PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING AS A RECIPROCAL GIFT

BETWEEN COUNSELLOR AND COUNSELLEE

by

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ABSTRACT

Youth Centres such as Faure Youth Centre provide a challenge to questions such as violence and crime. This qualitative research journey started at Faure Youth Centre using narrative pastoral care and counselling and participatory action research to assist the young people there to find alternative ways of standing against violence and crime. Changing circumstances at Faure however, paved the way for the research to follow another direction. This resulted in different voices to emerge and for my family to receive an unexpected 'gift' in the process. The 'gift' that my pastoral care and counselling at Faure gave to my family initiated a process of change in us and transformed it into a spiralling journey of challenging patriarchal practices and finding alternative ways of living.

Key terms: narrative pastoral care/counselling; participatory consciousness; consciousness raising; intimacy; agape-listening; 'alternative families' (gangs); feminist theology of praxis; 'gift'; voice; alternative ways of living.

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Chapter 1
Embarking on a journey

Introduction

In this chapter, I would like to introduce and orientate readers to my research journey. This journey included a variety of fellow participants: the young people at Faure Youth Centre, my husband (Coenrie) as well as my own children. But before we embark on this journey as fellow readers of this research story, I think that it is important to realise that this research project had many routes to follow. McTaggart (1997:34) refers to the self-reflective spiral as: 'a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, (implementing plans), observing (systematically), reflecting, and then replanning, further implementation, observing, and reflecting again.' As researcher, this research journey challenged me to reflect and re-plan quite often, as my hopes and dreams for the research were not always attainable.

Reinharz (1992:204) describes feminist research 'as a fluid, flexible process that takes on different methods in a responsive way'. This research journey took on many routes due to changing circumstances, both within Faure Youth Centre as well as within my own home. The many routes taken were from a position of responsiveness to all whom participated in the research and from reflecting on who were touched by this research (Reinharz 1992:208).

As researcher, I was a fellow traveller on this research journey. As fellow traveller doing feminist research, I was invited to abandon 'the voice of disembodied objectivity' and locate myself 'in time and space' (Reinharz 1992:211). In the following section and throughout this research story I abandon the voice of disembodied objectivity and introduce myself as a person. Ruby (1977:4) points out that reflexivity includes autobiography in that:

> To be reflective [in reporting] is to be not only self-aware, but to be sufficiently self-aware to know what aspects of self are necessary to reveal so that an audience is able to understand both the process employed and the resultant product and to

know that the revelation itself is purposive, intentional and not merely narcissistic or accidentally revealing.

1.1 Self description

1.1.1 My history and context

According to Heitink (1993:150), theory and research are integrated into the context in which the researcher functions. Reinharz (1992:240) acknowledges that '[f]eminist research frequently includes the researcher as a person'. As this research journey was a journey that I as researcher embarked on myself, I therefore find it necessary to include in this research story myself as a person. In this section I will thus include a brief account of my own history and context. I hope that this will enable the reader to have a better understanding of the research.

I am the eldest of three daughters and was raised in a middle class Afrikaner home during the 1970's and 1980's. My mother was a dominant figure in our home and she usually decided how things were done. I remember that people used to say how 'good mannered' we were as children. We were taught to be proud of our 'good manners' and to 'know our place' (as children). It was difficult for me to always be the 'perfectly mannered child' and although I used to question and wonder about things, I was usually too scared to talk about them. Criticism from my mother and sisters about my 'weird' ways of thinking also caused a lot of stress for me. The scars of inferiority and uncertainty and not having a voice still show on my life today. According to my mother, one day I had a 'personality change'. I changed from a talkative little girl, who always wanted to perform in concerts, into a silent person. During my adolescence and young adult life, I was seen as the easy, silent and obedient daughter.

I am now almost 35 years old and have three children: a son (11), daughter (9) and another son (4). Coenrie (my husband) and I have been married for 13 years. It has always been a struggle for me to find a space in our marriage where I could be heard. The discourses around marriage, which were embedded in both our histories, contributed to the silencing of my voice in our

marriage. We were taught (by the church, our parents and society) to believe that the wife should be obedient and submissive to her husband. I thought that I did not have the right to question anything that Coenrie did or said. I regarded his opinion very highly and that he was always 'true' or 'correct'. When I did not agree with something he did or said, I would not challenge him, but I would rather retreat into a 'silent spell'. These 'spells' paralyzed me and could last for days. I also became physically ill, so ill, that I could not work or go out of the house. Depression and loneliness were also constant companions during that time.

The one thing that I never stopped doing, from childhood onwards, was to stop reading. I love books and I almost read anything. Sometimes, during our first years of marriage, I would find a space to discuss some of the things I read with Coenrie. He was always interested but never enthusiastic about the ideas I shared with him.

1.1.2 Finding my voice

The discovery of postmodern epistemology at the beginning of 2000, however, gave me the freedom and the voice to question the 'traditional' discourses and to search for alternative possibilities. The validity and academic power that I found in the written text empowered me to find my own voice. The academic discourses began to speak to me in new ways and I began to look for places in the community where other people did not have voices. I found a place to do pastoral therapy in Faure Youth Centre.

A woman finding her voice for the power of 'naming one's self, one's environment' has been an important concern for feminist theology (Cozad Neuger 2001:71). Feminist theology gave me the skills, tools and words to find my voice in my marriage. Cozad Neuger (2001:78) says the following important words: 'Many young women learn in adolescence what it means to be a "good" woman and to "forget what they know". They give up the ability to be in authentic relationship for the sake of being related in ways that minimize the risks of exclusion and abandonment. Coenrie was very supportive when I

told him that I wanted to work at Faure Youth Centre and he became even more enthusiastic about the work as time went by.

Voicing and sharing the work I did at Faure in my home (with Coenrie), helped to bring about a change in Coenrie and in the way he thought about different relationships both as a parent and as a partner. The Gift of change that the young people at Faure gave to my family, will be discussed in Chapter Four. These changes that took place in our family resonate with Reinharz's (1992:194) acknowledgement that a common consequence of doing feminist research is that the researcher learns and changes whilst being on this research journey: 'the researcher would learn about herself, about the subject matter under study, and about how to conduct research.'

Now that I have described my history and context, I can go on to describe the course which the research took.

1.2   Background to research

It is not difficult to distance oneself when you read or hear about prisons and reformatory schools – places where first time offenders and young people in need of care live behind bars and steel gates. Faure Youth Centre, formerly known as Faure Reformatory for Girls, is such a place where young delinquents and destitute children are placed by a youth court. The centre is situated in Eersteriver (traditionally a Coloured area) in the Western Cape. Coming from a privileged middle class background, I probably would never have volunteered to work at such a place. It was, however, after I heard Faure's girls singing: 'I am nobody's child' on the radio that I decided to offer myself as voluntary pastoral therapist at the centre. In line with Couture's (2000:49) words, I do not believe this was a coincidence:

> God claims us morally and spiritually [and physically] on behalf of children to whom we are biologically and non biologically related.

1.2.1 Ethical considerations in doing research

I remember that I asked myself whether I was really willing to move out of my own 'comfort zone' into a world that I knew absolutely nothing about. Was I willing to share in the daily struggles and joys of the young people at the centre? Was I willing to make the pain and struggle of being a young person "incarcerated" in South Africa today, mine? How would I invite the young people to understand and to talk about their own unique experiences (see Reinhartz 1992:220) without unconsciously restricting them and sending them in a direction that I has chosen? Would I succeed in always being conscious about my own history and traditions and aware of how those constructions still exist in many of my thoughts? (see Ackermann 1996:43). These questions were really hard to face. Answering them put me in the position where I always had to practise and to remember my commitment to the ethical question which I had been taught in my pastoral training, namely, 'Who benefits?' (Kotzé , Myburg , Roux & Associates). With this in mind, I decided to show 'a spirit of care and tolerance' and an 'attitude of openness and receptivity to a greater wholeness' (Kotzé & Kotzé 2001:1).

This is a choice I made for my life!

1.2.2 Participatory consciousness

While listening to the young people's stories at Faure, I tried to participate in such a way so as to heal and not to hurt. I tried to listen in what Kotzé (2002:4) describes as a 'connective understanding' way. Such an understanding is more than empathy and 'insights' from theories: it 'represents a fine process of weaving threads of understanding' (Kotzé 2002:4). I understand a connective understanding to take place within a participatory mode of consciousness (Heshusius 1994).

Heshusius (1994:16) explains that participatory consciousness is a deeper relationship between the researcher and the participant. For a participatory consciousness to exist requires the letting go of the boundaries that create

distance between people. Participatory consciousness does not refer to a method or strategy, but rather to a consciousness that exists of an openness to the other. The implication is that I (researcher), not only have to forfeit any egocentric agendas, but also have to redefine the self to self-other (see Heshusius 1994:17) in such a way that 'the self and the other are seen, not as separate entities, but as an ontological and epistemological unity' (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:131).

In such a participatory consciousness, 'knowledge of the other becomes knowing with the other' (Kotzé 2002:6). Such a knowledge 'is different from the knowledge discovered as the product of applying theories to uncover an understanding of what "is". Rather:

> It is an ethical-political process, co-constructed in the course of relating with others in a specific context or situation, at a specific moment in time.
>
> (Kotzé 2002:6)

1.3   Research curiosity

My therapeutic involvement at Faure started with conversations with some of the young people. Although I was inspired by these conversations initially they also highlighted the fact that the young people at the centre were committing violations such as stealing, hitting each other, verbally abusing each other, smoking dagga and using other drugs. This raised concerns as to how I could take responsibility for my own safety while at the same time arguing against violence and crime in the youth centre community. But my genuine efforts to create an atmosphere of non-violence were rejected and greeted by more acts of violence. This left me feeling helpless, useless and scared. I started thinking of ways to break the vicious circle of violence and discussed the ideas with Coenrie and my supervisor. The discussions led to my decision to make my aim and focus the process of creating an alternative 'way of being' and living against violent behaviour.

1.3.1 Negotiating a research aim

My aim was focussed on expanding the participant's understanding, as well as my own, of matters such as violence and crime in the youth centre context. I thought that the increase of knowledge for all of us would create the opportunity to improve 'the participant's [young people's] better understanding, along with transformation and change within the existing boundaries and conditions' (Zuber-Skerrit 1996:5). In conversations I had with some of the young people at the centre, I asked them what they wanted for their lives. Many of them told me that they felt 'trapped' and 'powerless' to really do anything about their situation in the centre, but they thought that standing up to problems such as violence could perhaps empower them in some way to change their situations. I thought by empowering the young people to stand against violence and crime, their violent 'lifestyle' would change to what I thought (my preferred alternative) would be a 'better lifestyle' (violence and crime free). My initial aim to do pastoral care and counselling and how I did it at Faure, will be discussed in Chapter Three.

As the research proceeded, however, new experiences evolved and new voices were heard. As a response to these new experiences and new voices, the research took on another different route.

1.4   'The process becomes part of the product'

Reinharz (1992:211) likens feminist researchers to people setting out on important journeys. The journey becomes a process of gradual discovery. The process of research, in which the researcher and participants participate, also becomes part of the research. The researcher is changed through this journey because she is stripped of objectivity and becomes part of the process (Reinharz 1992:212). The result of the change and the process of discovery and change has become 'part of the product' (Reinharz 1992:212) of this research project:

> This approach is humble since 'findings' are housed in the project's specific features, rather than claimed as disembodied truth.
>
> (Reinharz 1992:212)

I therefore find it extremely important to reflect on the whole research journey and not just on the end result. This is because the different routes that were taken on this journey constitute, for me, an important aspect in understanding the nature of doing feminist research. 'As projects proceed, new experiences are interwoven and new voices heard .... *The process becomes part of the product'* (Reinharz 1992:212).

1.4.1 Reflecting on research questions

Action research is always reflective in that it links theory and practice in research. Theory and practice therefore, become 'complementary phases of the change process' (Winter in Zuber-Skerrit 1996:24). Reflective action is always open to question. According to Winter (1996:25), 'the purpose of reflection is to question the reflective bases upon which the practical actions have been carried out, to offer a reflexive and dialectical critique whose effect is to recall to mind those possibilities that practice has chosen on this occasion to ignore'.

Initially, the focus of this research was only on young people and the 'culture of violence' in the centre. My initial research question was the following:

How can understanding the 'culture of violence' in the centre help the young people to find alternative ways to stand against violence and crime?

Reflecting on and taking into consideration the way in which the participants' initial needs/circumstances has changed, meant that I had to adapt to a change in the direction of the research. Reinharz (1992:204) puts it like this: 'In that duration, we may learn new ways of doing research or may discover that the circumstances of the people we are studying have changed.' Reflecting on my own actions, lead me to also investigate my own change in the process.

On this new route that I took, something else appeared that I did not anticipate: as a result of the change in myself, there was a ripple effect of the

conversations with the young people at Faure into my family life. This ripple effect also invited change in my husband, Coenrie. Winter's (1996:23) words about the risk of exploring possibilities of the transformation of the researcher in the action research, resonates for me:

> Through involvement in the action research process, we not only submit other's accounts to critique, but our own also. We note not only the contradiction in other's viewpoints, but also the contradictions and possibilities for change in our own viewpoints. We are not consultants, advising others how to change, nor unchanging catalysts of others' development. We are part of the situation undergoing change. We have no theoretical basis for exempting ourselves from the processes we set in motion. On the contrary, we want to change, because we want to learn.

I realised that, through not trying to hide the 'I' and allowing myself to 'reveal myself and my feelings' (Dudley-Marling 1996:36), 'the typical separation of the process of research from the product of research is eradicated' (Reinhartz 1992:213).

Consequently the new route taken in the research required me to reformulate my initial research questions to the following question:

How did the research and pastoral care at Faure touch aspects of my life?

I regard the research I did at Faure, and what flowed from it, as another route or leg of the research. Though I did not anticipate the new direction and the new questions that arose from the research, the focus on a new direction gave me the opportunity to give recognition to ideas - such as including my husband's voice in the research - that may otherwise have been dismissed as irrelevant, because they do not necessarily fit into the conceptual framework of the research. I hope that the inclusion of these ideas will also create the 'chance that the report will be of value to a wider audience than just our immediate colleagues' (Winter in Zuber-Skerrit 1996:24), such as other researchers' partners and children.

Feminist writers have chosen innovative formats for research reports (Reinharz 1992). The blending and weaving of various themes and reflections within everyday life has given me the opportunity to also include in this report reflections on the gift that my work at Faure has given to our family. (The gift will be described more fully in Chapter Four).

1.5   Research Methodology

I chose qualitative research as research practice for this study, because its aim is not to examine or measure, but to place emphasis on the collaborative process and meaning-making of the researcher and participants within their socially constructed reality. Through the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, the qualitative researcher can look at how social experience is created and given meaning in the process (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:4).

> This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observation, historical, interactional, and visual text- that describe.... moments and meanings in individual's lives. Accordingly, qualitative research deploys a wide range of interconnected methods.
>
> (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2)

1.5.1   Qualitative research style

The context in which I use the term 'qualitative research', is a post modern context, where knowledge is inherently contextual, pluralistic and local. The post modern context shifts from objectivity to contextual, local perspectives, where no grand narrative can describe the current culture. Pluralism provides an alternative to objectivity. In this case, this meant privileging participants' perceptions, experiences and accounts of meaning making. This means that pluralism does not silence alternative opinions, but rather includes the opinions of both the young people at Faure and my husband (Coenrie). Their descriptions, making sense of, interpreting and reconstruction of the

meanings that they attached to their socially constructed worlds (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:3) are all included in this research study.

Qualitative researchers usually use the tools of their methodological trade, that is, whatever strategies, methods or empirical material are at hand (Becker 1989, in Denzin & Lincoln). If they have to use or invent new tools, the researcher will do that. The researcher usually does not know in advance which tools will be used or which research practices will be employed. The 'choice of the research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context' (Nelson et al 1992:2), - that is, what is available and what the researcher can or can not do in the context.

During this research journey, as new contexts developed and needs changed, I adapted and employed different research methods.

1.5.2 Qualitative research methods

During this research journey I made use of case studies, personal experience and reflexivity as research methods.

1.5.2.1   Case studies – telling the story

Qualitative researchers are committed to acknowledging multiple realities and the fact that they cannot know at the outset of the research what the issues, perceptions and theory of the research will be. It is therefore not uncommon for qualitative researchers to let the research 'tell its own story' (Stake 1994:239).

To describe the research with the young people at Faure, I used the qualitative research method of *case studies* to record both the process of 'learning about' and the 'product of our learning' (Stake 1994:237) in the research (see Chapter 3). The case study emphasises the uniqueness of a situation or a story, as is the case with the Faure Youth Centre context.

A case study is 'a complex entity operating within a number of contexts, including the physical, economical, ethical, and aesthetic' (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:239). As a researcher, I entered the research expecting and knowing that certain events, relationships and problems would be important. This was the case when I initially thought that it was important to do research in Faure about the culture of violence in the youth centre. Yet, I discovered that circumstances could alter events so as to become of less consequence, such as the changing circumstances in Faure (see Chapter 3). Similarly, others can become more important, such as the research process becoming one of collaboration and consultation with the young people at Faure and the effect that the work has had on my own family (see Chapter 4). In the end, I, the researcher, decided to report that the case study about Faure represents just one of the different routes in this research study. The other routes in the research journey content actually unfolded and evolved while writing this report (Stake 1994:240). Spiro et al (1994:178) contend that the knowledge fragments along the different routes of the research, are:

> ...a method of case-based presentation which treats a content domain as a landscape that is explored by 'criss-crossing' it in many directions, by reexamining each case 'site' in the varying contexts of different neighbouring cases, and by using a variety of abstract dimensions for comparing cases.

1.5.2.2 Personal experience method

Personal experience is another theme and is inevitably part of the process of doing this research. Such a 'subjective' theme is seldom an examined part of traditional research because objective, social science has little place for what is personal. I, however, believe that knowing is personal and that I cannot distance myself from those feelings, perceptions, values, assumptions and practices of the peoples' lives that my research has touched. This research not only touched the lives of the young people at Faure, but also the people I live with - my family.

One may ask why research should be interested in investigating the personal experience of someone like my husband, Coenrie? As researcher, I recognise

'that what I describe in my research is in no way existent apart from my involvement in it – it is not "out there"' (Steier 1991:1). For me, this means that my construction of meaning had to have an effect in my socially constructed world and this world included my husband, Coenrie. By revealing and sharing my (the researcher's) 'knowing activities' and including Coenrie's personal experience of the effect of the research in his life, I chose to challenge the traditional objectivist and rationalist view that personal experience should exist in a different universe from research (Steier 1991:1).

1.6   Conclusion

Who benefits from including Coenrie's voice in this research?

First, I hope that Coenrie's experience will give the reader access to the personal moments of change in his life.
I hope that by sharing Coenrie's ideas and experiences with the young people at Faure (when I take the research report back), we can perhaps reflect on how we can survive change in our lives. We can also reflect on how the result of change can stand as a marker or gift for further change (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:xi) in peoples' lives.
I see the inclusion of Coenrie's voice in the research as 'humanising the research process' (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:x) by showing that one can do it. Could sharing Coenrie's experience also perhaps show other researcher's partners that 'coming out of the closet' is possible?

1.7   Chapter outline

Chapter Two introduces the reader to the epistemological and theological views of the researcher and shows how these views are complementary to the research process.

Chapter Three is an overview of the first leg of the research journey and represents some of the voices of Faure Youth centre.

Chapter Four presents the 'gift' that Faure gave to my family. Coenrie's (my husband) voice is included in this chapter and represents a 'rather personal biographical narrative' (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:xi) describing how this 'gift' stimulated change in our lives.

Chapter Five offers reflections on the research process.

Chapter 2

The "map" of the journey

2.1   Introduction

This research journey is about people and events and the effect that these events have on peoples' lives. As I have mentioned before, the research took many routes, but I would like to highlight two routes stand out in this research. The first is the route that my work at Faure followed (see Chapter 3), and the second is about how my family and I were changed in the research process (see Chapter 4).

I see Chapter Two as the map of the research/journey. White (1995b) suggests that maps usually do not specify the destination of the journey, but show a multiplicity of routes and destinations. Chapter Two shows how important themes in the research at Faure intersect with the themes of my family's life and how these points of intersection invites new insights and changes.

2.2   Narrative Pastoral Care/Therapy

> Narrative therapy seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling and community work, which centres people as the experts in their own lives. It views problems as separate from people and assumes people have skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives.
>
> (Morgan 2000:2)

As a pastoral therapist, I could argue that I 'knew' how to help the young people (at Faure) who participated in the research. A social construction approach, however, moves away from the idea of the therapist as the expert. It centres the client as the expert (Anderson & Goolishian 1992:28-34) by listening in a respectful way and developing an understanding of the influences of the dominant stories on peoples' lives. I found this approach most useful with the pastoral care and counselling I did at Faure.

I tried to invite the young people at Faure to share their 'local knowledges' (Freedman & Combs 1996:33) around issues such as violence and crime. Because I considered them to be the experts on their lives, I privileged their explanations of 'the problems' in their lives. The stories they told gave meaning to the stories of their lives. The dominant stories about violence and crime had affected and influenced their behaviour. These dominant stories 'constantly invite them to tell and remember the stories of certain events and to leave others un-storied' (Feedman & Combs 1996:42).

I became interested to help seek out alternative stories (unstoried-stories), stories that they would prefer for their lives. For example, most of the young people at the centre wanted to work at attaining a 'good' reputation for their lives. But the dominant story of violence and crime in the centre and which they had brought with them to Faure, restrained them from achieving this goal.

2.2.1 Narrative pastoral care at Faure Youth centre

Narrative pastoral therapy has provided me with a vehicle for engaging with the young people at Faure, so that they could tell their stories, while at the same time co-creating new possibilities for their futures.

The stories at Faure, revolved around the lives of young people who lived living in a facility that could house 150 so-called 'problematic young people'. Since October 2001, I have witnessed Faure Youth Centre (a former 'reform school') receive between 6 and 8 so-called 'children at risk' per week. Young people are mostly referred to Faure by social services or are sentenced as first time offenders by the court.

Several reform schools have been closed in recent years. Six of the nine reform schools in the country are situated in the Western Cape. Faure Youth Centre is one of the remaining institutions in this province. The centre was

renamed in March 2001: Faure Reformatory for girls is now called Faure Youth Centre.

Rationalisation of Faure Reformatory for girls has taken place since the IMC report on Places of Safety, Industrial Schools and Reform Schools in 1996. Institutions such as Faure are now the joint responsibility of Government departments such as Department of Education and the Department of Correctional Services and Criminal Justice. After a person is sentenced by the court, it is the role of the Department of Correctional Services to incarcerate the 'convicted criminal and rehabilitate' him/her for reintegration into society.

I was interested in discovering the alternative story of how the young people preferred to act and how they wanted to be perceived by themselves, one another and the youth centre 'community' in which they lived. I hoped that the discovery of an alternative story could reduce the problem stories' influences on their lives and invite new possibilities and responsibilities for living.

2.2.2 Diversity of pastoral care in a youth centre context

Hunter (1990:845) says that pastoral care should embrace 'all pastoral work concerned with support and nurturance of persons and interpersonal relationships.' Gerkin (1997:89) reminds pastoral counsellors to care for neglected or overlooked people. Such care must include expressions of care and concern in various practical and everyday levels. Providing material needs for the young people at the centre - such as stationery articles and underwear - and visiting some of them in the 'high care' unit, was a contribution on one level. Pastoral care also occurred on another level: for instance, when I negotiated with personnel and teachers at the centre around the difficulties which some of the young people had experienced while in the 'high care' unit; when some were heartsick from longing for their mothers; and when some felt that nobody cared for or understood their needs.

2.3   Pastoral care as a "way of being"

I realised that pastoral work at Faure brought me into contact with (young) people in a specific context (reformatory). Initially, I was nervous and uncertain about how to do pastoral care with people in a context that was not familiar to me – a context that was very different from my middle class lifestyle. My own 'anxieties' about caring for the young people at Faure made me aware of my own humanness. Heidegger (quoted in Patton 1993:17) suggests that it is important to understand care as both the anxiety and uncertainties we may feel about our own lives as well as the concern we feel for another person's life.

I realised that care is more than a way of thinking or doing: it is a 'way of being'. The following words from Couture (2000:50) resonate for me with how I experienced doing pastoral care at Faure:

> Pastoral Theology has always asserted that we learn about God in the midst of humanness. In that companionship we are likely to see God's grace at work in them and in ourselves, holding us in relation, giving hope where there seems to be none, creating resilience, re-creating tragedy-torn hearts into hearts of love and forgiveness.

2.4 Pastoral care through the eyes of a Feminist Theology of praxis

Feminist theologians insist that pastoral care starts with the experience of people (men and women) in a society as 'a source from which to do theology' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:35).

'[Developing] our capacity for love and loving' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:70), becomes an ethical task 'when it is connected with our becoming or our concern for becoming with others' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:70). The capacity for love manifests as 'what many psychologists have called an irrational commitment to the well-being of the child [people]' (Couture 2000:51).

I realised that through becoming 'irrationally' involved with the young people at Faure, I would also become responsible for promoting theological ways of seeking their 'flourishing' in some way, especially because they were 'liv[ing] in economic poverty and in the poverty of being tenuously connected' (Couture 2000:47) (see also Chapter 3: 'What is material poverty and poverty of tenuous connections?').

2.4.1 "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

As I have mentioned before, I realised early on at Faure that pastoral care could not be done in a role as the expert therapist. As Anderson and Goolishian (1992:29) insists: 'The therapist does not "know", a priori, the intent of any action, but rather must rely on the explanation made by the client.' I constantly reminded myself to be aware not to slip into the role of the 'expert knower', but to take a position for preferring and favouring the young peoples' knowledges. The question I asked myself was: How could I honour the stories and experiences of the young people *within* the centre from an *outsider*, white, privileged position?

I believe that the only way to honour peoples' stories is: 'If we were to enter the dialogue (of faith) as "children", knowing that we are vulnerable and needy yet eager to "grow up", willing to allow ourselves to be led by our imagination, hoping that we can trust others, eager to learn and eager to play' (Riet Bons-Storm 1998:21).

Bons-Storm (1998:21) goes further when she says that 'theology would change' if we could commit ourselves to such care. I can just imagine that Jesus had such a theology in mind when He responded to the question: "Who is the most important in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus called a young boy to His side and said:

> Unless you *change* and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever *humbles* himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
>
> (Marchiano 2000:105)

2.5   Pastoral care as ethics and transformation

Kotzé and Kotzé (2001:2) write:

> As therapists we witness and are confronted with pain and suffering of many people. Daily encounters with suffering, hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, rage and anger, crime attacks, violence, rape – all these issues are not extraordinary but ordinary to many counsellors, caregivers, and pastoral therapists in South Africa.

Graham (1996:172) comments that, ethically, pastoral therapists should take a position of commitment to transformation. This means standing with those who are suffering and standing against oppressive or marginalizing discourses and practices. Bosch (1991:362) argues that: 'What is called for is the willingness to take a stand, even if it is unpopular – or even dangerous.' For me, this meant positioning myself with people in pain and suffering, such as the young people at Faure. Through conversations with them, I tried to understand the pain and suffering experienced by them and tried to develop and co-construct possible alternatives for their lives. In the process, I was challenged on many levels: firstly, examine and critique some discourses in my own life; Secondly, to recognise my own pain in changing during the research process; and thirdly, to experience the effect that the change in me brought to my family. The process of change resonates with what Anderson (1997:100) says:

> It seems illogical to ... think that we could be involved in a transformative process and not be transformed ourselves.

Exposure to the daily struggles of the young people at Faure raised my consciousness about oppressive discourses and practices and the effect that those realities had had on their lives. In the process, I was changed and my change had a ripple effect on my family.

2.6   Consciousness raising

I believe that a process of change or transformation can only occur through consciousness raising. Feminist researcher, Kate Ferguson (quoted in Reinharz 1992:192), explains consciousness raising as follows:

By exposing the contradictions and manipulations contained within a bureaucratic society, one can demystify the theory and practice of that society. Since the organizational society is maintained in part by creating and perpetuating the appropriate ideology, one that both reflects and distorts the reality it describes, a different form of understanding is [needed]...

Consciousness raising or 'demystifying' occur, when taken-for-granted knowledges are exposed, and when people begin to consider their situation in a new light. In this study, consciousness raising took place on different levels.

The first level on which consciousness raising occurred was when I, as researcher, was changed through the research. The work at Faure brought me into contact with people and ways I knew nothing about, largely because many of my own interpretations/knowledges were deeply influenced and informed by the culture in which I grew up (see also Chapter 1). I know that this was mainly as a result of have been privileged as a white middle class woman and having been coccooned from poverty and violence my whole life.

Consciousness raising/ becoming aware of helped me to find a 'new' or different way of looking at ('knowing') at the young people at Faure. The post modern approach I chose for the research set a process in motion in which I had to challenge the many discourses and social and religious constructions in my life. This not only had an impact on the work I did at Faure, but also impacted on my personal lived experiences and on my family.

Consciousness raising occurred on another level. Talking to my husband, Coenrie, about some of the work at Faure also set in motion the process of consciousness raising in him. I found that we could discuss, question and argue with each other around ideas, such as alternative parenting, women's and children's rights and patriarchy. In this spirit of 'connectedness' (see Chapter 4), we found that we could open up to one another and share our feelings and ideas, for example, around spirituality. We talked about how 'new' knowledges could inform 'new' practices in our home and professional lives. This also turned the personal professional (White 1997).

We are aware that this process of change in us, should be an ongoing consciousness raising process which should result in ongoing change in our practices and in how we want to live our lives and to participate in the social and religious constructions of ideas.

The process of transforming and understanding the world and learning how to improve it by putting into practice the changes which have taken place in us, requires a 'guide to action'. According to McTaggart (1997:40) participatory action research provide such a 'guide', because 'participatory action is not "the scientific method" applied in social work, [rather] 'participatory action research is systematically evolving, a living process changing both the researcher and the situations in which he or she acts;...'

2.7   PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The basis for action research is to show the relationship between theory and practice (action). The important question which the researcher has to ask is how the theory and practice are linked in the research. Winter (1997:13) writes that:

> Action research is seen as a way of investigating professional experience which links practice and the analysis of practice into a single, continuously developing sequence.

I chose participatory action research as an approach largely because the initial aim of the study was to investigate the 'culture of violence' in Faure Youth centre and to search for alternative ways of community in the centre. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the research changed and new directions developed. I was obliged to investigate and incorporate this new direction: namely, the effect that my work at Faure had on my family.

In this study, I adopted the principles associated with the action research process as defined by Winter (1997:13). They are:

1   reflexive critique, which is the process of becoming aware of our own perceptual biases (in this case Coenrie's and mine), such as patriarchal discourses;

2   dialectic critique, which is a way of understanding the relationships between the elements that make up various phenomena in our context. The deconstruction of discourses in Faure unfortunately did not help to bring understanding to the people in that context, but rather had an effect of deepening understanding for Coenrie and myself ;

3   collaboration, which is intended to mean that everyone's view is taken as a contribution to understanding the situation. Collaboration in this study consists of the views of the young people at Faure, as well as Coenrie's and my own;

4   risking disturbance, which is an understanding of our taken-for-granted processes and willingness to submit them to critique. In this study, although I could not use this principle in the Faure context, due to unforeseen circumstances (see Chapter 1 & 3), some taken-for-granted knowledges and processes were addressed and submitted to critique in Coenrie's and my life (see Chapter 4), which resulted in transformation/change;

5   creating plural structures, which involves developing various accounts and critiques, rather than a single authoritative interpretation. This involved the inclusion of multiple voices in the research, such as the young people at Faure, Coenrie's and my own as researcher ;

6   theory and practice internalised, which is seeing theory and practice as two interdependent yet complementary phases of the change process. Reflection was used in this research to accomplish above.

In this study, participatory action research is about the learning process, which, for me, is the link between pastoral practice and reflection. Reflection involves the development of understanding and self-reflection involves the change of practices. The change of practices not only concerned my practice as a narrative pastoral therapist on a professional level, but also on a personal level, as my family practices were changed during the research

process. But changing involves taking risks – the risks of interpreting the 'signs of the times' (Bosch 1991:420).

2.8　Signs of the time

Gerkin (1991:11) says that changes in the larger social situation require new theological reflections from therapists because pastoral therapists need to 'respond pastorally to the signs of the time.' Bosch (1991:430) warns that we are also at risk of interpreting the 'signs' incorrectly, because '[o]ur initial assumptions may be erroneous; we could have asked completely inappropriate questions and looked for wrong clues.' He adds, however, that we are not without a 'compass'. I believe that in this research, postmodern discourse became the guideline or compass in the pastoral care and counselling I did at Faure.

2.8.1　A shift from modern to post-modern discourse

The shift from modern to postmodern discourses and practices is continuously taking place and brings with it new understandings of the world and the self. Modernity places practices such as neutrality, objectivity and finding the truth in the foreground. Gergen and Kaye (1992:167) write that 'for the modernist, a good society can be erected on the foundations of empirical knowledge.' The belief in an objective truth that is knowable and researchable enables people to make assumptions about cause and effect as well as predictions about the future.

Post modern discourse and practices have definitely influenced my thinking and views on working with the young people at Faure. During my conversations with the young people at Faure, these ideas helped me to question the notion of a single meaning of reality, which at that time, was my truth and the reality in which I grew up. Post modern discourse also provided me with a vehicle to 'voice' the stories of the young people at Faure to my family (see also Chapter 4).

2.8.2 Language and discourse

Social construction discourse explains that language is not simply linguistic, but a dynamic, social activity (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:30). People make meaning and understanding through language. Language constitutes meaning and meaning is found 'within the context of ongoing relationships' (Gergen 1994:49). Anderson (1997:42) says that 'meanings are not permanently fixed but are continuously influenced, constituted and reconstructed over time.' Winter (1997:19) says further that 'language structures our consciousness' which means linguistic practices constitute discourses.

Language is used in a discourse that becomes constitutive of our reality (McLean 1997:14). The postmodern approach in social construction discourse does not focus primarily on language, but rather on discourse (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:31). The concept of discourse refers to a 'process of conversation'. Meanings are created and 'systematic and institutionalised ways of speaking/writing' develop through the use of language (Lowe 1991:44,45). Our lives are influenced by the broader discourses of the culture we live in (Morgan 2000:9). The constitutive power of the dominant discourses of our culture has an impact on 'our preferred and customary ways of believing and behaving' (Freedman & Combs 1996:32).

Discourse acts as the medium that provides a society with a 'restrictive and expressive set of codes and conventions' in which to 'sustain a certain worldview' and also to 'categorise it' (Hare-Mustin 1994:19-20). Discourses are mostly invisible and can be compared to a pane of glass. We mostly 'disattend the glass in order to look at the view out the window, so we generally disattend discourse. It is not until the glass fractures or breaks, for example, that we focus differently' (Davies 1993:153). Postmodern epistemology helped me to 'look' at and question the discourses (fractured window panes) in my life. It set in motion a process in which I began to challenge the many discourses and constructions in my life, such as patriarchy. This process not only had an impact on the work I did at Faure, but

also on my personal lived experiences and on my family: it opened up alternative possibilities for ways of living and for change.

The relationships I had with the young people at Faure, made me realise that as a researcher/therapist, I could not be 'objective' about how they experienced their lives. It was my responsibility as a white, Afrikaans-speaking middle-class woman to reach out and find ways to talk about challenges such as racism, discrimination, poverty, violence and the effect of Apartheid on peoples' lives. Anderson (1997:42) says that because our contexts change, 'meanings are not permanently fixed but are continuously influenced, constructed and reconstructed over time.' Gergen (1991:32) adds that 'Relating to others slowly transforms our identities; the more others there are, the more we are transformed.'

When we expand our interaction with people, we are exposed to other identities, values and opinions (Niehaus 2001:26). My involvement with Faure not only resulted in the expansion of my own cultural and social worlds, but also expanded my family's (especially my husband, Coenrie) world. 'Within this new complex and expanding world of relationships, every individual incorporates a variety of values and attitudes into his/her own definition of self – even sometimes resulting in contradictions' (Niehaus 2001:26). The process of consciousness raising which Coenrie and I experienced involved interaction and relation with the young people at Faure. The making visible of discourses for 'questioning and challenge' (Morgan 2000:45) in our lives, enabled us to change our discursive position. According to Anderson (1997:36) questioning discursive practices move 'toward a plurality of narratives that are more local, contextual and fluid; it moves toward a multiplicity of approaches to the analysis of subjects such as knowledge, truth, language, history, self, and power.'

Patriarchy was one such discourse that was regularly being 'pulled apart and examined' (Morgan 2000:47) in our conversations.

2.9 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a discourse which has influenced and is still influencing the lives of many people. In the modernistic world with its objective 'truths' and absolute answers, patriarchal discourse has functioned very strongly. The father was the head of the house and he was seldom questioned. The word 'patriarchy' literally means: 'rule by the father'. In a patriarchal community, the father is regarded as the most important and dominant person who has the freedom and right to 'rule' over others, mostly women and children. (Poling 1996)

Patriarchal actions towards children can be traced from early times. Patriarchal practices include selling children as labourers, pre-arranged marriages and the father 'giving the bride away' in a wedding ceremony. Traditional patriarchal law saw women and children as men's possessions:

> Women, children and slaves had no legal status. They were seen as dependants and quasi – property of men, as persons who had no right to assert their own will but who were bound under the yoke of obedience and servitude of their lords – the male head of the household.
>
> (Ruether 1989:31)

I grew up in a society where the dominant patriarchal discourse that women and children are inferior to men had developed in my life (see 1.1.1; 1.1.2 & 4.3.3). The dominant story that children should honour and obey their parents constructed much of my reality. It was only when I came into contact with the stories of the young people at Faure, that I became aware of the hurtful and harmful causes of patriarchal discourses in our society. Exposing the discourse of patriarchy as a structure that privileges men (Bloomquist 1989:5) and talking about it, also created the opportunity for Coenrie to examine some of his authoritarian practices, such as making rules and expecting the children to obey them (see 4.3.2).

2.10 Children's rights

Patriarchy fails to acknowledge the rights of children. Adults 'sovereign' rule over them makes children dependent and requires complacency from them so that they can be shaped and controlled by adult's values and attitudes.

I was raised with the idea that 'children should know their place'. I never even considered that children could have rights, or that children had knowledge and the right to voice their opinions and ideas. I was surprised when I discovered that there existed such a thing as The Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989). This treaty has created more international consensus than any other treaty in history. It promotes the vision of a child who is well connected to his or her family, community and nation, as well as to other resources. According to the treaty, it is a child's fundamental right to secure his or her survival, development and flourishing. This treaty made me sensitive to the voices of the young people at Faure and also to my own children. I began to see them as young people who had an opinion about ideas and who could offer valuable knowledges and advice about life experiences. For example, in an informal conversation with some of the participants, I asked their opinions about protecting our girls in a violent society. I was surprised about their enthusiasm to participate in the discussion as well as by the many useful ideas that came up. I found that after our conversation, I also 'consulted' my own children more about their opinions about issues that involved their lives.

Conversations between Coenrie and myself about the treaty and the rights of children also had a profound influence on how we see young people in general, as well as shaping how our child rearing practices in our home now look like. This will be discussed in Chapter Four.

2.11   Power and discourse

Adults will often defend the physical punishment of children on the basis of their property rights. The notion that children are the property or possession of parents, and particularly fathers, make them especially vulnerable to the abuse of power.

Foucault's work – especially on how power is entrenched in discourses – has made a significant contribution to the discussion around power. Foucault explained that peoples' power in society was in direct proportion to their ability to participate in the various discourses that shape that society (Freedman & Combs 1996:37,38). He argued that there is an inseparable link between knowledge and power:

> the discourses of a society determine what knowledge is held to be true, right, or proper in that society, so those who control the discourse control knowledge. At the same time, the dominant knowledge of a given milieu determines who will be able to occupy its powerful positions.
> (Freedman & Combs 1996:37,38)

2.12 Power practices

Foucault believed that knowledge is power and power is knowledge (Foucault 1980). He proposed that: 'power is always already there and that one is never outside it' (Foucault 1980:141). White, following Foucault's thought, suggests that since we tend to 'internalise' the 'dominant narratives' of our culture, it is easy to believe that they speak the truth of our identities (White 1992) . An example of such internalised and dominant narratives can be seen in the conversation that Helene had with Coenrie (Chapter 4). In the conversation, Coenrie explains how the dominant discourse around being an 'conventional' engineer, proposes that an engineer should give orders and demand production, without necessarily consulting people working with them, about their opinions.

Another part of Michel Foucault's work involves the analysis of 'practices of power' in institutions such as prisons and hospitals. He traced the history of the 'art of the government of persons' (Foucault 1979, 1980) through which the modern 'subject' is constituted from the seventeenth century. Foucault identified Bentham's Panopticon (prison) as the ideal model for this form of power – for the … 'technologies of power, which determine the conduct of

individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject' (Foucault 1988:18). Foucault exposed the practices/techniques of power in this model as:

- invisible to those who experience it
- subjugating of persons through isolation
- a 'gaze'" and normalising judgement of persons as subjects
- constant surveillance and scrutiny
- subjecting persons to perpetual evaluation and policing of themselves so that they become 'docile' bodies and souls.

Through becoming 'willing' participants in the disciplining of their lives, people were recruited by this system of power into what Foucault calls the 'technologies of the self, which permitted individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault 1988:18).

The masked working of power operates in relation to certain 'truth' norms and criteria. These constructed 'truths' or knowledges were designed to bring about certain 'correct or 'desired' outcomes such as 'fulfilled', 'liberated' and, in the case of prisoners, 'good citizenship'. According to Foucault, these 'desired' ways of being are in fact a ruse that disguises what is actually taking place – namely that these particular ways of being are prescribed ways of being. Foucault argues that in this way the modern practices of power are particularly effective in that these incites a person to embrace his/her own subjugation.

It was not difficult for me not to compare Bentham's Panopticon (prison) with Faure Youth Centre. Places, such as Faure Youth centre, were initially 'designed' to 'reform' or 'correct' juvenile youths to become 'good citizens' again. During the research at Faure, it was my experience that through practices of power (mostly by adults and by some of the boys) and certain prescribed ways of being (mostly by the educational and justice system), the

young people were forced to 'embrace their own subjugation'. For example, one of the research participants was regularly locked up or punished for climbing on to the roof of the centre. When I asked her about this, she answered that she did not deliberately wanted to disobey authority, but that the roof of the centre was the only place where her heart could 'feel free to connect' with her mother's heart at home. Although she believed that it was necessary to punish her for her transgression, nevertheless the longing in her heart was sometimes so big that she could not guarantee that she would not do it again.

2.13 Sensitivity to gender

Patriarchal discourse also disguises the fact that women are subjugated by its use of power. The discourse promotes a power relationship in which men dominate women and whereby women are kept subordinate in many ways. By 'breaking the glass' (Davies 1993:153) of this power discourse, we open up space for alternative understandings and practices in the discourse.

I only became aware of gendered issues at Faure when the boys came into the centre. They began to enforce their male-dominated values at the expense of the girls. Some of the girls and female teachers told me that they were threatened and verbally abused by some of the boys. Some of the girls were also sexually abused at night.

I voiced my concerns for the safety of the girls and female teachers at Faure to Coenrie. We also talked about the effect that the patriarchal discourse had had on the lives of the girls at the centre. I remember that I was very surprised that he stood up for the girls and that he argued that they were being 'downplayed' at the expense of the boys. I realised that the girls' 'struggle' I had been sharing with him, had touched him deeply. He shared with me how he had become aware of 'women's rights' and of their right to participate equally in all activities. He told me that his awareness of women's rights had stood with him in his decision to involve women in a Christian business men's prayer group (see Chapter 4) he had been involved with.

Following participatory action research approach (see 2.7), which attempts to transform practice, the study is upheld by feminist values and aims.

> To this end, for me, any research may be considered 'feminist' which incorporates two main aims; a sensitivity to the role of gender within society and the differential experiences of male and females, and a critical approach to the tools of research on society, the structures of methodology and epistemology within which 'knowledge' is placed within the public domain.
>
> Millen (1997:11)

2.14   Conclusion

According to Bruner (1993:1), postmodern researchers are human observers, who are historically positioned and locally situated. Bernstein (1983:173) suggests that:

> A false picture is suggested when we think that our task is to leap out of our own linguistic horizon, bracket all our preunderstandings, and enter into a radically different world. Rather the task is always to find the resources within our own horizon, linguistic practices, and the experience that can enable us to understand what confronts us as alien. And such understanding requires a dialectical play between our own preunderstandings and the forms of life that we are seeking to understand. It is in this way that we can risk and test our own prejudices, and we can not only come to understand what is 'other' than us but also better understand ourselves.

In this study, by becoming aware/conscious about and challenging dominant discourses in our lives, the 'unvoiced and repressed dimensions of experience – of individual consciousness' (Graham 1996:193) were exposed and recovered. The lived reality of the young people at Faure, helped to inform and set in motion a process of change both for Coenrie and for me, as researcher.

This study describes two main routes of the research: firstly, the one in which the young people at Faure and I entered into a participatory relationship with one another; secondly, how these relationships with the young people,

became the vehicles that made it possible for me and my family to discover possibilities for change in our ways of living. Where the two routes intersect, a new history was created, consisting of new knowledges: these knowledges became in turn a 'new' way of living our lives. 'This knowledge cannot be generalised, but it may be relevant to other places and times as it fits into the greater collage of life' (Viljoen 2001:44).

In Chapter Three, I will be describing the pastoral care and counselling I offered at Faure Youth Centre.

Chapter 3

(Not) finding alternative ways of standing against violence and crime in Faure Youth centre

3.1   Introduction

As I explained in Chapter One (1.4.1), my research set out to ask the question: How can the understanding of the 'culture of violence' in Faure Youth Centre assist the young people there to find alternative ways of standing against violence and crime? Unfortunately, changing circumstances at Faure (to be explained later in the chapter) forced the research in another direction. I opted to go with the new direction. The result or product does not literally 'give voice' to the 'voiceless' young people at Faure. Rather it allows 'a different voice within some person to emerge' (Reinharz 1992:143). The voices that 'emerged', includes my own as well as my husband's (see Chapter 4). My work at Faure became an 'instrumental case study' (Stake 1994:237): the case study became both the 'process of our learning about' and the 'product of our learning' (Stake 1994:237).

3.1.1 The process of our learning

For me, the process of learning included discovering/learning that participatory action research involves a research journey that can never be accurately planned ahead. Research, people and aims can change at any time during the journey (see also Chapter 5).

During the research, it was the young people at Faure who taught me that research can be 'messy' and 'untidy'. Each time I went to the centre, I had ideas about what I wanted to do that day. But my grand ideas and agendas had to be put aside or abandoned completely when confronted with the realities that for example the young people did not want to talk. The young people taught me that new and grand ideas and visions rapidly fade when confronted by the details of our lives - such as our physical needs - and that we should strive rather to live lives of faith, hope and caring. Heshusius

(1994) calls such a attitude a 'participatory consciousness' (see also 1.2.2) when one becomes 'open' and 'receptive' towards the other. 'Turning to the other does not result in the loss of the self, but leads to a heightened feeling of aliveness and awareness' (Heshusius 1994:16-17). By turning my attention to the young people at Faure, a space was created for me to learn about myself and to change.

3.1.2 The product of our learning

Reinharz (1992:194) suggests that researchers' visions are changed when they learn about themselves, the subject under study and the research process itself. In this research, the product of my learning had a ripple effect on my family, and more especially, on my husband, Coenrie. I believe that my family and I received a valuable 'gift' through the pastoral care and counselling I did at Faure. The product of our learning involves a 'gift' which is described in Chapter Four.

I will now explain how the research began and developed to the point where the change in direction took place.

3.2 Finding ways of caring

I do not think that I really understood what it meant to care for 'strangers' before I started to do pastoral therapy at Faure Youth centre. I was immediately confronted by the question: 'What could we possibly have in common?'

I remember standing in front of the building of Faure Youth Centre for the first time. As I looked up at the barbed-wire fences and the heavily barred windows, I realised that the chances of me ever having been incarcerated as a youth, were negligible. My privileges had allowed me to remain largely unaware of the realities of life in such an institution. I realised that I did not have much in common with these young people. I had not yet developed a 'pastoral heart which responds to the suffering and pain in our communities' (Theron et al 1999:117). I did not understand what it meant to experience

certain policies such as discrimination and racism, nor could I conceive what it would be like to be brought up without familiar support (like parents) for my experiences. I quickly realised racism, discrimination and unjust and impoverished social conditions were not foreign to the young people at Faure. Most of these so-called coloured young people, had grown up during the last years of apartheid, not all were hardened criminals. First time offenders are also sent to Faure, as well as these children whose parents could no longer take care of them.

At the time I started to work at Faure, I read Couture's (2000:70) words:

> Caring for godchildren, entering into their experiences, is the deepest kind of friendship that is possible, one that invites the mutuality of power rearrangement and is inextricably bound to our experience of God.

Couture's words made me wonder about how I could 'enter' (care for) into these young people's experience as an 'outsider'. Was it perhaps through taking responsibility? But then whose responsibility was it to 'take care'? How could I, as pastoral therapist/researcher, take responsibility?

3.2.1   Whose responsibility is it to care for our young people and children?

As a Christian, I was reminded by 1 Corinthians 12 verse 26: 'If one member suffers, all the parts [share] the suffering...' (Amplified Bible).

Regarding responsibility for young people, Couture (2000:18) suggests that what society needs, is 'to convert short-term enthusiasm into long-term resilience and shared responsibility. As long as any children are impoverished, our local, national, and global communities – and our individual lives – are made poor also. As one more flourishes, all are enriched'. Couture (2000:83) continues:

> When care is offered through works of mercy across boundaries of established communities and in ways that transgress the power of established piety, simple acts of mercy may no longer be completely safe. Simple acts of mercy may require us to take on the vulnerability of others. Caring for the children of material

poverty and poverty of tenuous connection, strengthening their social ecology and supporting their rights, eventually requires courage.

I realised that, regardless of our different backgrounds, the 'well being' of the young people at Faure was also my responsibility and that I had to commit to taking that responsibility. They were vulnerable in the sense that they were 'poor': materially poor, as well as poorly connected to people who could support them, such as their family or other significant people.

3.2.2 What is "material poverty and poverty of tenuous connections"?

Institutions such as Faure Youth Centre, are supposed to provide education and care for young people. Frequently 'such institutions do not complement family life, but substitute for families that are unwilling and unable to care for their children' (Couture 2000:33). Couture (2000:33) says that children live in a 'social ecological nest' which consists of 'family and friends, local and national institutions and culture.'

Most young people become vulnerable and fragile when they are separated and disconnected from their families and local communities (Couture's social ecological nest). The effect of this kind of disconnectedness in young people's lives is 'multiple kinds of poverties' (Couture 2000:19). The kinds of poverties that mostly affect children or young people are: 'material poverty and poverty of tenuous connections' (Couture 2000:19). I saw for myself and heard from the personnel at Faure that the young people mostly arrive with only the clothes on their backs. Sometimes they have been 'passed on' by other institutions such as children's homes. I realised that most of the young people in Faure are materially poor and are 'tenuously connected' to a social milieu through being disconnected from their families and local communities.

3.2.3 Context of care

I believed that these young people needed a 'long-term commitment' (see Couture 2000:18): someone who would agree to walk a few steps with them along the path of life. Caring, and more specifically pastoral care, provided a context in which I not only could commit on a therapeutic level, but where I also became friends with the participants. Van der Geest (1981:197) insists that care should not be the concern of a few people, nor should it be restricted to certain persons or professions. According to him, 'people should take care of one another, because care is a human activity towards people in distress.' Sevenhuijsen (1998:147) speaks of 'caring solidarity' as taking action and standing with people in the face of hegemonic practices and the undermining of personal agency.

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> I think that if we consider caring as a human activity, we should not neglect to consider the ethical implications of care, namely being human. John Patton (1993:19) says the following regarding care:

> [T]he words "You don't care" are, perhaps, the most painful ones that we hear or say. To care is central to being human, from the perspective of theology, philosophy, or ethics.

The result is that care becomes the agent of ethics.

3.2.4 Prescriptive ethics and participatory ethics

Kotzé (2002:20) says that prescriptive ethics and participatory ethics need to be taken into consideration when caring with others. According to Kotzé (2002:16) prescriptive ethics prescribe what is 'normal' and 'abnormal', 'true' and 'moral' and treat people as 'generalized others' without acknowledging 'the individuality and concrete identity of the other' (Welch 1990:127). As a result, prescriptive ethics can become problematic. Kotzé (2002:17) proposes that the alternative to prescriptive ethics is participation. He continues:

> The challenge is to find our ethics in ways that will be open for participation by all and to avoid prescriptive, formalised or closed

systems of norms, anarchy or chaos.

(Kotzé 2002:20)

Kotzé (2002:18) suggests that those people (like myself) who are privileged and have power, are obliged to ensure participation with the marginalized by acknowledging their decisions through listening to them. During individual conversations I had with the young people at the youth centre, I heard that many of them were not only struggling with loneliness, but also with other issues, such as violence and drug abuse. I asked some of the girls about 'the culture of violence' and they all agreed that they were struggling with violence and violent behaviour. Through these conversations I realised that they all had considerable wisdom (local knowledges) to offer on these issues, but that they were seldom given the opportunity to offer their knowledges (see 2.1.2 – power practices & 4.2.1.2). Foucault (1980:81-82) says that dominant discourses can be challenged by 'subjugated' or local knowledges. In our conversations, I heard how the girls supported each other (subjugated/local knowledge) when they were feeling 'down' and lonely by making jokes and telling stories about their childhoods. This support usually helped them not to give vent to their anger (about being 'locked up' and feeling lonely) through destructive behaviour. I saw the potential benefit of creating a context in which they could connect with each other and perhaps share, support and learn more from each other.

Creating just such a context and winning the young people's trust to talk about issues was, however, a great challenge. I sensed that the young people were initially feeling a bit uneasy and that they did not trust me. Weingarten (1994:176) writes: 'Feeling intimate with others occurs through learning about and then participating in other's interests and excitements.' The idea of intimacy resonates with participatory consciousness (see 1.2.2), in that such an intimacy with the young people at the centre only occurred when I tried to learn about and then *participate* in their interests and experiences – their passions – rather than impose my own.

Reinharz (1992) says that self-disclosure from the researcher can put the 'interviewee' (or group in this case) at ease. According to her, doing participatory research needs equality between researcher and participants. Nancy Chodorow (cited in Reinharz 1992:33) suggests that one can build this rapport through the and self-disclosure of the researcher: 'Self-disclosure initiates "true dialogue" by allowing participants to become "co-researchers".

3.3   Intimacy

Intimacy with the young people at Faure involved many things. Firstly, I learned that sitting in a chair that was the same height as the ones on which they sat during conversations and group meetings was one way to create intimacy. Sometimes, the rooms we met in didn't have chairs. I would then sit with them on the floor or on the grass if we were in the playground. I also made it clear that I accepted the different ways they chose to sit in the room. For instance, with or without shoes, on the chair, on the floor or standing. I remember how funny it was for us all when Charmaine (one of the participants) fell asleep and snored during our second meeting.

Sharing stories about their childhoods and what made them excited - such as shopping or visiting their friends - was another way of creating intimacy. I tried not to impose my views and feelings, but rather allowed the opportunity for 'mutual sharing' (Weingarten 1994:183). I believe that when we begin to 'mutually share' (ourselves), we begin to care for one another: '...this obligation to others is what the earliest Christian tradition called *agape*' (Boyd 1996:14). According to Boyd, agape is a relational word: 'It describes regard or friendship between equals.' Agape can also be translated to mean the showing of love: it is therefore an activity. The name for the activity is agape-love. The agape-listener listens actively – with care and attention. (Boyd 1996:15).

3.3.1   Agape listening

Although it was my desire to 'become equal' with the young people through intimate listening, I was always aware that I came from a different context. I came from a white, privileged background, whilst most of the young people at Faure came from poor environments. Because I was initially a 'stranger' to them and they to me, some of my questions were not answered prior to the existence of a caring relationship. Agape-listening grew out of the conversations between the young people at Faure and myself. Boyd (1996:20) highlights two aspects of agape-listening: empathy and mutuality. Empathy and mutuality created space for friendships to develop between the young people at Faure and myself. He argues that agape-listening 'begins with empathy and proceeds in mutuality toward the promise of transformation' (Boyd 1996:23). As researcher, I was transformed in the process (see Chapter 5):

> *Agape-Listening* is the realization that I benefited personally in my role as pastoral counselor even when I was operating out of self-giving love toward my clients.
>
> (Boyd 1996:20)

Through my participation in the relational activity of agape-listening, I discovered that in my role as pastoral counsellor at Faure, I too found 'healing grace', because as Boyd (1996:21) says: the 'listening healer is a learning healer.' According to Boyd (1996:23) the nature of agape-love is not self-denying: 'there must be some degree of reciprocity to nurture and sustain the generosity of self-giving love.' My agape pastoral care and counselling at Faure, became the 'gift' (see Chapter 4) reciprocated to my family.

Keeping the above in mind, what did agape-listening look like in Faure?

According to Boyd (1996:15), '[a]gape-listening begins as a conscious choice, a willed selection, a readiness to listen the other.' Listening this way required some 'skill', but as Kaethe Weingarten (1994:178) describes:

> I think of intimacy as something that people can create with each at any time, if they are open to sharing what they truly care about and open to trying to understand what the other finds meaningful. This can happen to really *listen* to that person.

Some people choose to approach counselling/therapy with a detached professionalism guided by the idea that there are strategies, or 'tricks' you can use without becoming emotionally involved with the client's experiences. I chose a more 'intimate' therapy. For me, therapy at Faure was about linking back to young people about issues in their lives in a shared search for meaning.

The process - and what I learned from the young people - made me wonder about my own ignorance toward the issues they were facing in their lives, such as violence and crime. I have been privileged, coccooned and protected from such issues. I believe that my awareness/consciousness (see 2.6) about my own ignorance could only have been achieved by some kind of intimacy or 'emotional involvement' with the young people at Faure. Kotzé (2002:22-23) says that this combination of 'rational' and 'non-rational' ways of learning to form 'embodied ways of learning' prioritises ethics.

3.3.2 Ethical implications

The ethical implication of doing pastoral care at Faure in such an intimate, participatory way, was that:

> [w]hen the self and the other are seen as belonging to the same consciousness, all living is moral ... To live morally requires, in the first instance, not moral discourse, but a relentless awareness of ourselves in the particulars of moment-to-moment living.
> (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:133-134)

According to Heshusius and Ballard (1996), modernity focuses on the separation of rational and non-rational ways of learning, giving privilege to the former. Research is therefore also required to be free from personal influences and operates with discoveries and findings. The result of this is that:

> we can separate perceptions of what is and what ought to be and, as such, the moral is allowed to remain as a contingent category in the minds of researchers. The interpretive perceptive dispenses with these false dichotomies and forces us to realise that the moral goes to the very center of our beings....Then we will cease to do

> the kind of research that not only separates us from other people, but also separates us from ourselves we will no longer do the kind of research that allows us to avoid responsibility for the choices we make and the worlds we construct.
>
> <div align="right">(Smith 1996:166-167)</div>

I agree with Kotzé (2002:21) when he says that we can no longer hide behind restrictive (rational) norms and systems. Ethical research involves participating and 'engaging in the challenges of real-life dilemmas' (Kotzé 2002:21). He continues:

> Ethicising is not something unseen that some people sometimes do for or about other people. To ethicise is to do everything in participation with the others, or rather, with everyone participating. This implies that all who are involved, implicated or possibly affected by ethicising in any given situation become participants in the process.

In this research, the presentation of the stories of the young people at Faure, as well as Coenrie's story, support the practice of doing ethical research and ethical ways of being (Kotzé 2002:20). Their stories 'serve as vehicles to carry people's dilemmas and ethical choices, including the effects of those dilemmas and choices on other people. The more of these stories we have, the richer the possibilities that could guide people's struggles to find ways in which to live at the margins of clarity about what is good and/or evil' (Kotzé 2002:21). Sevenhuijsen (1998:29) says the following: 'Moral stories about care can be seen as a means of interpretation and communication, in which people from a diversity of positions and perspectives exchange values and aims relating to care.' Kotzé (2001:8) says that 'Pastoral therapy should not only involve participatory ethical care but also ecological care.'

3.4   Caring for nature, caring for each other

During the time I worked at Faure, I read the work that Cheshire and Lewis (1996) did with young people in nature. Supporting the idea of working with young people in nature, Kotzé and Kotzé (2001:8) say that '[p]astoral therapy should not only involve participatory ethical care but also ecological care.' I thought that the 'adventure-based therapy' of Cheshire and Lewis (1996), or nature, could provide a context for the Faure young people to share and talk

about issues such as violence and crime, because these are the issues that the young people face at the centre. Clinebell (1996:13) suggests that 'alienation from nature' is one of the possible causes of 'violent behaviour toward nature, toward our bodies, and toward others perceived as "wild". A willingness to share and open oneself to be nurtured by people and nature, should be the focus of a holistic, therapeutic approach. I realised that it was important in my work as pastoral counsellor/therapist at Faure to invite discussions and to share experiences in some natural setting. Clinebell (1996) says that when young people are given the opportunity to be in nature, this experience can enable them to discover a source of healing and growth. Finding a natural setting for the young people at Faure meant taking them on a physical expedition in nature.

3.4.1 A physical expedition

The aim of taking a group of young people on a nature-adventure expedition was to learn collectively and to stimulate discussions around standing up and finding alternatives to problems, such as violence and drug abuse. I thought that a nature 'caring awareness' could assist the young people to realise that they could care for each other and stand together against violence and other issues in their lives. Ackermann's words (1991:111) resonate with my understanding that:

> ...the belief that violations of the eco-system mean the destruction of our life-support systems and these violations are a product of the western theological tradition, of an hierarchical chain of command, and of the socialization of people into dominant subordinate social roles. We should change our attitude from one of believing that we have 'dominion over' the earth and creation to a view that we are 'the custodians of nature'.

I discussed the idea of taking a group of young people on an adventure 'trip' in nature, with two teachers at Faure (Mrs Fish and Mrs Martins) and they enthusiastically offered their support for the project.

The teachers and I drew up a list of the money and gear we needed for the trip. Since none of the young people possessed any walking shoes, sleeping

bags or camping equipment, we would need approximately R10 000 if we took a group of ten young people. Mrs Fish volunteered to contact the Department of Education for a sponsor and we also looked for outside sponsors. We also asked for volunteers in the centre to participate in the expedition. Seven young girls volunteered and came to an informal meeting which we had organised to explain what the trip would involve.

Before we began our first meeting, I explained that I was busy studying for a Masters degree at UNISA and that the work I was doing was part of a dissertation. I asked for their permission to write up some of the work for the dissertation and explained that since the work might be published, I needed their permission to participate in the project. They all agreed to my request, but they were especially excited when I told them that this work could be used to help other young people like them. I will now introduce the young people who participated in the project.

3.4.2   Introducing the participants

After the discussion about my dissertation and the project, I realised that we had not yet been introduced to one another. I only knew Samantha from previous individual counselling. I asked them if they wanted to introduce themselves to me. Since nobody wanted to start, I asked if it would be helpful if each one introduced another person. They thought this suggestion was very funny, but they still agreed to the idea. I suggested that Samantha and I could start introducing each other, because we knew each other a little bit.

Samantha introduced me as the woman who wants to help. She told the group that we had been talking together in counselling. When she was finished, I asked the group if there were more questions about me that I could answer. By allowing the young people to ask questions, I invited more intimacy and equality into our relationship. They asked about my age, if I were married, had children and the children's ages. They were very excited that I had a daughter and said that they would like to meet her. Some of the girls

commented that they have seen me at the school with my three year old son whom they thought was 'cute'.

I then introduced Samantha. There was lots of laughing and giggling when I said that I would recognise her in a crowd because she likes to write with a white pen on the back of her black school shoes. When I asked the group how they would describe Samantha, they told me that she is a leader, that she likes to make jokes, she cheers people up and that she wears a no.9 shoe size.

Marushell was introduced next. She was fifteen years old and her home was in Elsies River. There were a few jokes about her one broken school shoe. She also told us that she liked chocolates and being with friends.

Chrystal was also fifteen years old. She was from Ravensmead and liked to sing and dance. She had green eyes and everyone knew her from her 'beautiful eyes'.

Magrieta was introduced next. She was sixteen years old and from Gansbaai. She told the group that she liked to play rugby and she was often involved in fighting.

Gretha was from Wellington and she was fifteen years old. She liked to swim and she laughed a lot. She was the clown in the group.

Roxanne told the group that she was fifteen years old and from Milnerton. The others said that she was the best swimmer in the school and that she likes shopping. They also described her as a bit 'crazy'.

Jermaine didn't want to say anything about herself. She said that she was tired. I told her that it was OK with me and that I also struggle with tiredness and lack of energy sometimes. I said that maybe we could discuss the tiredness sometime and come up with some useful ideas for both of us. She was a little stunned by my comment but agreed to the idea.

Shortly after our meeting, however, the situation at Faure began to change.

3.4.3 Changes at Faure

It was decided by the Department of Education to change the 'school' for girls into to a youth centre for young girls and boys. The principal, Mrs Horne, left the school. Boys were coming into the Centre almost daily and I began to see a 'change' in the behaviour of some of the girls. One teacher I talked to complained that the girls' behaviour changed from 'tolerable' to 'uncontrollable'. I also realised that we were not going to raise enough funds to take the group on the adventure trip. Moreover, due to bad weather and an exceptionally long winter, we were advised to postpone the trip until later. I think it was quite 'natural' for all of us to feel disappointed and disheartened after all the excitement and the preparations we had already made for the expedition. I still believe that an expedition in nature could be helpful for the young people, but that the project needs to develop and be implemented over a longer period of time and when things 'settle down' at Faure (See recommendations in Chapter 5). Although things were beginning to change at Faure, I decided to stand with and support the young people and teachers at Faure.

3.4.4 Community of care

Choosing to stand with and support the young people and teachers at Faure in the face of circumstances over which we had no control reminded me of Robert Franklin's story in Pamela Couture's book: 'Seeing Children, Seeing God' (2000:37). Franklin describes his journey as a youth living in a difficult, sociologically poor community. He says that his neighborhood was 'fraught with vulnerability and risk, but his environment was also filled with caring adults who guided and inspired him at crucial transition points in his life.' Franklin adds that communities with multiple social networks are more supportive toward children than communities whose social network is dysfunctional. According to Mbiti (1998:145) the African view of an individual's life cannot be seen apart from the communal life. Mutual interdependence between people and the community is a requirement for a full and healthy life.

Mbiti's (1998:145) words guided me as therapist in Faure: 'I am because we are, and since I am therefore we are.' I saw myself (as therapist), as part of the Faure community and thus therefore, whatever affected them would also have an influence on me - such as the current changes that were taking place. These ideas link up with the narrative approach.

3.4.5 A narrative approach

The narrative approach also follows the idea of 'community of care'. Community with others makes it possible to take back lives from the effect of dominant stories (Freedman & Combs 1996:237).

Therefore, with the idea of community in mind, I decided to think of other possible ways that could be helpful for the young people to stand against violence in the centre. The one idea I came up with was the idea of groups or 'teams'. Alice Morgan's (2000:17) idea of a team or group proposes that having a 'team' or group, helps people to stand against the effects of problems. Teams or groups create opportunities for conversation in which people can stand with each other and support one another through difficulties. People's lives 'become linked with others in ways that more richly describe alternative stories' (Morgan 2000:119). I thought that perhaps by having a team, as described by Morgan (2000), the young people could come together and talk about issues such as violence, abuse, crime and drug abuse. I wondered if teams were not perhaps similar to the idea of 'ganging up'.

3.5 Ganging up

The topic of gangs regularly came up in my individual conversations with the young people. I wondered if 'ganging up' was not a way of being part of a social group/team and making friends? Kotzé and Kotzé (2003:199) says that '[g]angs have become another version of family.' Pinnock (1998:45) adds that gangs become the substitution for disintegrating families and communities. The fact that most of the young people at Faure were from poor backgrounds and had tenuous connections to people in their families or communities

influenced my thinking when working with them. During many individual conversations, I asked the young people about their involvement with gangs. I heard from most of them that gangs had a great influence in their lives – most of them were members of some gang. I got the impression that most of them missed the sense of 'community' they had shared with other gang members. One of the research participants (Natasja) told me that she missed her friends and the way they 'look out for each other.' She also said that being part of a gang meant that you never felt alone. According to other participants, gang friends understood each other and they knew how to cheer each other up: they became like a family. According to Kotzé and Kotzé (2003:199) once someone is included in a gang, 'the members support and protect each other, fulfilling tasks we usually attribute to families.'

This made me wonder whether 'ganging up', rather than breaking the young people up individually, could not perhaps provide a context in which the young people would connect with each other. I hoped that such a connectedness would perhaps enable the young people to stand together against violence and to develop different relationships with others. I also thought that the belonging to a gang could break down the isolation and feelings of being a problem and create possible ways for them to take responsibility for violent behaviour. I decided to propose the idea to the group.

3.5.2 Characteristics of a gang

Since I knew very little about gangs or how they functioned, I worked with the idea of the socially constructed nature of language and I decided to ask the participants to explain some of the characteristics of a gang to me. By allowing them to negotiate their own understanding of what gangs stand for, they came up with the following:
- gangs have a group name for example: The Young Americans.
- gangs have a 'turf' or an area, usually a neighbourhood that they claim and mark off by graffiti on the walls.
- members of a gang have a code of dress – a certain colour or type of clothing for example: running shoes, sports jackets.

- gang members communicate through special hand signs and use a 'gang language' which are unfamiliar to the general public.
- tattoos show a member's loyalty and pride towards the gang.

The next step was to invite the young people to participate in forming their own gang to stand against violence in the centre. Their reactions to the idea were very enthusiastic. They all told me that they thought the idea could work. I believe that through positioning the young people at Faure as the 'experts' on the topic of gangs in their lives, they were given the space and opportunity to create their own preferred story/gang (Davies 1993:20). Because power imbalance existed between the young people at Faure and adults (personnel), greater power rested with adults and teachers. Adults were considered to possess expert knowledge regarding making decisions about and taking responsibility for the wellfare of the young people. The children have little to say about matters concerning their own well-being). Kotzé and Kotzé (2002:207) call this an ethical-political practice where we expand 'the horizons of what it means to do pastoral care and counselling.' By encouraging and providing a space for the young people to voice their 'subjugated knowledge'/or local knowledges (Foucault 1980:82) about gangs, I, as adult/researcher entered into an ethical-political challenge and in the process resisted power. By using their 'subjugated knowledges', we incorporated some of the above mentioned characteristics into the 'new gang'.

3.5.2 Characteristics of Faure's gang

As mentioned above, gangs have certain characteristics or traits that the members attribute to themselves in order to create a sense of belonging. I decided to hear from the young people what participating in the gang meant for them. We also negotiated the traits they wanted for the Faure gang. I wrote their comments down on a poster and put it on the wall after the conversation. We discussed the following:

3.5.2.1 Participation

- Respect stood out under participation. The young people thought that respect for their opinions and experiences, was important, because different opinions and experiences should be respected.

- Confidentiality was important, in that it promoted feeling 'safe' in conversations.

  I remember that sometimes the young people would tell me a story, and then say: 'Please, miss, we only tell this to you, we don't want the other teachers to know'. I would then reassure them that the information was confidential.

- Adults, myself included, were merely participants in the process, who were experts to contribute their experiences in the same way as everyone else.

Adams-Westcott and Isenbort (quoted by Dixon 1999:55) suggests that: 'we invite group members to develop connections and create a community that supports each participant's personal journey of change.' I hoped that this 'community' could provide an audience for the young people at Faure to (1) develop their own self-knowledge, (2) practice more validating stories about self in the centre, and (3) incorporate preferred narratives into their lived experiences, such as would enable them to stand up against violence and crime. I thought that we could perhaps best achieve this when we had a name for the gang.

3.5.2.2 A name

Early on in our first meeting, I asked for suggestions for a name for the gang. I suggested that everyone wrote a name on a piece of paper and placed it on the floor in the middle of the room. I then held up each name and we discussed the possibilities of each choice. After a thorough discussion, all agreed on the name VIP (very important persons). On reflection, I wonder if that name was such a good choice, because the name VIP is very exclusive and connected to persons who posses a lot of power.

3.5.2.3 Code of dress

We also discussed and eventually agreed that something like a bracelet with the gang's name on it could act as a sign to themselves and to the rest of the school regarding what the 'gang' stood for. I undertook to investigate the options for the bracelet and to give the feedback to the gang.

3.5.2.4 Language

During the next two weeks, we talked in the gang about the influence of violence in their lives. I took a position of 'not knowing' (Anderson & Goolishian) and asked questions to help me understand what violence looked like for them. Narrative questions can sometimes be complicated and asking them required me to think carefully about the language I used in my questions to the girls. I would often get a blank expression and an 'I don't understand' response when a question had perhaps gone 'over their heads'. As I became more skilled, I modified my language and questions to make it easier for them. Morgan (1995:26) likens asking questions in this way to building a 'scaffold of questions for them'. For example, rather than asking, 'What does it take to drown the voice of good behaviour?' I would ask them a series of smaller questions that built up to this idea. Thus, 'Do you think it takes a lot of courage and patience to strengthen the voice of good behaviour?' 'When you helped Mrs Fish in the tuck shop, was that strengthening the voice of good behaviour?'

I also learnt that I needed to be careful that the process didn't become therapy-focussed rather than co-research focussed (Reinharz 1996:33). According to Reinharz (1996:182), in co-research the researcher invites participants to join the researcher in creating the study. In this way, the study becomes 'learn from' and not just 'learn about' the people involved in the research. I realised that I sometimes prepared 'therapy questions' (which focus more on the individual in an attempt to learn about him/her), but I had to change these to 'co-research' group questions where I could learn from the research group as a whole. For example, I prepared the question:

'What does a bad reputation look like for you?', but I changed the question to,' If we as a group had to work with someone who wants to begin living a 'bad' lifestyle, what will the road be like for the person, what will happen to the person? How will other people react when they see a person misbehaving?'

The way we language questions in therapy and research is very important, because we want to invite people/perpetrators (Jenkins 1990) to take responsibility for violations.

3.6   Explanations, causes and solutions

When I asked young people at the centre about violence, they mostly attributed responsibility to factors such as parents, friends, the school (government) 'system', teachers, drugs and others. I was struck by the way in which many of the explanations, causes and solutions were being unhelpful for explaining the of violence in that they often led to practices that promoted blame and the avoidance of responsibility. Jenkins (1990:18;64) says that finding a 'correct' or 'true' explanation for something like violence may seem to be helpful in that someone or something can then be blamed for the problem. In the Western tradition of empirical science, a problem is best explained and 'solved' by uncovering the essence and rectifying its 'true' underlying cause. I realised that trying to find explanations, causes and solutions had contributed to a context in which the young people and teachers at Faure felt trapped. Such a context created space for a culture of violence in which no one (perpetrators, victims and others) took responsibility for violent actions. Jenkins (1990:32) argues that a preoccupation with explanations isolates people and prevents the discovery of alternative solutions. At the time, I found that my visits to the centre left me feeling drained and exhausted. My desire was to help the young people at Faure escape the context of violence and crime. I wanted their help and participation in doing so but it was not forthcoming. I also found that being constantly confronted by forms of violence left me feeling anxious and stressed.

3.7   Stress and research

As I have mentioned before, I soon learned that things at Faure could be very unpredictable most of the time. One day the gang wanted to meet and talk and the next day they would not. That boys were coming into the centre almost daily was another 'new' factor to consider. Moreover, the boys were speaking their own 'gang language' which nobody else could understand. I was shocked when I heard from some of the girls that boys had gained access through the roof to the girl's bedrooms during the night roof and had abused them sexually. It also appeared that the new personnel in the residential section could not - or would not - control the boys, and favoured them above the girls.

I was beginning to get discouraged (stressed) and tired of working in such conditions. I mentioned my frustrations to my husband, Coenrie, telling him that I had noticed that the girls in the gang were changing. He asked me how and when I was most aware of the change. I remember I telling him that the girls had told me that they could not and did not want to stand up to the influential children in the school. When I asked who the influential children were, they answered that it was the boys. Boys and boys' names came up regularly in conversations in the gang.

I could not get the gang to meet during the next few weeks. They informed me that they did not want to meet. I was very disappointed when I saw how some of the girls had burnt down the high care unit of the centre. I also witnessed more frequent police raids for dagga and other drugs that were coming in from 'outside'.

Teachers also began to approach me. In our conversations they expressed their depression and tiredness from working in such conditions. I had a long conversation with a female teacher who was sexually harassed by a group of boys. They made comments on how they could get her pregnant and then threw condoms at her. I also began to experience glances and comments from the boys and seriously began to fear for my safety.

Reinharz (1992:34) says that: 'The ethic of commitment exposes feminist interviewers [researchers] to stress.' On reflection, I think that I was experiencing 'stress' on different levels. Firstly, I was concerned for the girls and their well-being. I talked to some of the 'authorities' at the centre and they told me that they could do nothing, except perhaps to discipline more rigorously. I felt that I was failing to help them and that made me feel even more helpless.

Secondly, I was also thinking that I had perhaps overlooked certain things that could have been more useful in the research. Perhaps I should have discussed gender and gender issues earlier with the young people?

The many unpredictable changes at Faure caused stress for me and for the personnel working there. Becky Thompson (quoted in Reinharz 1992:34) writes that 'stress can occur in numerous phases of the research.' Due to the participatory nature of the research, it also meant that I had to consider that the participants felt it was time to end their participation in the research: this was their decision and I needed to respect this. I decided to take a 'time-out' period from the centre. I informed the teachers and the young people that I still proposed to come back and work at the centre. Many of the girls who initially were in the groups also left the centre. I have had contact with some of them since.

3.8   Summary

It is difficult to summarise this chapter. The product or result of the research at Faure does not reveal what I would have liked – namely that the young people stood up to a culture of violence at the centre. I initiated the research by trying to create a context/community in which young people could deal with issues in their lives such as violence and crime. As the research continued, my perspectives shifted. By the time the research was finished, I was studying the effect that my work at Faure had had on my family. Reinharz (1996:244-245) says that '[m]ultiplicity of methods allows us to study the greatest possible range of subject matters and reach a broad set of goals.' Multiple methods,

however, slows down the progress of the research. Couture's (2000:61) following words helped me as researcher not to become impatient about doing research in this way:

> Do not rush to save the world. Begin small. Consider commitments carefully. Make only the commitments you can keep. Do not underestimate the accumulating value of small, regular commitments. Reflect on your experience; pray about it; learn from it; walk with God in it.

The research has not failed. Because feminist researchers promote the mediation of meaning in research, they 'examine both the text and the process of its production' (Reinharz 1992:145). The process of the research becomes part of the issues studied (Reinharz 1992:212) (see also 1.3 'the process becomes part of the product').

In the process of this research, I have learned that young people in 'reformatories' are conveniently forgotten, because they are a 'disgrace' to society and feared by most people. But whom do we exclude and ignore because of our fears? We exclude the children/young people and the poor - the materially and tenuously connected poor: 'their lives are a cry against those who benefit at their expense' (Kotzé 2002:18). Their stories are not told because they are not very visible.

What I have learned at Faure has changed me. Reinharz (1992:195) warns that 'the changes researchers undergo can lead to harsh recognition of their own shortcomings.' I agree with the statement, but I want to add that the research I did at Faure made me realise what a wonderful gift my work had given to my family and me. I will be discussing this gift in the following chapter.

Feminist researchers have given attention to marital couples. Judy Wajcman (quoted in Reinharz 1992:41) 'stresses the significance of interviewing husbands because of their importance to women.' The next chapter of this research will consist of an interview that one of my colleagues, Helene, had

with my husband. He will explain the effect that my work at Faure had on his own life.

Chapter 4

The 'gift' that the pastoral care and counselling at Faure reciprocated to my family

> A gift is something that you cannot be thankful for.
> **As soon as I say "thank you" for a gift, I start destroying**
> the gift, I start cancelling the gift, I start destroying the
> gift, by proposing an equivalence, that is, a circle which
> encircles the gift in a moment of reappropriation [RT 18]
>
> <div align="right">(Derrida 1997:142)</div>

4.1   Introduction

The research question asks: **How did the research and pastoral care touch aspects of my life?**

As mentioned in Chapter One, when I started on this research journey, I had one destination in mind, and yet reflecting and replanning took me on many other routes and I discovered myself being touched by this research in many ways. One of the surprises of the research was the unexpected 'gift' my family received through my involvement at Faure Youth Centre. Derrida (1997:142) suggests that there are limits to the idea of a 'gift', which make it 'possible' and also 'impossible'. He insists that a gift is cancelled or becomes 'polluted' when something is expected in return. Derrida (1997:144) suggests that:

> The gift "calls" upon us for an expenditure without reserve, for a giving that wants no payback, for distribution with no expectation of retribution, reciprocity, or reappropriation. To give a gift then requires that one then forget, and ask the other to forget, absolutely, that the gift has been given (DT 30-31/GT 16-17), so that the gift, if there is one, would vanish without a trace.

According to Derrida, such a gift, can never present itself - it is impossible: 'one can think, desire, and say only the impossible according to the measure without measure of the impossible' (1997:144).

In this chapter, I would like to explain why and how I consider the work I did at Faure, as a gift to my family, keeping in mind that I stand at the door of the 'impossible'. I use the metaphor of a gift, because the work at Faure 'is an "unpresentable" [gift] exceeding all presence (and presents).' The gift drew my family and I 'out of ourselves, like a certain beneficent transcendental illusion' (Derrida 1997:145).

The 'gift' involves my witnessing (see Chapter 2) Coenrie (my husband) changing and standing up against dominant discourses in his life and him finding 'new ways of living' in the process. The 'gift' is presented in the form of a conversation that one of my colleagues, Helene, had with Coenrie, and my reflections on witnessing transforming practices of inclusivity.

4.2   Men finding 'new/alternative ways of living'

As a white man in South Africa, and thus being privileged by apartheid, Coenrie has benefited significantly from the practices of oppression. Today, men like Coenrie are challenged to redress the imbalance in new ways that will not again become dominating or patronising. As mentioned in Chapter Two, 'a different form of understanding is in some ways also a form of action...' (Reinharz 1992:192). The stories of care and counselling at Faure Challenged Coenrie to step into transforming ways of acting and living.

Through conversations Coenrie and I had about my work at Faure, Coenrie had come to 'know' some of the people at the centre without ever actually seeing them. He became sensitised to issues such as gender, children's rights and relationships by listening to the stories about Faure. Frank (1995:158) explains the 'becoming' of a listener as: 'not to move on once the story has been heard, but to continue to live in the story, becoming in it, reflecting on who one is becoming...' The people at Faure had become 'real' to Coenrie. In this process and he had come to a 'different form of understanding' about their lives and struggles, which in turn changed the way he wanted to live his story. Frank (1995:25) says that 'in listening for the other, we listen for ourselves.'

Peace (1997:115) asserts that men can develop new/alternative ways of living: 'Empathy for the oppressed and the ability to imagine yourself in another person's position can be a powerful motivating force for the relinquishing oppressor roles.' According to Ackermann (1998:83), the process of relinquishing the oppressor roles creates fear. Ackermann (1998:83) proposes that the oppressors need healing from the 'self-inflicted wounds of being oppressors'. Such a healing praxis, according to Ackermann, emerges from the oppressed's actions and knowledges (in this case the young people at Faure and our getting to know the effects of violence, poverty and oppression on them), and also from 'those who have privilege and power, provided they too understand its genesis in the hope for restored creation and are willing to hear the pain of the suffering of "the other" and act in response' (in this case, Coenrie by really listening and acting in a new way). I think the 'healing process' should be supported by constant critical inquiry and reflection on one's actions and understandings resulting in change.

4.2.1 Change can be painful and enriching

The change that I saw in Coenrie, was for me as his wife, sometimes very painful to watch. I could see that it was difficult for him to admit that he had been privileged by apartheid and that he could no longer support the ideologies and practices of oppression.

As researcher/ pastoral therapist, it was also difficult to decide whether or not to include Coenrie's voice in this research, because we could be exposed to much criticism – from other researchers as well as our family. Some steps may be seen by some as too insignificant and by others as too difficult to grasp.

Despite this, I agree with Cladinin and Connely (1994:418):

> Therefore, difficult as it may be to tell a story, the more difficult but important task in narrative is the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change.

We therefore took the step of reflecting on our own learning and transformation. Welch (1991:68) suggests: 'Such action requires immense daring and enables deep joy.' She describes courage and risk- taking as a 'decision to care and act although there are no guarantees of success' (Welch 1991:68).

Accepting the gift from the young people at Faure means that Coenrie and I must keep watch over our gift (Derrida 1997:147) by reflecting on and taking responsibility for our actions and change (Welch 1990:23).

4.2.2   Change through interaction with the environment

In this study, I use the word 'environment' to describe the social context in which we live. This context or environment includes people and the relationship we have with people. Anderson & Goolishian (1992:26) suggests that: 'People live, and understand their living, through socially constructed narrative realities that give meaning and organisation to their experience.' Through conversations and language, certain meanings/knowledges become privileged above others (dominant discourses) in our social environment. For example, in most social environments, '[m]en's activity was accepted or became accepted as superior activity' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:42), resulting in their withdrawal from their environment.

Men, however, need not conform to the dominant discourses around being a man. White (1992:41) suggests that men can, through interaction with their environment (people and relationships), create 'new ways of living'. White (1992:41) goes further. He suggests that when men create an alternative ways of being for themselves, '[t]hese personal narratives are not reflections of lives as they are lived, but narratives that are actually constitutive of life; they are not stories about life, but stories that have real effect in the shaping of lives and relationships.' Coenrie's 'environment' includes the people he come into contact with every day and even those he has only come to know through our conversations (the young people at Faure).

Next, Coenrie shares his 'personal narrative' and explains how he was touched by my work at Faure:

Helene: What about the work at Faure, the 'news', the collaboration, the creating of a family, the creating of a community, that Liezel did, had an effect on your life?

Coenrie: One thing that was an experience for me, was to realise and admit that the children at Faure are children just like any children I know. Maybe they have experienced more pain in their young lives and were stuck in a place they did not want to be, but they are people...yes!

Welch (1990:138) says that we are shaped by our particular histories that also have an effect on other communities. Learning from and with those people who are shaped by other histories and traditions helps to avoid 'totalitarianism'.
Like in the tale of the Emperor's clothes, reflecting on the limitations of our vision of other people, caused Coenrie and I, to become 'aware of our nakedness – ethical, moral and fatal – clothed as we are in our own skin' (Welch:44-45).

For Coenrie and myself, becoming aware was the beginning of the process of challenging those value systems in our lives that lead to ideas of difference and separation (definitions of the 'other' – Welch 1990:139) and of changing our practices so as to become inclusive of all people. Welch (1990:140) says that in the process, we do not emerge as the 'same' people. We are changed and our changed practices lead to reformed practices which lead to the dismantling of oppressive systems and practices.

4.3   'Bridges' that can help men to create new ways of living

Patterson (1991:42) says that men need help to create alternative ways of living: 'men need bridges to help them...which are structurally supporting, and which help a man to dig deep into himself to find a different way of being.'

Raising his consciousness regarding 'taken-for-granted' ideas in his history and tradition, was a bridge that helped Coenrie to create an alternative way of living.

4.3.1 Consciousness raising (see also 2.6) regarding patriarchy

I believe that consciousness raising provides a 'bridge' that can help people to change and to find 'new ways of living' (Reinharz 1992:189-192).

According to bell hooks (2000:7-12), consciousness raising emphasises 'the importance of learning about patriarchy as a system of domination.' Understanding patriarchy as a way to dominate, victimise, exploit and oppress, creates an awareness in both women and men of the need to change patriarchal ways: 'Before women[and men] could change patriarchy we had to change ourselves; we had to raise our consciousness' (hooks 2000:2). Social discourses have the power to influence people to shape their lives and relationships to certain 'truths' (White & Epston 1990:19). These 'truths' are socially constructed through language (see also 2.7.3). According to Weedon (1987:24), the meanings of words are not fixed, but socially constructed within language. This makes meaning subject to change: 'meanings are not permanently fixed but are continuously influenced, constructed and reconstructed over time' (Anderson 1997:42). Meaning is found 'within the context of ongoing relationships' (Gergen 1994:49) and grows from relationships (Gergen 1994:viii-ix). Therefore, people's claimed knowledges and perspectives are discursive – moving between context, culture, language, experience and understanding (Burr 1995:6; Anderson 1997:36).

hooks proposes that consciousness raising regarding patriarchy occurs through dialogue and conversation (2000:8). I believe that through conversations and sometimes even through the argumentative discussions Coenrie and I had, we became aware and our consciousness was raised to a level where we realised that we were brought up and were still 'living' in patriarchal discourses. Through consciousness raising, both Coenrie and I

gained the necessary strength to begin to challenge patriarchal forces and practices at work and at home. We opted to find new/alternative ways of living, as will be shown in the excerpts of the conversation that follow.

Through exposure to and conversations about the pastoral care and counselling at Faure, Coenrie 'became aware' of another world that existed outside of his (our) 'comfort zone'. I see Coenrie's consciousness raising occurring on many 'levels' (see 2.6). For me, these 'levels' form the scaffolds on which participatory action researcher's 'self-reflecting spiral' (McTaggart 1997:34) developed.

4.3.1.1 First level of consciousness raising

As mentioned in Chapter Two, I believe that consciousness raising occurs on many levels. The first level of consciousness raising for Coenrie was when he became aware of how the dominant construction about 'fear' of 'other/strange people', has prevented him from really 'seeing' other people.

Levinas (quoted by Wright, Hughes & Ainley 1986:169) refers to the relation with others as an ethical relation. He says a face-to-face encounter starts such an ethical relationship: 'In a certain way, in its silence, it calls you.' By distinguishing between the 'generalised other' and the 'concrete other', Seyla Benhabib defines a non-relational or relational theory of self. A non-relational theory privileges the theory of self in that 'our relation to the other is governed by the norms of formal equality and reciprocity: each is entitled to expect and to assume from us what we can expect or assume from him or her. The norms of our interactions are primarily and institutional ones' (Benhabib 1987:87).

In Coenrie's life, this non-relational approach created 'fear' in which 'strangers' were viewed as 'generalised others'. Although he did not come face-to-face with many of the people at Faure, the stories which I shared with him from Faure challenged his definition of the 'other' (Welch 1990:139). He began to challenge his limited vision of viewing people as 'generalised others'

and began to see people as 'concrete others' (Benhabib 1990:346). The 'concrete other' is a person with a face, a history, values and suffering. The 'concrete other' are those young people at Faure that Coenrie refers to when he says: 'children at Faure are just as any other children I know' (4.1.2).

Coenrie: Through Liezel's work at Faure, I have learned a lot of things. I have learned to overcome the fear of the unknown. I think it must have taken a lot of guts from Liezel to go and work at a place such as Faure, because it is totally outside our 'comfort zone'.

The feedback about the children at Faure, which Liezel brought to our home, made them a reality in my life. I learned not to judge them but to acknowledge their rights as human beings and as children.

I believe that a 'comfort zone' can entrench and sustain hurtful discourses such as patriarchy. Patriarchy (see also Chapter 2) is a discourse that devalues women and children because they are mostly seen as 'generalised others'. Couture (2000:111) says that by challenging these beliefs, we can 'make institutional and behavioural changes that improve children's and women's status'. Awareness about and acknowledging the rights of women and children (see also Chapter 2), encouraged Coenrie to 'become different'. Welch (1990:140) says that when 'we become accountable for the limits of our vision and the damage caused by the violation of those limits, we become a different community.' In the light of becoming aware and acknowledging the rights of humans, Coenrie's attitude and practices began to expand to other communities, such as his workplace, the children in our cellgroup and the women in his prayer group.

4.3.1.2   Second level of consciousness raising

Another level of consciousness raising for Coenrie came in his workplace. He began to realise that the dominant discourse around being a 'conventional' engineer, could prevent a person from eximining his actions and relationships at work. In the conversation with Helene, Coenrie points out that he does not want to be a 'conventional' engineer if that means that he does not respect people and their opinions.

The corporate environment, with its 'rules and regulations', demands that 'conventional' engineers act in the best interest of the company and of the project and thus give less attention to the possible (negative) effect which their actions might have on relationships. In fact, giving orders and demanding production are seen as preferable behaviour for most engineers and for the people working under them.

According to Foucault (1980:81-82), discourses containing 'subjugated knowledges' exist, but are 'buried' or 'disguised' by other (stronger) discourses. For me, Foucault's idea about 'subjugated knowledges' resonates with Coenrie not wanting to be a 'conventional' engineer (dominant/strong discourse). The dominant/strong discourse around 'conventional' engineers prescribes that an engineer should give orders and expect results. Coenrie took a stand against this dominant discourse by preferring rather to consult people about their opinions (unconventional). Seiling (1997:6) proposes that management in organisations should 'go beyond the process of leading through control to acceptance of higher member responsibility for personal behaviours, beliefs, working standards, and actions.'

> **Coenrie:** I am an engineer. I do not think that I am a 'conventional' engineer. I work in a corporate environment.
>
> **Helene:** Coenrie, when you say you are not a conventional engineer, what do you mean by that?
>
> **Coenrie**: I would say most engineers are people who work in a very precise manner. They keep strictly to the rules of convention and work in a theoretical manner. I am more unconventional, in that I tend to think more widely about things and I also do not necessarily always follow the rules. I like to follow my own feelings and I have learned that my gut feelings can be trusted.
>
> **Helene**: Do you think you have built up a reputation of working in an unconventional manner in the place where you work?
>
> **Coenrie:** I believe that a part of my way of doing things unconventionally has to do with my ability to communicate with people on different levels in the organisation. I can communicate with people on the factory floor, as well as people in a management position.

> **Helene:** Is this skill you have to work with people on different levels in an organisation something you have always had, or was it something that developed over time?
>
> **Coenrie:** I do not think I was always aware that I possessed such a skill. It was only during the conversations that Liezel and I had, that I became aware of this ability. People working in a production environment usually see engineers as people who give orders and want something like drawings done as soon as possible. I would never do that. A conventional engineer might do that, but when I want something done, I will go to the person who makes the product, and ask his opinion about the design or drawing and then ask if it will be possible for him/her to make the product.

Coenrie has learned and has chosen to work with people in his workplace in a consulting fashion. Awareness of the 'skill' to consult with people, prepared Coenrie to apply the 'skill' in other areas of his life, such as in his home with his children and with other people he deals with everyday.

4.3.1.3   Third level of consciousness raising

For Coenrie, awareness or consciousness raising regarding respect for people's opinions, had a ripple effect on the lives of our children as well as the lives of other people who crossed his path. Heshusius and Ballard (1996:173) say that through interaction with their environment (people), men can develop 'new ways of knowing' that can also be 'of value to the socio ecological needs of the whole because of the simple realisation that we are those needs and that we are that whole.'

For us, this happened when we realised that caring with people asks that we 'mutually empower one another, not only to cure the ills of our lives, but to proactively create conditions for fullness of life' (Couture 1998:47). The concept of fullness of life demands our participation in building on the skills, powers, experience, knowledge, and talents that people have which are unacknowledged in the power structures' (Hess 1998:60). In our home, I began to see how Coenrie tried to replace anger, shouting and forcing his rules by respect and consulting the opinions of our children. Such 'old' practices were being reviewed and replaced by 'new/alternative' practices

which focused on the care of our children. Coenrie's example of a father and husband, 'doing alternative ways of living', will hopefully build on an ethic of care in our children's lives.

4.4   New practices versus old practices

Choosing 'new/alternative' ways of living, can create an awareness within men to look critically at the effect that accepted social discourses have on their actions or practices (Reinharz). As mentioned before, when new practices stand against old practices, the benefit is seen in many people's lives. In this research, the benefits of Coenrie's new/alternative practices is visible: firstly in our relationship (marriage); secondly, in his relationship with children (especially our son, Heinie); thirdly, in the way he now relates to other people.

What follows, are reflections on how new/alternative practices stand against old practices and how the transformation of old practices into new/alternative practices has occurred in Coenrie's life.

4.4.1   Reflecting on relatedness versus separation

Social discourses force men to function independently from other people and can prevent men from thinking collectively. Trusting people and their opinions is frequently viewed as a 'weakness'. Smith (1992:22) reckons that learning to work in partnership with others can bring new freedom for men in relationships:

> There can be an encouragement for men to start to think collectively. Also, to be able to allow feelings of powerlessness or inadequacy in relationships...can be very freeing for men, and [can]prevent an escalation of control and alienation.

As I mentioned in Chapter Three, I sometimes struggled to understand the young people at Faure. During therapy and in conversations, I found that I was trying to 'understand' their problems from my own perceptions and background, without questioning the effects of classism and racism within

their context. For example, I thought that I could do pastoral care and counselling with 'pre-planned' questions and 'pre-known' ideas. I would ask the young people questions about violence and drug abuse, but my questions would mostly go unanswered. My frustrations around not finding an answer to my questions made me ask what I was doing wrong.

While I was doing the research at Faure, I discussed with Coenrie that I thought I was not 'getting through' to the young people. Our conversations made me realise that contrary to a contextual and feminist praxis, I was talking 'to' them and not talking 'with' them. I decided to use contextual and feminist ideas. I also adopted Anderson and Goolishian's (1992:25-39) that 'the client is the expert' and 'a not-knowing' approach. These approaches helped to put me as pastoral therapist in a position of 'being informed' by the young people about their lives. I tried to listen to the young people's explanations from a 'not knowing' position. Such an act requires what Couture (1998:27) calls a 'creative act of imagination' in that it is 'an artistic practice which simultaneously engages human gifts, meets human needs, and witnesses to a vision of life in which care of persons... is central.'

Coenrie related to me how he preferred to consult people about their opinions in his workplace. Our conversations made Coenrie realise that everybody in his workplace had to live with the consequences of decisions that *he* made and that it was perhaps better to consult *with* people around decisions rather than *for* them. Our discussions regarding the contextual and feminist pastoral care and counselling at Faure resulted in him changing his management style to that of participation and collaboration (see 4.1.2.2)

> **Helene:** Coenrie, would you say you consult people in your workplace about their opinions?
>
> **Coenrie:** Yes, definitely. I think you have to make sure that other people can also live with the things you do – you have to take other people into account in your workplace. I have found that people like to be asked about their opinions.

4.4.2 **Reflecting on new parenting practices versus patriarchy**

Coenrie's awareness that relationships with people are important stands against the patriarchal discourse of power and dominance. Exposing the dominating and discriminating practices of patriarchy, such as women and children being men's possessions (see Chapter 2), helped Coenrie to see and to do parenting practices in a different way. Reflecting on this transformation that took place, Helene asked Coenrie the following:

> **Helene:** Do you think relationships with people have become important to you?
>
> **Coenrie:** Relationships have become very important to me. For example, with our first two children, I was very strict about rules and that they should follow my rules. I was raised with the idea that children should be obedient to their parents. I think the process of change I have gone through and am still going through, opened up something for me. I realised that children have opinions and that I should give them a chance to state their opinion. I should give them a chance to say how things work for them. A breakthrough came for me last year when, after a conversation that Liezel and I had, I realised that children have rights!
>
> **Helene:** Can you explain more?
>
> **Coenrie:** I will use an example to explain. Our son, Heinie, did not want to play rugby for the school. He told us that he did not like the physical side of rugby. One day, the headmaster of the school phoned me and asked me if Heinie could play rugby for an important match for the school. That afternoon, I told Heinie that he was going to play rugby for the school. He cried and told me that he did not want to play, but I did not want to listen to him and I forced him to play. During the match, there was chaos on the field and the children lost the game by far. Afterwards, I realised that my child had been humiliated, not only by losing

the game, but also by me forcing him to play a game he did not want to play. I went to Heinie and asked him to forgive me for forcing him play and not listening to him. I also went to the headmaster and told him that I realised I have violated my child's rights. Actually, I have taken my child's rights away by forcing him to do something he did not want to do and listening to him.

Helene: Did the fact that you asked Heinie to forgive you for the mistake you had made by not giving him a voice and not honouring his opinion, change you relationship with one another?

Coenrie: I do not think the one incident made all the difference, but I can say that our relationship has improved dramatically over the last two years. I was not much 'there' for him when he grew up. I worked long hours and I did not invest in our relationship. I think my approach towards fatherhood and relationships during the past two years has changed and the change in me has contributed to the building of a father-son relationship between Heinie and me – a relationship that I treasure!

Heshusius and Ballard (1996:171-172) propose that: 'Postmechanistic and postpatriarchal concepts of knowing involve the reimagining of self, not just of the other.' For me, this is an ongoing process which can only occur through 'intimate relatedness and attention' to the other. When we enter into such a 'consciousness of participation' (see 1.2.2), the concerns of the self have been let go of and total attentiveness can occur (Heshusius 1994:16; 1995:121). Such 'self-other' relationships develop 'new ways of care and love', which stand against the masked practices of power fostered in most adult societies, such as having no regard for the equal worth of children as 'fully human' (see 2.6 & 4.3.3). Coenrie's next words imply that he had to let go of all egocentric agendas and old established patriarchal practices in his relationship with Heinie:

Helene: Are you surprised by your relationship with your son?

Coenrie: Yes. You know, this is a process that does not stop. I have to work on our relationship. It is so easy to fall back into the old pattern of enforcing my rules.

I try, however, to reflect on our conversations, and then go back to him when I think something is wrong, asking Heinie if we could talk about it. Heinie responds usually in a positive manner. I can almost say that the 'recovering period' when something goes wrong, is much shorter.

Weingarten (1994:86) says that psychological theories have 'proven' that mothers are responsible for the psychological welfair of their children. Coenrie and I also believed that it was my responsibility and duty as a mother to 'nurse' the children after a shouting match with their father. My studies and the research at Faure, however, made us both realise that our children's well-being required an equal partnership of responsibilities. This meant a 'home' where our children would be seen as people of equal worth, who were recognised for themselves and listened to, and who were supported and loved by both of us. During the past few years, I have seen that Coenrie has become a caring father, who is committed to transforming old practices of indifference towards children into the kind of relationship that can make his children feel 'at home'.

4.4.3 Reflecting on the equal worth of children as human beings versus indifference towards children

The Igbu people of Nigeria use the word 'ginekanwa' which means: What is greater than a child? The question implies the answer: There is nothing greater than a child.

Coenrie and I did not grow up with the idea that there was nothing greater than children or young people. Rather, we grew up with the idea that children did not have the knowledge to do or to say the 'right things'. In our historically patriarchal history, we had to 'Honour your father and mother, so that you may

live a long time in the land I am giving you' (Exodus 20:12). This was interpreted in such a way that asking questions or disagreeing about something was seen as a sign of disrespect and disobedience which had to be corrected or punished. Children and young people should listen to their parents and not cause trouble. 'If you don't punish your son, you don't love him. If you do love him, you will correct him' (Proverbs 13:24).

Steyn (2001:44) asserts that patriarchal discourse has been kept alive by theology and the church for a long time: 'The church preached patriarchy and lived patriarchy – for a very long time the positions of power were reserved for men, and women and children were seen but not heard at all.' (See also patriarchy in Chapter 2).

In the New Testament, Jesus treated people as having equal worth. Women and children were respected by him (see Chapter 2, 'who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'). Jesus' message is that all people are equal and righteous before God. I wonder where we stand today on the issue of equal worth regarding children? Is it possible that children and young people can be consulted on their ideas on equality? Lopston and Stace (quoted in Freedman, Epston &Lobovits1997:8) say that:

> As children are in a more malleable stage of development compared with adults, it is incumbent upon us that we exercise responsibility regarding the weight of our influence in shaping children's lives and the narratives by which they come to describe their lives. They too, must be allowed to speak as subjects who have expertise about their own lives, rather than be spoken about as objects who are acted upon by others.

Allowing our son, Heinie, to speak about issues in his life (as the expert of his life), had an effect on how Coenrie regards other children. He started inviting the children of our cellgroup of the church to participate in conversations with us (adults) about good parenting practices. Kotzé (2002:18) calls this a 'participatory ethics' which 'requires an ethical consciousness situated in the participation of all, especially those who are usually marginalized and

silenced....Those who have a voice and power have an ethical obligation to use the privilege of their knowledge/power to ensure participation with the marginalized and silenced to listen to them, but not to decide for them, and to engage in participatory solidarity with them.' I think that participation/communication with children and hearing them voice their opinion about such issues - such as good parenting - stand against the discourse of indifference towards children as mentioned in Chapter Two.

Helene:	Liezel also mentioned that you, as the leader of your cellgroup at church, invite the children in your cellgroup to share their problems and ideas with the adults in the group. It sounds as if you really invite the children to help you to be good parents to them?
Coenrie:	Yes. We, as adults, invite the children to talk to us about our relationship with them. It was a strange idea in the beginning for both the adults and children, but by the third or forth try, we got the conversation going, and it became easier. By that time, the children knew they could trust us, also as parents. It was a great challenge!
Helene:	What about the conversations with the children were challenging to you?
Coenrie:	I experience children as very unpredictable. Children are not so 'moulded' as adults are. Children also do not react as we would expect them to. They talk straight when you make the time to ask them and they will tell you when they do not agree with something you say. I think children's thoughts are not so blemished and dusted as most adult's thoughts are.

Coenrie's words resonate with Davies' (1996:12) idea of 'binary divisions between people (such as male/female, white/black, and heterosexual/homosexual). It shows that they are not 'natural' divisions, but constructed ones. It further indicates how these binary divisions systematically disadvantage one half of each binary.'

Sevenhuijsen (1998:19) asserts that it is the adults' responsibility to care for the young people in such a way that we 'want to break with the patterns of domination that have surrounded caring activities and moral feelings for too long and to establish new modes of being "truly moral". For me, such a 'morality' involves finding ways to do pastoral care and counselling *with* children and young people, and not *about* them. Adults need to give young people a chance to speak and should listen to what they have to say. Pastoral care with young people should be about entering into a 'participatory relatedness' (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:173) and connectedness where the boundaries of binary and oppositional life are merged (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:172).

4.4.4 Reflecting on connectedness versus control

Heshusius (1994:17) explains that 'one does not come to knowledge by separation': rather, 'we become part of one another's stories and we are changed' (Ackermann 1996:48). In this regard, Weingarten (1991:289) writes:

> In the social constructionist view, the experience of self exists in the ongoing interchange with others...the self continually creates itself through narratives that include other people who are reciprocally woven into these narratives.

Anderson and Goolishian (1992:28) say that: 'We live in and through the narrative identities that we develop in conversations with one another. The skill of the therapist is the expertise to participate in this process. Our "self" is always changing.' As researcher/pastoral therapist, I tried to recognise that I could not fully understand the experience of other people, especially the people from different cultures (in this research, the young people at Faure). During the process of challenging the discourses of classism and racism, the question I asked myself the question: How can I become more accountable for the effects of my '(mis)understandings and actions' (Freedman & Combs 1996:18). This I did as a way of witnessing (see Chapter 2).
Welch (1990:139) says that:

> Particular stories call us to accountability...they call those of us who are...complicit in structures of control to join in resistance and transformation.

Doing research, pastoral care and counselling at Faure, I was witness (see Chapter 2) to and confronted by issues such as violence, race, gender and others, as mentioned in Chapter One, Two and Three. These issues challenged me to take a position when engaging with the young people at the centre. Ethically, this position meant that I had to commit to transformation, positioning myself on the side of these young people and against oppressive or exploitative discourses and practices. What I learned about myself changed me both as a researcher (Reinharz 1992:194) and as a person. I believe that such a personal change could only have occurred through a 'self-other' (Heshusius 1994:16) connectedness with the young people at Faure.

White (1997:143) says that one way for therapists/researchers to acknowledge the ripple effect that their work has had on their lives is by 'taking-it-back' practices. He says that taking-it-back practices are not about an 'expression of graciousness' (1997:145) (see also 4.1), but rather 'about the performance of an acknowledgement of what this work brings to the life of the therapist. Taking-it-back practices add to a rich description of all the participants in the research process. (see Chapter 1, Conclusion – Taking the research back to Faure).The effect that the work at Faure had on changing me, was noticed by Coenrie and also had an effect on his life:

Coenrie: For me, the most amazing thing was how Liezel was changed through the work she did at Faure. She began to look at life with a postmodern approach, and we began to talk about these things. I became so interested, that my 'paradigm' also began to 'shift'.

Helene: How did your 'paradigm shift', as you say?

Coenrie: When Liezel and I began to talk about postmodern ideas, I realised that I had not really thought much about people and my relationship with people before.

A postmodern approach has resulted in an important shift in focus for both Coenrie and myself. Thomas Kuhn (1970) played an important part in the understanding of the shifting of knowledge, which is now described as postmodernism and poststructuralism (Kotzé 2002:9). Kuhn argues that a paradigm consists of questions and answers (knowledge). When more questions develop and the paradigm can no longer provide answers, a shift to a new paradigm takes place, which can provide possible answers.

Postmodern discourse emphasises diversity and scepticism. All truth claims are doubted equally and post-modern discourse provides new ways of accepting multiple representations of events. Post-modern discourse opened up discussion and conversation between Coenrie and myself when we began to question the notion of a single meaning of reality/truth, especially around the 'truths' that we were raised with in connection to patriarchal discourse.

Postmodernists believe that language constitutes our worlds and realities. As Anderson and Goolishian (1988:378) put it: 'Language does not mirror nature, language creates the nature we know.' They say further that people exist through language and bring forth realities by speaking (1998:371). Hoffman (1992:116) says that knowledge evolves through language and takes shape in the 'common world '. Deconstruction provides 'a means of examining the way language operates below our everyday level of awareness to create meaning' (Hare-Mustin & Maracek 1988:460). Morgan (2000:26) takes it further when she defines deconstruction as '[t]he pulling apart and examining of 'taken for granted truths.' By deconstructing our conversations, Coenrie and I began to examine our ideas and practices: we defined them; 'pulled them apart' and traced their history. Deconstruction helped us to then challenge oppressive and destructive discourses which did not include relationships with other people in our lives, and opened up new 'ideas, thoughts and ways of living' (Morgan 2000:26), as Coenrie explains below:

Helene: So, what did you think about people and relationships with
             people previously?
Coenrie: People were not important to me. I used people and people

used me.

Feminist theology emphasises the importance of praxis as the starting point for theology. According to Ackermann (1990:30), such praxis reflects the commonwealth of God, which includes justice, love, freedom and peace. The commonwealth of God thus calls for a practice which is just, promotes freedom and leads to peace and wholeness. Feminist theology is therefore also contextual in that it examines 'whether political, social, economical and familial institutions reflect the values of the commonwealth of God in the present context' (Ackermann 1990:23). Cozad Neuger (1999:117) suggests that the deconstruction of power arrangements is a relational activity where people's humanity as created in the image of God is affirmed as equal (Ackermann 1990:15). Van Schalkwyk (quoted in Niehaus 2001:36) says that 'in a context of relationality, people can become fully human and can reflect on the image of a relational God.' For Ackermann (1996:45) these relationships are reciprocal in nature and require accountability in the form of acute awareness and sensibility to injustice. '[O]ur accountability is ultimately tested in the reality of the well-being of all' Ackermann (1996:45). Such wellbeing is grounded in our relationship with God, with one another and with creation. By hearing (listening) and becoming aware of the stories of the young people at Faure, Coenrie was challenged to reshape and to transform old practices in order to find new/alternative practices and ways of living.

According to Candinin and Connely (1994:422), qualitative research not only changes the lives of researchers, but co-researchers are also changed by the research. Because co-researchers have an input and 'an identifiable stake' (Dixon 1999:45) in the process, the participants and the researcher contribute to, and are affected by, the research through the construction of 'intellectual' and 'private' knowledge (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:15). This results in continuous change for both researcher and co-researcher alike through their participation in the research.

Helene: Coenrie, what happened, that changed your thoughts about
            people?

Coenrie: The conversations that Liezel and I had about her work at Faure, challenged me to investigate my ideas about people and helped me to explore new practices and ideas.

One of the social discourses around men in marriage prescribes a style of dominance over women. 'Feminism and feminist theology want to engage in a critique of traditional politics and theology in order to trigger a process of investigation, rethinking, change and ultimate transformation within patriarchal society and religious institutions' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:16).

Feminist theologians, Isherwood and McEwan (1993:108) say that women 'should learn to see their own experiences as normative, learning to value their feelings as good and healthy and not comparing them to a false consciousness measured against a 'norm' which does not accept their experience.' Feminism proposes 'bringing the world into balance, offering a way out of age-old dualisms and discrimination to achieve inclusion and mutuality (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:92). Through honouring the feminist principles of inclusion, connection, interrelationships and partnerships, Coenrie showed his willingness to develop and to work towards a relationship built on trust, rather that on control. Smith (1992:22) refers to 'strength coming through connectedness rather than 'control', or developed through allowing our vulnerability rather than through isolation' and this is what happened for Coenrie:

Helene: Were the conversations that you and Liezel had, different from those you had in your earlier years of marriage?

Coenrie: Yes, definitely! I think Liezel and I work well together. We both like to do things 'differently'. We both like challenges. When we started to talk about postmodern ideas, I realised that we are actually moving on different sides of the same thing. When we started talking about the postmodern concepts, we actually started to 'connect' better. Our relationship has deepened and the tangent-points of our conversations went further than the children or the weather. I think our discussions around people

and relationships, especially, was the part that I have missed in my life. For me, the tangent-points created a 'connectedness' that strengthened our relationship.

Davies (1993:12) states that when we see how power and maleness are constituted in relation to one other, we discover the possibility of 'disrupting old discourses.' According to Davies, 'paths open up for speaking into existence other ways of being which are not organised in terms of binary opposition between male and female.' This process draws attention to a person's preferred way of living (identity). Coenrie's willingness to forfeit control as the 'head of the house' in our relationship, reconnected him to the preferred value of connectedness in our relationship.

Coenrie's attitude of openness and interest in my work at Faure made it easy for me to share with him the steps that the young people at Faure were willing to take towards living an alternative story (Freedman & Combs 1996:237). Smith (1992:18) comments that '[j]ust sharing an experience or simply relating or connecting, is often what women ask for in relationships.' Feminist theology sees 'a world where individuality and integrity are honoured in mutual relating, where life-giving power replaces life-denying power and people are enabled to accept their humanity joyfully (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:134).

4.5   Doing Spirituality

'Christianity has been guilty of a number of historically conditioned discriminations;...and it is still guilty of sexism' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:34). The patriarchal discriminative norms about women as believers, did not simply materialise from thin air: they were socially constructed by male power in theology. Male tradition and power have excluded and silenced women in the church (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:26-30). Within such a cultural and religious context, it can become inevitable that patriarchy would conclude that God approves of men not allowing women to worship and pray with them. The exclusion of women was also Coenrie's experience when he joined an organisation which focuses on Christian businessmen and the

spreading of the Word of God to businessmen. Coenrie explains what happened:

Coenrie: Historically, women were never included in the outreach. About two years ago, I was asked to start a new group for the organisation. The first day the group started, three women wanted to join. This was a major problem for the organisation. The fact that the women were Coloured, was an ever bigger problem. I, as the leader of the group, got instruction from the national board to disband the group immediately.

I started arguing with the board that we had prayed about this group before the group started and that I thought that this was how the group was supposed to look, according to our prayers beforehand, and what I thought God's will was. The board's reaction to my protest was that they decided to cut the group off from the national group South Africa.

Helene: Was this all about the women in the group?

Coenrie: Yes, it was about the women. I must admit that, had this happened to me before I started the process of change, I also perhaps would have quitted. In fact, right at the beginning of the 'struggle', I wondered if I was busy with the 'right' thing.

I remember that Coenrie and I had had many discussions around what was happening to him and the group and what they should do about their exclusion from the national group. I shared some feminist theological reflections with him around whether patriarchal forms of worship - such as excluding women from prayer and Bible study meetings because they 'are evil or can distract men' - were meaningful or meaningless today. By re-examining, re-thinking and re-appraising some of the religious discourses we grew up with, we could begin to think about ways to resist and to transform present structures in Christian Business Men Committee (CBMC).

Against this backdrop, feminist theologians stand for the transformation of patriarchal Christianity. Their vision is 'a new relationship of equals ... enabling everybody to become an agent in his or her own right, with full personhood and autonomy' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:112).

Helene: It must have been a challenge for you to stand up for the people, especially the women, in the group and fight for the existence of the group? What helped you to stand up to this unfairness?

Coenrie: I think the conversations that Liezel and I had around human rights and women's rights in particular, influenced me to stand up to these patriarchal practices such as not to pray with female believers. I think I was perhaps a little bit petulant in this matter. But now, almost two years later, I look back and I see that the struggle was not for nothing. The group has been accepted back into the organisation – the women included. All the conversations and correspondence has led to a name change in the organisation. The organisation's name has been changed to Called to minister Christ in Business. The organisation has also changed its constitution to include businesswomen. Although we are still the only group in CBMC who has women as members, the board now sees us as a new model or arm of the organisation that can develop into a new direction for the future.

Feminist theology seeks 'justice, peace, healing and wholeness for all in partnership' (Ackermann 1991:96). By empowering men and women to become agents in creating a more just society, the position of all people becomes righteous before God. In the Scriptures, the word righteousness proclaims all peoples' 'right standing before God' (Romans 5).

Helene: When you talked about women and standing up for women's rights, the feminist ideas of justice, righteousness and care came to my mind. Do you think that your petulance perhaps came from a sense and desire for justice and righteousness?

Coenrie: Yes, for sure! My reason for being petulant was a desire for righteousness.

Helene: Do you find that your openness to these practices of righteousness help you to stand up for what you believe?

Coenrie: I think these practices strengthened my sense for righteousness and opened it up more for me – it became a familiar companion and had a huge impact on my life.

I believe that when we 'stand up' for people - especially women, children and marginalized people - these practices become a 'doing of spirituality' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:77). Traditionally, theology was done 'from above' (Bosch 1991:423) by and for the privileged. Bosch (1991:423) asserts that contextual theology is 'theology "from below", its main source (apart from Scripture and tradition) is the social sciences, and its main interlocutor the poor or the culturally marginalized.'

Rossouw (1993:903) says that when we do theology in a way that we take into consideration the effects or consequences that our theology has on the lives of other people, we are doing a spirituality (theology) that moves 'from being right to doing right.' This is the spirituality that Coenrie and I are committed to and which we encourage our children to do.

Such a spirituality, which includes respect and, care for others, creates an opportunity to 'meet' God in a different way. '[S]uch care is the practice of theology. Caring with vulnerable children is a means of grace, a vehicle through which God makes God's self known to us and to them. In their care we experience grace, the movement of God in our lives that allows us to give to and receive from others' (Couture 2000:13).

For Coenrie, the process of change that he went through and is still going through, brought about a change in his relationship and experience of God. He began to think of God and his relationship with God in a different way. Through my witnessing about the people at Faure, Coenrie began to 'see' God in them. Couture (2000:50) says that we learn about ourselves and encounter God in humans 'if we are open to it...the presence of God where God is not expected to be found. In the companionship we are likely to see God's grace at work in them and in ourselves, holding us in relation, giving hope where there seems to be none, creating resilience, re-creating tragedy-

torn hearts into hearts of love and forgiveness' (Couture 2000:50). Couture says further that when we care with others, we are transformed (Couture 2000:55).

4.6   Challenging cultural traditions and religious convictions

Bons-Storm (1996:125) asserts that '...dominant theologies cannot claim universal Truth. Dominant theologies are 'particular' and contextual for they are the theologies of the dominant group and its position and interests.' Being brought up in the Reformed and Calvinistic traditions of the Dutch Reformed church, Coenrie thought that man-made traditions and rules were essential in his relationship with God. Our conversations about God and religion opened up 'these certainties [traditions] to the refreshing breezes of curiosity and wonder' (Griffith 1995:127) for him, in which multiple realities and relationships with God evolved. He explains:

Coenrie: I have always thought that the Reformed and Calvinistic traditions in which I was brought up, was religion. I thought that believing in the traditions, was what God expected of me. I realised, however, that the traditions were man-made rules. I realised that the traditions and rules I believed in and fought for, had nothing to do with my relationship with God.

Shawchuck and Heuse (1993:119) suggests that by removing man-made rules and traditions, a more 'open' relationship with God can be established. Such an open relationship with God 'means coming to an interior of complete openness to whatever God may wish to give of God's self to us.'

4.7   Conclusion

In Heshusius and Ballard (1996:43-49), Egon Guba uses 'What happened to me on the road to Damascus' as a way of describing a life-changing experience. He says that some people can be converted on first hearing the 'good news' (as Paul apparently was when he was travelling to Damascus),

while others need longer time. He describes his conversion as a 'labored' process on a difficult road.

I asked Coenrie if something of what Guba describes about his experience resonated in some way for him. He responded by saying that awareness, rather than criticism (as was Guba's experience) contributed to a paradigm shift for him. He agreed with Guba that the road to Damascus was not an easy one, but was nevertheless very enriching of his life. He told me that our conversations helped him to work through and to see dimensions and ideas that were earlier obfuscated by other discourses (as described earlier). He echoes Guba's (1996:49) sentiment:

> While I have not always understood (and sometimes resisted) the challenges she set, the fact that she got ideas churning through my mind has had a major impact. I am a better professional for it.

This chapter concludes the 'gift'. The gift that my work at Faure gave to my family, initiates the process of change in us and transformed it into a spiraling journey into the impossible:

> The gift takes place in a moment, in a moment without time, in which the agents/subjects throws reappropriation to the wind, in an instant of madness in which we know all along that the circle will close over soon enough, that the winds of reasonable expenditure will soon enough send the gift drifting back to the subject. It is not a question of actually falling into a transcendental illusion, of requiring that the gift acquire actual being here below or ideal being above, but rather of being here driven by the gift which is what gets things moving.
>
> (Derrida 1997:146)

Chapter Five consists of a reflection on the researcher journey – of what was learned or gained from this journey.

Chapter 5

'We do not take a trip (journey), a trip takes us'
(Steinbeck 2001:52)

5.1   Introduction

When they describe the research as a journey (trip), feminist researchers are acknowledging the fact that the research can be a complex one during which those people involved in the journey can be changed. This complexity means that 'the typical separation of the process of research from the product of research is eradicated' (Reinharz 1992:213). Heshusius and Ballard (1996:169) propose that we cannot work (or do research) in a 'disembodied' way, where we separate ourselves from people or actions. To do so would : 'be making another journey in the mind only.' We should rather be understanding life (and research) in an embodied way where living, knowing and feeling are inseparable.

For me, one of the most difficult aspects of doing research in an 'embodied' way, involved including my 'feelings' in the research and giving up the idea that our knowledge can be contained by our rational and cognitive faculties. This meant including those parts that did not fit neatly into the research. Bhavnani (1990:143) points out that this 'messiness' in the research reflects the complex realities and views of the therapist/researcher. Frank (1995:109) suggests that '[t]o deny a chaos story is to deny the person telling the story,...until the chaos narrative can be honoured, the world in all its possibilities is being denied.' For this reason, I have included the 'messy' parts of the research journey.

5.1.1 Reflecting on the beginning of the journey

Steinbeck (2001:52) compares a journey to the uniqueness of people - no two are alike. He says further that most of the plans one makes for a journey are fruitless because 'we do not take a trip (journey), a trip takes us.' In this chapter, I will be reflecting on how we did not 'take' this research journey, but

how the research journey 'took' us – the participants as well as the researcher.

Steier (1991) suggests that reflexivity provides the researcher with a way of 'owning up' to the knowledge construction process in the research. Reflexivity also provides inquiry into alternatives that practice could possibly have overlooked or ignored by asking questions like: How did I choose which stories to tell? Or, How do I know I have changed? Or, How do I write about my transformation when I am - and always will be - in the midst of it?

This research project is about people from different contexts/routes, coming 'together' in the research journey. My initial research curiosity focussed on the following question:

> How can understanding the 'culture of violence' at Faure youth centre help the young people there to find alternative ways to stand against violence and crime?

My aim was the following in this regard:

- to develop caring practices and an atmosphere of non-violence between the young people living in the centre
- to co-author creative ways of doing narrative pastoral therapy by creating alternative 'ways of living'

Changing and unforeseen circumstances at Faure took the research on a different route. Subsequently I changed my research question to the following:

> How did the research and pastoral care at Faure touch aspects of my life?

The change of the research question also shifted my research aims to focus on:

- how the research process becomes part of the product
- how the researcher was changed in the process
- how new voices and experiences emerged in the research as a result of discovery and change. For example, the voice of my husband, Coenrie.

In view of these aims, I would like to reflect on the multiple aspects of my life that were touched during and after the therapy-as-research process. First, I will reflect on the pastoral care and counselling I did at Faure and then on the gift that my work at Faure returned to my family.

5.1.2 The involvement of the researcher as a person

Reinharz (1992:258) says that feminist research is different from mainstream research in that it recognises the researcher's personal experience as a valuable asset to research. The result is that 'Feminist research then reads as partly informal, engagingly personal, and even confessional' (Reinharz 1992:259). In this research project, I included myself as a person in the research, using my own voice to describe the research process as a 'lived experience'. By including myself as a person in the research, I was able to reflect on what I have learned in the process. For me, the inclusion of my personal experience as researcher and pastoral therapist in this project violates the conventional research expectations that the researcher should be detached, objective or neutral. In this research, I acknowledge my position as a researcher who did not try to hide myself by standing 'apart' from the research, but I took the step of exploring my own experience:

> The work of inquiry in which I am engaged proceeds by taking this experience of mine, ... and asking how it is organised, how it is determined, what the social relations are which generate it.
> (Smith, quoted in Reinharz 1992:259)

As I mentioned in Chapter One, I was careful and perhaps scared (see chapter 4) to step out of my 'comfortable world' as a white, middle class (blond) woman into the world of struggle and pain which at that time characterised Faure Reformatory School for girls. Perhaps my 'fear' had more to do with what Ackermann (1998:90) calls a 'sleep of chosen ignorance ... to face the grim and exacting reality of our history and legacies of apartheid' as white South Africans.

Levine (quoted in Ackermann 1998:90) says: 'The beginning of the path of healing is the end of life lived'. Ackermann (1998:90) describes a 'life unlived' as 'a life barren of self-reflection, which is narcissistic and disconnected from people, particularly those who are 'different'. She proposes that healing starts with awareness. 'Awareness is the willingness to hear, to see, to feel.' I relate to Kotzé's (2002:5) 'ethic of awareness' in that I believe that such an awareness guided me as pastoral therapist in Faure to let go of an 'objective' mode of consciousness. In what follows, I will explain this way of working and thinking in my work at Faure Youth Centre.

5.2   Pastoral praxis is an ethical-political process

Pastoral praxis challenged me to take seriously the idea that Pastoral care and counselling at Faure was about participation and about relating to the young people in a 'self-other' relationship of moment-to-moment living.

> Within such a participatory consciousness, knowledge itself is quite different from knowledge discovered as the product of applying our theories to uncover an understanding of what 'is'. It is an ethical-political process, co-constructed in the course of relating with others in a specific context or situation, at a specific moment in time.
>
> (Kotzé 2002:6)

Kotzé adds that the ethical-political process of creating knowledge implies power/knowledge practices or ethics. My commitment to ethical-political practices in my counselling and care with the young people at Faure changed me and my practice, as well as my family (especially my husband Coenrie). For example, the sharing of stories from Faure with my husband, led towards a transformation in him and some of his practices. So too, as I listened to the girls' stories my understanding of pastoral praxis was challenged. I realised that my privileges and power as white, Afrikaner woman could distance me from standing with these young people. It could become 'power over' rather than 'power with'. Poling (1991:33) warns us of the dangers of the abuse of

power, but also offers a way forward for pastoral praxis creating new communities:

> Power in its ideal form is the energy of life itself as it is organised into the relational web that unites us all. This primal relational power is distorted through humanity by individuals and societies in the abuse of power and is the cause of much human suffering. Through resistance to the abuse of power and the work of and love in Jesus Christ, the human spirit is made resilient. We search for the resilient hope of the human spirit, which can resist abuse and create new communities for the restoration of communion and freedom of the soul, others, and God.

5.2.1 Challenging dominant ideas

Talking about the role of power, I grew up in a culture with the idea (and language) that adults had all the knowledge/power and children were only to be seen in connection to a developmental phases. Before children could be heard, they had to develop physically and psychologically before they were considered to be fit to be declared 'adults'. I grew up learning not to question my parents' or any other adult's behaviour or knowledge. In fact, I can remember my questions were answered with: ' you will not understand now (while I was still young), but some day, when you are an adult, you will understand everything.' I was forced to accept that my parents and most adults knew what was best for me. I was expected be a 'good' young person and not to cause any trouble. Institutions such as the church and school also enforced these dominant ideas and values about adult knowledge and authority by subscribing to patriarchal or power practices. Pattison (1994:248) states that: 'like other patriarchal institutions, religion has made women invisible, both historically and in the contemporary world. While absorbing women's energy over the centuries, it has encouraged women to take an inferior social place.'

5.2.2 Reflecting on a "healing" praxis

I remember that, as a young person, I always felt that my ideas and feelings were in conflict with the dominant view of centering adult knowledge. These practices excluded me as a young person from the conversation and denied

me the opportunity to express my opinions. The result was that most of the time I felt awkward ('disempowered') in expressing myself, because I felt that I 'did not fit'. Consequently, I fell silent, because I did not think I had anything of worth to say and I feared that when I would say something, it would be dismissed or belittled. Foucault (1980) claims that those individuals (in this case, adults) who have knowledge or claims to knowledge about the 'truth', hold a position of authority and power.

Through the process of 'genealogy' (Foucault 1980:85), Foucault argues that subjugated knowledges (unqualified, low ranking knowledges of struggle) can be reactivated. Using Foucaults' description, one of the genealogies in this research was to give voice to the knowledges of the young people at Faure. As pastoral therapist, I tried to create possibilities for their subjugated (local) knowledges to be heard in therapy and in group discussions, because I believe that the division between adulthood and childhood has led and is still leading to the subordination of children: they do not have a voice, nor are their knowledges heard.

Cochrane (2001:74) insists that 'the other's voice should be heard.' By this he means the other who is 'at least not the self ... the other at least means that it is their context, as much as one's own, that counts.' Elaine Graham (1996:206) describes authentic pastoral practice as 'that which draws us into encounter with the "other", towards a deeper understanding of our own identity - i– - relation.' Thus, my pastoral praxis was shaped by the desire to create a safe place for the voices to be 'heard'. A contextual approach in practical theology allows for diverse expressions and different voices to emerge. Consequently this study became a forum for including different voices - such as the voices of the young people at Faure, my husband, Coenrie, as well as my own. These voices reflect on the experience of the 'others' (Ackermann 1998:79) - the 'reaching out across differences to 'the other' (Ackermann 1998:91) which in this study, were the people at Faure youth centre. Ackermann (1998:79) adds that practical theology should look critically at the inability to deal with the realities of the lives of women, children and the poor. Reflecting on the pastoral work at Faure, I had to change my

approach once I was confronted with the 'realities' of the challenges facing the young people there. But, 'such a process is not about a simple reversal of roles in the hierarchical sense. It is an offering of vulnerability in trust to each other, so that the pain of injustice can be transformed' (Tamsese & Waldegrave 1996:42). Isherwood and McEwan (1996:184) reminds us that 'transforming injustice' is part of the 'praxis' of feminist theology. Our 'praxis' is 'linked' with the commandment to love and the demands for justice, and becomes the attempt to live the gospel by sharing in the lives and the struggles of the poor and by striving to bring the changes needed to eliminate such suffering and to liberate them.'

How can such a theology further the cause of healing in our society?

5.2.3 Accountability

Ackermann (1998:91) says an important step in the healing process involves the acceptance of accountability. Although I can plead that 'I did not know' or nor did I directly take part in practices of oppression and apartheid in South Africa, Rich (quoted in Ackermann 1998:90) insists that '[We] are born innocent and accountable.' This means that even though I did not choose to be born as a white South African, I have benefited nevertheless from the behaviour and assumptions of the group to whom I belong. I am therefore not excused from not knowing. I am accountable to our different communities, because I chose to know or not to know (Ackermann 1998:91). Zuber-Skerrit (1996:5) says that 'accountability is about building trust with the group with whom trust has been broken.' I chose to reach out to and build trust with the young people at Faure. I believe that the task of theology is to build trust in order to act collaborately in the ongoing process of action and reflection.

5.2.4 Vulnerability and active involvement

As pastoral therapist, I sought collaboration with the young people by being prepared to be vulnerable yet actively involved in their lives. To explain this position, I will use an example. The Faure Youth Centre context can be

compared to a prison. The young people are 'locked up' in the facility and kept under 'guard' most of the time. I tried to show my vulnerability and active involvement with the young people at Faure by not asking for master-keys to enable me to get through to the different sectors of the centre – a privilege which is a possibility for staff members. Instead, I chose to do the following: I 'waited in line to be taken through the gates' by the security personnel just as the young people were. This is a small step but significant: I chose not to use my privilege and status as a pastoral therapist to allow me to be treated differently than the participants in the research.

According to White (1995:166), the implications of accountability and vulnerability is the addressing of power differences between people. He goes on to add that regardless of how committed we are to equality in viewing therapy/research as a two-way process, power difference is the one thing that cannot be erased. (see 2.11 & 2.12). The challenge was for me – who is privileged and have power - to address this power difference in some way. Practically, this meant that I tried to ensure participation with the young people in what Heshusius & Ballard (1996:133-134) describes as a participatory consciousness: '[w]hen the self and the other are seen as belonging to the same consciousness'. (see Chapter 1). But what did such a participatory conscious awareness look like?

5.2.5 Awareness of power

Awareness about power difference required me as pastoral therapist and researcher to be sensitive in my relationship with the young people at the centre. Rich (quoted in Ackermann 1998:91) says that 'We are bound in relationships that claim responses, that make us accountable and, in our very accountability, bonds of relationship are forged, strengthened and expanded.' I think my initial research curiosity about the atmosphere/culture of violence and crime in the youth centre was a result of being sensitive to power and power difference in the centre. I heard stories of how hitting and hurting each other, cursing, stealing and using drugs had become the dominant story of the lives of the young people at Faure. Conversations were a way of exposing

and addressing these issues. Elaine Graham (1996:113) reminds us of the important resource which narrative provides for pastoral theology:

> The pastoral function of telling stories, whether understood as a general human story or the particular revelation of the Christian story, defines the shape of the community and helps locate individual meaning and identity; thus it also implies certain kinds of values, commitments concerning the nature of truth and knowledge.

Through conversations and through listening to their stories, I realised that the young people had much wisdom to offer to each other . Basson (2001:89) says: 'Remaining connected to the local knowledges of children is an important aspect of power and knowledge sharing. I relinquished concerns about *my* self and instead considered the nature of the *other*.' This is how Heshusius (1995:121) refers to the attitude of 'a participatory mode of consciousness' (see 1.2.2). Adult-child distance disappears when we as adults realise that children can contribute far more than we realise. They have the 'know how' regarding their own lives (White 2000:22) at their fingertips that we as adults often do not have. The 'know how' that came out in conversations with the young people at Faure as well as with my own children, often surprised me and I came to appreciate its worth.

Through hearing their stories, I found that I was being changed. Ackermann (1996:48) draws our attention to the way that this happens: 'Hearing and engaging in improved reflections with the life stories of those who have been oppressed has the potential to change and enlarge the selves of the privileged hearts. But we do not only hear others' stories. We have our own stories to tell. If these stories intersect, they change....It is only when hearing and telling stories....a process of openness, vulnerability and neutral engagement, that alienations of class, race and gender can be challenged.'

5.2.6 Reflecting on nature as healing

Using Heshusius' (1995) idea of 'participatory consciousness', I tried to listen to the young people's voices while doing therapy/research. By acknowledging

and honouring their contributions to the research process, I shared co-authorship in the finding of alternative ways of living with them.

So, for example, it was my task to find and create a context in which the young people could come together and talk about issues such as violence and crime. During our conversations, most of the young people expressed their desire to 'get out' of the centre. Some asked me if I could take them away for a week-end. Reacting on their desire to 'get out' of the centre, I suggested a physical nature adventure 'trip' to them and the personnel at Faure.

Using the ideas of Aileen Cheshire and Dorothea Lewis (Dulwich Centre Newsletter 1996) on 'adventure-based therapy', I thought that nature could provide a possible context to come together, to share and to talk about issues such as violence and crime. The idea was embraced with enthusiasm and expectation by both the young people and personnel at the centre.

Clinebell (1993:13) says that the 'alienation from nature' is one of the possible causes of 'violent behaviour toward nature, toward our bodies, and toward others perceived as 'wild'''. A willingness to share and open oneself to be nurtured by people and nature, should be the focus of a holistic, therapeutic approach. I thought that by inviting discussions and sharing experiences in some natural setting, the young people at Faure would be given an opportunity to be in nature and that the experience would enable them to discover a source of healing and growth.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances (as discussed in Chapter 3), this trip never materialised. In reflection, I was very disappointed that the adventure trip did not take place, but I also realised that the circumstances were not ideal at the time of the transition the Youth Centre were going through (for the transition from a reformatory to a Youth Centre – see Chapter 3).

5.3   Caring despite disappointment

Encountering discouragement and disappointment such as that mentioned above did not put a damper on my commitment to practising a 'caring solidarity' (Sevenhuijsen 1998:147). I made the decision to stand with the people of Faure and to take (other) action in the face of the difficult circumstances. Even though circumstances at Faure changed, I stood by my 'long-term commitment' (see 3.4) to walk the path of caring with them. Isherwood and McEwan (1996:203) reminds us that the ethics of care involves the willingness to become embedded in a network of relationships, in which 'individuals define themselves as connected in relation to others, they understand their relationships as response to another on his or her own terms.' Such care involves risk; it also involves allowing oneself to feel another's pain – a vulnerability which Welch (quoted by Kotzé 2002:18) suggests can have transformative power. This ethic of care is also at the centre of the 'spirituality of risk, courage and hope...(which) is at the heart of the human struggle for the "mending of creation" (Ackermann 1996:33).

5.3.1   Finding resources in multi-storied conversations

Another 'theme' that was very prominent in my conversations with the young people was their longing to 'belong'. They shared many stories of their involvement with gangs and expressed the sense of belonging that they experienced through their involvement with gangs. White (2000:41) says that: 'It is in the space provided in the context of double- or multi-storied conversations that people often find new opportunities to speak of the effects of whatever it is that they have trouble with.' He adds that double- or multi-storied conversations help people to challenge negative accounts of their identity.

Most people in our society believe and experience that gangs and belonging to a gang is negative. We see and hear in the media that gangs make war against each other and destroy people's lives. Kotzé and Kotzé(2002:199) suggests that 'gangs have become another version of family. Joining a gang

becomes joining a new family of choice.' Thamm (2001:38) says that gangs provide a kind of 'enduring' and 'unbreakable substitute family' that 'becomes an alternative way of life in a hostile world.'

This alternative idea of gangs enabled me to unite the young people in a group so as to stand with each other rather than to destroy each other. These young people had told me that gangs played an important part in their lives (see 3.5.1. Their involvement with gangs provided a context in which they felt 'safe' and 'wanted'. Starting such a group/gang with the young people at Faure created a space for them to talk to and support each other in many ways. The gang almost became an 'alternative family' for them and me.

5.3.2 Reflecting on 'alternative families' (gangs)

As pastoral counsellor, the creation of a 'gang family' challenged me 'to reflect critically on [my] taken for granted truths about families – truths that may offer support to certain structures of family life whilst being problematic to others' (Kotzé & Kotzé 2003:202). I believe the idea of 'gangs' (see 3.14.1) as 'alternative families' challenges the cultural discourse around gangs which views them as negative groups. This alternative view enabled me to focus on nurturing care and communities. The 'gang' therapy (see 3.14.1) in Faure was one way of deconstructing/ challenging many taken for granted and dominant centralised ideas regarding gangs. Unfortunately, the many unpredictable circumstances in Faure also meant that this project was 'put on ice'.

5.4 Reflecting on the 'research outcome'

I found that reflecting on my 'failure' to provide a 'research outcome' or to be able to describe a positive ending to the research I did at Faure, was a humbling experience as researcher. I learned that abandoning the 'voice of disembodied objectivity' meant removing myself from the time I formulated the first research questions and aims to locating myself in time and space (Reinharz 1992: 212). I learned that the research journey was not a 'quest for truth', but a 'process of discovery' (Reinharz 1992:211). I learned that I could

present the 'findings' of the research at Faure in process format, because the 'findings' were part of product (see 1.3) which in turn became features of the gift (see Chapter 4) that my family received in the process. Through this process I also was reminded that a 'feminist theology of praxis is embodied practical theology' (Ackermann 1998:87).

Just as for Heshusius & Ballard (1996:8) 'embodied knowledge' meant working towards an integration of mind and body, within a social context, so too practical theology must 'reach into our bodies, our being and our doing' (Couture 1998:27).

5.4.1   What I learned from action research

According to McTaggart (1996:251), the aim of action research is to focus on theory and practice, reflecting and changing practice. Kurt Lewin (quoted in McTaggart 1996:27) who invented the term, defines action research as a process which proceeds in 'a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, action, observing and evaluating the result of the action'. The process usually begins when a group has an idea that 'some kind of improvement or change is desirable.'

This research project began with my idea that the 'culture of violence and crime' in Faure youth centre needed to be addressed and some kind of improvement and change made. Following the cyclical nature of the action research approach, the action plans I made for the research were flexible and reflective. For example, I had pre-planned ideas and questions which I wanted to ask the young people in the group sessions. I found, however, that on some days they wanted to participate in discussions and conversations and on other days they did not. I learned that on the so-called 'difficult' days, they rather wanted a hug or a quick informal chat with me than a formal therapy session. Lewin (quoted in McTaggart 1996:27) says that 'given the complexity of real social situations, in practice it is never possible to anticipate everything that needs to be done.' Lewin's deliberate overlapping of action and reflection

was designed to 'allow changes in plans for action as people learned from their own experience.'

This research also taught me that participatory action research can create participatory resistance to change because 'participatory action research involves people in making critical analyses of the situations (projects, programs, systems) in which they work [live]: these situations are structured institutionally' (McTaggart 1996:36).

 An example of the above is when the girls in the gang group (see chapter 3) experienced conflict changing their practices of violence and crime especially when they were confronted by the accepted patriarchal practices of the boys who came into the centre. By becoming aware of institutionalised discourses such as patriarchy and gender, I came to understand that the girl's resistance was rooted in 'competing kinds of practices, competing views of social (and educational) positions and values, and competing views of social organisation and decision making' (McTaggart 1996:37). McTaggart argues that this reflective understanding that I incorporated can help the action researcher to 'overcome' resistance by involving others through collaboration in the research process. The 'other' I invited to collaborate in this research was my husband, Coenrie. By critically exploring discourses in his life, Coenrie took the action to change 'old' practices to new/alternative ways of living (practices).

Action research provided me as researcher with opportunities to become aware of the complexities involved in living in a youth centre. Although I did not change the 'culture of violence and crime' in Faure youth centre, I am convinced that the research contributed much to creating an awareness and change in the life of one white 'privileged' man (Coenrie) in our country. In this regard, McTaggart's (1996:34) following words regarding action research resonate for me:

> think globally [and] act locally.

Welch (1990:67) reminds us that such awareness can be an invitaion to become involved in the process of transformation. But, like the decision to care, awareness involves risk:

> Within an ethics of risk, action begins where much middle-class thought stops. Action begins in the face of overwhelming loss and the recognition of the irreparable damage of structural evil.

As Coenrie became aware of how he had benefited under the policies of 'structural evil' (Apartheid and patriarchy) he accepted responsibility for bringing transformation within his own circle of influence.

5.4.2 Recommendations concerning similar research projects

Following on the above discussions, I agree with McTaggart's (1996:34) idea that research should be conducted in small steps. I therefore propose that addressing the problems concerning the young people at Faure, should be conducted over a longer period of time. It is my opinion that, due to the unpredictable nature of the context of a Youth centre, long-term research would better adjust to changes and could accomodate unforeseen circumstances.

Following Selwyn College's implementing Team (Dulwich Centre Journal no 2 &3 1998), I also want to suggest the implementation of pastoral care groups who could support personnel as well as groups who help young people with problems. These pastoral care groups could consist of personnel and young people who help the personnel and young people at the centre to interview problems the young people face – such as violence, crime and drug abuse. Regarding the venue, I want to suggest nature in the form of adventure-based trips, because I believe that nature can eliminate potential power structures in groups. Clinebell (1996:xv) suggest that we as people can learn to 'depend' on each other when we have 'earth stories' (Clinebell 1996:xvii) to share.

> We live in a closed system, absolutely dependent on earth
> and on each other for our lives and those of succeeding generations.

> The many things that divide us are therefore of infinitely less importance than the interdependence and danger that unite us.
>
> From a message to the world by six biologists at an international meeting
>
> (Clinebell 1996:xv)

The young people at Faure's involvement with gangs had taught them to unite against 'danger'. I believe that adventure-based therapy could act as another vehicle to further deconstruct and explore discourses of power and gender. This could not only contribute to the discovery of 'new/alternative ways of living' for the young people and personnel in Faure youth centre, but also point a way forward for other youth centres in South Africa.

5.5 Reflecting on how the pastoral care and counselling at Faure touched aspects of my life.

5.5.1 Voice

Reinharz (1992:211) says that '[b]eing a researcher-traveller means having a self and a body.' Therefore, 'giving voice' to my personal experience in the research, is one way to reflect on my experience of the research process.

Frank (1995:7) says that issues involving voice, has always been around. Reinharz (1992:16) says that 'finding one's voice' is an important process of feminist research and writing. As I mentioned before, Foucault's (1980:85) idea of 'geneology' suggests that subjugated knowledges (including voices) can be reactivated through a highlighting or exposure process. Frank (1995:7) says voicing involves 'people feeling a need for a voice they can recognise as their own.' He argues further that people seeking to define a place in the world for themselves forms the basis for the need for a personal voice. Finding my voice in my marriage, was another genealogy in this research.

> Voice is a metaphor through which some people, especially

> women, it seems, express their sense of who they are, what they think, feel, know, believe, and care about. Voice is not only what we say, but also how we say it. In the best writing, authors have a distinct voice. You can 'hear' it.
>
> (Weingarten 1994:9)

In her research about 'voice' and finding one's voice, Weingarten (1994:9) refers to the biography of Willa Cather in which she describes her thoughts of voice. According Cather, voice is something that can be found by 'turning inward' where one discovers one's thoughts and feelings. Weingarten disagrees with the idea of turning inward to discover voice. She proposes the following: 'I believe I must turn outward, to my community, to learn 'what the traffic will bear. In effect, I am saying that voice is always social.'

Our social world is constituted from different voices. Gergen (1985:3) says that social construction discourse is 'the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live'. We use language to co-construct voice within social interchange. Anderson and Goolishian (1988:378) say that we make meaning and come to understanding within language. The language that we grow up and live in specifies or constitutes our experience or 'having a voice'. (Anderson & Goolishian 1992:26). For me, finding my voice meant 'shifting' from modernist 'truths' and experiences to adopting a post modern approach.

Borgmann (quoted in Frank 1995:4) uses the metaphor of a journey to describe 'Crossing the Post Modern divide':

> Once on the other side, the traveller remains the same person, carrying the same baggage. But on the other side of certain divides, the traveller senses a new identity; that some baggage now seems useful for new purposes.

As I mentioned in chapter one (1.1.2) the postmodern discourse gave me the tools and legitimacy to express my voice in my marriage. Reclaiming my voice involved telling stories. Frank (1995:7) says that 'Postmodern times are when the capacity for telling one's own story is reclaimed.' During conversations with my husband, Coenrie, postmodern discourse gave me a 'framework' to put my arguments and stories in (see also chapter 4). The story of this

research is not only about me and recovering my voice, but at Faure I also became a witness to the conditions that robbed others of their voices. Frank (1995:xiii) says that 'When any person recovers his voice, many people begin to speak through that story.' My hope is that I found my voice in order to tell the stories of others who have not yet been given the opportunity to find their voices.

5.5.2 Reflecting on the 'gift'

Chapter four consists of a comprehensive description and reflections on the 'gift' that the pastoral care and counselling at Faure reciprocated to my family. Therefore, I will briefly summarise my reflection on the 'gift' in this chapter. For Coenrie, listening to the stories that I told about Faure created 'new perceptions of [his] relation to the world' (Frank 1995:1). The stories about Faure created an 'awareness' (see also consciousness raising, 4.2.1) in Coenrie which invited him to inspect oppressive discourses in his life and to find 'alternative/new ways' (see 4.1) of being a white male and a father in South Africa today. He compared his 'conversion' to what happened to Paul on the road to Damascus. I see my work at Faure and what I learned from the young people there as a gift that affected and my family and myself. The 'gift' we received, was an unexpected 'gift'. Derrida's (1997:150) following words summarise my experience of the 'gift' we received from Faure:

> If I am addressed by the other, overtaken and surprised, traumatised even, as Levinas likes to say, shocked by the blow that the circle of the same receives from the incoming of the other, then I 'must respond'. But this 'must' is without necessity, compulsion, or force; it is beyond mere duty or dutifulness. If I respond to the solicitation of the other out of pure duty, that is almost insulting.

I believe a response to such a gift as my family and I received from Faure should not be 'duty dictated'. Our response requires a constant critique into our 'old practices' and to find ways to live 'new preferred realities' (see 4.3). This includes justice, 'If justice is what is 'owed' by the other, it is at the same time 'given without restraint' (Derrida 1997:150).

5.5.3 Reflecting on qualitative research

Reinharz (1992:243) insists there is no single Feminist way to do research:

> There is little 'methodological elitism' or 'methodological correctness' in feminist research. Rather there is a lot of individual creativity and variety.

Reinharz adds that feminist research can go 'everywhere' and in 'every direction', because it uses all the methods – singly and in combination.

In this research, I have used a combination of research methods. First, the method of case studies (see 1.5.2.1) in which I tell the story of the young people at Faure Youth Centre. Second, I also used the personal experience method where I recognise my involvement as researcher in the research. I also included the voice of my husband, Coenrie to describe the personal changes in his life resulting from my pastoral care and counselling at Faure. I did not privilege one methodology over another, because the methods are interconnected in this research journey.

5.4 Where do we go from here?

Feminist theologians Isherwood and McEwan's (1993:134) vision for the world is a 'commitment to the process of each person's becoming':

> 'feminist theology is the awareness of our experience, the inclusion of the rest of our selves in doing of theology. The real lives and lived experiences of women and men, their diversity and gifts, their differences and struggles.
> (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:80)

The vision 'of becoming' involves transformation. Transformation involves the breaking down of divisions between people (adults and children; women and men; white and black). Isherwood and McEwan propose that 'one way of breaking down old divisions is by networking across old divides.'

Ackermann (1998:84) suggests that the starting point for transformation is a relational anthropology based on the relational. Such a relational anthropology is 'founded on the praxis embodied in the injunction "to love your neighbour as

yourself."' My work at Faure was an attempt to see these girls as 'my neighbour' and so to break down some of the 'old divisions.' It meant acknowledging both in myself, in the girls at Faure and in Coenrie 'the unending, relentless suffering together with the resilient longing of the human person for wholeness.' (Ackermann 1998:84)

For me, pastoral praxis at Faure meant vulnerability and risk. It also meant abandoning the apathy and not knowing that had been possible in a life 'unlived'. It meant embracing a relational anthropology which, as Ackermann (1991:108) suggests is 'the opposite of alienation, of apathy, of discrimination and which finds its source in our understanding of God as "God in relation".' And finally, it meant embracing hope, which Bruggemann (1993:40) describes as

> 'an act that cedes our existence over to God, in the trusting assurance that God is "above accomplish abundantly for more than all we can ask or imagine" (Eph 3:20).'

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