowledge is critical to understanding, analysing and teaching about racial oppression. Experiential knowledge can be obtained by methods which include storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios and narratives (Solórzano, 2002). Tenet 5 argues that CRT adopts a trans-disciplinary perspective in that it moves beyond disciplinary boundaries by drawing on scholarship from disciplines such as ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law and, psychology, (Solórzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

The goal of CRT is to give a voice to oppressed groups by listening to their constructions of their realities on race, race relations and racism (Bell, 1987; Carrasco, 1996; Delgado, 1989; Olivas, 1990). Story telling entails providing detailed accounts of subtle, overt and covert examples of institutional racism, individual racism, subordination and oppression (Bell, 2010; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), narratives or stories can be contested, deconstructed and reshaped by the narrator so that they become lived, experiential knowledge that can serve as a catalyst of transformation.

In the context of my study, CRT offers new ways to pursue issues of social relations by initiating dialogue and debate, and to challenge uncritical ways of thinking about social inequality, as stated by (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Ryan and Dixson, 2006). The aim of CRT is to examine the historical context of race, and to '"theorise race"' and use it as an analytical tool for making sense of inequalities in schools (Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2005 p. 5). CRT also serves as a framework for challenging and dismantling notions of fairness, meritocracy, colour-blindness and neutrality in education (Parker, 2003).

Marx and Pennington (2003) advise that an analysis of education and schooling contexts using a CRT lens has implications for teachers at a personal and professional level. The premise is that racism is endemic to schools, and teachers have a responsibility to acknowledge it, expose its manifestations in school and explore its impact (Marx and Pennington, 2003). CRT in education research can be used to bring about awareness of racism, inspire a social justice agenda and give voice to oppressed groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Taylor, 2004). Yosso (2005) further explains that a CRT approach to education involves a commitment to developing schools that acknowledge the multiple strengths of all groups, including subordinated groups, in order to achieve the goal of social and racial justice.

Parker and Lynn (2002) point out that both CRT and narrative research focus on giving voice to and listening to participants. Chapman and McNeill (2005) explains that participants become empowered by listening to and reflecting on their own stories. These scholars argue that, through listening to the stories of participants, oppression based on race can be challenged.

Norquay (1993) contends that we cannot work against racism or any form of oppression unless we understand its place in our lives. We need to open up a conversation about oppression. My study adopted a narrative inquiry methodology which therefore resonates with CRT.

In my study, I attempted to use CRT as a theoretical and analytical framework for examining the ways in which race, racism and race relations play out within the structures, practices and discourses of a particular school. Yosso (2005) explains that CRT can be used to scrutinise the ways in which race and racism directly and indirectly affect certain social groups. I was open to exploring whether there was evidence of personal experiences of racism and race relations and systemic factors that may be perpetuating and reproducing educational inequities in the particular schooling context. I was also keen to explore resistances to racism and inequities in the particular schooling context. Stovall (2005) points out that CRT examines racism as both a group and individual phenomenon that functions on many levels. Further, it provides a way to identify the functions of racism and race relations as institutional and systematic phenomena (Stovall, 2005), which was the aim of my study.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology and design of my study. In this chapter I argued that my research paradigm moved beyond the interpretivist paradigm in which most narrative research is located. I show that I made a shift to the critical paradigm since I interrogated issues of power, power relations and oppression in the lives of the teachers, and hoped that my study would inform social change in schools that have desegregated. I argued for the importance of 'small stories' as a research method within narrative inquiry. 'Small

stories' capture the everyday conservations and interactions of the participants which was the aim of my study. I also provide a detailed account of all other design choices I made.

My theoretical framing for the study was presented. The chapter also gives insight into how Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the theory of oppression informed the research methodology and design of the study. The focus on 'small' stories aimed to give voice to participants. The study examined teacher lives through 'small stories' in a particular situated context. CRT focuses on the experiential knowledge, and in the study it was used examine the ways in which race and racism directly and indirectly affected participants working in a desegregated school. I selected a school as a social institution to examine the way racism plays out as an institutional and systematic phenomenon. By examining teacher stories my study took on a subjective perspective in design, data collection, interpretation which is in-keeping with the tenants of CRT.

I became aware of my positionality in the study when I engaged with the methodology and design. My study of CRT helped me to understand that I could not distance myself from the reality I was researching. In other words, I knew that I could not achieve an unbiased and impartial perspective on the lives of the teachers and their experience of racism and race relations. CRT encourages researchers to openly discuss and acknowledge the experiences they bring to the study which I did in chapter one.

The theory of oppression would suggest that research should serve to give voice, empower, emancipate and liberate participants. Through my interviews with participants and by listening to their stories I hoped that research would facilitate a political process through which the teachers would find a platform for confronting oppression and to see the link between knowledge and action.

In view of the very subjective and sensitive nature of my research, I also presented in this chapter a comprehensive account of the steps I took to ensure the trustworthiness of my research. I provided a detailed description of how I dealt with ethical issues pertaining to my study. Finally, I presented an in-depth account of how the data were analysed. The next chapter will present the study findings.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1.   Introduction

Narrative inquiry has the potential to enhance our ability as teachers to reflect on our personal and educational experiences which are meaningful and transformative (Conle, 2006; Dewey, 1966). Dewey (1966) suggested that through reflecting on experience we learn about the world, and that by using our experience we can transform ourselves and our social institutions. The goal of my research was to lend an ear to teachers' stories on race, racism and race relations at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal. I engaged 6 teacher participants in a critical reflection on race, racism and race relations through their storytelling. In this chapter, I present the key findings of the study through the themes that emerged from the stories. A discussion of the findings will highlight the stories that teachers told, and the assumptions that underpinned their stories.

 The research questions I explored were: What stories do teachers tell about race, race relations and racism at their school? How do teachers' live, conceptualise and challenge racism? The five key themes discussed below are: teacher's stories of race, racism and race relations; who holds power?; 'a monster that lurks in the dark': institutional racism at play; teacher emotionality and racism; strategies of oppression, resistance and coping.

4.2 Teachers' stories of race, racism and race relations

4.2.1 Introduction

At the outset of the data collection, I found that the teachers had difficulty engaging with issues of race, race relations and racism at their school. I used Critical Race Theory (CRT) to try to make sense of teacher stories. There was a sense of uneasiness and discomfort

that was often subtle. However, there were teachers who openly stated that they found talking about race and race relations difficult, as illustrated below:

I need to say that the issues of race are not very easy to be chatting about.
(Bongani, black African male)

Initially, the African male teacher questioned whether there was any kind of racism at the school:

I wonder if I can call it racism...... I would have heard racial slurs or comments being passed.
(Bongani, black African male)

However, in the second interview he did concede that racism is often levelled against African and Indian teachers, who are in the minority at the school. The agents are the Coloured teachers, who are in the majority. He had this to say,

Individuals are marginalised, victimised and treated unfairly. Sometimes this is subtle. He [the principal] used to humiliate African female teachers to try to destroy them so that they will think of leaving his school. He was the cause of racism at school.....he also used the female gender to his advantage to further his......manipulation - as this school has more females than males.
(Bongani, black African male)

Overall, the study revealed that there are deep silences around racism at the school. Silences around racism, oppression and marginalisation in institutions are well documented in literature, for example, (Delpit, 2004; Dickar, 2008). Winant (2001) argue that CRT, which is one of the lenses used for analysing the data in the study, does what most theories do not:

CRT places race, racism and race relations as central to educational experiences. These scholars argue that as educationists we often fail to address racism and issues of race relations because we take these issues for granted or divert their importance.

In the sub-sections below, I examine the stories that teachers told, and interpret their stories through the lenses of my theoretical and conceptual frames, and the literature I have reviewed. I identified key themes or patterns that emerged in the data which I present and discuss below.

4.2.2 'You don't feel you belong'- experiencing exclusion and marginalisation

A common theme that emerged is the exclusion and marginalisation of minority group teachers by the dominant group, evident in their everyday experiences at the school. As explained in earlier chapters, the school in the study is a desegregated school which was historically designated as a Coloured school by the Department of Education during the apartheid era. The apartheid government had four distinct racial categories which governed the lives of people: Coloured, Indian, White and Black Africans. In this dissertation, I view and use the concept of 'race' as a social construction.

Feagin & Vera (1995) suggest that everyday racism is repetitive, accumulative and reproduces racial domination. Therborn (2003) confirms this and contends that everyday racism maintains power in schools. Feagin & Vera (1995) also argues that the legitimisation of everyday racism justifies unequal power relations. Teachers' voices below reflect examples of everyday racism.

Being an Indian, my religion is prejudiced and it becomes an issue as it was mentioned repeatedly that this was a Christian-*based school, based on Christian principles. One of*

the Coloured teachers didn't even know that this was a public school and all the religions must be taught.

(Mala[3], Indian female)

They don't look at me as a teacher; they don't look at me as the professional teacher. I am the maid. They are looking at me as though I am still their maid and they do not look at me like I belong to this school as it is a Coloured school. So I do not belong to this school and isiZulu again, they don't like it.

*(*Thandi[4], Black African female)

Even in the school governing body (SGB), you don't even feel like having an input, you don't feel you belong to this school. They always have a way as if they are waiting to press a button, then they will tell you, they are telling you to get out of the office although they are not using those words. They welcome you when you get to the office, but there's no word that you will get from the principal and the management and the other teachers, they own the school.

(Thandi, Black African female)

He [principal] used to humiliate African female teachers to try to destroy them so that they will think of leaving 'his' school. He was the cause of the racism at this school because he favoured the Coloured teachers and gave them privileges, ignoring the Indian and African teachers.

(Bongani, black African male)

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[3] Pseudonyms are used to protect
[4] the identity of the teachers.

The above responses from the teachers show the complexity of exclusions and marginalisation experienced at the school. The black African male teacher explains that he does not suffer racism and associated marginalisation because he is male. His experience is that the female teachers of the minority groups at the school are most affected. Of the participants, it seems that the African female suffers the worst form of racism as she feels she is being marginalised at the school just as she was as during apartheid. She observed other teachers being listened to, while she is ignored, this African female participant described her experience of trying to seek assistance in her everyday activities from a Coloured male teacher, the deputy principal of Canyon Primary.

.......but I think he was very racist because there were certain groups that he would allow in and greet them nicely. I as a black person and other black people, when we greet him, he didn't even say 'Hi,' that was a very difficult thing for him to say. He used to turn his back and run away from us. They victimise me on the basis of my race. The principal only victimises the African women, he does not victimise the African man. This race relation is also gender biased.
(Thandi, black African female)

One of the other participants validated the perceptions of the African female teacher:

I am of the opinion that many of the so-called Indian teachers and the so-called Black teachers were victims. The isiZulu teacher always felt, she was being treated differently by the principal and she would often come to me and say that because she was Black, she was given a different sort of treatment by the principal.
(Bongani, black African male)

The type of racism this teacher faced was individual racism. Individual racism is concerned 'with actions and attitudes involving the negative evaluation of people on the basis of some assumed biological characteristics such as skin colour,' (Todd, 1991, p.81).

Teachers' responses above and in other instances in the study, reveal oppressive practices, which reflect the intersection of race, gender, language and religion. Thus oppression and racism are complex, social constructions. MacDonald (2006) and Speight (2007) suggest that racism is socially engineered to maintain power and privilege. Sidanius (2000) draws attention to the interactive nature of oppression. Critical Race Theory puts forward the issue of intersectionality. The processes of race and racism work with and through other forms of diversity such as gender, ethnicity, class, language as systems of power. CRT's aim is to investigate these intersections, (Bell, 2004) which this study has attempted to examine. As stated in Chapter 3 of this study, Yosso (2005) explains that CRT can be used to scrutinise the ways in which race and racism affect certain social groups directly and indirectly.

Teachers of the minority group also mentioned the social exclusion they felt daily at the school. There was little evidence of informal social interactions between teachers of the minority and dominant group. This is illustrated in the response below:

I noticed more when I first came....it's kind of that you don't fit in into that group…the Coloured group.....when they are talking within their social arena and whatever, and even in the staffroom, they are comfortable when they sit among themselves. If somebody [from another race group] comes in there is uneasiness. That I noticed, not that anything has been said verbally, no, it is my observation. It is not totally inclusive as we interact as a staff that is multi-racial. This school was a previously former

Coloured school, so the majority of teachers that are here are Coloureds; even when teachers leave, more Coloured teachers join the school from the local community, so that this race is always in the majority.

(Bongani, black African male)

So oppression still exists in our school, whether we like it, and if we don't address it now and accept it, because we are not accommodating each other as teachers. We undermine each other. There are those who are queens. There are those when they look at us, even our ideas and opinions are not taken into consideration.

(Thandi, black African female)

Young's (1990) concepts of marginalisation and cultural imperialism can be used as analytical lenses to make sense of the experiences of the teachers in the above excerpts. Thandi states that the ideas and opinions of her group are not valued. Bongani explains the subtle forms of social exclusion she has experienced. Thandi also alludes to the fact that oppression is not challenged in the school context. Cultural imperialism describes the way in which one group's ideas, views and experiences are defined as superior to other groups (Young, 1990). Through marginalisation a certain group of people are rendered unimportant and invisible. Thandi also draws attention to the strategy to ensure that the majority of teachers at the school are drawn from the dominant group. Marginalisation is evident in this strategy as it denies one group equal citizenship rights.

Freire (2007) explains that the oppressed do not challenge these patterns of exclusion and marginalisation because of fear of losing something. One often becomes submissive and subordinated (Young, 1990; Hemson, 2006). Oppression hurts and invalidates, forcing a person to 'agree' or 'accept' when he or she is pushed or forced into a

particular position (Young, 1990). The oppressed may develop a pattern where agreement or acceptance prevails, so their oppression becomes internalised (Freire, 2007). This pattern illustrates how a dominant group may have the power to render the target group invisible, and how the target group can be stereotyped and marked as 'Other' (Freire, 2007). Thus, the actions of the agent (dominant) group can result in the reconstruction of the target group as inferior; in the case of this school, as being less competent to hold posts at the school. Minority teachers are not given voice as can be seen in the fact that staff meetings are dominated by the agent group, and the views of the target group are not valued. Kohli (2008, p. 177) explains 'how invisibly the dominant culture can penetrate the way we see ourselves and the world around us.' Goodman and Lesnick (2004) define domination as the systematic control, manipulation and usage of people to justify one's own gains.

Kohli (2008) suggests that the voices of teachers from oppressed and marginalised groups are often invisible in education policy debates, yet their perspectives and experiences are needed to inform teacher education and whole school development initiatives.

4.2.3 Who holds power?

The discourse of power is seen as integral to an understanding of oppression (Young, 1990; Freire, 1969; hooks, 2004). When power is unequally distributed, it is used as a weapon of domination over others (Freire, 2007). According to Hardiman (1982) oppression is multi-layered and dynamic.

The interviews with teachers in the study showed that the culture, values and teaching experience and methodologies of the dominant group were privileged at the school. CRT explores how systems of oppression, power and privilege are related. It considers how the construction of race benefits certain groups, and it examines the historical context of

uneven power relations (Matsuda, et al., 1993). As in the present study, Kohli (2008) was able to identify numerous moments when certain teachers made comments or acted in ways that privileged White cultural values over her own. Power makes the dominant group exert control over the subordinate group. A system of dominance is created where it chips away and eradicates the subordinate group's identity, rendering it invisible in a gradual way (Kohli, 2008). Two of the teachers at the school in this study referred to the power of the School Governing Body (SGB) in perpetuating oppression. The SGB has the power to employ mostly Coloured teachers at Canyon Primary to maintain the status quo, as it was a former Coloured school. The strategic posts in the SGB are also held by Coloured parents.

The SGB have both Coloured and African parents, teachers and non-teaching staff. However, the strategic posts are held by Coloured people yet they are not in the majority. (Thandi, black African female)

Although this school has desegregated, some of the Coloured teachers still feel that this school belongs to them, because it is in a former Coloured area, the same thing occurs at ex-model C schools, the same thing occurs at ex-Indian schools and ex-African schools. The department is not promoting transformation, schools are left to select their own candidates for promotion posts and former White schools are promoting Whites. Each race is promoting their own kind of people and the department who is the employer is allowing for this to occur.
(Bongani, black African male)

The power of the dominant group is embedded in institutions through the rules, norms and habits of the school. Gramsci (1998) calls this 'power hegemony'. Hegemony may

be evident through class domination, racism and sexism (Essed, 2002). According to Essed (2002), the power of the dominant groups may be noticed in their everyday racism or sexism.

Teachers in this study complained that there was no support from the Department of Education to enable the school to transform and meet the goal of inclusivity. The South African Constitution of 1996 speaks to non-racist education: Section 29 does not allow any school to discriminate on the basis of [race]. Section 4 (a) of the National Education Policy Act seeks to guarantee the right of every person against unfair discrimination on any grounds whatsoever. The South African School's Act also promulgates non-racist education. Yet discrimination and racism seem to be firmly entrenched at the school in this study, to the point where they become the norm.

There were many questions raised about the leadership of the school principal. Teachers were in unison when they described their experiences with the school principal. The power and control of the school principal was complex. Actions and enactments revealed the intersection of gender and race. The sentiments of the teacher below were echoed by the other teachers in the study.

His [the principal's] attitude was that only Coloured teachers can teach Coloured children because he had confidence in them and not confidence in me, which shows me that he was a racist, he was judgmental. He could not accept the new South Africa and its transformation. He was an agent who promoted and supported racial division in this school because he did nothing from preventing the Coloured teachers from oppressing the Indian and African teachers. In fact, he enjoyed it because he was obsessed with power and control. He thought that his race was superior to mine. I think that he was threatened by me because he could not bully me. Being a man, he also used his gender

to threaten me. I felt morally degraded as he thought that my race, that is being an

Indian, is inferior.

(Mala, Indian female)

The above response shows that racism and prejudice are about losing power and privilege. The agent group stands to gain emotionally, culturally, socially, and economically. Racism is thus a socially constructed reality and often at the centre of social institutions and their structures. At the heart of racism lie the concept of group competition and the resultant quest for power (Shih et al., 2007).

4.2.4 'A monster that lurks in the dark': institutional racism at play

A key theme that emerged in this study was that of institutional racism. Institutional racism at schools allows those in power to limit opportunities and information given to target groups. Institutionalised racism stunts the aspiration and talents of the target group. It has the potential to entrench myths so that the identity of the target group is neutralised (MacDonald, 2006). The institution can then shape and control the attitudes, beliefs and value systems of the target group (Duncan, et al., 2004; MacDonald, 2006).

This study showed that institutional racism was evident in school policies, rules and the ethos of the school. It also revealed the strategies that the school's management used to entrench inequality and oppression. A female teacher complained that learners were also being used to perpetuate racism against her Coloured children were being removed from her class and placed in the class of a Coloured teacher. The teachers explain:

This school is practising institutional racism which is subtly hidden as a monster that lurks in the dark. We need to challenge institutional racism as it can be direct and intentional to hurt, harm and divide us.

*(*Thandi, Black African female)

There are subtle forms of racism against learners when it comes to leadership positions of prefects. Head prefects are Coloured learners. African learners are sidelined. This has changed slightly this year.

(Mala, Indian female)

Firstly, one story that affected me was that Coloured children were removed from our classes and placed in Coloured teachers' classes. This was done without any consultation. The principal did not communicate with me if there was a problem with this child. We were told that parents that phoned in had this notion to remove the child from my class. The principal entertained this notion instead of educating those parents and transforming them.

(Mala, Indian female)

Also, Black educators were also targeted, they would talk along the corridors that they can't teach, they have no control or discipline, but nothing was brought up formally. Black educators were given the opportunity to act as HOD, but they were not shortlisted for the HOD position. That is also a form of racialism. There is no Black member on the school management team.

(Mala, Indian female)

Cultural invasion, according to Freire (2007) occurs when people of colour accept the culture, norms and values of the dominant group, rendering the target group powerless and inferior. The inferior lose their identity.

Teachers in this study felt powerless in the face of this kind of institutionalised racism. Young (1990) proposed 'powerlessness' as one of the faces of oppression. Young (1990) argued that workplaces are often not organised on democratic principles. The powerless have no autonomy and their creativity are restricted (Young, 1990). There are many injustices at the school in this study that can be associated with Young's (1990) face of powerlessness. Teachers are inhibited, lack decision-making power and are exposed to disrespect.

Neither teachers, nor the Head of Department, nor parents questioned the strategy of the principal to move Coloured children to the classes of Coloured teachers. These teachers rely on their privilege and they avoid objecting to oppression. They do not challenge racism or oppression. They have a choice to remain silent as well, and they choose to be silent. One of the teachers argued that teachers have to resist institutional racism. School policies also affected black African parents. One teacher explains,

African parents are also targets of racism. Coloured parents get to do relief teaching to pay off their learners' school fees, while African parents have to work in the school garden, scrub the toilets to pay off their learners' school fees. Here we can see the discrimination in the type of work that parents have to do - so some African parents feel dehumanised to do such chores. The Coloured parents are 'part-time' teachers and the African parents are 'part-time' maids. This is socially unjust and unfair to me. The apartheid mentality [that] African people should do menial jobs still exists.

(Thandi, black African female)

Teachers in this study alluded to what they believed was a further strategy to humiliate them. A letter was sent to the school by parents objecting to the presence of Indian teachers at the school. Many teachers felt that this was instigated by the principal:

The letter highlighted that we did not belong to this school, it was stated, and this was a Coloured Christian school. It was plain and simple, it was stated outright. We did not belong here. That made us very, very insecure, in a way, a little angry; this is not one person's school. It is not a one-race school. It is a public school.

(Mala, Indian female)

Ross (2002) examined how minority teachers experienced institutional racism in the UK and contends that 'racism in schools needs to be very explicitly and forcefully confronted' (Ross, 2002, p2).

4.2.5 Teacher emotionality and racism

Before the 1980s, teacher emotions and feelings were absent in educational research literature. Since then there has emerged a body of research focusing on teacher emotions and emotionality, for example (Hargreaves, 1996; Zembylas, 2003). These scholars and researchers argue that teaching is an emotional activity. Emotions shape cognitions, and may affect teachers' motivation and their performance in the classroom. Wilson (2004) argues that emotions are at the heart of teaching and learning. According to Denzin (1984), teaching, like any other job, is about emotional practice. The emotional practice refers to how teachers feel about their work, their learners, their colleagues and their competencies of being effective teachers. Nias (1989) suggests that the feelings generated by an emotion in a school

environment are a common occurrence. Hargreaves (2001) explored the sociological aspects of emotions and elaborates on four notions for the emotional landscape of teaching: the emotional practice, emotional labour, emotional understanding and emotional geographies of schooling.

The stories of the teachers in this study of race, racism and race relations reflected strong emotions and feelings which included anger, hurt, fear, suspicion, hate, helplessness, and feeling threatened and, vulnerable.

Racism has a negative impact on anyone's life. It makes you feel that you are not competent to do your job, yet you are a professional person and you are teaching for many years, yet it brings you down to that level where you feel that you are not competent, you are hurt. You are ignored in major decisions taken for you in school. No-one's dignity and respect should be compromised.
(Mala, Indian female)

Zembylas (2003a) argues that schools, as teaching and learning institutions, take the emotions of teachers for granted. Schools should address the underlying causes of teacher emotions within oppressive ideologies and power relations, Zembylas (2004) Teachers' emotions are about their social life in their school as this where the power is structured. Emotions are public and active processes. Zembylas (2003b) explains that in every emotion of a teacher there is a relation of power, and that this power relation shapes expressions of emotions. Zembylas (2004) warns that emotional suffering by teachers' could result in burnout.

Teachers respond to emotions in varied ways (Zembylas, 2003a). For example, teachers can become suspicious of each other. There was tension when Canyon Primary

started enrolling black African learners and employing Indian and African teachers. Teachers in the study suggested that a fear of the unknown may have set in. Coloured teachers felt threatened as they were not ready for this form of transformation and worked to resist change. In addition, teachers assigned blame; for example, they indicated that the Department of Education (DOE) did not prepare teachers for this transition.

I still feel that there is a great deal of suspicion amongst us when we are working with each other. Anything for example, we had things/episodes when things go missing, then suddenly we want to narrow it down to, and say so-and-so is to blame.
(Oliver[5], Coloured male)

He [the principal] hated my race. He promoted segregation and sided with the Coloured teachers, Coloured learners and the Coloured parents. He was not an understanding man. As a result, my relationship with the parents and learners with the African parents flourished and is growing from strength to strength.
(Mala, Indian female)

4.2.6 Strategies of oppression, resistance and coping

This study revealed that teachers who were targets adopted various strategies in the face of oppression and racism, while the agents of oppression employed various tactics to entrench the dominant culture and ethos at the school.

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[5] Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the teachers.

The lack of voice on the part of teachers at Canyon Primary is a huge problem according to the participants in the study. At times, the strategies used by the school management one being turning parents against teachers were aimed at instilling fear. For example, parents are instigated to question the professional status and teaching capabilities of minority teachers. The message sent out is that Indian and Black African teachers are not competent.

He [the principal] practised individual and institutional racism. He would also get parents to phone in and complain about teachers so that he could humiliate them even further and exploit their 'fragileness', rendering them helpless.
(Oliver, Coloured male)

The findings also revealed that there is little resistance from either the agent group or target groups of teachers at the school. On one dimension, most Coloured teachers do not raise objections to acts of racism and oppression; in many ways they colluded with the principal and school management.

No Coloured teacher ever raised their voice to him. I suppose some of them were vulnerable because they were not qualified and permanently placed so they relied on him for their bread and butter, at the expense of their human rights and dignity.
(Mala, Indian female)

On another dimension, the Black African and Indian teachers merely capitulated in the face of oppression and tried their best to fit in and be accepted rather than resist.

In order for me to feel welcome and part of this school, I had to adapt to most of their way of teaching. My teaching approach was very different from what I was taught and I

had to implement their way of teaching. I was told by my HOD to teach in this

particular way. But I realised that I had to find my way and due to that I had to find

what I am good at, I had to find my strength and realise that this is a career I chose.

(Mala, Indian female)

Ross (2002) found that ethnic minority teachers felt that they had to be better than the White, dominant group in order to be equal to them. In the present study, Mala explains:

Now I have empowered myself because of those racial problems I decided to bring out

my strengths and work on that.

(Mala, Indian female)

The one Coloured teacher, Susan, experienced oppression in the school setting on account of what she terms 'ethnic' racism. She was the only Coloured teacher who empathises with the Indian and Black African teachers. She explains her experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, and her strategy was to isolate herself from Coloured members of staff.

I had this curly little look because it was about me, who I am. I could not portray to be

someone else. I was not warmly accepted. I could not speak my mind. This for me was

being real racist because I was not allowed to be the person God ordained for me to be.

Nobody can all fit, be the same, eat the same, walk the same, dress the same, style the

same, no we are all different human beings and we need to be respected. That for me

was very racist. I experienced ethnic racism so I isolated myself and had a few selected

friends. I isolated myself from the other Coloured teachers because I was a victim of

ethnic racism. I was very hurt, so I kept away.

(Susan[6], Coloured female)

This study shows how the ethos, cultures and ideologies in particular settings can result in the normalisation of racism in our everyday lives. Such settings can legitimise and reinforce systemic racism. Essed (2002) explains that in certain settings dominant ideas and myths perpetuate racial hierarchies.

A strong theme that emerged in this study is the 'victim image' evident in the stories of the six teachers. They were competent teachers with years of experience, yet for the most part they constructed themselves as being victims of oppression and racism.

I live with this and I have to be cautious in this school because my race is in the

minority and for fear of intimidation and for fear of victimisation on the basis of that.

(Mala, Indian female)

But still racism is not confronted. This year this has started. We have birthday

celebration; we can come together during our birthday month and have a little bit of a

celebration. It brings us together but the racism topic is not discussed, everything is

sidelined.

(Thandi, black African female)

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[6] Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the teachers.

Freire (2007) argued that teachers are intellectuals who can make sense of the world. Even teachers who are oppressed should be able to work towards transformation (Freire, 2007). Freire's seminal book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (1969)* unveils two stages of emancipation. Firstly the oppressed have to come to terms with their world of oppression and through praxis transform themselves (Freire, 2007). In the second stage, the reality of oppression becomes a process of liberation once the oppressed confront domination (Freire, 2007). In Moloi and Henning's (2006) study, the Black African teacher fashioned her identity as a victim of racism, and this, according to the researchers 'disabled' her. Moloi and Henning (2006) argue that teachers need to free themselves from such a victim image in order for real transformation to occur. Drawing from the work of Freire (2007) such a process would require transparent conversations about power and privilege in decision-making and governance issues in institutions.

Although all six teachers did voice the need for transformation and were able to suggest ways to address racism and oppression, most responses were located in the framework of traditional multi-cultural education with a focus on celebrating diversity or understanding and accepting other cultures. Intervention from this perspective focuses on the material and exotic aspects of culture food, dance, festivals and traditions (Bongani, Simon, Oliver, Susan, Thandi and Mala). The aim is to change attitudes of people (Young, 1990). Critics have argued that this liberalist, multicultural approach to education fails to interrogate racism and structures of social inequality (Dei & Calliste, 2000; Henry & Tator, 2010). Such an approach ignores inequitable social and institutional relations (Freire, 2007). The responses below provide insight into the teachers' thoughts about change:

Positive race relations at my school, I promote that so much, I have arranged with

whatever is calling the people to come together, of different race background, I

embrace that I promote that, I try to be part of that. I make sure I speak words of multiculturalism and non-racism and promote the spirit of the rainbow nation that Mandela is teaching us about over all these years.

(Bongani, Black African male)

This is a challenge at this school as we do not understand the religion, cultures, traditions and language of these learners and the teachers yet we must work together.

(Oliver, Coloured male)

When we go for awards functions, as much as people can complain I see people pulling together and working together and we come from different cultures and colours and we work together for the good of the school.

(Oliver, Coloured male)

From a critical multiculturalism and anti-racism perspective, the focus of intervention would be to disrupt unequal power relations (May, 1999). Anti-racism and anti-racism education is action-orientated and aims to challenge and disrupt systemic barriers to equity in social relations and social structures (May, 1999). Rather than attempting to merely change individual attitudes, prejudices or cultural misunderstandings, the focus has to be on questioning systemic inequalities, and facilitating the transformation of institutions by addressing systemic barriers, and structural forms of inequality (Dei & Calliste, 2000; Henry & Tator, 2010).

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the findings of this study and attempted to use my theoretical lenses to make sense of the narratives of the six teachers in the study. Storytelling

revealed the centrality of racism, and forms of subordination and oppression at the school. The stories gave participants a voice.

The chapter presented the five themes that emerged in the study: who holds power?; 'a monster that lurks in the dark': institutional racism at play; teacher emotionality and racism; and strategies of oppression, resistance and coping. I used Critical Race Theory (CRT), and the theory of oppression, in particular insights from key theorists such as used Using Young's (1990) and Freire (2007) to make sense of the findings. The discussion showed the complex ways in which the ethos, cultures and ideologies in the particular setting can result in the normalisation of racism in the everyday lives of teachers.

This study revealed that the teachers work in a socially constructed and complex setting, and take up multiple subject positions in the face of oppression. In the next chapter, I discuss my concluding thoughts and the implications of the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to lend an ear to teachers' stories of race, racism and race relations at Canyon Primary School in KwaZulu-Natal. What stories do teachers tell about race, race relations and racism at their school? How do teachers' live, conceptualise and challenge racism? This qualitative study provided rich and in-depth data of a sensitive and emotional nature. Narrative inquiry as my research methodology allowed me to develop a deep understanding of my participants' stories of race, racism and race relations through their self-reflection. The study revealed the complex ways in which racism and race relations play out at the school.

The study revealed the complex ways in which race and race relations play out at the desegregated school despite education legislation and policies that have been promulgated in South Africa to address racism at individual and institutional levels. The study identified key themes in the data, namely, who holds power?; 'a monster that lurks in the dark': institutional racism at play; teacher emotionality and racism; and strategies of oppression, resistance and coping.

A common experience that emerged is the exclusion and marginalisation of minority group teachers by the dominant group, evident in their everyday experiences at the school. Everyday racism is experienced by teachers as repetitive, accumulative and reproducing racial domination, and it serves to maintain power in the school. The study revealed that the power of the dominant group is embedded in institution through the rules, norms and habits of the school. Institutional racism at the school allows those in power to limit opportunities and information to target groups. Teachers seem powerless in the face of institutional racism.

Often oppressive practices reflect the intersection of race, gender, language and religion. This study highlighted teachers take up multiple subject positions in the face of oppression. But

in general, the oppressed do not challenge patterns of exclusion and marginalization. The stories of the teachers reflect that their experiences of racism and race relations at the school evoke strong emotions which include anger, hurt, fear, suspicion, hate, helplessness, and feeling threatened and, vulnerable.

This study contributes to the body of literature that has used Critical Race Theory to show how racism and race relations operate in schools (for example, Winant, 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Dyson, 1996; Pollock, 2006). The work of these scholars reminds us of the role of power in entrenching oppression in the form of racial inequalities. Oppression is a process driven by unequal power. The stories of the teachers in the present study were powerful as they exposed their marginalisation, powerlessness, emotionality and vulnerability. According to Creswell (2008), one of the aims of narrative inquiry is to listen to those in society who have not been heard before. Bell (1992) illustrates how these stories need to be told to avoid the dismissal, trivialisation and misrepresentation of the everyday experiences of race relations and racism.

This study suggests that further research into the de-racialisation of schools in their various permutations, including former Indian schools, former Coloured schools, and so on, is needed to develop a sense of whether racial integration is truly taking place. Research is needed to examine the complex ways in which teachers live, challenge and conceptualise racism in their individual, unique ways and within their situated contexts.

One of the implications of the study is that teacher professional development needs to empower teachers to challenge the power relations within schools, to take risks and ask difficult questions. Freedom to speak and express their dissatisfaction by opening up dialogic

space is an issue that needs to be addressed. Education is central to a fairer, less oppressive society. A critical race analysis of educational institutions involves the understanding of power relations. This understanding is a tool to shift our consciousness. The concept of race operates in different ways for different teachers at Canyon Primary. Teacher development should incorporate narrative inquiry into its methodology. Narrative as a critical reflection tool is invaluable to the empowerment of teachers.

Finally, the study has highlighted an important issue related to teacher work, that is, the critical importance of teacher emotionality in the face of oppression. This study has revealed that emotions are an inextricable part of teachers' personal and professional selves. In order to make sense of emotionality that arises in schooling contexts, one has to listen to the stories that teachers have to tell.

A key recommendation from this study is the need to focus intervention programmes not only at the level of individual attitudes, prejudices or cultural misunderstandings, but also on systemic inequalities and structural forms of inequality

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Appendix A: Consent letter for District Office: KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Education Department

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus
24 Aintree Road
Newholme
Pietermaritzburg
18 March 2011

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at a school in Pietermaritzburg

Sir/Madam,

I am a Masters in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, conducting a research project titled: **"Teachers' stories on race and racism at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal"** I am keen to listen to teachers' experiences, stories and engagement with, race and racism at their schools.

I humbly request your assistance in this research project by being granted permission to conduct my study at schools in your district. The participants in my study will be teachers from the various schools in the district. They will be required to participate in individual interviews that are expected to last between 30 to 45 minutes.

Please note that

- The schools and participants will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- The teachers will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The schools' or the participant's identities will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- There is no right or wrong answer.
- All teachers' responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The participants will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Digital recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the participant is obtained.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by burning.

Yours Faithfully

_____

Ansuyah Mahes   (10950338)   033 3873224/083 320 5188   mahes@telkomsa.net

Supervisor: Professor Nithi Muthukrishna 031 260 2494   muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix B: Consent letter for school principal

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus
24 Aintree Road
Newholmes
Pietermaritzburg

18 March 2011

Dear Principal,

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in your school

I am a Masters in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, conducting a research project titled; **"Teachers' stories on race, race relations and racism at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal"** I am keen to listen to teachers' stories of race and racism.

I humbly request your assistance in this research project by being by granting permission to conduct my study at your school. The participant/s in my study will be teachers from your school. They will be required to participate in an interview that is expected to last between 30 to 45 minutes.

Please note that
- There will be no material benefits for the school or the participants for participation in this research project.
- The teachers will be expected to respond to questions in the manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The school and the participant's identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- There is no right or wrong answer.
- All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, the school and participants will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The participants will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Digital recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the participant is obtained,
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by burning.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully   033 3873224 /083 320 5188   mahes@telkomsa.net
_____
Ansuyah Mahes   (10950338)
Supervisor: Professor Nithi Muthukrishna 031 260 2494 muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

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Appendix C: Informed consent letter for the teacher.

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus
24 Aintree Road
Newholmes
Pietermaritzburg
18 March 2011

Dear Teacher,

I am a Masters in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, conducting a research project titled; **"Teachers' stories on race, race relations and racism at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal"** I am keen to learn from your stories on race, race relations and racism in your school.

I humbly request your assistance in this research project by being a participant in an interview. The interview/s will take place at your school premises on this date/s: (------------)
I would like you to take note of the following:

1. There will be no material benefits that participants will receive for taking part in this research.
2. You will be required to respond to each question in the manner that will reflect your own personal opinion.
3. Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.
4. There is no right or wrong answer.
5. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
6. Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants / institutions will not be used throughout the research process).
7. Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants are free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
8. The participants will not under any circumstances be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
9. Digital- recording will only be done through the permission of the participant.
10. Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by burning.

 I thank you in advance for your assistance as a participant.

Yours faithfully

_____
Ansuyah Mahes   (10950338)   Tel. No's: 033 3873224/ 083 320 5188

E-mail address: mahes@telkomsa.net

This study is supervised by: Professor Nithi Muthukrishna. Tel: 031 2602494. E-mail address: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix D: Biographical information form for participants.

Name: _____

Instruction: Please put a cross (X) in the column that most closely describes your information about yourself and your school.

1.   GENDER

MALE ☐   FEMALE ☐

2.   AGE

21-30 ☐   31-40 ☐   41-50 ☐   51+ ☐

3.   RACE

AFRICAN ☐   COLOURED ☐   INDIAN ☐   WHITE ☐   OTHER ☐

4.   YOUR FORMAL QUALIFICATION IS

BELOW M+3 ☐   M+3 ☐   M+4 ☐   M+5 ☐   M+6 ☐

5.   NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

PERMANENT ☐   TEMPORARY ☐   CONTRACT ☐

6.   EMPLOYER

STATE ☐   SGB POST ☐

Appendix E: Transcription validation form

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus
24 Aintree Road
Newholme
Pietermaritzburg

10 August 2011

Dear Teacher/Participant

Thank you for so willingly and obligingly participating in my research project titled: "**Teachers' stories on race, race relations and racism in a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal."** Your stories have provided very rich data for me and I am in the process of analysing it. I have shared in some of your experiences and you have become an ally to me in a very special way.

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of my study, I humbly request your assistance once more. I require you to verify and validate the authenticity of the stories and the verbatim transcription thereof. This will ensure that the interviews were conducted in an ethical manner and that no data or information was included, excluded, distorted or altered in any way.

Please note that, in order to improve coherence of the transcription, information such as hesitations (e.g., er, hmm, etc) were omitted. It is suggested that you read the transcript while listening to the recorded interview. You may amend, as you think fit, words, phrases, sentences or any such information that you believe was not recorded or transcribed in the correct manner. Please bring the aforementioned to my immediate notice. This should ensure the trustworthiness of the transcribed data.

I _____(participant's name), hereby verify and validate that the information transcribed from my interview was verbatim, and that no information was included, excluded, distorted or altered in any way.

_____ Date: _____/_____/ 2011.

Yours faithfully

_____
(Ansuyah Mahes)
Tel. no 083 320 5188/ 033 3873224

This study is supervised by Professor Nithi Muthukrishna tel. 031 2602494 e.mail address: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix F: Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
Private Bag x54001
DURBAN, 4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

3 June 2011

Mrs A Mahes (210553455)
School of Education & Development
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Mahes

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0286/011M
PROJECT TITLE: Lending an ear to teachers' stories of race, race relations and racism at a primary school in Pietermaritzburg

In response to your application dated 31 May 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.
PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Prof N Muthukrishna
cc. Mr N Memela/Miss T Mnisi

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Appendix: G: Consent from Department of Education

kzn education
Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar   Tel: 033 341 8610   Ref. :2/4/8/201

Mrs A Mahes
24 Aintree Road
Newholmes
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

Dear Mrs Mahes

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Lending an Ear to Teachers' Stories on Race, Racism and Race Relations in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal,** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The Period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 July 2011 to 31 July 2012.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to one school in the Umgungundlovu District.

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.