

**DISCOURSES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: PAINTING A PICTURE OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE**

by

**KERRY-GAYE SCHIFF
(STUDENT NUMBER: 3598-874-6)**

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DECLARATION

I declare that **DISCOURSES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: PAINTING A PICTURE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

KERRY-GAYE SCHIFF

15 SEPTEMBER 2010

DEDICATION

For Peter, Nathanael, Raphael and Talya

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SUMMARY

Workplace violence is reported to be on the increase, and within the South African Police Service, the inherently stressful nature of policing leads to high rates of suicide and violent behaviour. Contemporary investigations of workplace violence reveal epistemological, methodological and theoretical biases towards positivistic, rational-empirical approaches resulting in partial understandings and limited scope. This study aimed to qualitatively explore workplace violence as a socially embedded act. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a primary participant and three others directly related to him in order to supplement existing understandings from a social constructionist perspective. Discourse analysis allowed for discovery of socio-historically located discursive networks, while an ethnographic or empathic technique was used to gain insight into the life worlds of participants. Discourses of organisational negligence, betrayal and concurrent discourses of group solidarity and cohesion and organisational culpability reveal a reliance on external locus of control and avoidance coping. Discourses of absolution due to another's involvement, retribution, justice, and innocence perverted by a stronger agency relied on strategies of justification, denial, disclaimer, excuse or apology to negotiate positive participant identities. Discourses of masculinity allowed for a corroboration, justification and maintenance of male violence in general, and social discourses of female subjugation and commodification were used as a means to deflect responsibility and as justifications for actions of violence towards women. Inherent in all discourses was a deep socially and historically embedded conception that facilitates violent action as an expression of maleness in all spheres of life. From an ethnographic or empathic perspective, participants' world views were polarised around masculinity and femininity, suggesting that an ability to remain unemotional in situations of turmoil is a highly-prized characteristic of maleness, especially in a hypermasculine setting such as the police. The implicit and explicit approbation for the expression of masculine stoicism, as opposed to feminine or 'weaker' emotions, causes recruits to experience isolation and shame if unable to face traumatic situations with the requisite dispassion, leading to negative coping mechanisms, depression, and suicide or violence.

The conclusion can be drawn that prevention of violence relies on extrication of the concept of violence from masculinity at ideological, cultural and social levels within the SAPS, and the concurrent reduction in justificatory discourses reliant on an external locus of control. This has considerable implications, including the radical transformation of the organisation through the development of a clear vision of the future that can be supported by management, members and the community; the empowerment of employees through active participation in decisions and development of skills through training; rigorous modification of the practices that generate inequitable social conditions; and the revolution of cultural practices that venerate and enforce gendered inequalities.

Keywords: South African Police Service, Workplace Violence, Social Constructionism, Masculinities, Suicide, Discourse Analysis.

Chapter One

Behind the Metaphor: An Introduction to a Work of Art



1

CHAPTER ONE

BEHIND THE METAPHOR: AN INTRODUCTION TO A WORK OF ART



A sincere artist is not one who makes a faithful attempt to put on to canvas what is in front of him, but one who tries to create something which is, in itself, a living thing.

(William Dobell, 1899-1970)¹

Introduction

Incidents involving workplace aggression have been noted in many diverse organisations, particularly those that have work environments characterised by frustrating and irritating interactions with fellow workers, or in which policies expose employees to the risk of violent attack by a client of the organisation (Barling, Dupré, & Kelloway, 2009; O’Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Glew, 1996; Schat & Kelloway, 2005). Recent global trends suggest that workplace hostilities are on the increase; consequent public demands for the inhibition of such violence in order to alleviate the immense social and economic costs to the victims, their families and the community at large are becoming more strident (Burgess, Burgess, & Douglas, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Leather, Brady, Lawrence, Beale, & Cox, 1999; O’Leary-Kelly et al., 1996; Olson, 1994; Rogers & Kelloway, 1997). Public interest in the concept of workplace violence has been spurred by media reports of several instances of workplace homicide, where an aggressive or dissatisfied employee has assailed co-workers or supervisors (Kraus, Blander, & McArthur, 1995). The mediums of television, film and literature have constructed violence as a means for a relatively powerless and ineffectual

¹ Citation details for all artist quotes appear in Appendix A.

individual to regain some control over those who are portrayed as marginalising them in some way (Jodie Picoult's book, "Nineteen Minutes", 2007, is a prime example of this).

Arguably, in no other setting is workplace violence more overtly recognisable than within a police force: not only do researchers believe the role of policing to be inherently stressful (Anshel, 2000; Bishop et al., 2006; McCafferty, McCafferty, & McCafferty, 1992; Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006; Perrott & Kelloway, 2006; Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006; Violanti & Aron, 1994; Violanti, Vena, & Marshall, 1986; Violanti et al., 2008), but the easy access to firearms leads to a high rate of suicide and violence within the police service, especially within a South African context. The demanding nature of the work potentially undermines the efficiency of the organisation as a whole and can pose a threat to the whole community (Biggam, Power, MacDonald, Carcary, & Moodie, 1997). High rates of absenteeism, low morale and low productivity, and concurrent increased expenditure due to legal, medical and early retirement costs are the result, impacting negatively on the community at large, culminating in lawlessness, hopelessness and an attrition of moral standards (Nel, 1999). This can have significant consequences for the economic growth and stability of a country (Van der Merwe, Rothmann, & Pienaar, 2004).

There is significant public interest in instances of workplace violence in organisations such as the South African Police Service, and the inflammatory nature of media coverage thereof serves to fan the flames of public outrage and disgust. Recent banner headlines of national papers scream²: "Help vóordat polisie knak, smEEK artse" (*Help before police crack, plead physicians*) (Kühne, 2005, p. 6); "Stres in die polisie lei tot meer selfmoord" (*Stress in the police leads to more suicide*) (De Beer, 2005, p. 3); "B'fell [Brackenfell] geruk deur gesinstragedie" (*B'fell [Brackenfell] shaken by family tragedy*) (Hume & Box, 2006, p. 2); and "Polisie-pa skiet baba – 'Dit was aaklig, die hele bed was vol bloed'" (*Police dad shoots baby – 'it was horrible, the whole bed was full of blood'*) (Jansen & Van Aardt, 2007, p. 1); "Cowboys don't cry" (2006, p. 3). As a result, many investigations have been conducted into the field of violence as a corollary of a stressful occupation such as policing (amongst others, Anshel, 2000; Brogden & Shearing, 1993; Koortzen, 1996; Nel, 1999; Shaw, 2002; Van der Merwe et al., 2004; Violanti, 1992; Violanti & Aron, 1994). However, the majority of contemporary investigations into workplace violence in general, and more specifically within

² English translations of all Afrikaans citations and dialogue appear in bracketed italics

a police force, generally reveal epistemological, methodological and theoretical biases towards positivistic, naturalistic approaches that attempt to account for and define the extent of the violent encounter rationally and that can potentially result in partial understandings and limited scope. In the main, studies have focussed on situations that stress measurement of prevalence, the identification of a profile for a person most at risk for committing an aggressive act (through the means of statistical data), including age, race, access to weapons, previous mental illness, job insecurity and so on (cf. Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kausch & Resnick, 2001; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Rutter & Hine, 2005; Stuart, 1992; Winstok, 2006), and typically imply linear considerations of causality. The purpose of such studies has largely been the prediction of violent conduct through the identification of the correlates and determinants that shape behaviour with a view to control thereof. Confronting workplace violence within organisational contexts traditionally consists of an overwhelming majority of initiatives that are aimed at altering the protocols and structures themselves rather than attending to the fundamental underlying social contexts implicated in the behaviours. This approach places emphasis on the supposition that there are rules that direct human actions; hence that human behaviour occurs in linear, causal relationships (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). However, as circumstances and situations are continuously changing, insight into behaviour in social and nonlinear terms becomes problematic. Defining workplace violence in a way that addresses all of its shifting socially-determined nuances and contexts is likewise just as difficult given this stance.

The emphasis on predominantly quantitative methods to inform the study of workplace violence has had the effect of marginalising the more qualitative research methods, restricting the insights that can be gained through the perspectives of the participants involved in the situations themselves. The multitudes of ‘voices’ that can potentially articulate their encounters within this field have been predominantly silenced in order to elevate the ‘scientific’ positivistic approach. Exploration of the potentially rich bedrock of lived experience has frequently been denied, severely hampering the investigation of the multiple realities as they are understood and elucidated by the social beings themselves.

These quantitatively-oriented research approaches have the potential of crediting

gender, class, race or other equally contentious variables as predictive of later aggressive behaviour, leading to the identification of individuals deemed to be more 'at risk' for the commission of workplace violence, and branding certain persons as more 'dangerous' than others. An implicit discourse of social marginalisation can result, one that effectively impedes the comprehensive understanding of workplace violence, reducing it to a number of distinct variables, and ignoring the potential foundations of violent behaviour as a socially entrenched act. Furthermore, this discourse conveys a defeatist attitude that communicates the inevitability and relative permanence of workplace violence within an organisation, and the consequent necessity for the implementation of stringent organisational intervention strategies in order to maintain a semblance of control.

Significance of this Study

Although the scope of traditional quantitative findings has been invaluable for the mechanistic understanding of workplace violence that it promotes, it is necessary to transcend the descriptive statistical data and linear causality of the conventional research in order to better obtain a wide-ranging and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. At variance with the long-established and firmly entrenched quantitative methodology, this study aims to explore workplace violence as a socially embedded act, deepening and supplementing existing understandings and discourses of workplace violence within the South African Police Service and thereby overcoming some of the epistemological challenges noted above. It attempts to locate violence within the very ethos of the SAPS, relating it to the supporting ideologies, socio-historical background and rich cultural influences, with the aim of encouraging practitioners to consider social strategies other than those applied in the organisation at present for the resolution of workplace violence.

This study is engaged with the ways in which workplace violence is expressed, justified, excused and enforced in order to investigate the functions that these networks fulfil for the participants: as such, a social constructionist approach allowed for knowledge, actions and associations to be related to the socio-historical context in which they were fashioned. This method endorsed the existence of manifold truths that were all legitimate at one and the same time (Becvar & Becvar, 2003). The qualitative technique of discourse analysis allowed

for comprehensive and multifaceted disclosures concerning workplace violence, whilst at the same time promoting the unearthing of discursive networks. A view of discourse as an ordered structure of meanings underlying the bedrock of realities (Thompson, 1990) focussed on spoken language as the unit of analysis in the narratives of participants. In this way, the study explored the consequences and functions of the identified repertoires in relation to the socio-historical, cultural and ideological structures that functioned as their roots, and also directed attention towards the justifications, excuses and rationalisations that allowed participants to adhere to certain discursive networks without compromising an inherent sense of selfhood. Furthermore, the results of this study do not adhere to the dominant discourses of traditional research that result in the social marginalisation of a subset of the organisational population through their preoccupation with risk factors and interventions, but rather allow a consideration of workplace violence based firmly on the appreciation of the impact of socio-historical, ideological and psychological factors on the lived worlds of the participants.

Concurrent with, and complementary to, this technique, it was necessary to deviate considerably from what is routinely seen as ‘pure’ discourse analysis in an endeavour not only to account for how people’s life worlds, experiences and emotions are expressed in language, but also to *understand* and gain insight into those very life worlds and experiences. Given the appreciation that reality is constructed through the use of language, a position of objectivity is neither feasible nor desirable, and a subjective stance on the part of the researcher presupposes reflexivity and sensitivity. From this perspective, I thus used an ethnographic or empathic method at times, blurring the boundaries of discourse analysis with psychological assumptions and presuppositions that were, to my understanding, unavoidable given the situation. This led to establishing a different “psycho-social, psychological theory of the social actor” (Wetherell, 2007, p. 671), and an attempt to elucidate the subjective explanations, emotions and collective connotations that participants utilised to comprehend the social phenomenon of workplace violence. In addition to its substantive contribution, it is hoped that this study also has some methodological significance and will contribute to future academic work at the interface between discourse analytic and ethnographic methodologies.

The Origin of the Metaphor Underlying this Study

Ever since I was a small child, I have been enthralled by art in general and painting in

particular. I have distant memories of working at an easel in the art classroom, a brush clasped firmly in my childishly chubby fist, the pervading odour of the turpentine in my nostrils, at once intoxicating and mysterious, and my heart beating swiftly at the thrill of what I was creating on the canvas before me. Unfortunately, my mediocre artistic attempts never reached true greatness, and whilst displayed prominently on the fridge for a month or two, they were soon stowed away carefully in some treasure chest of my mother's. My practice of art was gradually subsumed by the more vital tasks of life: school, athletics, friends, and later, university, work, marriage, and children (twin boys and then a little girl). Yet although my artistic talent was pedestrian, I never lost that feeling of wonder and amazement, the awe that a truly immortal work of art inspires in its beholder, the seeming ability to perceive a magical realm of clear childhood vision and unspoken dreams.

I took up my first employment after university as a wide-eyed psychologist in the South African Police Service. Deep within the precincts of the gloomy halls and shadowy, depressing bureaucratic headquarters of the SAPS building, I decorated the walls of my office haven with paintings and works of art in order to keep the melancholy at bay. One painting in particular was an impressionist picture of two policemen, and it always interested me to note that the police officers I counselled were drawn to that painting specifically. Officers from the dog unit would gaze at the painting and immediately remark on the dog they saw closely following on the policemen's heels. Others would draw out likenesses with their own unit, seeing bullet-proof vests, certain weapons, or action of some kind, inadvertently endowing the painting with a vestige of themselves. I used to call it my own private 'Rorschach test'.

Similarly, the walls of my house today are liberally scattered with the paintings I have collected over the intervening years, some of which I have included as the cover page of this chapter (I have unusually eclectic tastes). Some are paintings which others have deemed excellent. Others are simply paintings which by virtue of their style, or lack of it, or their brushwork, or some arbitrary element that cannot be defined, I consider interesting, or which move me emotionally in some way. After all, I realised relatively early on, a work of art does not have to cause an immediate pleasing resonance within the viewer; it does not have to be universally liked to be acknowledged as a masterpiece – it just has to make the observer *feel* something – whether good or bad.

Over time, this research project on violence in the workplace has developed into the painting metaphor that I have employed. In the beginning, as I waded through the morass of published data on the subject of workplace violence (a task necessary in order for me to offer fitting deference to the multitudinous quantitative studies that preceded this work), I was struck with the similarity of painstakingly creating a work of art. Research, similarly to a painting, grows and develops, idea by idea, or brushstroke by brushstroke: both demand the reflective application of your spirit, soul, intellect and time for their creation. Both involve exposing a part of your essence for public view – an intimidating process, as some observers might not like the final product they view; others might be confused; still others may adore it. Irrespective, the most fundamental concept is that the work produced provokes thought and inspires emotion.

Another similarity struck me only further into my research: as a painting or a work of research has more added to it, by way of ideas or paint, it becomes more complex and strangely, requires that the artist, or researcher, develop alongside it. One cannot remain unchanged by the work that one produces, for the very nature of the work demands reflection on one's motives, needs, conceptions and abilities. Aware of this, I have endeavoured to be as honest and accurate as possible when describing my own process and the influence it has had on my research procedure. As reflexivity and positionality are essential tenets of social constructionism, so too an artist takes into account his or her positioning in relation to the subject matter. This allows the unique perspectives gained through their own creative journey to inform the way they approach their chosen topic of inspiration. An artist is aware of the multitudinous levels and complexities of 'reality', and continually attentive to the fact that there is no singular conception of the scene which they use as a foundation for the ultimate picture that results.

I initially did not intend the metaphor to inform this whole study – it appeared that some chapters integrated more neatly into the allegory than others. Yet as I negotiated my way through the literature reviews, methods and research phases, more and more pieces fell into place, and the project began to take on a cohesive form. The next section affords a glimpse into the chapters contained in this dissertation, their organisation, and the ways in which they fit into the metaphor of a painting.

Chapter Organisation

In *Chapter Two*, I outline a frame for my painting to occupy. This frame consists of a literature review of the salient quantitative and qualitative research on the concept of violence at work, which is not a new concept and has been discussed by many researchers previously. I have attempted to pay homage to the work on workplace violence that has gone before, even though the departure of the majority of the studies is fundamentally different to the qualitative nature of my research, because of the sturdy frame which they provide for the later discussion of violence within the context of the SAPS.

The initial pencil sketch of the painting consists of a discussion of previous research into workplace violence within a police force, and more specifically, the South African Police Force (*Chapter Three*). Again, an overwhelming majority of traditional quantitative research is foundational to this part of the study. As the lights and darks, the shadows and highlights are sketched on a canvas prior to painting, the literature review looks at the paradoxes that exist within a police culture: those forces that impel action or inaction, the convictions and attitudes, and the belief system that is inherently part of the police culture. The police, after all, are expected to take the place of that ultimate paradox, at once standing above people as their external conscience, and yet at the same time below them, blending in with all the depravities of human nature.

The glasses that we wear play a supreme role in the way in which we perceive the world: a person with less than 20/20 vision has need of a pair of spectacles or contact lenses in order to perceive their surroundings clearly. Additionally, diverse kinds of lenses, in an assortment of magnifications or colours, change the perspective of the viewer. In a similar fashion, the theory and epistemology which are embraced in the research setting change perception, highlighting certain points, shadowing others, until one view may seem totally disparate from its identical twin. A researcher's consideration of their epistemology has momentous consequences for the research arena; for there to be a shared understanding of postmodern research, it is essential that all participants begin in common terrain. The lens of social constructionism, through which I view the topic of workplace violence, views human beings as developing relationships within specific frameworks (Owen, 1992). I have given up the idea of objectivity altogether, and have viewed all descriptions simply as creation

rather than discovery (Bruner, 1987; Real, 1990). In *Chapter Four*, I discuss my own journey towards adhering to the basic tenets of social constructionism within my research.

Chapter Five, which describes the research method I followed, I have likened to the material on which an artist chooses to express themselves, as it inspires how the entire work of art will be viewed by observers. The final painting is reliant on the material of the canvas, whether rough or smooth, textured or silky, and it additionally determines the size of the eventual work of art. It was necessary for the ‘canvas’ I chose to allow for the evolution of meanings; a creative, growing process, rather than a structured, recipe-like approach. I took into account the significance of context and the discovery of meaning contained in experiences, a method which then endorsed a holistic micro-analysis of the elements and intricate interdependencies within the perspective of a larger whole (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003; Durrheim, 2002; Holliday, 2007). With reference to my study, I explain why it was necessary for me to take a qualitative stance in the research, my attention to validity and reliability issues, and my approach towards dealing with the research participants (my co-researchers in this project) respectfully. I also discuss the research method, including my choice of discourse analysis, and the ethnographic or empathic perspective that I adopt, in greater depth.

I was finally ready to begin ‘painting’ my work of art. I had chosen the frame, lenses and canvas; I had drawn my initial pencil sketch, and all was in readiness for the addition of the colour that was the reporting of my results. Yet, as I stepped up to my canvas, I realised that the stories of the participants, which I had been hearing in the interviews I had been conducting, were whirling around in my head, along with my own considerations, thoughts, and (dare I say it?) judgments and impressions. I realised that before I could start putting down the final brushstrokes of my painting, it was necessary for me to provide an undercoat of the perceptions and understanding I had gained through my interactions with the participants, in order to do their stories the justice they deserved. *Chapter Six* is just that – the stories of the participants in (mostly) their own words, yet with the added dimension of my own thoughts and evaluations to colour the background a little.

The proper ‘painting’, or report chapter, which in this study is integrated with the discussion section (as in Potter & Wetherell, 1987), starts in earnest in *Chapter Seven*. With

so much material, it was necessary to divide the findings into sections according to their common themes. Consequently, *Chapter Seven* discusses the organisation, *Chapter Eight* deals with the discourses and perspectives of violence, and *Chapter Nine* concerns the participants' world view.

The 'painting' in its completion is revealed in the final concluding *Chapter Ten*. Here, the frame, canvas and painting all fall into place to reveal a picture of the South African Police Service. This is a summary of the research findings and their importance, as well as a review of the limitations of the study. It is essential to remember that, unlike a photograph, the image we are left with is an impression only, one of many that can be gained of the police. In this final chapter are also the recommendations for future 'paintings', or other research, and directions for other 'artists', or researchers, to take.

Conclusion

This chapter briefly outlined the scope and significance of this study, the reasoning behind the choice of social constructionism and a qualitative research design, and has provided a brief accounting of the metaphor behind its inception. The following chapter presents a deeper look into the phenomenon of workplace violence based on a literature study of the largely quantitative contemporary studies.

Chapter Two

A Frame for the Painting: Workplace Violence and Aggression



2

CHAPTER TWO

A FRAME FOR THE PAINTING: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION



Art consists of limitation. The most beautiful part of every picture is the frame.

(G.K. Chesterton, 1874-1936)

Introduction

The metaphor of the painstaking creation of a work of art begins here, with the careful construction of a frame in which the painting will dwell. Although it may seem an unusual departure from the traditional method of framing a picture only after it has been painted, this frame is in itself an integral part of the whole, and, in this case, needs to be in place before the rest of the image can be contextualized. Few artists underestimate the power of the frame – a mediocre painting can be elevated to the state of greatness with the addition of the correct frame; likewise a cheap frame will degrade the whole tone of a masterpiece. The frame in this metaphor is the broader scope of workplace aggression and violence.

Conflict is endemic in society and should not necessarily be seen as negative or destructive, but rather as stimulating and invigorating, serving useful social functions, provided it is channelled in constructive ways (Lewis & Zare, 1999). Functional conflict serves to promote change and create enterprise through enhancing performance, while dysfunctional conflict serves to hinder the achievement of social and organisational goals (Cohen, 1990). If conflict is handled in a negative or destructive manner, it ends in violence,

which is the extreme manifestation of conflict, with some authors even going so far as to liken the workplace to a field of battle (Kondrasuk, Moore, & Wang, 2001).

Dysfunctional conflict in the workplace, which may involve the expression of aggression and violence, has always been present wherever people have worked together. Yet only in the 1960s and 1970s did social science researchers begin to pay attention to the issues being raised by unions and governmental bodies, (Bowie, 2002; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Painter, 1987). In the 1980s, interest was raised through the actions of Perry Smith, a 25-year veteran of the US Postal Service, who fired on co-workers with a shotgun wounding two and killing the postmaster (Van Fleet & Van Fleet, 2009). There was an increasingly large responsibility on the part of the organisation to take reasonable care for the safety of its employees as part of the contract of employment, which implied that if an employee were to be injured while at work, the victim would be able to claim damages for negligence from the employer (Hoad, 1993). Legal issues are now faced whenever workplace violence occurs inside the precincts of the organisation (Paetzold, O'Leary-Kelly, & Griffin, 2009).

The expression of workplace aggression and violence, therefore, can result in enormous costs to the organisation (Leather et al., 1999; Maes, Icenogle, Shearer, & Fowler, 2000; Rogers & Kelloway, 1997). The direct expenses are associated with finding replacement staff, implementing counter-measures, and repairing damaged equipment; the social, and more indirect expenditure, is related to compensation payments, prosecution costs, reduction in the quality of customer service, risk assessments, and a high staff turnover (Maes et al., 2000; Van Fleet & Van Fleet, 2009). There is also an accompanying reduction in organisational revenue, as customers might be reluctant to visit premises where there is a high incidence of violence (Hoad, 1993; O'Leary-Kelly et al., 1996).

Additionally, less immediate costs to the individuals involved (beyond those costs associated with injury or death) are high. Violence is a phenomenon of the modern world that touches people in dramatic and disturbing ways: interrupting the operation of business; tarnishing the reputation and credibility of the organisation; decreasing morale; and increasing a sense of fear (Olson, 1994; Van Fleet & Van Fleet, 2009). Victims of aggression have a higher likelihood of stress-related conditions, ruined reputations, lower morale, lost work time and decreased productivity (Kirk & Franklin, 2003; Maes et al., 2000; O'Leary-

Kelly et al., 1996; Schat & Kelloway, 2005), or experience the desire to leave the organisation as a means of coping with the increased fear of future violence (Rogers & Kelloway, 1997). Employees' emotional and cognitive resources are depleted through exposure to stress, and consequently they are less likely to focus on job performance (Herschcovis & Barling, 2010).

In summary, the individual can experience psychological consequences, which include depression, anxiety and negative work-related affect (where an individual fears the work environment leading to greater time off work), and physiological complaints such as headaches, sleep disturbances, infections, gastrointestinal problems and increased blood pressure (Schat & Kelloway, 2005). Withdrawal behaviours and reduced productivity are often the result (Van Fleet & Van Fleet, 2009).

The study of workplace aggression and violence is becoming a focus in Western industrialised societies. Traditionally, it is addressed by the media and officials in an inflammatory way, with little attention to accurate quantification of incidence, and many researchers note that there is no attempt to place the risk in context (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kraus et al., 1995; Leather, Cox, & Farnsworth, 1990; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Mullen, 1997; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Rogers & Kelloway, 1997; Stuart, 1992). Problematically, studies of an empirical nature are lambasted for the widespread use of unrepresentative sampling, discrepancies in reporting time frames, variations in defining and operationalising workplace aggression, and overlooking forms of aggression and violence that are less visible, such as psychological aggression (Barling et al., 2009). Researchers call for greater construct validity, in order that constructs such as aggression, bullying, abusive supervision, and so on, are studied as separate entities. Additionally, inter-relationships of various forms of aggressive behaviour within and across domains need to be addressed (Barling et al., 2009).

Whilst this study is of a qualitative nature, it would be gravely remiss to ignore the plethora of quantitative research that has been conducted on the topic of workplace violence and its effects both in the international and South African contexts. These studies have been instrumental in establishing critical organisational guidelines for the protection of a vulnerable workforce, and reveal significant contributions made in the understanding of the nature of workplace violence. An unanticipated by-product of these studies, however, is the

manner in which they have contributed to contemporary discourses of violence in society, determining what is seen as normal and what deviant. Foucault's (1980) recognition of knowledge as constituting specific power relations, whilst simultaneously being employed to maintain power relations, highlights the influence that these quantitative studies have on the construction of the dominant discourses that are prevalent in today's society. Consistent with this approach, the apparent constitution of the perpetrator as deficient in certain physical, intellectual or psychological parameters, and the location of the perpetrator within certain substrata of society leads to a linearly predictive and preventative approach to the study of workplace violence. Therefore, it is of critical importance to review such studies, as they provide the frame against which the analysis of discursive networks of the participants of this research will take place.

Assembling the Raw Materials: A Definition of Constructs

Within the traditional positivistic studies, the careful definition of a construct is perceived as critical in the process of validation, because commonly used terms such as 'aggression' and 'violence' are seen to have different meanings for different individuals (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 1996); these terms have been used interchangeably in the past. This section provides a brief overview of the constructs as they have been used by various authors in the past. The intelligence thus gained is applied to the specific context of the workplace and the resultant definitions of workplace aggression and violence.

The Nails that Hold the Frame Together: The Different Facets of Aggression and Violence

Customarily, aggression has been characterised as injurious or destructive behaviour that is defined as aggressive within the social context (Bandura, 1973), or any act in which one individual intentionally attempts to harm another (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Aggression in this context is taken to be any behaviour where the aggressor delivers a noxious stimulus to another person with the objective of causing harm to that person. Similarly, violence is defined as an act carried out with the intention of causing corporeal distress in another person. Literature generally agrees that if the harm caused to a person is physical in nature, then the behaviour that caused it can be classified as violent (Bowie, 2002; Neuman & Baron,

1998).

Dichotomies of aggression and violence

Various authors have identified analogous concepts on the continuum of human aggression. Buss (1961) was one of the first to classify acts of human aggression in terms of three dichotomies: verbal-physical, direct-indirect, and active-passive. Verbal forms of aggression inflict damage through words rather than deeds, while physical forms intend some type of injury to the victim. Direct forms of aggression occur when harm is overtly delivered to the victim, while indirect forms involve impairment to the victims being conveyed through an intermediary, or through assault on persons or objects valued by the victim. Active aggression produces harm through the performance of some behaviour, while passive aggression delivers harm through the withholding of an action. Eight forms of aggression (see Table 2.1) can be based on this classification system (Buss, 1961).

Table 2.1 Eight forms of aggression according to Buss (1961)

<u>Type of Aggression</u>	<u>Example</u>
Verbal-passive-indirect	Failure to deny false rumours about the target; Failure to convey information essential to the target's functioning;
Verbal-passive-direct	Failure to return telephone calls; Giving the target the silent treatment;
Verbal-active-indirect	Spreading false rumours about the target; Belittling the target's opinions to others;

<u>Type of Aggression</u>	<u>Example</u>
Verbal-active-direct	Insults, yelling, shouting; Flaunting status or authority, acting in a condescending manner; Abusive communications, including verbal and written threats (Mullen, 1997);
Physical-passive-indirect	Causing hindrance with regard to matters of importance to the target; Failing to take precautions to guarantee the target's safety;
Physical-passive-direct	Purposely leaving the area when the target enters; Reducing the target's opportunity to express themselves; Non-verbal communications of threat or derogation (Mullen, 1997); Behaviours contributing to an atmosphere of fear, including intimidation, exclusion, informal initiation of new employees, and mobbing behaviours (Mullen, 1997);
Physical-active-indirect	Theft or destruction of property belonging to the target; Needlessly consuming resources needed by the target; Stalking, referring to an unwarranted intrusion of a person's private space through loitering near the victim or making unsolicited communications in a manner that creates apprehension in the victim for their safety, and would evoke apprehension in any reasonable person in the same situation;

<u>Type of Aggression</u>	<u>Example</u>
Physical-active-direct	Physical attack (pushing, shoving, hitting, etc); Negative or obscene gestures towards the target; Physical abuse, which includes physically intrusive behaviours that do not result in actual physical harm (Mullen, 1997); Physical assault, which results in actual harm, either minor injuries, such as those requiring first aid; major injuries, which require medical assistance; or injuries resulting in death; Sexual harassment, which is a form of illegal sexual discrimination as a result of the victim being selected on the basis of their gender (Mullen, 1997).

Integrating dimensions of aggression and violence

Neuman and Baron (1998) and later Rutter and Hine (2005) recommended that the following three umbrella dimensions of aggression be used in order to organise the eight categories of Table 2.1 above:

- *Expressions of hostility.* These include behaviours that are primarily verbal or symbolic in nature, which are likely to take an emotional toll and occur more than any other form of aggression. Ostracism or intentionally ignoring someone is a pervasive phenomenon. Verbal forms of aggression are often more frequent, producing serious consequences for the targets, such as damaged reputations and careers, and may result in the strong desire for retaliation amongst the victims. These forms of aggression may serve as initial steps in the practice of aggression that lead gradually to more active and direct forms (Baron & Neuman, 1996). Many of the aggressive actions which occur frequently can be categorized under the term ‘organisational politics’, with actions such as neglecting to deny rumours, failure to advise victims of crucial meetings, or withholding support (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Rutter & Hine, 2005).

- *Obstructionism*. This includes actions that are designed to impede an individual's ability to achieve certain tasks or, with reference to the workplace, obstruct an organisation's capacity to meet its objectives. The majority involve expressions of a passive-aggressive nature, such as withholding a resource or behaviour, and due to this covert character are exceedingly difficult to track (Baron & Neuman, 1996). Passive forms are more common than the active forms of aggression (such as outright attack), and may fail to trigger a search for the source of harm due to any negative outcomes being ascribed to external factors rather than the perpetrator (Baron & Neuman, 1996). The harm done to the victim is maximised while retaining the secrecy of the identity of the perpetrator. Deliberate actions may result in the wastage of valuable resources and may manifest in retaliatory behaviours (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).
- *Overt aggression*. This usually includes non-fatal or fatal physical and sexual assault, property damage or theft, and sabotage. Indirect forms of overt aggression, which harm the victim through the actions of agents other than the aggressor, or injure persons or damage objects valued by the victim, involve the performance of overt actions, which may prompt the victim to search for the aggressor or source of the harm (Baron & Neuman, 1996). As such, while passive forms of aggression are common, indirect forms of aggression may be less common due to the likelihood of the victim searching for the perpetrator in order to retaliate.

Definitions of violence form a continuum ranging from those which merely include physical assault to broader definitions that include threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, and emotional or psychological abuse (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Painter, 1987). In order to delineate this continuum, Mullen (1997) proposes a scale to classify the degrees of severity of aggressive behaviours:

- I Intrusions into privacy that are experienced as intimidating;
- II Verbal abuse;
- III Verbal abuse with specific threats or physical action against inanimate objects;
- IV Physical abuse without injury;

- V Physical assault with minor injury (cuts or bruises);
- VI Physical assault with severe injury (needing hospital care);
- VII Physical assault resulting in death.

Bevelling the Edges: Distinguishing Between Workplace Aggression and Workplace Violence

Definitions of workplace aggression and violence are many and varied, addressing the spectrum of the continuum of aggressive behaviours seen above. The International Labour Organisation's definition includes a large variety of behaviours such as homicide, rape, robbery, wounding, battering, stalking, harassment, bullying, intimidation, innuendo, deliberate silence and systematic collective violence (which consists of subjecting a target employee to psychological harassment) that result in considerable detriment to the person's physical and psychological well-being (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000). The European Commission views workplace violence as those events in which persons are mistreated, intimidated or assaulted in circumstances that are associated with their work, and that involve an overt or implied challenge to their security, welfare or health (Wynne, Clarkin, Cox, & Griffiths, 1997; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000).

However, many early definitions fail to distinguish between aggression and violence, using terms interchangeably and creating a certain amount of confusion which other authors have attempted to address. Although the terms 'workplace violence' and 'workplace aggression' are seen as forming part of the same concept, more researchers are insisting that it is crucial for them to be differentiated from each other (Greenberg & Barling, 1999; O'Leary-Kelly et al., 1996; Schat & Kelloway, 2005).

Authors such as Bowie (2002), Neuman and Baron (1998), and Schat and Kelloway (2005), consequently use the term 'workplace aggression' in order to define those efforts of certain individuals within a workplace to harm other employees, or the organisations in which they are currently, or were formerly employed. Thus 'workplace aggression' is a general term encompassing all forms of behaviour by which employees attempt to harm others at work or their organisations (Bowie, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Such behaviour can be physically, verbally or psychologically injurious to the individual (Jawahar, 2002; Kennedy,

Homant, & Homant, 2004; O’Leary-Kelly et al., 1996), and there is an implication that the threat of violence must be taken as seriously as actual physical violence in any definition (Bowie, 2002).

The term ‘workplace violence’, however, is used by many researchers to refer to a small subset of behaviours which have the intention of harm, and which entail direct physical assault to the individual (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Schat & Kelloway, 2005). Within the organisation, all intentional harm-doing would qualify as workplace aggression, while workplace violence is deemed to apply to only serious cases of physical assault. O’Leary-Kelly et al. (1996) classify workplace violence as the zenith of a destructive act, in other words, the consequences of an act of aggression would be violence, which is quantified in terms of injury to the victim. They add another dimension to the definition through referring to organisation-motivated aggression, which is defined as the attempted injurious or destructive behaviour, initiated by either an organisational insider or outsider, which is instigated by some factor present in the organisational context itself. Likewise, organisation-motivated violence is the significant negative result that occurs as a result of organisation-motivated aggression. The underlying motivation for an act becomes the defining issue, as opposed to the location in which the act occurs.

Recently, Schat and Kelloway (2005, p. 191) extended the definitions to define workplace aggression as “behaviour by an individual or individuals within or outside an organisation that is intended to physically or psychologically harm a worker or workers and occurs in a work-related context”. It is believed that their reference to the term “aggression”, as opposed to violence (expressions traditionally used interchangeably), broadens the term to include a wider variety of interpersonally harmful behaviours: whereas violence implies behaviours that are by definition aggressive, not all aggressive behaviours are violent (as in bullying). This definition, however, does not include the organisation as a whole, and denies organisational culpability towards the individual, yet it does not limit the frequency or duration of the aggressive behaviour as some of the other definitions do. The definition additionally includes extra-organisational sources of aggression, an important distinction.

To avoid the confusion surrounding the terms ‘aggression’ and ‘violence’ completely, some authors have been motivated to refer to “counterproductive work behaviour and

violence” (Spector, Fox, & Domagalski, 2006, p. 30), a subset that includes intentional acts of employees that harm organisations or their stakeholders. This includes physical violence against people, as well as milder forms of aggression such as verbal derogation. Acts directed towards the organisation in the destruction of property, incorrect work attitudes, and withdrawal from work attendance when not incapacitated, are also incorporated (Spector et al., 2006).

The Emergence and Prevalence of Psychological Forms of Aggression.

Non-physical aggression (such as intrusions and verbal abuse), whilst more difficult to measure (Budd, 1999), is more prevalent in the workplace than overt violence. Aggressors are more likely to act in a manner that will be successful in doing harm to the victim while at the same time risking as little danger to themselves as possible (Baron & Neuman, 1996). There are several factors present in the work setting that reinforce this preference: persons in work settings are often in regular and prolonged contact with one another, which means that aggressors can reasonably anticipate meeting their victims intermittently over extended periods of time. The likelihood of retaliation of the victim in these settings would therefore be perceived to be quite high (Geddes & Baron, 1997). Additionally, because of the need to work together and coordinate activities in the work setting, colleagues often pay close attention to each other’s behaviour. As a result, workplaces generally have an audience of observers who are more likely to notice overtly aggressive behaviours and censure them. As such, aggressive behaviours in the workplace are often more often covert in nature, and aggressors strongly prefer modes of hostility that allow them to camouflage their identity and purpose: preferred forms of aggression in the workplace would therefore be more likely to be verbal, passive and obliquely applied, rather than physical, active and direct (Baron & Neuman, 1996).

In recent years, two forms of psychological aggression and violence have been reported to be on the increase (Girardi et al., 2007; Leymann, 1990). ‘Bullying’ is described as the frequently recurring unfavourable conduct towards a person by others in the workplace, subjecting that person to offensive behaviour that is malicious, spiteful or degrading and is unwarranted and improper workplace practice (Barron, 2002; Jennifer, Cowie, & Ananiadou, 2003; Mayhew, 2002). The power of the bully lies in making people

remain silent through fear, whilst the subtle psychological erosion of the person's character and resilience is difficult to put into a formal complaint (Adams, 1997). A recent study qualitatively evaluated workplace bullying and found the most salient risk factors in bullying to be job ambiguity, complexity and autonomy, followed by job insecurity and working in a stressful condition that allows for little social control. Unclear allocation of tasks and an absence of a clear job description are factors of uncertainty that increase the likelihood of bullying occurring (Baillien, Neyens & De Witte, 2008), along with role conflicts and lack of role clarity (Notelaers, De Witte, & Einarsen, 2010). A good deal of bullying is based on personal envy, which occurs because a quality perceived to be possessed by the person is not possessed by the bully, making them a threat to that bully's position. Any action may be seen by the bully as the legitimate removal of the competition, especially when they feel that their professional competence has been challenged by the victim. The tyrannical side of the bully is often seen and experienced in a different way by the person's superiors or an outsider, who often perceive the bully as charismatic, dynamic and compelling (Adams, 1997).

'Mobbing' or psychological terrorism, consists of psychic terror used by a group against a particular victim, methodically stigmatising the victim through discrimination, or violation of rights, and entails ganging up on or mobbing a target employee, subjecting that person to psychological harassment (Leymann, 1990; Mayhew, 2002).

There are four critical incident phases of mobbing behaviour which can be identified (Leymann, 1990):

- *Phase I, the Original Critical Incident*, is a relatively short phase in which the initiating condition is most often difference of opinions, usually over some aspect of the work.
- *Phase II, Mobbing and Stigmatising*, in which the actions have an injurious effect as they are methodically used over a long period of time with the intention of causing damage. The main purpose is to reprimand the person for a perceived wrong, entailing blackening the victim's reputation, negative communication with the victim (including non-verbal glances, loud-voiced criticism), social isolation from the group, making their work appear meaningless or demeaning in some way, and levelling threats of violence or performing deeds of actual violence against them.
- *Phase III, Personnel Administration*, occurs when management steps in and the case

is officially investigated. During this phase, serious violations of justice can transpire, such as management presuming that the source of the problem is logically the victim, as a result of the victim's defensive behaviour.

- *Phase IV, Expulsion*, in which the victim is barred from working life, causing further stigmatisation, such as the individual being mandatorily assigned long term sick leave, being allocated work tasks that are degrading, or management insisting on psychiatric treatment for them.

The majority of bullying and mobbing behaviour is verbal and indirect, with considerable scope for a wide range of subtle tactics that can be divided into five main groups: threat to professional status; threat to personal repute; isolation; overwork; and destabilisation (Jennifer et al., 2003). Behaviours such as making incessant negative remarks about a person, continuous criticism, dissemination of false information or subjecting them to constant ridicule (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000), offensive language and withholding of information, persistent attacks on a person's personal and professional performance, exclusion from meetings and setting of impossible tasks (Adams, 1997), are common. The person must feel harassed, their work must be negatively affected, and there must be a measure of regularity in order for the definition of workplace bullying to be applied (Rayner & Hoel, 1997).

There appears to be a conspiracy of silence when it comes to these forms of psychological abuse as a large majority of employees favour enduring the abuse in order to protect their jobs, rather than electing to protest the treatment. Although the perpetrators can be either management or fellow workers (Leymann, 1990), a large percentage of the accused bullies (up to 80%) are identified as line managers: as a result, confronting the bully often results in the employee being fired (Adams, 1997). The organisation conveys an implicit sanctioning of bullying, since when it occurs, it usually filters from the top down, and is seen as being an acceptable way to manage, resulting in the frequent promotion of the bully.

It is incongruous that many Western governments encourage employers to implement the most current procedures in order to promote the fair treatment of employees, yet at the same time many organisations fail to shield their staff from bullying, classified as one of the most worrying, destructive, degrading and financially undermining forces at large in the

workplace (Adams, 1997; Mayhew, 2002). The health-related consequences engendered by psychological aggression at work can be as severe as those from physical violence (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007), and involve depressed mood, difficulty in making decisions, change-related anguish, somatic symptoms, higher need for attention and affection, and the exhibition of passive-aggressive traits (Girardi et al., 2007). At its worst, it can result in clinical depression, other psychological problems, psychosomatic illness, or panic attacks, and may result in the victim being unable to find employment or may lead to the eventual suicide of the victim (Adams, 1997; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Leymann, 1990). The economic consequences are dismal: long periods of sick leave, a decrease in production, and the essential, regular intervention by personnel officers, management, external consultants or health care centres (Leymann, 1990). Additionally, bullying, which is so often excused with labels such as ‘personality clash’ or ‘autocratic management style’, can be detrimental to the retention of the human resources of the company (Adams, 1997).

The Style of the Frame: Types of Workplace Aggression and Violence

From attempts to define facets of workplace aggression and violence, the focus shifts towards the delineation of specific types. While traditional approaches suggest three main types of violence in the workplace, Bowie (2011) classifies four types of workplace aggression and violence, expanding on the typology of Kraus et al. (1995), and Neuman and Baron (1998). The following types of workplace aggression and violence can be experienced by employees of an organisation (Bowie, 2011; Kennedy et al., 2004; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002):

Type 1 – External or Intrusive Violence

This type is perpetrated by persons external to the organisation (Mayhew & Chappell, 2001), and includes violence motivated by gain, such as theft or criminal activities, and violence not motivated by obviously extrinsic gain, such as vandalism, or assault (Bowie, 2011; Knefel & Bryant, 2004; Mayhew, 2002; Mullen, 1997; Resnick & Kausch, 1995). The victims are targeted, but others may be injured as a result of being present at the same time and in the same place (Schat & Kelloway, 2005). This is sometimes referred to as

instrumental aggression (Hoad, 1993), and the workplace is referred to as the opportunity structure in which crimes of this nature can take place (Knefel & Bryant, 2004). The target is engaged with clearly defined goals that have been well thought out in advance. The aggression is as a result of ‘psyching up’ beforehand, and possibly conceals a certain amount of apprehension and nervousness. Individuals are volatile and unpredictable in this situation and use extreme levels of violence quite readily (Grainger, 1996; Hoad, 1993). The crime is opportunistic, and often the victim enters the scene at just the wrong moment, coinciding with the robbery. The criminal in this case is often violent or aggressive in nature, and often has a history of drug or alcohol abuse that increases an already volatile nature (Burgess et al., 1994). Also included here would be hate crimes or crimes of terrorism (Bowie, 2011; Mayhew, 2002). Organisational outsiders generally have less influence over the employee’s work experience due to the individual being less likely to blame the organisation for the act, and response options within the organisation serve to bolster the employee’s confidence (Herschcovis & Barling, 2010).

Type 2 – Consumer or Patient Related Violence

This includes employees of service-based occupations where the character of the occupation itself puts them at risk for violence from disgruntled customers, clients or patients (Mayhew & Chappell, 2001), or where factors intrinsic to carrying out the job itself (dangerous occupations such as police, security or the military) lead to a higher likelihood of violence. Violence occurs where the task is primarily carried out, and the victims are usually employees conducting their usual work routine (like policemen) who are assaulted by a violent client or criminal (Knefel & Bryant, 2004; Grainger, 1996; Hopkins, 2002; Mayhew, 2002). Angry or reactive aggression occurs as a direct response to a stimulus of some kind, which may appear to be quite innocuous or inconsequential to the majority of people (Hoad, 1993). Included here are the categories of vicarious trauma experienced by employees, and staff violence against those whom they “are expected to be serving” (Bowie, 2011, p. 45).

Type 3 – Staff Relationship Violence

This occurs when the employee is placed at risk as a result of interactions between co-

workers, and occurs within the context of the workplace, as a result of conflict between workers and dissent arising out of the situation at work, such as organisational culture, management style and organisational strategy (Bowie, 2011; Kennedy et al., 2002; Mullen, 1997; Resnick & Kausch, 1995). It can also be a result of current or former employees or other persons with employment-related involvement with the organisation, such as an employee's spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, friend, relative or a person who has a dispute with an employee (Kraus et al., 1995; Scalora, Washington, Casady, & Newell, 2003). Bowie (2002) defines this type of violence as relationship violence, where the employees are themselves the aggressors, as in the case of bullying, mobbing or harassment, and consequently it is sometimes referred to as horizontal violence.

Type 4 – Organisational Violence

In addition to the three traditionally identified forms of violence above, a further category of violence, *Type 4*, is identified by Bowie (2011), namely, the violence which is committed by the organisation itself. The way in which an organisation is structured and managed can provoke aggression (Bowie, 2002; Mayhew, 2002). This organisational violence emphasises the role the organisation can play in triggering violence by knowingly placing employees in hazardous or unpredictable situations (termed Type V violence by Kgosimore (2004), or by permitting a climate of bullying, harassment, insecurity or abuse to thrive in the workplace (Knefel & Bryant, 2004; Scalora et al., 2003). This violence-inducing climate can include concerns about downsizing or layoffs, chronic worker-management conflict, ineffectual communication, and unjust decisions by management (Bowie, 2011). Rapid and ruthless organisational change may be a key trigger in what is often perceived as individual pathology, while a constructive management culture could be part of minimising the impact of internal and external violence upon the organisation. Thus what may appear to be Types 1-3 workplace violence might have initiation in organisational factors, filtering down through a negative management culture, which can maximise the effects of internal and external violence on the organisation (Bowie, 2011).

One Frame Cannot Compliment a Multitude of Paintings: Limitations of Conventional Definitions

From the above attempts to define the concept, it can be seen that the new profile of aggression and violence at work grants the same emphasis to physical and psychological behaviour and acknowledges the implication of minor acts of violence within the work environment. Unsurprisingly, then, given the subtle nuances and scope of a socially entrenched act such as this, conventional researchers have long struggled with the issue of defining workplace violence (Bowie, 2002; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Painter, 1987; Waddington, Badger, & Bull, 2005). The nature of violence is such that it resists attempts to view it as simplistically linear. Violence is not an inert or absolute element, and is exhibited in an extremely wide range of contexts ranging from the parental discipline of children, to abuse, punishment or instrumental deployment of physical violence by people authorized to act in such a manner, such as police officers or the military (Waddington et al., 2005). Additionally, the experience of violence or aggression is subjective, given that an individual acts uniquely in the light of personal experiences, skills and differences in personality: the same violent act might have a different impact on the people involved (Bowie, 2002; Painter, 1987).

From a theoretical standpoint, the definitions cited above are problematic for a number of reasons:

- As is to be expected, a major challenge for all concrete definitions is the subtlety that occurs in the definition of an incident as occurring ‘at work’, since time and place may not provide clear answers to this (Van Fleet & Van Fleet, 2009): the work-places of many are not as clearly defined as for those who are confined within the precincts of an office block.

- As a result of the wide range of actions that they encompass, definitions are inclusive of any violence that takes place in the area in which an individual carries out his or her work-related tasks, irrespective of the antecedents and theoretical explanations that may be coupled to the different violent situations (Leather et al., 1999; Neuman & Baron, 1998; O’Leary-Kelly et al., 1996). The term ‘workplace’ has come to mean

many different places – employees now work from home, travel to clients' premises, or have different work sites (Beech & Leather, 2006). The situation becomes more complicated in policing, where a policeman who is shot while making an arrest, and an event concerning a policeman who, as a result of organisational stressors and personal problems, shoots his supervisors and colleagues, are collectively construed as workplace violence or aggression, leading to one theoretical framework being applied across all actions and outcomes.

- Many definitions and studies do not identify the perpetrator, assuming that workplace aggression and violence does not differ by perpetrator. This has substantial implications for the estimations of the prevalence of what can truly be called workplace violence according to the studies' own definition thereof. Researchers may overlook mediators and outcomes that are specific to a particular perpetrator (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). For example, a police officer's fear of aggression from a supervisor might cause job insecurity, whilst fear of attack from an outsider or criminal might lead to personal safety concerns. Organisational interventions addressing the two different scenarios would logically be extremely divergent.
- Ambiguity concerning whether a perpetrator is acting with intent, or whether the victim merely has a perception of that intent, occurs in many studies (Hershcovis & Barling, 2007). In this way, a criminal acting under the influence of alcohol may not have an intention of harming an officer, as he is acting in diminished personal capacity, yet the officer may have the perception that such harm is indeed intended. Aggression even without intent may still be harmful to the victim. The use of intent as a defining factor of the violent encounter in the workplace is thus moot.
- Ideological assumptions about the act of workplace aggression and violence have resulted in vastly differing conceptualisations across researchers. Some researchers adopt a management-centred approach, in which an aggressive employee is constructed as deviant, counterproductive or antisocial, threatening the well-being of the organisation and its members. Others, however, adopt an employee-centred approach, in which aggression is seen as resulting from negative situational factors within the organisation, such as poor managerial skills, and as such, the employee's

actions are seen as largely retaliatory in nature. “Confounding the construct with its potential predictors adds to the conceptual ambiguity” (Hershcovis & Barling, 2007, p. 270).

- Workplace aggression and violence fundamentally implies a relationship between two people. Differential experiences within each act of violence make accurate prediction problematic – an employee’s reaction to the stress of a workplace incident is mitigated by factors such as their relationship with the perpetrator (interdependent or not), relative power of the perpetrator and victim, task interdependence and relationship importance; all have a significant influence on the perception of the violent encounter (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010).
- Concepts of acute and chronic stressors are inherent in the definitions: acute stressors are considered to begin at a specific time, have a high intensity, short duration and low frequency, such as a physical assault, whilst chronic stressors have no specific onset, range in intensity and duration and occur frequently, such as ridicule (Schat & Kelloway, 2005). However, definitions become problematic in circumstances such as police work, where violent acts are relatively common, and would thus need to be classified as chronic stressors, even though the intensity thereof is much higher than would be expected by those in other professions, which would classify the events as acute. This has the tendency of blurring the neat boundaries that researchers have traditionally aimed for.
- An decisive factor largely ignored in the discussion of violence and aggression is that behaviours can be externally directed, such as the overwhelming majority of studies address, but also internally directed towards the self in the form of self-harm or suicide (Lion, 1991). This factor has been disregarded by current definitions of workplace aggression, which classify only aggression or violence towards others within the workplace as violent behaviour.

These objections can be summed up by stating that aggression and violence are socially-embedded, fluid phenomena and as such, difficult to circumscribe neatly. This study will attempt to integrate culturally-initiated, historically-grounded facets into the concept of

workplace violence in an attempt to broaden understanding of the multitudinous possibilities that exist when human beings interact negatively with each other.

Splice Together the Four Corners and a Frame Takes Shape: Is an Inclusive Definition Possible?

Given the above considerations, I am loath to delineate an all-inclusive, inflexible definition for the exploration of workplace aggression and violence as they transpire and are revealed in this study. Suffice it to say that, loosely speaking, the research is confined to the intra-organisational commission of violent and aggressive acts, which I deem to include all forms of behaviour, including either physical or verbal, direct or indirect, active or passive, committed by an employee, or previous employee of an organisation. This encompasses attempts to harm themselves; others within the work environment; previous colleagues; or the organisation in which they are employed (or have been previously employed). Behaviour resulting from conflict between employees at work, a situation arising from the work context, or violence motivated by the organisational system itself, thus forms the broad scope. Incorporated is the subset of behaviours that is prompted *by the organisation itself*, implying that some factors in an organisation's culture trigger aggressive behaviour, thus subjecting the violence to some degree of organisational influence and control (Knefel & Bryant, 2004; O'Leary-Kelly et al., 1996). The emphasis is placed on the underlying motivation for the act of workplace violence as the defining issue, as opposed to the location in which the act occurs (i.e. at the place of work).

My tendency to prefer the term 'workplace aggression and violence' within the confines of this study, in contradiction to the contemporary trend towards using the phrases "workplace aggression" (see Schat & Kelloway, 2005, p. 191), or "counterproductive work behaviour" (Spector et al., 2006, p. 30), stems from my involvement with the data of this research project. It is my opinion that these phrases do not pertain to a context such as that of a police force, where the overwhelming emphasis is on acts which can be described as exclusively harm-doing, and involve direct physical assault to an individual. By simply referring to the phenomenon as "workplace aggression", I would fail to convey the seriousness of the interactions: in none of the instances of behaviour cited by the participants

of this study could the actions be termed merely 'aggressive', since their scope was of a much more severe nature. While the study of bullying and the more psychological forms of workplace aggression are equally valid they are not the focus of this study. They are, however, incidentally addressed.

Specific Frames for Specific Paintings: The South African Context

Prior to 1979, discretionary and arbitrary exercise of authority by both the government and management created deep-rooted perceptions of what discrimination and exploitation entailed (Nel, 1988). During this apartheid period, workers in South Africa were deprived in a number of ways; services and employment were heavily racialised, and primarily directed towards Whites (Bowman, Bhamjee, Eagle and Crafford, 2009; Kgosimore, 2004). The majority of workers were economically and politically deprived as well as being denied basic human dignity and life chances through apartheid, racism, poor living conditions and so on (Cohen, 1990). Whilst it would be expected that these individuals would express aggression against those who were the primary sources of their frustration, this often did not occur, probably as a result of the source's perceived superior power and the consequent greater risk involved, and thus other innocent bystanders became the targets of misplaced aggression. The repression and reactionary resistance of the past has led to what has been termed a perpetual culture of violence in South Africa (Kgosimore, 2004).

Rather than addressing the resistance that racial discrimination generated, the State chose rather to suppress it, leading to an escalation of violence. One of the most prominent effects stemming from this was the emergence of intimidation as a social dynamic (Nel, 1988). In fact, Liebenberg (1987, p. 37), in an address to the Labour Horizons Conference stated:

But what is new to the mines...is the nature of the violence. It is a new violence - a different type of violence. It is not the faction fights of communal conflicts...which occurred from time to time particularly during the 1970's. In fact, the major feature of industrial relations conflict in 1987 has been the level and intensity of intimidation and violence that has occurred in the workplace.

It is the intimidation and violence we are increasingly experiencing in industrial disputes... that is today threatening the natural, further growth and development of this country's infant industrial relations system.

Since the late 1970s, when there was a revision of the structures of governance at both national and business levels (the Wiehahn Commission of May, 1979), the power relationship between management and labour experienced elemental changes (Nel, 1988). As a result of the changing political system, the marginalized workers' expectations of the new structure were heightened (Cohen, 1990; Kgosimore, 2004). Traditionally, people in underprivileged conditions, while having few expectations, are disposed to experience less dissatisfaction; as hopes inflate with the belief that working and living conditions will improve, the potential for disenchantment and frustration with the new system also increases. Frustration is moreover most likely to heighten aggression when it is intense, or the source of frustration is perceived as arbitrary or still unfair (Cohen, 1990).

Similarly, Nel (1988, p. 4) noted that "no time is as unsettling or dangerous as when a bad government tries to change", raising expectations and aspirations of changes that have never previously been realistically anticipated. In South Africa during the period of labour reform, there was a significant increase in violence committed by the government, management and labour and trade unions which manifested itself within the workplace (Cohen, 1990). Few channels have existed historically for the airing of socio-political grievances. During the apartheid years, the poor quality of life in South Africa, combined with the fact that violence was seen to achieve results, and the workers' simultaneous conviction that management was able to exert power over the government, all contributed to the increase of violence within the workplace (Cohen, 1990).

From the case where, before the 1970s, management had nearly total control over the fate of their workers, to the late 80s, where the workforce had largely rejected the yoke of authoritarian management, the focus was on the desegregation of the workplace. Development programmes for previously deprived workers were promoted, and directions for the workforce were resolved without legitimate consultation of employees (Nel, 1988). The lack of consultation extended even to the denial of the political rights of workers. Van Holdt (1989, p. 26) stated:

Workplace violence is one aspect of the violence that exists at every level of South African society and at the root of violence is the absence of political rights for the majority. Until the majority have those rights, violence will be a part of life.

The Current Situation in the South African Workplace

The process of moving towards a post-apartheid society (with its accompanying dramatic shift in the nature and functioning of the state), is inescapably attended by the conflict, dissent, insecurity and violence that occur as the previous configurations of social interaction are subsumed by new structures (Du Plessis & Louw, 2005). This occurs both within and outside the workplace as workers begin to demand an end to discriminatory practices, arbitrary uses of authority, and inequities in wages or conditions of employment. Aggression and violence often accompany this type of protest.

Laws that previously promoted the supremacy of a certain group over others (such as the Wage Determinations Validation Act 16 of 1935; the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953), have had the result that even after the demise of apartheid, the majority of employers remain White while more Black individuals are employees (Bowman et al., 2009; Kgosimore, 2004). The Labour Relations Act of 1995, with the support of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), has gone a fair way towards eradicating the exploitation of workers and the conception of a subservient relationship between White employers and Black employees (Kgosimore, 2004). Yet in spite of ground gained, aspects such as isolation from a traditional community and family system, prejudice, racial discrimination and classism prompt the proliferation of aggression and violence in the workplace; management's paternalistic stance towards employees still tends to relegate the worker to an inferior, dependent position (Coomaraswamy, 1996).

As a result, surveys concerning workplace aggression and violence have been conducted in the fields of healthcare, finances, mining, security and transport sectors. Yet in strong contrast to the global trend, these studies are limited, which raises cause for trepidation given the fact that South Africa has amongst the highest rates of aggression and violence in

the world (Bowman et al., 2009). The current wider atmosphere in South Africa is a central component, with its political problems, and migrant labour system contributing to employees' levels of frustration and violent outbursts. In addition, the violent social environment and economy and high levels of unemployment have adverse effects on the lives of workers. Violence in the South African workplace is therefore seen as not merely an organisation-specific issue that can be resolved through the intercession of industrial relations factions, but rather as a trend with precincts that extend beyond the workplace and impact on all aspects of society (Cohen, 1990). The organisation is inherently linked to the society in which it originates; as a social structure, which is made up of members (management and workers) yet is at the same time part of other purposeful systems (organisational stakeholders, the general business environment). It is necessary to address all organisational levels that play a role in the development of workplace aggression and violence in order to effect change.

The Grain of the Wood: A Multi-levelled Description of Potential Causes of Aggression and Violence in the Workplace

As was stated in the introduction to this chapter, quantitative research is especially of interest in its contribution to contemporary discourses of aggression and violence in our society, determining what is seen as normal and what deviant. The idea that a perpetrator of violence can be identified through certain characteristics that he or she possesses or lacks is consistent with this approach, and the concept of physical, intellectual or psychological parameters leads to a predictive and preventative approach to the quantitative study of workplace aggression and violence. It is of critical importance to review such studies in light of the discursive networks that they promote.

Within this realm of quantitative research, the interface of person behaviours, workplace or social factors and situational determinants are evident in violent incidents and this interaction is considered predictive of workplace aggression and violence (Herschcovis et al., 2007; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Systems theory bears directly on the concept, with every act that occurs having an effect on every other act and each part of the organisation forming an integral part of an interconnected system. In incidents of workplace violence, a healthy and functional organisation that is capable of learning will endeavour to comprehend why something has gone wrong by reviewing the entire structure of interconnected events and

decisions, not assuming that a single event, decision or person is accountable for the calamity (Braverman, 2002). Linearly speaking, an act of violence is seen as the conclusion of a series of events, preceded by warning signals for hostility and violence that are as diverse as the multiple systems and levels of the organisation itself. As such, contemporary quantitative research advocates that profiling should be used as a guideline in the selection of personnel in order to exclude potentially aggressive individuals from the workplace (Barling et al., 2009). Needless to say, numerous ethical and legal concerns are raised through the encapsulation of a vibrant human being into a few distinguishing factors: excluding an individual from gainful employment based on a selection of characteristics that are statistically, but tenuously related to violent behaviour, cannot be supported. Additionally, resultant profiling could, arguably, be so generally applicable compared to the relative rarity of the event itself (such as in the case of identifiers like ‘White’, ‘socially isolated’ or ‘finds their identity in their job’), as to be of little practical value or application.

The Personal Determinants of Aggression and Violence

Linear, deterministic (or probabilistic) studies of the human stress response conventionally indicate that unbearable stress will result in one or more of four outcomes: serious or chronic pain or physical illness, emotional breakdown, suicide or violence (Braverman, 2002). A person’s retreat into aggression is seen as largely reliant on certain dispositional characteristics of the individual, which determine the way an individual will react in a provocative situation (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Employee aggression can be viewed as a mode of social control and the way that an employee expresses a grievance (Greenberg & Barling, 1999). In combination with situational correlates, individual characteristics are thought to be predictive of workplace aggression, and research advocates the study of the interaction between individual and situational predictors (Herschcovis et al., 2007). Certain characteristics of behaviour have been linked to the more frequent expression of hostility in the workplace, including demographic characteristics, dispositional traits, behavioural tendencies and past experiences, and thus are used in order to attempt to predict the later commission of aggression (Schat & Kelloway, 2005). This has implications of linear causality, and also results in bolstering discourses that have as their aim the typecasting of certain individuals and their concurrent classification as more ‘dangerous’ than others who do not possess the same range of significant features. Traditionally, the following predictive

variables have been used:

Type A behaviour pattern

Individuals who are classified with a Type A behaviour pattern (described as driven, goal-oriented and ambitious) are often more impatient and irritable, preferring to work alone (Jawahar, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998). They have a tendency to lose their tempers more frequently than do individuals classified with Type B behaviour patterns (described as more laid-back, relaxed and placid). As such, they report a higher frequency of conflict with subordinates, and demonstrate tendencies towards aggression on the job (Baron, 1989; Jawahar, 2002).

Trait anger

Anger has been linked to aggressive behaviour: certain individuals seem to have a higher tendency to react to situations with hostility, being more easily provoked (Herschcovis et al., 2007). This has been linked to expression of interpersonal aggression more than to organisational aggression. Trait anger, when linked with personalities described as narcissistic, has been shown to result in a greater number of violent incidents, due to the vigilant maintenance of ego threats, and yet appears to be mitigated by high self-control (Spector et al., 2006).

Self-monitoring behaviour

People who are classified as low in self-monitoring behaviour (a concept which includes a person's ability to alter words and deeds in order to be sensitive to others and produce a favourable impression of themselves), are less aware of others' reactions, or are perhaps less concerned with these adverse reactions than people high in self-monitoring behaviour would be (Neuman & Baron, 1998). As a result of the fact that low self-monitors are less inclined to adjust their actions to fit the changing situational conditions, they may also be less conciliatory in conflict situations and more provocative in their behaviour to others.

Hostile Attributional bias

An individual who perceives another's attitude as hostile is more likely to feel slighted and retaliate. Some individuals tend to perceive this hostility even when the intent to be hostile is lacking, and develop the expectancy that others will respond to them in negative ways prior to any interaction taking place (Jawahar, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998). These individuals are consequently more likely to respond to even a minor provocation with overt aggression (Dodge & Coie, 1987; Jawahar, 2002).

A previous traumatic experience

A person's previous experience of trauma creates the perception of an unsolvable psychic condition which generates extreme and unremitting emotional strain or anxiety. This trauma may be a large occurrence, such as job termination, or the result of a series of minor events such as negative performance reviews or reprimands (Bensimon, 1994). The employee projects the responsibility for the state of mind onto the situation, a reaction which externalises the blame for the uncomfortable state. The person's thinking becomes increasingly more egocentric, combining thoughts of self-preservation and protection, and violence is perceived as the only way out. Following the period of internal conflict the person may commit or attempt a violent act (Bensimon, 1994). Specific characteristics of organisational environments troubled by trauma include those that have a rigid paramilitary work culture, are plagued by chronic labour or management disputes, have frequent grievances registered by employees, and experience extra-ordinarily large injury claims or under-staffing (Bensimon, 1994).

Internal states

These include unpleasant feelings and hostile thoughts (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Negative affect evokes unpleasant thoughts and memories which may lead in turn to irritation, annoyance and anger (Barling et al., 2009). Subtle feelings may predispose individuals to certain behaviours, to which the effects of cognitive appraisal and processing must be added (Jawahar, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Cognitive appraisal

Cognitive appraisal of the situation may lead to negative feelings being attributed to unpleasant interactions instead of a state of physiological arousal, and this can lead to a misinterpretation of the situation as hostile (Jawahar, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Thus, aggression-related thoughts may elicit aggression and arousal, and the perception of hostile intentions in a neutral situation can potentially lead to an aggressive response (Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Alcohol use

Employee use of alcohol is seen as predictive of aggression in the workplace (Greenberg & Barling, 1999).

An unrealistically high level of employee self-esteem

Self-esteem, by which is meant a favourable global evaluation of oneself, has the possibility of leading to the commission of more violent acts (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). Aggressors see themselves as superior and capable beings; the expression of aggression results from a discrepancy between two views of the self, namely a favourable self-appraisal and an external assessment that is significantly less complimentary (Baumeister et al., 1996; Felson, 1978). Negative feedback received from others in this regard contradicts the constructive view and leads to possible aggression as a result of the fact that people are disinclined to revise their self-appraisals in a more negative direction (Baumeister et al., 1996). Additionally, violent episodes involve a substantial amount of risk; favourable self-appraisal might supply the requisite self-confidence to take the chance of committing a violent act. Aggression may be a consequential response to the unflattering evaluation, which acts to punish the valuator for the unfavourable criticism, discouraging future evaluations from either that person or others, and impugning the other's right to censure (Baumeister et al., 1996). A successful attack achieves a symbolic dominance over the other and re-establishes the aggressor's sense of self-esteem with regards to being superior to the victim.

An untreated psychiatric disorder

Aggression and violence in the workplace is sometimes a manifestation of an untreated psychiatric disorder such as paranoid personality disorder, paranoid schizophrenia and delusional disorders (Boxer, 1993). Workers can exhibit violent behaviour as a reaction to the belief that certain other workers or managers are threatening or persecuting them. Personality disorders, which are characterised by a constellation of long-standing maladaptive behaviours that cause subjective suffering or impairment in social or occupational functioning, may make the individual with the disorder misinterpret the words and actions of others as intimidating or humiliating (Boxer, 1993).

The Social Determinants of Aggression and Violence

Arway (2002) suggests that the work environment plays a distinctive role in the development of aggressive behaviour: social learning theory determines an individual's imitation of popular role models; the definition of deviant behaviour is established socially; and the individual's alliance with and reinforcement from certain groups determines consequent displays of aggression. If aggression pervades the workplace, it seems likely that employees assimilate the behaviour from their contact with society and then pass on the negative behaviours in the workplace (Arway, 2002; Storms & Spector, 1987). Stressors also correlate significantly with reported aggressive acts within the workplace, such as belligerence, disparaging comments, disregarding the instructions of the boss, sabotage, aggression, unremitting labour and management disputes, grievances filed by employees, a significant number of injury claims (particularly for psychological reasons), and under-staffing or resignation (Chen & Spector, 1992; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Spector, 1975; Storms & Spector, 1987).

From a behavioural viewpoint, it is assumed that employers use personnel practices as a means for the management of employee attitudes and behaviours, and these activities will fluctuate according to the diverse characteristics of different organisations (Jackson, Schuler, & Rivero, 1989; Lewis & Zare, 1999). Certain social factors seem to have a trigger effect that is relevant to the discussion of aggression in the workplace, such as:

Perceptions of injustice

The degree to which procedural justice is judged as being present in the organisation affects the levels of frustration experienced by employees (Greenberg & Barling, 1999). Perceived injustice has been linked to negative employee reactions such as theft and employee aggression, physical and verbal reactions (Chen & Spector, 1992), and negative reactions to employee layoffs (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Perceptions of unequal distributive justice (which refers to the perceived fairness of the rewards employees receive for their performance) may lead employees to even out a perceived inequity by lowering their inputs or attempting to raise their outcomes (Greenberg & Barling, 1999). Perpetrators of violent acts such as homicide often reveal perceptions of organisational injustice, and show a desire for revenge against what they perceive as their organisation's inequitable or unreasonable treatment of them (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Poor leadership abilities and interpersonal injustice seem to be strong motivators for supervisor-targeted aggression (Hershcovis et al., 2007).

Frustration-inducing events

Interference with on-going goal directed behaviour has often been seen as an antecedent of violent behaviour (Baron & Richardson, 1994). Violent behaviour is often the result of impeding perpetrators' goal-directed behaviour in a manner seen as being unfair, intentional, illegitimate or unwarranted (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Frustration is positively correlated with aggression against others, interpersonal hostility, sabotage, strikes, work slowdowns, theft, and employee withdrawal (Spector, 1975; Storms & Spector, 1987).

Increased workforce diversity

If not managed correctly, the increasingly diverse workplaces in many countries may lead to tension and heightened interpersonal conflict. People tend to be attracted to those they see as similar to them, and repulsed by those seen as dissimilar (Kenny, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Increased diversity leads to recurrent contact between different race groups, with the associated complications of strained interpersonal communication and mutual stereotyping that lead to higher levels of aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Kenny, 2002).

Differences which are perceived as insurmountable by employees generate negative feelings, and may decrease interpersonal attraction or increase the potential for aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Kenny, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Normative behaviour and norm violations

Many workers feel that aggression is a normal part of the job, viewing any behaviour that is aggressive as job related and hardly ever exposing negative incidents when they occur (Neuman & Baron, 1998). When an organisational climate is fostered that celebrates toughness, macho behaviour or contention, it becomes the norm for the individual to act in these ways. Additionally, the violation of certain norms is seen as an act worthy of retaliation. Aggression is often employed against members of the organisation who violate established production norms, especially if they are seen to be outperforming their colleagues, who take action to reduce their accomplishments (Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Excessive supervision or micro-management

Supervision of employees tends to increase the amount of stress perceived by employees and decreases social interaction with co-workers and supervisors, leading to adverse health consequences, tension, fatigue, anxiety, depression and anger (Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Kenny, 2002; Lewis & Zare, 1999). An autocratic and controlling style of management leads to a greater risk for employee health problems and contributes to a toxic work environment (Lewis & Zare, 1999).

Negative performance appraisals

Providing negative performance evaluations to employees is a difficult and stressful interaction, and may have detrimental effects on their attitudes and behaviours if perceived as an ego threat, eliciting defensiveness, negative affect and conflict among members of the organisation (Geddes & Baron, 1997). Providing negative feedback in an already overcharged emotional atmosphere may serve to increase the likelihood of aggressive worker behaviour. Many managers express concern that employees might become defensive or aggressive or choose to retaliate in some manner if negative feedback is conveyed.

Organisations should beware of existing appraisal practices that are possibly the cause of elevating the frustration levels of employees and should consider revising these procedures (Geddes & Baron, 1997). Aggressive reactions of employees are usually verbal, indirect or passive, and only a small percentage of the reactions can be classified as physical, direct and active in nature. As hostility of a relatively minor grade persists on the part of the employee, the manager might feel forced to exert firmer pressure, such as threats or punishment, to improve the uncooperative behaviour. The extra demands may inadvertently increase the possibility of more serious employee aggression (Geddes & Baron, 1997). The employee's response to negative criticism substantially disrupts the work-related rapport between the manager and the subordinate, and the manager's capacity to encourage and facilitate employee performance is reduced.

Verbal and physical attack

Provocative encounters are often blamed for the later expression of aggression and violence, and either verbal or physical attack, while at first inciting efforts of reconciliation, statements of submission, or even blatant escape, gradually deteriorates into aggressive reactions if the assault does not end (Baron & Richardson, 1994). Cutting comments and sarcastic remarks cause the individual concerned to lose face in front of colleagues, with the potential of escalating into violent brawls.

The Situational Triggers of Aggression and Violence

As an individual is typecast for the variables linked to violent behaviour that they may possess, situational and organisational factors are suggested as predictors of workplace aggression (Schat & Kelloway, 2005). The 'recipe' for violence includes a situation that propels a person towards the behaviour, as mere personal predispositions and social determinants do not single-handedly qualify as predictive of violence (Braverman, 2002). Certain factors related to the situation are more likely to result in aggressive outbursts of employees than others. These include:

Environmental conditions

Conditions such as high temperatures, humidity, extreme cold or poor lighting are all linked to increased levels of aggression. As a result of cost cutting business practices, workers are often required to function under less than optimal working conditions (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Rotton & Cohn, 2004).

Loss of predictable safety

Changing aspects of the work environment such as being passed over for promotion, layoffs or labour disputes also open the conduits for the conduct of violent behaviour (Burgess et al., 1994; Paul & Townsend, 1998). Retrenchments and downsizing appear to have an effect on the aggression displayed in the workplace, as a result of the stress and frustration experienced by the employees and the perceived powerlessness of the individual over the retention of their employment (Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Loss of structure in the workplace, loss of predictable safety and inability to function alone leads to isolation and insecurity for the employee, which can result in aggressive behaviour. Certain changes occurring in the work setting (such as changes in management), or adverse working conditions (such as job insecurity), are directly related to decreased job satisfaction, increased levels of anxiety, more resignations, and workplace aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Greenberg & Barling, 1999).

Through the Varnish Glows the True Grain of the Wood: The Prediction of Aggressive and Violent Behaviour

Everything passes and vanishes;

Everything leaves its trace;

And often you see in a footprint

What you could not see in a face.

(William Allingham, as cited in Ricks, 1999)

Mental health professionals are frequently placed in situations where they must assess the future risk of violent behaviour. Many contemporary researchers believe that the ability to foresee danger in order to prevent it is a matter of enormous practical importance. However, the validity of the prediction of violence still remains questionable due to the low rate at which the behaviour occurs, given that science is ineffective in predicting infrequent events (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kuzmits, 1990; Lidz, Mulvey, & Gardner, 1993; Mossman, 1994; Resnick & Kausch, 1995). Previous quantitative research into the prediction of violence has included many methodological flaws, such as using police arrests, commitment hearings or clinical records as predictors for future violent behaviour, leading to an underestimation of the actual figures (Lidz et al., 1993). Gender bias has been shown to affect clinical judgement of dangerousness, in that women are less likely to be perceived as having a capacity for violence than men, and clinicians tend to be biased in attempting to predict the violence of women (Lidz et al., 1993; Resnick & Kausch, 1995). As males are recognised as being more aggressive than females, clinicians tend to exhibit much more leniency towards women, assuming them to be non-violent or less capable of violence. However, this soft approach to some females leads to them being disregarded in terms of risk for commission of violence, with disastrous consequences.

Although a scientifically-valid, predictive model may be elusive to the traditional researchers, research has nevertheless revealed cases in which certain warning signals occur that appear to be too threatening to be ignored (Kuzmits, 1990; Paul & Townsend, 1998). This research has led to the construction of the typical profile of a workplace killer, which, although restricting the analysis of workplace aggression and violence as a social phenomenon, nevertheless should be mentioned here in the pursuit of a complete understanding. Contemporary research believes that the 'typical' offender:

- is a White male between 30 and 40 years of age. People in this age group tend to experience more stress as a result of marital transitions, possible deaths of parents, loss of self-worth due to being retrenched, and dreams of wealth and a greater status not being realised (Barling et al, 2009; Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kausch & Resnick, 2001; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Rutter & Hine, 2005; Winstok, 2006). Certain dominance issues related to race and gender might be underlying factors in this construct;

- is a person who has lost a job or perceives that he will soon lose his job (Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Stuart, 1992). Lower status within the workplace is also a predictive factor for workplace hostility, and especially bullying (South & Wood, 2006; Winstok, 2006);
- possesses a low IQ, which is predictive of future aggressive behaviour. It has been argued that persons with higher IQs are able to deal with stress in a variety of ways, such as talking to friends for support, and additionally are more inclined to respond verbally to threats. Intellectually impaired individuals are more likely to revert to primal physical responses (Resnick & Kausch, 1995);
- finds his identity in the job. At risk individuals may have limited interpersonal skills, and as a result, their lives may have few chances for social interactions, and their jobs take on a significantly larger importance in their lives. The over-enmeshed relationship that develops with their career might lead to their feeling diminished without it, and the feeling that their very existence is coupled with their status and career makes the loss of a job particularly distressing. Many perceive changes in their work to be directed at them personally, and not merely arbitrary personnel decisions; this leads to feelings of persecution and victimisation in the workplace (Bensimon, 1994; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Stuart, 1992);
- has a history of problems such as conflicts with colleagues and supervisors, and a history of violent behaviour (Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kausch & Resnick, 2001; Kenny, 2002; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Stuart, 1992). Many individuals who commit a violent act show an escalation of behaviour before the episode, with incidents such as frequent arguments with co-workers or supervisors that make use of abusive language, domestic violence, trouble with the police for disorderly conduct, and inappropriate behaviour at social gatherings (Lewis & Zare, 1999). Understanding of the forces that led to prior violent acts improves the ability to evaluate current risk of violence (Resnick & Kausch, 1995);
- is a loner who isolates himself from colleagues and has few friends or family that are supportive (Bensimon, 1994; Kenny, 2002; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Stuart, 1992);
- may be undergoing private stress such as a divorce or death in the family (Bensimon, 1994; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995);

- has difficulty in accepting authority (Bensimon, 1994);
- repeatedly violates company policies or rules (Bensimon, 1994);
- has a tendency to hold others responsible for his difficulties (Bensimon, 1994; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Stuart, 1992);
- has shown recent suicidal behaviour or expressed a desire to commit suicide (Kenny, 2002);
- threatens fellow employees or supervisors (Bensimon, 1994; Kenny, 2002; Lewis & Zare, 1999);
- may have a history of substance abuse (Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kenny, 2002; Olivier, Roos, & Bergh, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Stuart, 1992). Alcohol and substance abuse may be indicative of impaired judgment, paranoid reasoning and increased risk of violent behaviour. It contributes to loss of inhibitions, job-performance impairment and diminished self-control (Lewis & Zare, 1999);
- has a fascination with weapons (Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kausch & Resnick, 2001; Kenny, 2002; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995). The purchase of a weapon, especially on impulse, should be viewed with some suspicion (Lewis & Zare, 1999);
- has a history of depression, paranoia, or another psychiatric disorder such as paranoid ideation, or delusions of persecution (Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kausch & Resnick, 2001; Kenny, 2002; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995);
- may have a neurological disorder such as tumours, syphilis, blood infections, or Parkinson's disease which may affect cognitive functioning (Lewis & Zare, 1999; Resnick & Kausch, 1995);
- frequently talks about his past incidents of violence (Bensimon, 1994);
- works in a company with an authoritarian management style such as the police force (Bensimon, 1994);
- has a history of impulsive behaviour such as frequent job changes for little reason, a sudden interest or disinterest in hobbies, frequent short-term romantic attachments, the purchasing of items beyond their capacity, involvement in poorly thought out investments or frequent change of residence for no apparent reason (Lewis & Zare, 1999; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995);

- has a history of compulsive behaviour such as addictions, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, gambling or even over-eating (Lewis & Zare, 1999);
- has a history of trauma, abuse or neglect, which is seen as being damaging to self-esteem and self-image. A person may develop defence mechanisms to ward off the feelings of humiliation, shame or loss of control, which may take the form of compulsions or impulsiveness, mood swings or risk-taking behaviours (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Paul & Townsend, 1998).

The results of these studies and numerous others like them have contributed to contemporary discourses of violence in our society, determining the modern view of normality and deviance. The perpetrator is perceived as deficient in certain physical, intellectual or psychological factors, and as a result, violence is conceivably able to be foretold and prevented. Why so little success in the prediction of workplace offenders occurs in the face of all this research (apart from hindsight reflections on the abnormality of one who has committed aggressive deeds) is a question seldom addressed. Nevertheless, in a bid to curb the prevalence of workplace aggression and violence, these factors are utilised in prevention frameworks and mechanisms of control, and it is these that will receive brief attention in the next section.

Of What Use is the Frame? The Prevention and Control of Workplace Aggression and Violence

*Oh, no no no, it was too cold always
(Still the dead one lay moaning)
I was much too far out all my life
And not waving but drowning.*

*(Stevie Smith, "Not Waving but Drowning",
as cited in Ricks, 1999).*

As a result of the decontextualisation of workplace aggression and violence, and the

concurrent tendency to focus on the psychopathology of only the perpetrator, workplace aggression and violence has the tendency to become meaningless outside the characteristics of that individual (Mullen, 1997). This makes the raising of pertinent questions about management or the wider social realities that may also play a role in the existence of workplace aggression and violence difficult. Consequently, in the traditional approaches, more focus is placed on procedural issues such as workforce selection, early identification of potential violent offenders, the adequacy of insurance to cover liabilities should a violent incident occur, risk management strategies, and training for managers (Schat & Kelloway, 2005). The workplace, organisational culture, and management practice, as potential causative factors for the expression of violent behaviour, are largely ignored, while the impact of a violent society, disgruntled and vengeful workers or individual pathology take central position. Beech and Leather's approach (2006, p. 32) sums up this stance:

If workplace violence is a matter of individual pathology, then 'policing' and security measures become the most logical targets for intervention activity (i.e. ways and means of protecting the 'at risk' individual from another's pathological behaviour). The adoption of a multifactorial model, on the other hand, carries with it many more avenues and possibilities for organisational intervention (e.g. a review of work and organisational policies, practices and procedures which perhaps either give rise to incidents in the first place or contribute to their escalation and development once started).

Researchers, policy developers and practitioners deem it essential for the organisation to recognise that it cannot be absolved of blame for workplace aggression and violence. As discussed previously, the situational context created by the organisation provides an environment where a violent reaction is possible given the vulnerability of a few employees, their personal characteristics and social situation (Mullen, 1997).

Organisational Measures of Control

Organisations have been encouraged to take a number of measures in order to

minimise the likelihood of a violent situation occurring, thereby addressing the predictive variables of personal, situational and social determinants espoused by research. These include:

The control of personal determinants

Screening.

An attempt should be made to uncover a pattern of aggressive behaviour in the applicant's past, based on the idea that the best forecast of future deeds is previous behaviour (Anfuso, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kirk & Franklin, 2003; Kondrasuk et al., 2001; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Slora, Joy, & Terris, 1991). Standardised tests and a statistical model of prediction have been shown to be able to predict the occurrence of aggression and violence in the workplace only marginally (Slora et al., 1991). As was mentioned above, the resulting discourse of discrimination against 'at risk' or 'dangerous' individuals raises moral and ethical dilemmas, since many of the predictive variables identified by research are arbitrary, to say the least. Items such as race, age, or previous psychological problems have at their core the marginalisation of individuals based on characteristics that are, for the most part, random at worst. Given the weak predictive power, this is only possible at the expense of including many 'false negatives', or people who will not show violent behaviour being flagged as potential offenders, a position that is not ethically defensible.

Pre-employment testing.

Carefully structured job interviews, or personality scales designed to assess a person's predisposition to violent behaviour, are recommended for identifying potentially aggressive job applicants. Indications of situations in which the applicant acted in an aggressive manner towards unfair treatment suggest a possible problem (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kirk & Franklin, 2003; Kondrasuk et al., 2001; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Lewis & Zare, 1999).

Employee surveys.

All members of a team should be able to rate the efficiency of their team members and their working relationships in the manner of a 360 Degree evaluation process (Lewis & Zare, 1999). Employees who thus have a forum to express their concerns and frustrations have lower levels of stress overall (Lewis & Zare, 1999).

Employee support.

This includes Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs). Training and education of both management and employees on how best to access the EAPs should be conducted (Anfuso, 1994; Lewis & Zare, 1999). Management of employee problems ideally occurs before the problems become too serious to deal with or result in the expression of dissatisfaction in an aggressive manner. Violence is a human issue which Human Resources should take a role in preventing. This involves encouraging an environment that is less conducive to volatility in which workers are empowered, and making support systems available so that all employees are fairly treated (Anfuso, 1994; Blythe & Stivarius, 2004; Schat & Kelloway, 2005; Tehrani, 2002). Whilst shown to be particularly effective in addressing problems related to alcohol and substance abuse, EAPs may also help with stress, depression and domestic violence (Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Personnel assessment.

It is advised that evaluations that can be initiated by an employer directly, or an EAP representative, should be undertaken. The assessor should gather as much collateral information as is possible, including police reports, interviews with other employees or management, family members or military records. A detailed inventory of the person's history should be taken, paying particular attention to violent acts, patterns of behaviour, weapons history, alcohol and drug use and abuse, mental health, mental status, personal stressors and social interactions (Kirk & Franklin, 2003; Resnick & Kausch, 1995).

Treatment and intervention strategies.

It is advocated that intervention strategies be developed for certain dynamic factors, such as alcohol abuse or an active psychotic state, the inclusion of the individual in a therapeutic process, or a recommendation of a period of extended leave of absence (Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Tehrani, 2002).

Expression of negative feedback.

Managers can control many of the factors that determine the extent to which negative feedback generates feelings of anger and resentment among recipients. If the feedback is delivered in a considerate tone, is perceived as being constructive in its approach and timely in its delivery, it is less likely to generate aggression in the recipient (Geddes & Baron, 1997). When feedback is considered harsh, ambiguous, unreasonable, unjust, and aimed at upsetting the recipient's self-esteem rather than enhancing performance, it is more likely to provoke an aggressive response (Geddes & Baron, 1997).

Employee separation.

Termination of employment is a stressful event for those who must carry out the dismissal as well as the employee being fired (Braverman, 2002; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Clear policies regarding termination of employment and the handling of formal grievances should be written and communicated to personnel departments. These policies should include guidelines that can be applied in the face of threats of revenge and retaliation in order to recommend voluntary therapy, involuntary commitment, the warning of potential victims, and the utilisation of the police for immediate action. The policies should be realistic, and be able to be carried out effectively (Monahan, 1990). Employees should at all times be treated with respect and dignity, as unfair treatment may result in discontent and potentially increase levels of aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Lewis & Zare, 1999).

The control of social antecedents

Workplace aggression policies.

Organisations should provide definitions of inappropriate activities in order to establish norms of suitable behaviour and dispel the notion that certain forms of aggression are part of the job (Kirk & Franklin, 2003; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Large organisations should have a clearly written policy regarding the chain of command so that direct and indirect threats of violence from employees can be reported, and consistent policies in industrial relations and human resources maintained (Blythe & Stivarius, 2004; Monahan, 1990). Supervisors should know the channels of communication to utilise in order to convey threats seen as being of a serious nature to management (Monahan, 1990).

Fair treatment.

Employees should receive treatment that they perceive as being fair to all, with respect for the individual being of primary concern (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Internal conflicts should be handled among employees in an unbiased manner.

Policies on employee debriefing.

As a result of the fact that fear is a mediator of relationships between workplace violence and negative personal or organisational outcomes, interventions designed to reduce fear are most effective in defusing the negative consequences (Rogers & Kelloway, 1997). Stress debriefing and other forms of crisis intervention allow for the reduction of fear (Lewis & Zare, 1999; Rogers & Kelloway, 1997).

Organisational culture reform.

A major influence on the employee is the organisational culture: management setting an example for the workers, respect, trust and dignity conveyed through the treatment of employees, adequate compensation and reduction of job stress might lessen counterproductive behaviour (Blythe & Stivarius, 2004). McNamara (as cited in Cohen,

1990) suggests that organisational reform should be implemented on a planned basis, and that internal reforms should be executed prior to social responsibility programmes in order to raise morale and provide a healthy organisational culture. Additionally, involvement in external and political issues should subscribe to the central business values; employees should be kept informed; and management should be proactive with the media. The organisational culture should endorse integrative values and a new vision for the future. Preparing and communicating a strategy to prevent future violence might also be beneficial in terms of reducing individual fear, helping individuals to develop a sense of control over the occurrence and outcomes of violence in the workplace (Rogers & Kelloway, 1997).

Information and communication.

Policies on the circulation of information and open communication and guidance substantially reduce the risk of aggression and violence at work (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000). This removes the taboo of silence that often exists around cases such as sexual harassment, mobbing, and bullying behaviours. Information sessions, meetings, group discussions and problem-solving groups are all highly effective in this respect (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000).

Training.

In addition to the effective implementation of employee assistance programmes, training can provide employees with skills in defusing and managing potentially aggressive situations they encounter at work (Braverman, 2002; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kirk & Franklin, 2003; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Monahan, 1990; Paterson & Leadbetter, 2002). People lacking in social skills are often insensitive to others, and training in certain social skills can lower the risk of aggression (Schat & Kelloway, 2005). Studies should be undertaken in order to allow the organisation to learn from the tragic experiences of other organisations and to develop a body of clinical evidence on aggression and violence in the workplace (Monahan, 1990). Training should emphasise prevention, calming and negotiating skills, restraints, causes of aggression, reducing risks and anticipating violence, whilst also modelling breakaway skills, and familiarity with arrangements and policies. Training should continually be evaluated (Beech & Leather, 2006).

Workplace violence risk audits.

Every workplace possesses its own constellation of risk factors, and these will obviously be unique. Employee opinions and concerns, their past experiences with violence and conflict within the organisation, and the current organisational policies are invaluable resources to obtain information about the functioning of the organisation with regard to the current threat of violent behaviour (Braverman, 2002).

Progressive disciplinary policies.

The disciplining of an employee, which is stressful at best, should be a managerial skill that is enhanced through training. Interventions should ideally be progressive in nature, with verbal intervention, written warnings and administrative levels being progressively accessed by the manager (Lewis & Zare, 1999). This gives the supervisor a consistent intervention process while assuring individuals of a fair, system-wide procedure.

The control of situational antecedents

Security training of personnel and heightened security.

The security of the workplace can be strengthened through policy development and implementation; in-service training of all employees to handle dangerous situations; and consultation with experts in the field (Burgess et al., 1994). Violent employees should place managers on the alert when their behaviour includes: obsession with weapons; excessively discussing weapons; making direct or veiled threats; intimidating or instilling fear in others; having an obsession with one's job; showing little involvement with co-workers; displaying unwanted romantic interest in a co-worker; exhibiting paranoid behaviour; being wary of criticism; holding a grudge; having recent relational, economic, educational, social, official or other private problems; showing interest in recently publicised violent acts; testing the limits of acceptable behaviour; and making extreme changes in behaviour or stated beliefs (Burgess et al., 1994; Lewis & Zare, 1999).

Practices vary from basic awareness-training of managers and employees, to the installation of high-tech security devices such as cameras, access badges and alarm systems. Employees require security at work, and if feeling threatened, might resort to behaviour that will make the workplace feel less threatening, for example, carrying weapons to work, which may contribute to further acts of violence (Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Regulation of environmental factors.

Where possible, factors associated with provoking negative emotions in employees should be minimised, such as poor lighting, heat, cold, or high humidity, all of which contribute to higher levels of stress and aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Rotton & Cohn, 2004). Additionally, employees should be provided with the basic protective clothing and accessories in order to ensure their safety, especially when they work in dangerous environments, in order to lower the stress related to their performance of their work (Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Conclusion

*We were always skating on thin ice, Shaking the wrong dice,
Swimming against the tide, Playing on the wrong side, Yes you were
the player, and you were so cool, I was the greenhorn, King of the
fools, Painting the picture, to fit with the frame.*

(Keith Reid, 1946 - present)

What is being termed as the “age of rage” threatens to overwhelm many workplaces and organisations internationally (McCune, 1994, p. 52). Like a unique frame designed to hold the composition of an organisational climate and culture, the constructs of violence and aggression mould to the specific context in which they occur in each organisation, and are difficult to define. Yet attention must be paid to the whole by stepping back, gaining insight from perceiving the different facets as a gestalt, and placing each in perspective with the others with whom space is shared. Acknowledgement of the largely quantitative research into

the subject is essential if one is to have insight into the contemporary discourses seeded and maintained by such approaches. Only by so doing will the prevention of violence become more than simply publicising a policy, groping for a profile or responding to a calamity, and become about self-awareness and knowledge. Where there is no spontaneous self-scrutiny, delusions that are potent and potentially perilous are nurtured (Braverman, 2002).

The next chapter will look more closely at the unique painting of the South African Police Service as an organisation, as framed by the global constructs of workplace aggression and violence.

Chapter Three

A Sketch in Black and White: The South African Police Service



3

CHAPTER THREE

A SKETCH IN BLACK AND WHITE: THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE



*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is Man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the sceptic,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest,
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer,
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Still by himself abused, or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:
The glory, jest and riddle of the world!*

(Pope, "An Essay on Man", cited in Miller & Greenberg, 1981)

Introduction

Since the philosophical thinkers of ancient Greece first put stylus to tablet, humans have been envisioned as comprising a composite of paradoxes: neither god nor beast, hanging suspended between daunting aspirations and humbling realities. Human beings are prey to the passions that drive them, while presuming to be masters of all. It is these eternal paradoxes that define them, whether for good or evil, forming the dualities that so consumed the fathers of psychology such as Freud, Erikson and Jung, and causing considerable stress to the individual forced to confront them.

Arguably, no other form of employment has more inherent paradoxes than the work of the police officer. Throughout their careers, police officers are beset with the apparent contradictions of the job, the confusion of their roles and responsibilities, and yet they are expected to handle these inconsistencies not only with equanimity, but with the fortitude and stoicism reminiscent of Custer surveying his last stand. The police take the place of the ultimate mediators between the glory of human culture and unrestrained brutality in humankind, which puts them in a position where they need to scavenge the filth, remove the waste or butcher the beasts. They perform a social function that is welcomed, yet denied; seen as necessary, but often reviled (Shaw, 2002; Young, 1995). Occupations such as policing are tainted with the “dirty work” stigma because of the moral ambiguity that attaches to some of their core tasks and to the groups with which they habitually deal (Dick, 2005, p. 1363).

As a result, most researchers believe that the job of policing, although fulfilling, is extremely stressful (Anshel, 2000; Hurrell, 1995; Reiser, 1974; Violanti, 1992; Violanti & Aron, 1994; Violanti et al., 2006). The ensuing combination of severe acute stress, the restrictive police culture, the difficulties of establishing adaptive coping mechanisms, reduced job satisfaction and performance quality, coupled with poor retention rates and high rates of suicide and violence is cause for concern in a police service, especially in South Africa.

Stress potentially undermines the efficiency of the police service, and highly stressed officers can pose a threat to the community and to their own safety (Biggam et al., 1997; Vila & Moore, 2008). The consequences can be far-reaching: an organisation troubled by high

rates of absenteeism, low morale and low productivity and with increased expenditure due to legal, medical and early retirement costs also impacts negatively on the community at large, contributing to lawlessness, a sense of hopelessness and the erosion of values (Nel, 1999). Consequently, the economic development and stability of a country, largely dependent on an industrious and vigorous police force, is negatively affected (Biggam et al., 1997; Van der Merwe et al., 2004).

The majority of traditional literature underlines the need for earnest exploration and intervention in potentially hazardous situations based on a linear cause-and-effect approach to violence. Studies consider it of importance to uncover stress-producing paradoxes inherent in the profession in order to understand the police culture fully and gain insight into the functioning of the police officer. In confronting the extensive field of police stress, it has been considered crucial to think about it comprehensively, taking the full range of causes into consideration in order that a variety of intervention strategies can be applied, and a broad preventative approach can be implemented (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000). Through the discovery of meaning in the specific context, and an inclusive microanalysis of the parts and multifaceted interdependencies within the larger whole (Camic et al., 2003; Durrheim, 1999), a better understanding could be gained in order to suggest interventions and preventative measures.

Whilst the focus of this study is vastly different from the preceding, homage must be paid to those researchers who have gone before, and their insights into stress and its effects on the police officers of today. This chapter is a review of the various paradoxes of the police culture, the consequences that might be expected to arise from the extreme stress provoked by these paradoxes, and the negative outcomes of these on the health and psychological well-being of the police officer as recounted in contemporary research. It is hoped that, through familiarity with these concepts, a pencil sketch of the study terrain will start to take shape, delineating the shadows and highlights that form the basis of the understanding of workplace aggression and violence within the South African Police Service.

A Sketch of the Organisational Culture in the Police Service

To draw does not simply mean to reproduce contours; the drawing does not simply consist in the idea: the drawing is even the expression, the interior form, the plan, the model. Look what remains after that! The drawing is three fourths and a half of what constitutes painting

(Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867).

Pencilling in the Background

The majority of paintings commence with a pencil sketch of the scene that inspires them: similarly, this discussion relies on the delineation of the basic outlines of police culture that informs the ways in which the police function.

The word ‘police’, derived from the Greek word *politeia*, was originally applied to the general instruments of government and the police of the Roman Empire. In those times, officials were charged with a mandate far wider than we would recognise policing today, which encompassed governmental tasks of law and order (Mawby, 1999).

In 1829, Sir Richard Mayne (as quoted in O’Loughlin & Billing, 2000) first expressed the philosophy of modern policing, which essentially amounted to: the protection of life and property; preservation of the peace; and prevention and detection of crime. Over the intervening years, these objectives have remained largely unchanged, and a significant component of police culture revolves around a police official’s ability to identify and apprehend offenders, with an accompanying emphasis on results such as arrests and charges (Chan, 2000; O’Loughlin & Billing, 2000). Policing is construed as being about negation and prevention, about defining and classifying human social behaviour and of constraining those who would defy custom, convention and the framework of legal conformity (Young, 1995).

The job of police work is characterised by a sense of the potential danger inherent in the day-to-day routine; the need to have authority over these encounters with the general

public; a sense of suspicion and anxiety about public hostility; and the associated strong bonds that develop with fellow colleagues. These four aspects, namely danger, authority, suspicion and solidarity - are seen as a means of understanding how police culture develops and reveals itself in current police routine and organisational procedures (Paoline, 2003; Skolnick 2008; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). Reiser (1974) first likened the police culture to a family in which the roles are clearly defined, from the patriarchal chief of police through the seniority of rank, comparable to the older and more powerful siblings, to the young recruits who strive and compete for the recognition of the elders.

Research since then has traditionally acknowledged that the nature of policing and the experiences officers go through result in the formation of a subculture characterised by highly particular patterns of activity (Dempsey & Forst, 2010). The key components of culture are taken to be values, norms and institutions: values guide what is seen as essential, guiding the rest of the culture; norms are expectations of behaviour which are enforced by the culture; institutions are structures of a society in which values and norms are transmitted (Dempsey & Forst, 2010). Police culture is defined by O'Loughlin and Billing (2000) as nothing more than the complex set of collective values, traditions, abilities, practices, customs and knowledge shared by members of a police organisation. Emphasis is placed on the importance of informal standards and values for the police in conveying the specific facets of police culture to new recruits, including the parameters of the job, and relations with various sectors of society (Loftus, 2009).

In contemporary research, there has been a significant move towards downplaying these inherent and inherited elements of police culture, suggesting that it is merely a stereotyped image at odds with every fundamental ethical principle of public service (see Prenzler, 1997). Regardless of this, the classical themes of police culture seem to be ineradicable, despite transformations towards more service oriented directions undergone by various police organisations (Loftus, 2009; Paoline, 2003; Skolnick, 2008). As Skolnick (2008, p. 35) declares "occupational groups do develop understandings about how to interpret conduct, retain loyalties, express opinions, use or abuse authority. These occupational 'rules' are rarely if ever written...Police respond to a profusion of unwritten rules".

Nevertheless, internal variations and features that exist within the bounds of what is termed 'police culture' should be brought out as the organisation begins to diversify with the addition of more females, college-educated officers, and community policing initiatives (Paoline, 2003). Images that officers have of their paradoxical roles within the organisation and society, their assumptions about the social world which informs their conduct, and the coping mechanisms with which they withstand the pressures of occupational and organisational environments should be explored in order to understand the genesis of police culture (Loftus, 2009; Paoline, 2003).

The development of police culture can be seen to rest broadly on three elements: the performance of a function, which centres on, but does not exclusively involve, the preservation of order and the regulation of norms; adherence to a structure, in which policing is carried out by particular individuals, organised so as to fulfil these functions; and inferred legitimacy, in which it is implied that an overarching political power supports the organisation (Bayley, 1985). These three elements and the ways in which they inform police culture will be discussed next.

Drafting Some Finer Details of the Foreground

It can be postulated that certain paradoxes inherent in the role of the policeman are the origin of the police organisation's values and culture, and the source of concurrent stressors for the individual officers, which motivates the development of coping mechanisms specific to the police (cf. Nel & Burgers, 1998; Reiser & Geiger, 1984). Building on Bayley's (1985) three-fold definition of the elements of a police force, some of these inherent paradoxes can be identified:

- *The function of the police force*, relating to the maintenance of order and regulation of norms. Police officers experience paradoxes concerning their work-related functioning, such as the contrast between the pervading atmosphere of dangerousness associated with the job and the mundaneness of certain aspects of it; denial of the expression of any strong feelings due to the emphasis on strict emotional control; and the blurring of their duty and the roles they must play in society.

- *The structure of the police force*, referring to the way the individuals who carry out the tasks are organised. As a result of its history, the SAPS was traditionally utilised in the controlled suppression of an ordered political danger, yet later was forced to face a spiralling increase of crime after the demise of apartheid. Logically, “a police organisation which has devoted decades to combating one kind of threat may not be particularly adept at finding the strategies and tactics that are appropriate to new ones” (Altbeker, 2009, p. 277). The paradoxes relating to this are the stress engendered by the structure of the organisation added to the stress inherent in the danger of the work; the denial of the organisation as a stress-provoking entity; and the existence of in-and out-groups in the organisation to which an officer must belong while still retaining autonomy.
- *The legitimacy of the police force*, which comprises the extent to which the organisation is supported by society and the political system. The police need public support in order to be effective in their role of order maintenance in society, and a key precursor includes public appraisal of the performance of police authority (Tyler, 2004). Because of the role the police have played in implementing the hated policies of apartheid, as well as the use of torture and assassination, there was a profound lack of social and political legitimacy, which led to a number of changes to procedure and practice (Altbeker, 2009). Police officers are confronted by the incongruity of a society that sanctions them to act violently yet disempowers them at the same time; they are bound by duty to enforce the law, yet this responsibility is undermined by the legal system of the country; and they have a need to be trusted by the community, yet a societal fear and mistrust of the police exists (Cawthra, 1993).

An expansion of the paradoxes inherent in the police organisation follows below.

Paradoxes of function

According to Reiser and Geiger (1984, p. 317),

though police officers are mere mortals, not uniquely different from other people in terms of basic emotional needs and reactions, they are affected

by some powerful shaping influences of both the police role and environment. Their authority role requires tight emotional control with suppression of affect and the maintenance of the cool facade of authority.

Certain contradictions exist regarding the function of combating crime within society that the police officer performs, and these are the bedrock on which the police conception of culture is formed:

The police role embraces extreme danger contrasted with the tedious and mundane.

Police work exposes the individual to unpredictable danger, which is aggravated by the sense of personal authority over and responsibility for society that is integrally part of the policing role (Paoline, 2003; Warren & James, 2000). Officers express a universal apprehension of becoming a victim of violence, which forms a foundational component in the construction and sustainment of police culture. Particularly, the work environment of the South African police officer differs from that of other countries in terms of the social, political and economic problems and the danger of exposure to unrest and violence which is noticeably higher in the South African context (Koortzen, 1996; Shaw, 2002; Smit & Cilliers, 1998). On a daily basis, police officers confront a wide range of traumatic stressors, such as unique levels of violence, the handling of dead bodies, and involvement in potentially life-threatening violent circumstances (Smit & Cilliers, 1998). For many police officers, the most obvious consequence of the perceived danger of their job is their preparedness to use force to defend themselves, an ability which is seen by police as a crucial feature of the ways in which police command respect and wield their authority (Warren & James, 2000). In a life-or-death situation, the officer is confronted with the knowledge that another person may interfere with his or her autonomy, and remove the ability to control or command (McCafferty et al., 1992; Reiser & Geiger, 1984). The exposure to death, carnage and antagonism or outright aggression from the public whom they are sworn to protect results in a loss of the policeman's sense of invulnerability: former ideals become meaningless in the face of expectations of a foreshortened future (Kop & Euwema, 2001).

Conversely, this finely tuned attentiveness to the possibility of danger in the environment also acts as a counterbalance to the mundane and often boring aspects of policing (Bishop et al., 2006). The unexciting daily routine of physical inactivity (with officers spending long periods of time engaged in unremarkable duties such as patrols, paperwork or logistics) is interspersed with the adrenalin rush of high-danger, low-predictability events (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006), or preventative actions such as visible community policing. Loftus (2009) raises an intriguing point: in their interactions with fellow colleagues, officers have a tendency to venerate physical confrontation, relating anecdotes that endorse the more violent and confrontational encounters with the public. In these tales, there is the implication that police officers believe that the true work of policing involves these brief episodes of danger and excitement, while the boring responsibilities are not seen as “authentic policing experiences” (Loftus, 2009, p. 5). The paperwork and service-orientated elements of police responsibility fail to conform to the officers’ dominant conceptions of proper police work, leading to frustration. Bishop et al. (2006, p. 71) believe these mundane “hassles” of everyday life are more deleterious to the officers’ health than the less frequent but serious events to which they are exposed. Unfortunately, these long periods of limited physical activity are often combined with excessive eating, smoking and drinking, habits typical of the lifestyles of many officers (Perrier & Toner, 1984; Violanti, 1996).

The police role advocates emotional denial, but officers’ stress is exacerbated by emotional suppression.

Pogrebin and Poole (1991) note the development of a repertoire of standard emotional responses that acts to preserve the group’s identity during commonly occurring work events, such as perilous or distressing situations. For the police, these responses are constrained within narrow occupational prescriptions, forming strict cultural norms of emotional control. As an individual associates more with a certain occupational identity, he or she will be motivated to act in ways that confirm and reinforce that identity. As such, the normative expectations for specific police behaviour inherent in a professional role identity provide the motivational foundation for emotional control (Brown, Fielding, & Grover, 1999; Pogrebin & Poole, 1991). The nature of this camaraderie, characterised by loyalty and feelings of belonging to a group, fosters a cultural expectation that members of the group are tougher than ordinary citizens and will be able to cope in any situation (Alexander & Wells, 1991).

There is a common characterisation of the rescue worker as the one who is infinitely inventive, practical and resistant to the impact of trauma and danger to which others may succumb (Perrier & Toner, 1984). Loftus (2009, p. 7) remarks that “in addition to devaluing softer approaches to policing, the powerful undercurrents of masculinity encourage an aura of toughness and celebration of violence” within the police. Police officers are expected to possess exceptional coping skills, to be tough, imperturbable and to maintain a poised presence even under the most tragic of circumstances. Indeed, the effectiveness of the police in dealing with traumatic situations might be severely compromised if the officers were unable to control their emotions (Heiman, 1975; Howard, Tuffin, & Stephens, 2000; Kop & Euwema, 2001; Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Nel, 1999; Pogrebin & Poole, 1991; Reiser & Geiger, 1984).

This stance accentuates the self-reliance of the police officer, who needs to set personal inadequacies aside in order to handle a situation effectively (McCafferty et al., 1992; Reiser & Geiger, 1984). The paramilitary communication that characterises the relationship between colleagues and supervisors does not permit significant interpersonal associations and prohibits intimate and unsuitable emotions from being divulged (Violanti & Aron, 1994). The portrayal of emotion is constructed as a threat to the officer’s performance, the threat being based on a common perception of the ability of emotions to undermine rationality and control, the exact qualities that are critical to professional competence (Howard et al., 2000). This tendency to elevate a behavioural repertoire based in a conception of virile maleness or ‘machismo’ exposes a resistance towards divulging either personal or professional crises (Brown, Cooper, & Kirkcaldy, 1996; Kop & Euwema, 2001; Kopel & Friedman, 1997); stress-related problems are seen as an undesirable flaw, possibly even having negative effects on future promotions within the organisation (Gudjonsson & Adlam, 1985). Additionally, officers are increasingly wary of being perceived as emotionally predisposed, a negative label they may acquire if they are unable to control their personal feelings. This awareness becomes a critical part of an officer’s acceptance as a respected and functioning member of the team (Pogrebin & Poole, 1991). Emotions become unspeakable within the culture.

These strong group socialisation processes within the organisation cause police officers to view their own emotions as “an occupational weakness or hazard, with the potential to impair their ability to perform their duties effectively” (Pogrebin & Poole, p.

397). Consequently, they develop reservations or uncertainty in dealing with their own emotions and a collective misapprehension of the feelings of their fellow officers (Graf, 1986; Perrier & Toner, 1984; Pogrebin & Poole, 1991). Confronting difficult, emotionally-charged situations on a daily basis leads officers to question whether the intensity of their emotions is pertinent given the circumstances; as a result, they are more likely to define their emotional reactions through comparisons with other officers who have been in similar situations.

The venting of emotions is perceived as a hazard to the professionalism of the police officer, yet in direct contradiction, individuals feel the need to express themselves, drawing on the conventional notions of the desirability of disclosing emotions in the maintenance of satisfactory psychological health (Howard et al., 2000), which places police officers in an extraordinarily difficult position. Whilst strict emotional denial can function as a necessary survival mechanism, shielding the officer in a physically and psychologically hazardous environment, it can result in the repression of, and separation from, any emotions that are experienced, and lead to shame engendered by the need to seek help. Emotional confession is perceived as revealing a possible lack of competence on the part of the officer.

Constant vigilance against fear and emotions is difficult to maintain and results in the use of other defence mechanisms. It is common for jocular, sarcasm, identification with one's group, self-medication with alcohol or drugs, and the rare ventilation of traumatic events (only when in the company of fellow police officers), to be used as defences against denied emotions (McCafferty et al., 1992). Police officers tend to emphasise their physical strength, ruggedness and invulnerability to danger (a view of the self inherent in the police culture), which leads to using the method of denial as a mechanism for coping with traumatic stress (McCafferty et al., 1992; Reiser & Geiger, 1984). In the South African Police Service, the phenomenon is often referred to as the 'Cowboys don't cry' syndrome. Police exposed to stressors of a traumatic nature retreat into a denial-avoidance process as a defensive strategy against both the intrusive and disturbed arousal effects caused by the exposure (Kopel & Friedman, 1997). Prolonged exposure to trauma may lead to the defensive behaviour of emotional numbing, which reflects a psychological need to deny the impact of the distress (McCafferty et al., 1992; Reiser & Geiger, 1984). In an attempt to pander to the ideals of emotional fortitude inherent in the culture, police officers continue to keep up a brave front so

that it appears they are unaffected by such incidents (Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Reiser & Geiger, 1984).

In order to diffuse the impact of negative experiences, those personal feelings and reactions that cannot be denied are dealt with in informal interactions with colleagues, in which 'black' humour is often used to elicit support (Alexander & Wells, 1991; Brown et al., 1999; Howard et al., 2000; Loftus, 2009; Kop & Euwema, 2001; Nel, 1999; Pogrebin & Poole, 1991; Smit & Cilliers, 1998). The grim story-telling is used as a means of facing the realities of messy and mortifying processes (Young, 1995). In a situation where an untried, teenage recruit is initiated into the ranks of the police through exposure to a traumatic event, black humour seems to be an essential way of managing the problematic emotions that might arise (Young, 1995). Additionally, discussion of feelings in a light-hearted manner is acceptable in a way that a sober conversation is not. If emotions are expressed in a grimly jocular fashion, they do not pose the same threat to perceived competence, permitting the officer to maintain a semblance of control and rationality. Although often perceived by outsiders as irreverent, the use of humour in this way may still be an effective way of expressing emotion because colleagues are made aware of what the officer is going through, even if it is vented in a witty or mocking way (Howard et al., 2000). Graf (1986) and later Howard et al. (2000) are of the opinion that the cynical statements uttered by police officers may be camouflaging what may be supportive dialogue: police officers do ventilate their feelings, but only when certain contingencies and circumstances have been met. For any disclosure to occur, though, trust in a colleague's discretion is imperative, and relationships developed over time involving shared interests, the colleagues' maturity or gender might be the only facilitators of confession (Howard et al., 2000). The venting of cynical feelings to a supportive, accepting audience may lead to a reduction in occupational stress. The officers are able to minimise the impact of the distressing experiences they face and articulate pent-up emotions in an acceptable, oblique manner, without exposing strong personal emotions that may be detrimental to their image as intrepid professionals (Graf, 1986; Pogrebin & Poole, 1991; Stephens, Long, & Miller, 1997).

The police role blurs the distinction between functioning as a police officer and functioning as a member of society.

A police officer has to assume a plethora of varied roles during the course of a single day. As a result, role confusion or even a blurring of the distinctions between roles might occur, causing underlying emotions to come to the fore in inappropriate ways, such as in interactions with the family or members of the public. The combination of danger and authority inherent in the role of the policeman gives rise to a need for officers to develop a sense of suspicion about members of the public in order to detect and prevent dangerous situations. After dealing with dishonesty, deception and opposition on the streets, they develop a mistrust of others that may manifest in the suspicious evaluation of even friends and family members (Loftus, 2009), leading to detached and insensitive responses that reduce the level of personal attachment (Golembiewski & Kim, 1990; Shaw, 2002). The negative perceptions that the police officer has of society are imposed on their family members, with the result that the family feels fearful of and isolated from society (Koortzen, 1996). The insecurity often experienced by the officer when 'on the beat', combined with a concurrent poor self-image engendered by disturbing interactions with the public, negatively influences a police officer's ability to form and maintain interpersonal relationships, causing isolation (Koortzen, 1996).

For some officers, their role as shift workers is disruptive to their family life, general mental, psychological and physical functioning and neuro-physiological circadian rhythms (Vila, 2006; Vila & Moore, 2008; Violanti et al., 1986). It may be that the changing shift routine contributes to occupational isolation as a result of fewer non-police friends, frequently being absent from social events with the family, and the inability to plan for events due to the irregular work routine. Working irregular hours on shifts was found to have a significant influence on depressed female officers, increasing their likelihood of experiencing suicidal ideation. Suicide risk for men with PTSD symptoms was increased when they had to work shifts (Violanti et al., 2008).

While male and female police officers experience similar stressors in many instances (He, Zhao, & Archbold, 2002), role confusion can take diverse forms in the different genders. Female officers, as a result of their gender, are exposed to untenable positions that do not

affect men. Women are more likely to feel that they are able to interact with the public as a mother would towards disobedient children in need of reproach, and in so doing, female police officers feel they can utilise their compassion while relating to people verbally and physically. Women officers are also at a disadvantage: those who have children are significantly more at risk of suffering psychological distress associated with operational tasks. Many women experience the added strain of keeping their own conflicts in check and quietening those of their significant others as regards their choice of a job which challenges sexual stereotypes (Brown et al., 1999; Perrott & Kelloway, 2006; Santos, Leather, Dunn, & Zarola, 2009). Additionally, females are more likely to report suffering from physical stress indicators (Gächter, Savage, & Torgler, 2009). Women with small children are effectively hindered from returning to full-time police work, and hence barred from promotion opportunities that might have been theirs. Justificatory working practices see policing as a complex array of demanding activities, dominated by the dangerous combating of crime, and therefore an unsuitable career choice for a mother (Dick & Cassell, 2004; Santos et al., 2009). The task of identity construction for a policewoman becomes the precarious balance of trying to maintain her legitimacy as a modern professional, whilst also preserving her status as a mother (Dick & Cassell, 2004).

As a result of the common perception that women have a greater tendency for compassion, victims of sexual offences are often allocated to female officers during the course of their careers. The officers' experience of empathy for the victims increases the likelihood of psychological distress and makes women officers more likely to experience secondary traumatisation (Brown et al., 1999; Perrott & Kelloway, 2006).

Additionally, female officers must function in an atmosphere of scepticism about their ability to deal physically and emotionally with the rigours of police work: as minority members of functional police departments, attaining the essential bolster to their self esteem in the form of peer support is a frustrating task (Brown et al., 1999; Johnson, 1991; Morash, Kwak, & Haarr, 2006). Females experience a formidable source of stress in the bias of their co-workers. They have a tendency to feel isolated in spite of the police culture of support, a factor which predisposes them to the development of adverse reactions to organisational stressors (Brown et al., 1999; Morash, Kwak et al., 2006). Women officers are often forced to confront prejudices stemming from societal influences that characterise them as the

‘weaker sex’, and this lack of confidence in their ability to perform their duties effectively can lead to professional uncertainty and lack of confidence (Johnson, 1991). This is especially true in the South African context: women, although empowered by the constitution to believe that they are equal to male police officers, experience the reality as decidedly different. Language harassment from male officers is also prevalent, which is a predictor of stress in female officers (Morash, Kwak et al., 2006). As a result, women are likely to have higher levels of depression, for which they institute coping mechanisms that include prayer for guidance and support, discussion with a spouse or friend, and planning actions that can be followed (He et al., 2002).

Paradoxes of structure.

Related to the structure of the organisation and the ways its members must function, certain contradictions occur. A few of these are:

Police officers experience stress as a result of the nature of the work, which is further exacerbated by the stress engendered by organisational issues.

Similar to other occupations, interdepartmental practices are a continuous source of distress in police work: the rigid structure, lack of involvement in decision-making, lack of managerial support, a discipline-oriented philosophy associated with interpersonal conflict and criticism from others, and unfair punishment are cited by authors as being particularly stressful (Brewer, 1994; Garner, 2008; Reiser, 1974; Violanti & Aron, 1995). Yet police officers are faced with another major stressor not experienced by other occupations: not only are there organisational and role pressures, but also environmental work factors such as danger and violence that contribute to the overall stress load (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006).

Symonds (1970) was among the first to categorise the stress of being a policeman into two categories: stressors related to the nature of the police organisation; and stressors incurred as a result of the danger inherent in police work (Violanti & Aron, 1994). It is clear that while both categories of stress affect the police officer, most researchers believe that the highest levels of associated stress are related to organisational factors (Biggam et al., 1997;

Bishop et al., 2006; Gulle, Tredoux, & Foster, 1998; Koortzen, 1996; Kop & Euwema, 2001; Kop, Euwema, & Schaufeli, 1999; Reiser, 1974; Symonds, 1970; Vila, 2006; Violanti & Aron, 1994).

Recently, Dempsey and Forst (2010) broadened this into four general categories of stress with which police officers are faced: external stress, or threats of real danger, such as aggressive criminal behaviour; organisational stress, produced by elements in the militaristic character of the police organisation; personal stress produced by the interpersonal characteristics of belonging to the police organisation such as interpersonal conflict; and operational stress, caused by daily confrontation with criminal elements of society or tragic circumstances, lack of recognition for engaging in a difficult and dangerous job, and awareness of legal liability for actions performed while on duty.

For the police officer, the organisational problems in combination with a sense of personal vulnerability to danger can be particularly distressing. The stress because of job demands (the nature of the work) and lack of resources (the organisational deficiencies) are strongly interlinked; since not having resources makes it more difficult to deal with crisis situations, a lack of resources probably increases the stress related to job demands (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006; Wiese, Rothmann, & Storm, 2003). The extent to which stress from either routine or traumatic events develops may depend on two factors: first, the resources and support available to the individual; and second, the individual's ability and willingness to utilise those resources and support (Walker, 1997). Pienaar and Rothmann (2006) found that lack of functional support within an organisation, which manifests in lack of recognition, lack of resources, and poor remuneration for officers, places extreme demands on the emotional resources of the officer.

The police organisation is a high stress environment but stress is seen as a sign of weakness and denied by all.

Flowing from the above, organisations internationally tend to subscribe to a widespread philosophy that views occupational stress as an employee matter and not an organisational problem. This implies that if only employees possessed and utilised effective coping strategies, then stress would not be as formidable a challenge (Hurrell, 1995; Morash,

Haarr et al., 2006). Accordingly, selection of employees on the basis of their ability to cope with organisational stressors is a priority, while strategies that attempt to make the organisation less stressful by reducing employees' excessive workload, increasing control over work activities, increasing worker participation in decision-making, reducing within-department bias, and instituting flexible work schedules are largely neglected (Hurrell, 1995; Morash, Haarr et al., 2006). The bureaucratic nature of organisations is thus self-serving rather than orientated towards the purposes for which the organisations were originally formed; such bureaucracies are hierarchical in structure and tend to be slow in providing appreciation and recognition for effort, comprising rigid work structures which prove frustrating and are high generators of stress (Perrier & Toner, 1984).

Traditionally, the police service has been associated with a male-dominated, military-like hierarchical structure within which the stress of the occupation is not acknowledged by police officers and is largely ignored by police departments and management (Gudjonsson & Adlam, 1985; Kop & Euwema, 2001). The juxtaposition of the experience of high levels of stress, and the concurrent denial of that stress, can lead to considerable personal confusion for the police officer.

There is a wealth of information concerning stress in the police occupation, yet the findings regarding whether the career of a police officer is more stressful than others or not are contradictory at best (cf. Anshel, 2000; Bishop et al., 2006; Danto, 1978; Koortzen, 1996; Kop & Euwema, 2001; Kop et al., 1999; Lester & Mink, 1979; Selye, 1978; Symonds, 1970; Violanti, 1996; Walker, 1997). There are many conceptual and methodological problems in positivistic police stress literature which have led to a paucity of information about the extent to which policing is stressful compared to other occupations. Methodological problems in studies about police stress include the use of inappropriate measures, lack of systematic and orderly procedures and methodology, a failure to compare police officers with other population groups, and the lack of an academic framework that elucidates the association between personal and occupational factors in shaping police officer's psychological reactions to their work (Goodman, 1990; Hart, Wearing, & Headey, 1995). Studies also frequently fail to disentangle the interaction between demographic variables and stress reactions, and confuse the direction of causality (Brown & Campbell, 1990).

Additionally, the public and the organisational view of the police officer as a hardy individual, possessing prodigious coping skills, serves to deflect attention from the study of this field (Biggam et al., 1997). As a result of the fact that stress is seen as a weakness that is denied by both the officers themselves and the organisation (possibly due to unwillingness to be exposed to potentially adverse criticism or publicity), practical difficulties, such as the inability to recruit police populations for studies, arise (Brown et al., 1999).

However, most quantitative studies do acknowledge that police organisations are the main source of psychological distress amongst police officers, and not the nature of the job as was previously postulated (Anshel, 2000; Dempsey & Forst, 2010; Reiser, 1974). In fact, many officers admit to enjoying the dangerous aspects of their jobs, even going so far as to seek out tasks seen as inherently stressful by the majority of the population, whilst variables linked to organisational management are seen as greater sources of stress (Loftus, 2009; Newman & Rucker-Reed, 2004). Police officers' main sources of stress are on the organisational and climate sub-scale, including staff shortages, insufficient resources or finances and poor quality equipment (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006), performing jobs not specified by the job description (Wiese et al., 2003), interpersonal conflict (Garner, 2008), characteristics of the organisation itself such as authoritarian structure (Reiser, 1974), lack of consultation, communication or participation in decisions affecting daily work tasks (Slate, Johnson, & Colbert, 2007), lack of administrative support (Buker & Wiecko, 2007), continuous organisational change, a punishment-centred philosophy, and unfair discipline (Loftus, 2009). Stress in the police service is often attributed to the experience of a lack of interpersonal justice, in which an employee's dependence on inherent, unstated psychological contracts of fairness, which are seen as demonstrating the organisation's integrity, is betrayed. Employees' perception of control over the performance of their job is likewise seen as an important moderator in the development of stress (Noblet, Rodwell, & Allisey, 2009). These factors often result in low morale, a lack of job satisfaction, corruption, ill discipline, low self-esteem, a disregard for human life and a decrease in overall performance level (Nel, 1999; Van der Merwe et al., 2004).

Police officers are faced with many demands and hazards of the occupation, as well as stringent legal restrictions, and paradoxes inherent in the role. As such, researchers believe that officers often perceive their work as beyond their control (Violanti, 1983). As Waters

and Ussery (2007, p. 172) note: “the fact that police officers begin their careers in excellent physical health and retire early or die from job related stressors demonstrates the cost of continuous pressure and the need for ongoing emotional adjustment”.

Police stress, and the concurrent recognition of causative aspects and indicators, has been identified as early as the mid to late twentieth century, yet commonly, police departments did little to curtail the escalating incidences of stress affecting many officers at that time (Waters & Ussery, 2007). Possibly one of the foremost of the early researchers into the field of police stress, Symonds (1970), noted that being a police officer is one of the few occupations in which the performance of one’s duties comprises public reactions of apprehension or loathing, and sometimes even resulting in physical attack. Symonds (1970, p. 155) states that

the young patrolman starts his career by seeing himself as an individual who will help and protect others ...an emotional strain is placed upon him by the uncooperativeness, antagonism and hostility of the public whom he serves. The policeman must have the ability to be flexible under stress and be able to adapt to rapidly changing, unpredictable situations.

Later, Selye (1978), a pioneer researcher in the field of stress, noted that police work is possibly one of the most stressful occupations in the world. He postulated three phases that any individual goes through in the experience of stress:

- *the alarm reaction phase*, in which resistance falls below normal on the first application of a stressor, and stress hormones are secreted more abundantly;
- *the stage of resistance*, where reactions become specialised in an attempt to bring the effects of the stress within tolerable levels. If the individual is successful in containment, the stress is overcome and the human organism returns to the usual level of adjustment;
- *the phase of exhaustion*, in which the defences against stress give way and the effects of the stress become dominant, resulting in the condition known as burnout.

Stress has been described as the result of disparity between the demands of the environment and the individual's perceived capability to adjust to them: if the demands surpass the individual's ability to manage their reactions effectively, diverse responses such as anxiety, apprehension, defensiveness and avoidance behaviour may ensue (Webb & Smith, 1980). Adjustment reactions are initiated as part of the response to the threat, and include the release of adrenalin, heightened heartbeat and respiration rate, and increased blood pressure. These physical responses are referred to as stress (Dempsey & Forst, 2010). Important in the definition is the emphasis on *perception*, as stress is said to occur only if the individual *perceives* that social or environmental demands cannot be handled adequately, and the experience of stress is a personal experience depending on the social and psychological attributes of each person (Anshel, 2000; Violanti, 1983).

As in the definition above, stress is not seen as a consistent factor in police work, but varies according to the perceptions of officers at different stages in their careers (Newman & Rucker-Reed, 2004; Violanti, 1983). Although researchers disagree on the number of phases that best define the officer's career progression, whether to use organisational tenure or positional tenure, and also differ regarding the discrete ages that comprise each stage (see Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; McElroy, Morrow, & Wardlow, 1999; Violanti, 1983), there are generally said to be four phases that occur during the career of the police officer (Violanti, 1983):

- *The Alarm Stage*, which occurs roughly during the first five years of police work and is accompanied by the realisation that real police work is different from what is learned in the training. This stage has been found to include the greatest number of women due to the relatively recent entry of women into the field of police work, and was also found to contain officers with a higher education level, reflecting the emphasis now placed on receiving an education (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). On average, less-experienced recruits hold a more positive or idealised view of the organisation and profession of policing. Police officers who have been in the service for longer take a more neutral or cynical stance, and question the role of superiors, the reasons for complaints and arrests, and the overall efficiency of the organisation more than recruits (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Singer, Singer, & Burns, 1984).

Less-experienced officers' perception of stress is camouflaged by the thrill of the job, and they may not have been on the job for long enough for stressors to have become a serious concern (Patterson, 1992). They have particularly limited experience with the execution of justice as a result of their assignment to entry-level positions, which involves restricted occasions to observe or interact with other facets of the system. There is also a possibility that the inexperience of the police officers leads them to model the actions of their seniors, who appear less influenced by stress. As such, they use resilient senior personnel as a reference group for their own behaviours, thereby denying the stressors they may well experience (Patterson, 1992).

As the recruit matures, stress is seen to increase sharply as a result of both the exposure to gruesome or dangerous scenes and the concurrent organisational demands, which tax the officer's personal response capabilities. Sergeants or those of lower rank are exposed to the greatest average number of stressors from all sources when compared to other ranks (Brown & Campbell, 1990; Kop & Euwema, 2001; Violanti, 1996). The ideals that they originally brought to the job are recognised as being far removed from the reality thereof. It is hypothesised that heightened levels of stress result in a greater incidence of cynicism, which has been seen to increase continuously during the first two career stages of police work (0 to 13 years). This occurs as a result of 'rookie' police officers' recognition that they have little effect on crime, which nevertheless has an impact on them (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). Cynicism is thus a coping mechanism until the officer attains a renewed emphasis on introspection and personal goals later on in the progression of his or her career (Reiser, 1974; Violanti, 1983). Family-work conflict is greater at this stage of the officer's vocation, but this is mitigated by the officer's perception of higher levels of social support and closer interpersonal relations (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). The potential for the officer to leave the organisation is greatest at this stage (McElroy et al., 1999).

- *The Disenchantment Stage*, which occurs from about the sixth year until the mid-career, during which the naive and romantic notions cultivated in the training academy are dashed through confrontation with reality. Bitter disappointment ensues with the realisation that the demands of the job outweigh the officer's ability to

respond effectively and that the work is more frustrating than first perceived (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Violanti & Aron, 1995). Cynicism is adopted as a defence mechanism (Dempsey & Forst, 2010), and officers feel a personal sense of failure at being unable to handle the demands of policing.

- *The Personalisation Stage*, which occurs from the end of the mid-career until possible retirement. During this phase, there is a renewed interest in personal goals instead of the demands of policing, and the focus falls more on the things that are perceived as being important in life. The possibility exists that officers with a tendency towards being more highly stressed drop out of public safety work when stress levels become unbearable for them, leaving behind those who perceive less stress, or who have developed adequate coping techniques. Health problems begin to become salient in this stage (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006).
- *The Introspection Stage*, overlapping somewhat with the previous, occurs after the milestone of twenty years of service. It is a time of reflection, when officers are somewhat more secure in their jobs, and worry less about job demands and failures. During their senior years, officers seem to experience lower amounts of stress, possibly as a result of better coping mechanisms, or the under-reporting of stress-related reactions (Gudjonsson & Adlam, 1985; Violanti, 1983), or perhaps due to full immersion in the police culture. Shift work is less common for these officers, with a resultant lowering of stress levels (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). They are more strongly emotionally bound to their organisation and typically intend to stay there until retirement (McElroy et al., 1999).

The negative message regarding stress that police officers receive from their environment, added to the managerial style of the organisation, which tends to deny the existence of stress, leads to the impression that all other officers cope well. This can result in loss of self-esteem, self derogation, poor interpersonal relationships with colleagues and the public, poor self-evaluation and interpersonal difficulties such as many sick days, anxiety on and off the job, problems with alcohol abuse and psychological difficulties for the police officer who cannot cope (Dempsey & Forst, 2010; Stotland, 1991). Interpersonal conflict is

common, especially when dealing with criticism from others, and provokes a significant amount of stress in officers forced to evaluate the behaviours of other officers (Garner, 2008). In general, cognitive and behavioural withdrawal, and a more negative attitude towards the organisation and clients, even to the development of aggressive and forceful behaviour towards civilians whose actions they perceive more negatively, occurs (Kop & Euwema, 2001). Cynicism, withdrawal, negative coping mechanisms such as substance abuse, family problems, health problems and eventually suicide or family murder can be the result of job-related stress (Dempsey & Forst, 2010).

Research has shown that denial of stress is not conducive to healthy stress management. An officer's negative communication with a supervisor about the performance of duties has been shown to have the tendency of increasing the officer's overall stress levels. The conclusion can be drawn that the content of communication and opportunities to talk about stress and trauma are fundamental aspects of social support in preventing harmful outcomes (Halpern, Gurevich, Schwartz, & Brazeau, 2009; Stephens & Long, 2000). There is a significant relationship between the number of supports, satisfaction with supports and occupational stress, the implication being that police officers who classify more relationships as being supportive also perceive their occupation as being less stressful, and further that a satisfaction with the support network reduces occupational stress (Graf, 1986). A major theme of security within the support system was identified in a qualitative study of officers who had experienced the trauma of caring for victims of traffic accidents. It was found that if support systems are perceived to be insufficient, officers felt insecure and uncertain. This influenced their ability to cope successfully (Bacteman-Erlanson, Jacobsson, Öster, & Brulin, in press). However, another qualitative study found that the organisational culture, which has been inclined to stigmatise vulnerability, is the most challenging barrier to accessing the vital support needed after a critical incident, and addressing this stigma within the organisation is critical to developing interventions (Halpern et al., 2009).

Police officers have an inherent requirement of dependence on the group, yet also value independence and need to function autonomously.

“To sustain their own social equilibrium in what is always a continuously melodramatic and potentially unstable world of violence and messy death, the police weld

together as a cultural unit that is ultimately set against the outside” (Young, 1995, p. 162). A securely knit culture is cultivated from the moment a recruit enters the police academy (Goldsmith, 2000; Skolnick, 2008; Violanti, 1996; Warren & James, 2000): from the first, they are informed that they are unique, far different from the average citizen (Young 1995). Police recruits assimilate the culture through their socialisation with other significant officers as their primary role models (Pogrebin & Poole, 1991), adhering to codes of allegiance to, silence about, and obligatory mutual aid of, fellow officers (Skolnick, 2008).

Linguistic and attitudinal constructions conveyed through discourses that are deciphered, absorbed or discarded by police members, the most common form being “war stories” (Warren & James, 2000, p. 36), are responsible for the development and dissemination of cultural values. The recruit takes in a vast quantity of information from the “tribal elders and the big men of the immediate society, as they pass on historical knowledge and beliefs to create a cultural identity and reinforce social or physical boundaries and other organisational precepts” (Young, 1995, p. 151). This oral tradition of cultural delivery takes the form of lively and meaningful discourse in an informal interaction (Young, 1995). The narratives of the older officers provide a certain framework or plot-line for occurrences, giving the story a structure that is both consistent and consequential (Murray, 2003), and providing a sense of continuity between history and the future (Rappaport, 1993). Mutually reinforcing cultural discourses (concerning concepts of sanctioned violence and competition) all glorify militarism within the organisation and the police themselves. Formal promotional practices (such as advancement through the ranks) and informal status conventions (such as hero-worship), actively encourage the subculture in which an individual is venerated for displaying fearless conduct in dangerous or violent incidents (Kraska & Paulsen, 1997; Shaw, 2002). These discourses, and the comprehensive, analogous manner in which a culture is transmitted (containing details rarely available in any official account), are of particular interest for this research due to the view that the human-life world is fundamentally constituted in language, and that language helps to construct reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Through these discourses, an ‘us’ is developed and cultivated that differs from the outside, ordinary ‘them’; a solidarity emerges based on a mutual reliance on fellow officers involved in the pursuit of a complex duty. This cohesion is discernible in the culture of

fiercely loyal support, which is sometimes perceived as being heroic or reckless in nature (Loftus, 2009; Kleinig, 2000; Paoline, 2003). Loftus (2009, p. 13) warns that “solidarity also has a sinister face insofar as it encourages the protection and covering up of colleague infringements of procedure”. As such, the police organisation is often regarded as a shadowy and menacing brotherhood, with members collaborating together to shield each other in the performance of their duties. As a result of this image, the desirable attributes of a positive police culture are often rejected from consideration or viewed as being inconsequential (O’Loughlin & Billing, 2000).

Peer group influence is particularly persuasive because of its shaping influence on attitudes, principles, roles and operational behaviour where being seen as ‘one of the boys’ is an influential motivating force. It bolsters and supports self-esteem and confidence, which allows the officer to tolerate high levels of abuse, anger or hostility from outside sources (Reiser, 1974). The enhanced support of fellow police officers occurs only with a simultaneous loss of autonomy in areas of values and attitudes, and a shared culture results. The professional role identity of ‘police officer’ compels the individual to subscribe to appropriate discourses for his or her emotional responses, and role behaviour or emotional responses falling outside acceptable group reactions are inhibited. “Group norms are thus reinforced, group solidarity enhanced and group identity confirmed” (Pogrebin & Poole, 1991, p. 399).

In direct contrast to the strong cohesion between members, the police officers are expected to function independently. Autonomy and ability to function under pressure rely on the need to remain free of emotional encumbrances that could potentially destabilize the professional-client status hierarchy or threaten the dependable ‘us-them’ dichotomy (Pogrebin & Poole, 1991). Individual failure in the performance of duties results in feelings of alienation from the support group, depression and low self-esteem, and has the consequence of a loss of group identification that may seriously affect functioning on the street (Reiser, 1974).

Police officers are expected to instinctively know when to keep and when to break the rules.

Based on the concept of group solidarity, this paradox requires the member to respond instinctively in ways ordained by the group. All organisations are characterised by their own vocabulary, distinct meanings and terms that orient the individual to particular knowledge and laws (Paoline, 2003). Knowledge of these underlying rules is essential to competent membership in an organisation; the mark of having achieved competence is the individual's straightforward application of the regulations. Not only must members know the rules, but they must learn to apply them in such a way that their use is seamless and barely discernible (Fielding, 1984). Police officers' subscription to collective meanings, including knowledge of acceptable departures, unspoken contradictions and reformulations accepted in practice but not in public, is informed by the occupational culture. In the performance of police work, novices are confronted by many instances for which there is no recourse to previous experience for resolution or answers, and they are forced to think on their feet. Additionally, as a result of the culture of the organisation, the police are little inclined to make guidelines for action explicit to those novices. Training at the college provides grounding in law (generally learned by rote under intensive conditions); the development of certain physical skills (weapons mastery and handling vehicles); the encouragement of physical exercise; and possibly acquainting novices with aspects of social science. Formal training does little to convey the qualities officers identify as essential to practice (Brewer, 1994; Fielding, 1984). Furthermore, experienced officers' tendency to improvise in their police work encourages the recruit to think success is straightforward or that the proficiency exhibited in the resolution of a difficult situation is merely an enhanced form of common sense. This misleads the novices into ignoring the fact that the experienced officer is often making decisions while being attuned to the realities of complex situations about which he has immensely detailed knowledge (Fielding, 1984; Loftus, 2009). A sense of inadequacy results from the novice's inevitable failures, which exacerbates the stress experienced by the 'rookie'.

Police officers feel a need to belong to the in-group, yet the inability to trust the group implicitly leads to isolation.

While group loyalty is an integral feature of rank-and-file culture, conflicts are evident in the atmosphere of competitiveness and the organisational emphasis on

performance (Loftus, 2009). Even if one is known as a well-informed and gifted police officer, the continual awareness that there are in and out groups within the organisation, and that membership of a certain group can have detrimental effects on a career, can be a source of stress (McCafferty et al., 1992). There is a paradoxical need to belong to the right group within the organisation, and the concurrent inability to trust anyone within that group as a result of suspicion. Isolation is increased as the officer begins to question colleagues' dependability, accompanied by the uncomfortable realisation that one can only trust oneself (McCafferty et al., 1992). The result is that the officer comes to believe that events are shaped by the will of someone else, resulting in endless conjecture and delusions of persecution that accompany the fantasy. An image of police deviance and public mistrust of the organisation, already promoted by the police conformity to a code of silence that is inherent in the group, is further reinforced through explicit threats of reprisal and the exploitation of fears of being shunned by the group. This feeds anxieties about individuals' career prospects (Dean, Bell, & Lauchs, 2010).

Paradoxes of legitimacy.

The manner in which individuals are sanctioned to act by the society in which they live is referred to as legitimacy. In particular, Koortzen (1996) mentions five aspects of society which undermine legitimacy and serve to exacerbate the feelings of futility and helplessness amongst police officers:

- the media, who manipulate public opinion concerning the police force due to their indiscriminate reporting;
- the community in general, which has a negative attitude towards the police force, and consequently does not give support or cooperation;
- militant and organised pressure groups, whose actions the police are not trained to handle;
- the government which has an indirect influence on the sentences passed by the courts and thus the support of the police;
- and the courts, where the police official who has struggled to bring a criminal to justice perceives that the sentences passed on criminals are not strict enough given the crimes.

Kop et al. (1999) define the legitimacy paradox as ineffectual or incompetent police performance, and include lack of structural solutions, the negative attitude of civilians towards police officers, lack of respect, inadequate punishment of crime and the limited authority of police officers (cf. Koortzen, 1996).

Police officers experience many contradictions in terms of their authorisation, amongst which are:

Police officers are sanctioned by society to act in a violent manner yet are disempowered from action by the same rules of society.

Peaceforce

peace - force

Last time they stuck a yellow star on your shoulder

It wasn't out of choice.

(Krut, "Peaceforce", as cited in Brown, Hofmeyer & Rosenberg, 1983)

If the term violence is taken to mean "the intentional use of force to produce injury or damage to persons or property" (Coady, James, & Miller, 2000, p. 4), then police officers have long been empowered to act violently. They have been given this power so that they may maintain order and enforce the laws against those who would violate both order and law. In many cases, police violence is a response to the violence of the offender (Coady et al., 2000; Dick, 2005; Heiman, 1975; Kraska & Paulsen, 1997; McCafferty et al., 1992; Shaw, 2002; Smit & Cilliers, 1998). Interwoven within the fabric of a police officer's job, therefore, is the legitimisation of violence, giving the officer social licence for aggressive behaviour and concurrent credit for and approval of the use of such power (Kop & Euwema, 2001; Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Shaw, 2002).

In the apartheid era, behaviours that violated the dignity and integrity of certain groups within South African society were advocated, and the government of the day

committed violence through institutions such as the criminal justice system. Structural and institutional violence of this nature sparked counter-violence and consequently violence became an inherent feature of South African society (Brewer, 1994; Shaw, 2002; Smit & Cilliers, 1998). During this time, the religious and political discourses of White rule in South Africa were embedded in the police culture through a combination of selection and continuing cultural indoctrination (Brogden & Shearing, 1993; Skolnick, 2008). The 1960 killing of sixty-nine people by the police at Sharpeville is seen as having sparked the beginning of the contemporary era of police violence in South Africa, an event followed by other similar incidents that came to represent the antagonistic relationship existing between the SAP and the majority of South Africans (Brogden & Shearing, 1993; Shaw, 2002). The South African Police have a heritage beset with contradiction: they were traditionally viewed by a majority of the population as a source of insecurity, not security, and instead of promoting peace, the SAP as an organisation was traditionally seen as a source of violence both directly and indirectly. Such a legacy of fear and mistrust is difficult to erase and is carried over to the next generation of officers (more on this subject follows in later chapters).

The new democratic government of South Africa has as its goal the re-establishment of national voluntary compliance with the law and the concomitant protection of society against criminals. However, the reality is different – there is a chasm between what is supposed to happen (compliance with the law) and the actuality (where criminals disregard the law in their own interests). The criminal justice system is simultaneously charged with protecting every citizen and respecting, promoting, and fulfilling the specifications of the Bill of Rights (Sections 8, 9, and 12 of the Constitution). Section 49 of the Criminal Procedure Act (No. 51/1977) makes provision for the reasonable, permissible use of physical violence by the police in the execution of arrests (Shaw, 2002; Smit & Cilliers, 1998).

The police function from the conviction that the use of force is a valuable and indispensable tool for the implementation of the police mandate, based on an escalating concern for the ability to defend oneself against the hazards of an ever more dangerous workplace and increasingly discourteous public (Warren & James, 2000). Rationalisation of violent conduct towards felons, based as it is on the perception of public support, has the potential to evolve into other forms of corrupt and unlawful conduct, another predisposing influence on police culture (O'Loughlin & Billing, 2000). Chan (2000) mentions that police

officers are given wide discretionary powers. They function with substantial autonomy (Vila & Moore, 2008), and consequently, faced with what they perceive to be a dangerous and volatile environment, combined with an ineffective criminal justice system, and lacking in guidance in their use of force, officers tend to develop cognitive structures which help them to see the world through police-relevant categories. These categories legitimise the use of violence against certain sectors of society, defuse the stigma attached to violence and stipulate how violence can be defensible given certain circumstances. Police officers locate the responsibility for their actions in the broader, legally defined social order, thereby absolving themselves of personal agency (Dick, 2005).

The use of force is seen as ultimately justifiable, and individual forceful actions by police officers are simply attributed to the behaviour of the suspect or the demands of the situation (Kop & Euwema, 2001; Shaw, 2002; Warren & James, 2000). Smit and Cilliers (1998, p. 219) reiterate this by stating that:

the conclusion can be drawn that violence forms an integral part of the social control function of the police, that police action can lead to counter-violence and can even be identified as the primary cause of violence....the various forms of violence they have to cope with in the course of their duties and the methods they apply in dealing with violence have an impact on the individual police officer as well as the system as a whole. As such, the police not only control violence and protect the public against violence, but also become the perpetrators and victims of violence.

Du Preez (as cited in Smit & Cilliers, 1998) divides the violent enforcement of the law into three categories:

- *Attitudinal violence*, which involves certain characteristics, inclinations, and attitudes such as bullying, suspiciousness, aggression, superior attitude, misuse of power and authority, discourtesy and hostility displayed in relationships with the public;
- *Operational violence*, related to functional duties such as arrest, search, confiscation and the associated practices of interviewing and interrogation that arise from repressive action;

- *Verbal violence*, which is related to the manner in which the police correspond with the public, especially taking the form of disrespect, bad language, verbal harassment, mockery, use of abusive names or refusing to pay attention when there is need for open communication.

Additionally, sensationalism in the media when reporting on crime leads not only to a public reaction of fear or disgust, but may also serve to perpetuate the existence of a hidden police culture of violence (O'Loughlin & Billing, 2000).

In opposition to the socially and officially authorised use of violence, democratic societies now insist that proficiency in the use of social skills becomes the primary weapon in the police officers' arsenal, instead of resorting to aggression. This demands that the officer place emphasis on delivering a service and the resolving dilemmas without or with minimal use of force (Kop & Euwema, 2001; Loftus, 2009; Shaw, 2002). This emphasis has been evidenced in the change of the name of the organisation from 'The South African Police Force' to 'The South African Police Service', with all the accompanying policy changes. Police officers within the South African Police Service must face similar changes that have recently been made in the structure of the country and the organisation (Nel, 1999; Shaw, 2002). The political and social changes have led to much anxiety and uncertainty, and police officers are not only required to adapt to the changes which affect their lives personally as well as professionally, but also must strive to secure and protect a society struggling to adapt to the changes in government and policies itself (Nel & Burgers, 1998; Shaw, 2002). As a result, many officers who first joined the force on the grounds of the ideals of stability and structure it represented are now faced with significant changes in the nature of policing. The redefining of roles from state to community policing, and the dissolving of certain sections or the amalgamation of others (with the consequent redeployment of personnel) causes immense upheaval (Nel, 1999). Additionally, on the basis of the new Constitution, police are expected to serve and protect the rights of all, which demands that the officer prove accountable to the community he serves and a demands a different type of recruit (Nel & Burgers, 1998). According to Nel (1999, p. 34),

a major contributor to trauma and crisis experienced by police officials is the inadequate preparation of members by management for the magnitude of

the changes, whether through more effective communication strategies, relevant training and skills enhancement, and/or provision of required resources...a perceived lack of commitment of management to the well-being of members, inadequate resources (human and material); the general lack of management support and other support systems for members; and the general conditions under which police officials have to perform their work.

Police officers are now expected to be able to handle potentially dangerous situations without the use of force in spite of negativity and complaints by citizens, intensification of violence and conflict, and concurrently increased risk for the police officer. This leads to upheaval and uncertainty in the existing police culture, and the accompanying disempowerment of police officers (Nel, 1999; Shaw, 2002). Officers traditionally see themselves as the thin blue line standing against crime and disorder: the principle of behaving towards members of the public as though they were customers in order to convey the newly-instituted customer-oriented approach is overwhelmingly contradictory with what the proper police function is believed to be. Accordingly, “the orientation towards crime fighting interfered with prevailing initiatives to redefine the police role” (Loftus, 2009, pp. 5-6).

Police officers are duty-bound to enforce justice, yet their work is continually undermined by the legal system.

Problems with the criminal justice system are particularly constant stressors for the police officer. These extra-organisational stressors include the system (with its lenient attitude towards criminals), the police-community relationship (characterised by increased police alienation), and police role conflict as a result of the shift in focus towards service orientation (Golembiewski & Kim, 1990; Loftus, 2009). When the criminal a police officer has risked his or her life to apprehend, is allowed free, a high level of cynicism is engendered (Bishop et al., 2006; Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006). Officers see the leniency of judges and ‘soft’ laws as responsible for hindering them in their assignment to combat crime, a difficult notion for many officers, whose authoritarian ideologies culminate in their support of the death penalty (Loftus, 2009). Officers are left with feelings of uselessness and futility, which at times result in burnout, lowered self-esteem and job satisfaction (Cawthra, 1993;

Goodman, 1990; Gulle et al., 1998; McCafferty et al., 1992; Nel, 1999; Perrier & Toner, 1984).

Those police officers confronted by incidents involving brutality (which has a direct influence on their emotional need for retribution) may be more likely to have strong desires to bring perpetrators to justice themselves rather than let an inefficient justice process occur (O'Loughlin & Billing, 2000). Despite their expressed aspiration to protect the public, officers paradoxically exhibit cynicism towards the criminality and unreliability of their society, and resent the public for being unappreciative of the work they are doing (Loftus, 2009), and for exhibiting this lack of support in the rulings of the justice system.

Police officers have a desire for public trust yet society generally fears, reviles or is suspicious of them.

*You know it's really cold
when you wake up hurtin'
in the middle of the night
and the only one you know to
call is the operator and she
puts you through to the police.*

(Williams, as cited in Miller & Greenberg, 1981)

Many officers report feeling that police work is a 'calling': defending and serving the community is definitely alluded to as a principal motivation for many officers who join the police (Anshel, 2000). Police officers like to maintain control over and extract trust and respect from the public as is their due. Members of the public are expected to be polite, apologise or admit guilt. However, the public is not always as ready to admit the right of the officer to exert this authority, and any reaction of contempt forces the officer to 'save face' to maintain and assert this influence (Loftus, 2009). This leads to strained relations between officers and members of the public, as officers see themselves as "intimately bound up with the delivery of justice and punishment" (Loftus, 2009, p. 12).

The decrease of moral standards and the lack of discipline within society itself appear to have a negative influence on the work functioning of the police officer (Koortzen, 1996; Nel, 1999; Perrier & Toner, 1984). The escalation of the crime rate in South Africa over the past few years has made police work more stressful, and officers are aware of a pervading feeling of lack of support within society (Gulle et al., 1998; Shaw, 2002). The police are exposed to rampant criticism: Altbeker (2008, p. 260) even goes so far as to name the crime problems in South Africa “a gauge of the extent to which policing has failed”, underlining the public castigation. One of the top stressors for police as identified by Bishop et al. (2006) was facing unreasonable press criticism for actions committed while in the line of duty.

Openness to public opinion about the quality of their previous work performance, such as in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, creates additional pressure with its demands for social accountability. Many conservative police officials, who have served in the SAPS since before the abolition of apartheid, find their new roles within the South African society confusing or even a traumatic culture shock to which they are unwilling or unable to adapt (Nel & Burgers, 1998).

In the unique South African context, the attitude of the community takes on a more dangerous perspective. Socio-political changes have led to negative public attitudes and a lack of community trust (Brewer, 1994; Gulle et al., 1998; Koortzen, 1996; McCafferty et al., 1992; Nel, 1999), culminating in the public view of a police officer not as an individual, but rather as a stereotype that engenders fear, suspicion and hostility (Perrier & Toner, 1984). The resulting perception of the police as legitimate targets for retaliation is exacerbated by the easy access to firearms and the South African culture of violence and associated trauma (Brewer, 1994; Nel, 1999; Shaw, 2002). The community’s violent attacks on police officers have a negative influence on the experience of authority and lowers self-confidence, contributing to a lack of control in the policing situation, damaged community-police relations and the impaired image of the SAPS as a whole (Smit & Cilliers, 1998).

The contradiction between the need to have the public’s trust, and the actuality of the public’s denigration inspires feelings of intense frustration. As such, attitudes of futility and helplessness in maintenance of social relationships, unsatisfactory punishment of crime, the

limited authority of police officers within society and the lack of respect and negative attitudes of civilians are common (Kop et al., 1999).

Consequences of Paradoxes

The effects of stress on the police officer engendered by the above paradoxes of function, structure and legitimacy are far-reaching, encompassing every sphere of the individual's life, whether professional, familial or social. Police officers' reactions to the contradictions in their lives encompass negative emotion-focussed coping strategies such as suicide, marital and family problems, sexual problems, unnecessary risk-taking, isolation from friends, callousness, alcoholism and unnecessary violence in dealing with citizens (Beehr, Johnson, & Nieva, 1995; Dempsey & Forst, 2010). Nel (1999, p. 37) notes that:

in the workplace the police officer might experience low morale, a lack of job satisfaction and feelings of inability and low self-esteem; may illustrate low productivity and a decrease in overall performance level; ill discipline, such as an 'I don't care' attitude, a disrespect for human life, corruption and accident proneness with a subsequent increase in expenditure for damages incurred and legal costs; physical illness and absenteeism with the accompanying increase in medical expenditure; and may even experience temporary or permanent incapacity with the subsequent increase in expenses and loss of expertise due to medical retirements and resignations.

There are three assumptions that can be made in describing police officers' processes of perceiving and coping with stress (Anshel, 2000):

- Highly intense, acute stress (such as pain and injury, an ambiguous situation that could potentially become physically dangerous), influences thoughts and actions which causes significant changes in psychological, physiological and behavioural responses.
- Long-term stress and burnout which is caused by short-term, sudden stress, such as daily nuisances, poor health, carrying out duties in an unsafe area, and the

accompanying failure to deal effectively with it, leads to an assortment of medical illnesses as well as reduced mental functioning, less accurate decision-making, heightened unpleasant emotions, anxiety or depression. Psychologically, stress may also engender a loss of desirable personal dispositions such as self-esteem, confidence and a sense of self-control leading to reduced job satisfaction and performance, mental withdrawal and an increased likelihood of dropping out of the police (Anshel, 2000; Violanti & Aron, 1994).

- Sources of stress for the police officer that are ongoing and long-term will result in burnout, reduced motivation, poor performance and an eventual resignation from the profession (Anshel, 2000; Biggam et al., 1997; Burke & Deszca, 1986; Violanti & Aron, 1994).

The effects of stress can be likened to a slow process of erosion, such as water dripping on a stone, gradually wearing down the physical and emotional health of the police officers and their ability to cope with personal, interpersonal and organisational demands effectively (Perrier & Toner, 1984; Selye, 1978). Post traumatic stress, burnout, changing personality patterns, suicide and violence, poor family or societal relationships, substance abuse and physical disease or absenteeism are among the most common. These effects will be briefly expanded on here.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

As part of their daily duties, police officers are exposed to many situations that could be described as critical incident stressors (Kopel & Friedman, 1997). Many researchers mention that, as a result of exposure to situations beyond the realm of normal human experience involving low-frequency, high-impact stressors such as having to deal with death or disaster, officers are likely to develop post-traumatic stress (Brown et al., 1999; Maia et al., 2007; Stephens & Long, 2000). Police in the South African context are victims not only of violence but are witness to many of the situations which are described as critical incident stressors, such as the suicide or violent death of a colleague, gruesome scenes, environmental dangers and national disasters (Nel & Burgers, 1998).

PTSD is characterised by the development of a constellation of distressing psychological symptoms divided into the three main categories of avoidance behaviours, hyper-vigilance, and persistent recurrence of the traumatic situation in the form of intrusive images, dreams or flashbacks as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Diagnosis of the disorder includes exposure to a traumatic experience such as those encountered by police officers during potentially traumatic situations, yet it must be remembered that not all people exposed to trauma develop the disorder (Stephens et al., 1997).

The highest ranked police stressors mentioned in conjunction with the development of the disorder were: police killing of a suspect in the line of duty to protect the lives of others or their own (Brown et al., 1999; Stotland, 1991; Stratton, Parker, & Snibbe, 1984; Violanti & Aron, 1995); fear of life-threatening situations (Goodman, 1990; Koortzen, 1996); and experiencing a fellow officer being killed. Symptoms of perceptual distortion, heightened sense of danger, anger, flashbacks, isolation and emotional numbing were reported immediately afterwards (Violanti & Aron, 1995). The effects of a shooting incident were noted for a period of one week to three months after the incident, during which time a large proportion of the officers experienced symptoms of post traumatic stress such as flashbacks, sleep problems, or extreme expression of emotions. The majority perceived the incident as a significant emotional event not easily forgotten (Stratton et al., 1984). Violanti (1994) notes that officers often leave the police after being involved in a shooting or killing incident because they are unable to deal with the stress engendered by traumatic experiences. Operational tasks such as attending the scene of a sudden death or arresting a violent person are also cited as having an unpleasant impact on those exposed (Brown & Campbell, 1990; Brown et al., 1999; Kop & Euwema, 2001).

Officers who experienced PTSD were five times more likely to be divorced, had more medical consultations, and reported more suicidal ideation (Maia et al., 2007). Some researchers believe that there are associations between psychological trauma symptoms and dysregulation of cortisol patterns which could affect future health outcomes in police officers (Violanti et al., 2007). Research has shown that there is a clear relationship between PTSD and suicidal thoughts and behaviours, irrespective of the type of trauma experienced, and if

co-morbid depression is present, it appears to boost the effect of PTSD on suicidality (Panagioti, Gooding & Tarrier, 2009).

It is intriguing to note that the development of PTSD may not require catastrophic, disastrous or exceptional events, since continued and prolonged exposure to road trauma, violent offenders or distressed victims may produce similar results (Walker, 1997). Secondary or vicarious reactions to a traumatic incident may be delayed: officers might appear to be handling the incident well and do not require assistance, yet some time later, they begin to develop difficulties for no apparent reason, such as psychosomatic illness, fatigue, sleeplessness or other types of symptoms (Reiser & Geiger, 1984).

In recent years there has been a movement towards classifying PTSD as political and socially constructed, a stance in direct opposition to the traditional view of PTSD as a disorder. Reasoning for this is placed in the definition of criteria, which are often changed over time in order to obtain consensus between judges, and consequently underlying concepts of 'deviance' or 'psychopathology' have discrete historical periods. By ordering and classifying aberrations within diagnostic systems, society can be controlled and regulated (Bing, 2009). If problems can be located within an individual, society is absolved of responsibility for their deviant behaviour. There is no doubt that within the police, certain practices such as early medical retirement for motives such as PTSD have secondary gain attached, and as a result, behaviour to appear more debilitated has merit (more on this in later chapters). As a result, the SAPS has traditionally not always recognised PTSD as an illness and gives little support to members purporting to have the diagnosis (Bing, 2009).

Emotional Exhaustion and Burnout

Continuous work stress can result in burnout, which results from the emotional and physical exhaustion of workers (Kop & Euwema, 2001). Burnout is described as a slow evolution resulting from many stressful experiences that affect the officer detrimentally with regards to psychological, behavioural and physical functioning, which might lead to an impaired ability to function under stressful situations (Goodman, 1990). An individual who experiences stress is usually able to return to a normal level of functioning (i.e. adaptation has been performed), while burnout refers to a breakdown in adaptation with its accompanying

chronic malfunction in a work setting (Wiese et al., 2003). Being shot or wounded in the line of duty increases a police officer's potential for eventual burnout (Goodman, 1990), along with stressors such as informing relatives of a sudden death, presence at the scene of a suicide or fatal accident, the officer's use of force, and dealing with criminal or sexual offences involving children (Kop & Euwema, 2001; Kop et al., 1999; Peltzer, 2001).

Golembiewski and Kim (1990) classified burnout according to three dimensions, namely depersonalisation, or a tendency to distance oneself from others; lack of personal accomplishment, or doing poorly on a job in which one's impact is perceived as being inconsequential or negligent; and emotional exhaustion, or the experience of feelings of being beyond comfortable coping limits. This deficiency can result in the officer not being able to assess situations carefully and thus endangering him- or herself or others.

Both male and female officers are exposed to burnout; however, burnout is expressed differently according to gender (Brown et al., 1999; Johnson, 1991). Females are more likely to report being drained and exhausted by their job, while males are more likely to externalise their burnout by treating members of the public like impersonal objects or becoming callous towards people. Many offenders do not aggressively attack a woman in circumstances where they would be prepared to assail a man, and the possible number of physical confrontations is reduced. As a result, a woman's burnout is more internalised, centred on the fact of her womanhood; negative responses of her fellow male colleagues are likely to be seen as threats to her self-esteem (Johnson, 1991). However, in the case of a male officer, his greater physical stamina and psychological readiness to confront danger are ingrained as part of the male culture, combined with a certain amount of competitiveness, assertiveness, military culture and strength. Males avoid similar internal burnout through their aggressive policing style and the fact that their behaviour is more often affirmed by the culture and the group (Johnson, 1991).

Reciprocity in relation to colleagues is considered a moderating factor in the development of burnout, as a result of the fact that relationships with fellow officers are seen as stronger determinants for feelings of effectiveness and satisfaction than associations with superiors (White, Lawrence, Biggerstaff, & Grubb, 1985).

Changing Personality Patterns

The requirements of the officer to be tough, objective and efficient may result in certain types of officers being rated more highly than others. Young police officers with outstanding performance ratings are more conforming, less interested in scientific or theoretical work, more work than people orientated and tend to have a lower need to understand their own or other people's feelings (Cacioppe & Mock, 1985). The recruit develops a 'John Wayne Syndrome', in which cynicism, over-seriousness, emotional isolation, authoritarian attitudes and the development of a certain amount of 'black or white' thinking, where situations and values are dichotomised into good or bad, all or nothing, is common (Dempsey & Forst, 2010; Kop & Euwema, 2001). Loftus (2009) postulates that the strain between expectations of what police work entails, and the actuality thereof (in which there is a large amount of unrewarding and monotonous work) engenders a profoundly cynical and pessimistic view of the social world. The striving to demonstrate masculine superiority or machismo, especially in physical combat, with its higher levels of aggression, assertiveness and competitiveness, is shown (Bing, 2009; Cacioppe & Mock, 1985). It appears to develop as a result of the shaping influences within the organisation and serves to protect the new officer against his own emotions.

Beutler, Nussbaum and Meredith (1988) were among the first researchers to raise the question of police officers' personality patterns changing over time. The researchers found that over a period of just a few years, police officers showed a significantly higher level of neurotoform psychopathology, indicative of increased risk for stress-related somatic complaints, and substance abuse was seen as a common coping mechanism. Police officers also develop significantly more cynicism than the average person, leading to isolation and experience suspiciousness that is pessimistic and negative (Anshel, 2000; Loftus, 2009; Cacioppe & Mock, 1985). Inevitably the novice adheres to stories conveyed by the older officers, and over time, the elders' expectations of him or her are satisfied as he or she assumes the distinctive group identity so characteristic of the police (Young, 1995).

Suicide and Violence

No one kills himself who has never wanted to kill another, or at least wished the death of another.

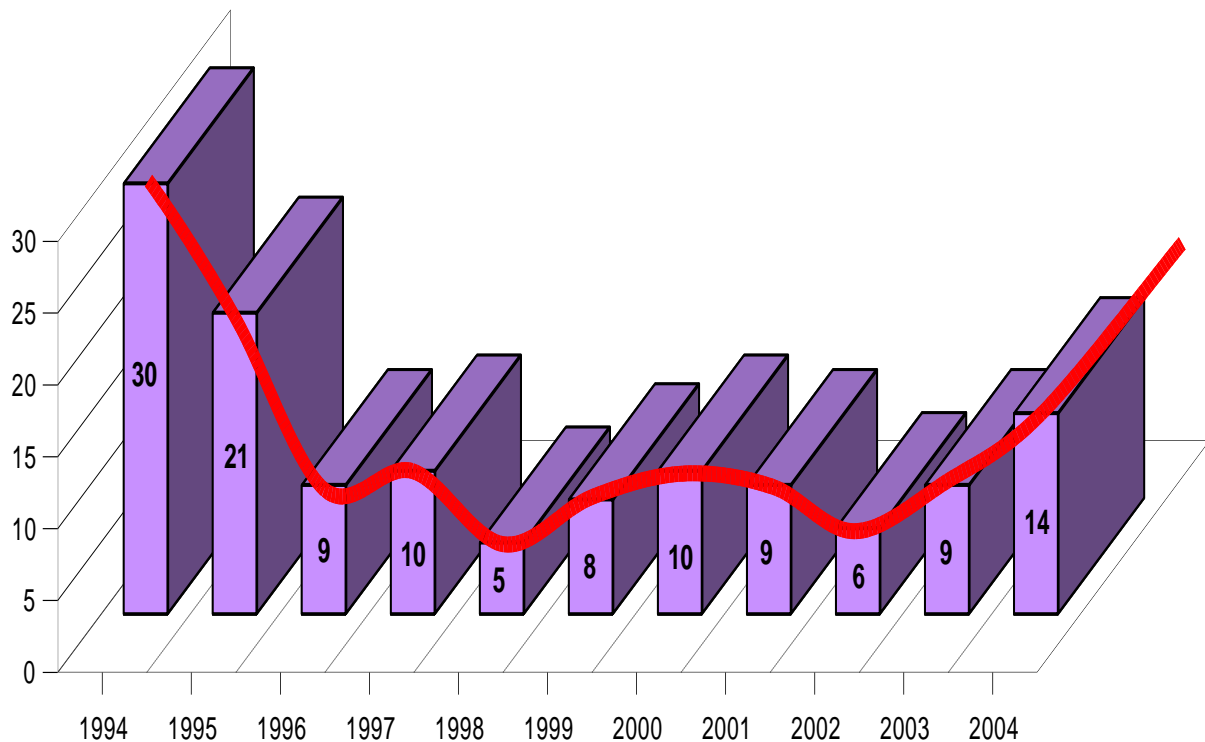
(Stekel, as cited in Heiman, 1975, p. 267)

It is pertinent to note that while it is the personal characteristics of the police officer (such as cynicism and detachment) that determine the use of force (Kop & Euwema, 2001), the high stress level experienced by police officers is accompanied by the inherent risk that a police officer can pose a threat either towards his own life or that of his colleagues (Perrier & Toner, 1984). It appears to be common for suicide within the police organisation to be under-reported to spare the family, or for reasons such as regulations regarding insurance benefits. Additionally, the internal affairs of the police department are kept secret, especially a phenomenon that might be seen as an indicator of stress in the workplace (Loo, 1986; McCafferty et al., 1992). The parameter of a high suicide rate is often held against the department as a tangible demonstration of overwhelming stress (McCafferty et al., 1992). Miller (2006) mentioned that at the time of the article, police suicide in the USA was three times that of the general population, and three times as many officers killed themselves as were murdered in the line of duty. It is postulated that suicides amongst police officers are frequently made to appear accidental (McCafferty et al., 1992).

The South African Police Service is challenged by the high crime level, organisational transformation and a lack of resources: as a result, suicide among police officials is common (Nel, 1999; Van der Merwe et al., 2004). In South Africa, studies reveal dramatic increases in the rate of suicide of police officers from 1990, when the rate was 110 per 100 000, to 2000, when the rate increased to 130 per 100 000 (Pienaar, Rothmann, & Van de Vijver, 2006). Country-wide, the number of suicides in the South African Police Service is five times that of police suicides elsewhere (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2005). A recent study by Van der Merwe et al. (2004) revealed that 14.76% of a sample of police officers interviewed in a South African context showed serious levels of suicidal ideation. Rothmann and Strijdom (2002) concluded that the suicidal ideation for both Black and White police officers was higher than the norm for students.

Due to my own location in the SAPS, and mostly for reasons of ease of accessibility, this study was situated in the Western Cape, and drew on members of the SAPS in the Western Cape. As such, I have included specific suicide statistics for this part of the country. Figure 3.1 shows the statistics for the Western Cape Province during the decade from 1994 until 2004 (Westraat, 2005). It is necessary to note that these are only those suicides that are unambiguously classified as suicide. In the case of a suicide which may be classified as an accident, for example, an accidental gunshot, the memory of the deceased may be protected by the classification of their death as ‘accidental’.

Figure 3.1 Suicide statistics in the SAPS Western Cape over the decade from 1994 to 2004



Researchers have postulated various reasons for this high suicide rate. These are briefly summarised here:

- Aussant (1984) mentions fifteen common causes of suicide amongst police officers: stressful police work; physical or emotional inadequacies; marital problems; familial conflict; abuse of alcohol; use of tranquillisers; use of drugs; difficult political

situations; environments hostile to the police; badly organised police departments; poor partner and team relationships; financial problems; inadequate training; and poor person-job fit.

- It was first thought that police officers are higher suicide risks because they are constantly exposed to tragedy and human misery and must be constantly giving of themselves (Heiman, 1975). The police culture instils a sense of superhuman emotional and survival strength to deal with adversity through the strong socialisation police officers experience in training and later experience. However, when this invulnerability is shattered by stress and traumatic events it may also increase the likelihood of suicidal thoughts and aggressive behaviours (Violanti, 1996). The denial of mortality becomes more difficult. In order to overcome emotional numbing, the officer seeks increased stimulation, resulting in outrageous behaviour, impulsiveness and aggressive reactions. Suicide may be an attempt to restore feelings of potency, bravery and mastery over untenable situations (Violanti, 1996).
- Actions of others are interpreted in a negative, suspicious or sceptical way (Dempsey & Forst, 2010) and officers may become arrogant, argumentative, insubordinate or hostile when interacting with other members of the department or even the public (Perrier & Toner, 1984). A typical negative interaction pattern develops: depersonalised officers behave more forcefully towards civilians, who in turn react in an unfriendly and uncooperative manner. This reinforces the negative attitude of the officer (Kop & Euwema, 2001).
- Kop et al. (1999) and Kop and Euwema (2001) note that officers who become depersonalised or feel less competent as a result of emotional exhaustion or burnout have a more positive attitude towards the use of force, and additionally have a negative attitude towards civilians. In their observations, all use of physical and verbal force occurred with police officers who scored highly on the three burnout dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and the need for personal accomplishment leading to sense of failure, which are related to organisational issues. This sense of personal failure is directly related to feelings of worthlessness and

suicidal ideation. These should be viewed as an important area for intervention and can be readily addressed and changed by management.

- Alienated as a result of the lack of governmental, organisational or community support, police officials accept a definition of themselves as ‘sick’ and subsequently internalise their feelings of aggression which were previously expressed in the execution of their duties (Nel & Burgers, 1998).
- Feelings of alienation associated with the withdrawal reaction typical of the development of PTSD can progress to a point where the officer harbours considerable anger and resentment toward those who judge his or her actions in the line of duty, and self-criticism is common. Defences of intrusion and avoidance appear to be the primary features of both the normal and pathological response to trauma, and it is postulated that a relationship exists between high avoidance scores and a high suicide rate (Kopel & Friedman, 1997).
- A perception of dissatisfaction with the human aspects of management and supervision, including the lack of understanding between the police official and the supervisor, their maltreatment by the supervisor and the poor way the grievance process is handled has been linked to suicidal ideation (Rothmann & Strijdom, 2002).
- Clark and White (2003) mention that officers often do not seek help as a result of concerns for the maintenance of confidentiality, anxiety about the impact of emotional disclosure on their jobs, the stigma engendered by airing emotional concerns, mistrust of the psychological field in general, and a concurrent negative perception of taking medication for treatment.
- A sense of coherence (the extent to which one has a pervasive, dynamic feeling of confidence that one’s internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high likelihood that things will work out well) is associated with levels of suicidal ideation. The more police officers are inclined to a sense of coherence, the more

satisfied they are with the job and the less likely they are to experience suicidal ideation (Rothmann & Strijdom, 2002).

- Suicide is greatest in those officers with a prior history of depression who face debilitating stressors linked to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Miller, 2006).

Poor Social and Family Relationships

Both male and female police officers experience negative relationships as a result of the blurring of work and societal roles, leading to limited emotional contact with family members or emotional outbursts that provoke feelings of guilt, with the implication that the families of police officers are also negatively affected (Dempsey & Forst, 2010; Koortzen, 1996). Police officers often have no more emotional resources left to deal with the needs of family and as a result, in addition to the tension which they bring home, often deal with their families in an aggressive, insensitive or emotionally detached way (Goodman, 1990). As a result of the development of an emotional buffer against unpleasant experiences as described previously, police officers become uncommunicative towards their spouses (Smit & Cilliers, 1998), and report moodiness, tension, anxiety, isolation, depression, emotional numbness, and insensitivity to the needs of others, low esteem, loss of motivation and loss of interest in the outside world (Nel, 1999). Work stress has ultimately been blamed for the accompanying intimate partner abuse that occurs (Gershon, Barocas, Canton, Li, & Vlahov, 2009).

Substance Abuse

The presence of police officers at incidents which can be described as critical incident stressors can result in blunted emotions and potentially destructive coping mechanisms such as alcohol abuse (Anshel, 2000; Golembiewski & Kim, 1990; Kop & Euwema, 2001; Nel, 1999; Violanti et al. 1986). Ironically, negative coping mechanisms are linked to higher levels of perceived work stress, and lead to adverse health outcomes (Gershon et al., 2009).

As a result of the fact that alcohol abuse is kept firmly hidden and that drinking on duty is strongly censured, remarkably few police officers are classified as alcoholics (Golembiewski & Kim, 1990). Consequently, extremely little information is to be obtained about this taboo subject, although it is tacitly agreed that police officers drink more than the general population. Non-official reports indicate a high level of alcohol consumption by police officers, but few accurate studies have been done on the level of alcoholism (Violanti et al., 1986). Some studies estimate that up to 25 percent of police officers depend on alcohol in some way (Cacioppe & Mock, 1985).

Swatt, Gibson and Piquero (2007) imply that there is a relationship between work-related strain and drinking prevalence as well as problematic alcohol consumption which is mediated through anxiety and depression. Police officers who are alcohol abusers more often have a history of work-related problems, and frequently have more interpersonal precipitants, although it is unclear from the research whether this is the result or cause of alcohol abuse. Patrolmen who abuse alcohol are continually reprimanded for being absent from their posts and for other infractions arising from their drinking on the job or arriving at work drunk. Alcohol abuse has been found to be common in police officers who commit suicide, murder-suicide or who have marital problems or the diagnosis of psychosis (Danto, 1978). Additionally, PTSD seems to be linked to alcohol abuse (Marshall, Panuzio, & Taft, 2005).

Physical Disease and Absenteeism

Violanti et al. (1986) found that police officers experience a significantly higher mortality rate due to cancer, suicide and arteriosclerotic disease than the general population as a result of the high stress environment, irregular sleeping patterns and eating habits, poor health habits and inconsistent exercise. Digestive disorders, cardiovascular disease, and alcoholism are sometimes blamed for officers' early retirement and death from job-related stress disorders (Waters & Ussery, 2007). Work on alternating shifts, eating at unusual times of the day and seldom having time to relax is associated with a higher risk for disease. Additionally, the presence of a transient risk factor, sudden episodic jolts to the cardiovascular system in times of emergency, combined with a high-striving achievement-orientated competitive personality, might lead to a higher risk for heart disease (Violanti et al., 1986; Violanti et al., 2006). Violanti et al. (2006) found a nearly twofold reduction in

brachial artery FMD (which is seen as a biomarker for subclinical cardiovascular disease) and a concurrently higher risk for heart disease in officers diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress. Likewise, Joseph et al. (2009) concluded that police officers have increased levels of atherosclerosis compared to a general population sample which potentially implicated law enforcement work in the development of cardiovascular disease. Police officers encounter stressful episodes largely characterised by uncertainty and unpredictability as regards timing and outcomes, often having to act on insufficient information, set priorities to ensure that essential responsibilities are met and resolve incompatible requests. According to Kirkmeyer and Diamond (1985), such role stress resulting from the loss of control would be expected to elicit Type A pattern behaviour, characterised by the dimensions of hostility-aggression, impatience and competitive achievement-striving, which has been associated with high levels of heart disease.

An officer's ability or inability to cope with stress may also be reflected in the absenteeism of that individual. Some officers who are unable to cope with the stresses of police work habitually avoid the situation by calling in sick (Goodman, 1990; Nel & Burgers, 1998), while another likelihood is that officers who find it impossible to cope with the stress encountered during their work, develop psychosomatic illnesses (Goodman 1990). However, the fear that they will be perceived as being weak or cowardly if they are absent from work ensures that some officers refuse to take extra time off work in spite of being involved in traumatic incidents which cause illness, a lowering of the quality of family life and professional competence (Walker, 1997). In addition to preoccupation with illness, police officers experience an emotional realm of symptoms such as apathy, anxiety, irritability, mental fatigue, over-compensation or denial, with resulting restlessness, agitation, over-sensitivity and defensiveness (Perrier & Toner, 1984).

Coping with Stress

Disastrous events tend to have lingering psychological effects on many emergency personnel. Emergency personnel typically employ coping strategies when dealing with the negative emotions aroused by a traumatic situation, such as a feeling of satisfaction in being able to help, ability to frame the event in a more positive light, finding humour in the event or enlisting social support (McCammon, Durham, Allison, & Williamson, 1988). Cognitive

strategies in which workers attempt to achieve mastery of the situation by seeking a greater meaning, and actions taken to achieve mastery appear to reflect an attempt of mastery of the emotional responses initiated by the event (Hart et al., 1995; McCammon et al., 1988). Feelings of being overwhelmed significantly affect the post-disaster adjustment of personnel. Avoidance coping mechanisms tend to exacerbate perceptions of work stress and have adverse health outcomes (Gershon et al., 2009). Emotion-focussed strategies, where police officers attempt to cope with their stressful work experiences by managing their emotional responses, tend to increase their perception of work hassles, while problem-focussed strategies (which manage or deal directly with the stressful event) are more adaptive (Hart et al., 1995). Emotion-focussed coping is aimed at reducing stress and regulating emotion and includes distancing, self-control, accepting responsibility and positive reappraisal of stressors. Consequently, it seems to be instrumental in minimising the negative psychological impact of stressors (Bishop et al., 2006). Ease of talking about traumatic experiences at work and an ability to communicate about disturbing experiences buffers the relationship between traumatic stressors and physical or psychological health outcomes (Stephens & Long, 2000).

Of vital importance is supervisors' response to trauma: in a qualitative study, those supervisors who responded in an emotionally supportive manner were found to mitigate the stress response of front-line practitioners (Halpern et al., 2009).

Anshel (2000) proposed the following model for coping with police stress:

- *Perceived stress* - the officer's perception of an event or stimulus, comprising attending to relevant information while ignoring input that is predetermined as meaningless, is important. It is crucial to note that stress is only evident if the officer detects the event or stimulus.
- *Cognitive appraisal* – in which the officer interprets the event or stimulus, relying on the perception of the stress as potentially threatening, harmful or challenging. Events that appear benign, extraneous or positive are not perceived as demanding and therefore do not require adjustment. This strongly influences the stressor's apparent power over the officer, the extent to which the stressor is viewed as significant and the selection of coping mechanism. Individuals who have advantageous personal temperaments, with high degrees of optimism, sense of self-worth and self-assurance

are more likely to be impervious to stress and to view events as challenging rather than hostile. However, chronic stress can wear down even the most optimistic of individuals.

- *Harm or loss appraisals* - these occur when the officer has experienced physical or mental damage or has lost something of value, and individuals are more inclined to use passive coping mechanisms such as fatalism (conviction that an event was ordained to occur), social comparison (contrasting their experiences with other officers who have been through similar or worse incidents) and faith in a higher power who is in control of what is happening, all of which can be effective. By means of religion, stressors may be reappraised as having more meaning through a perceptual framework that derives significance through the cataloguing of unpleasant experiences as ‘acts of God’ and not in need of reasonable explanation (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2003). Chaplains are employed as a part of the permanent workforce of the SAPS as a result. However, because these strategies are used typically when a person has lost control of a situation, Anshel (2000) believes they are contra-indicated in police work in which controlling the situation is the primary goal.
- *Threat* – this reflects expectations of potential harm and uncertainty of outcome, a common dilemma in police work, and encompasses visualising a worst-case scenario and then taking suitable care in order to prevent its occurrence. Threat appraisals should be used cautiously in police work to evade the chronic stress and burnout which would be the inevitable result.
- *Challenge* – this proposes an occasion to develop or gain from a stressful event, adopting a frame of mind that reflects belief and confidence in one’s own abilities to control the situation, and results in less intense stress and a heightened sense of power. Favoured by experienced police officers, coping mechanisms such as this are productive for keeping the officer directed towards performance of the task whilst maintaining confidence, alertness and proper arousal and energy levels.

Through training, researchers believe that police officers may learn to select the suitable cognitive evaluation as a function of what is demanded by the situation, and

consequently be able to deal with stressful events more successfully (Anshel, 2000). Within the framework, many different therapeutic approaches could be applied, such as coping strategies which comprise the use of strategies categorised as approach or avoidance, which may lead to reduced stress intensity.

- *Approach coping* reflects dealing with disagreeable or menacing information in order to manage, develop insight or foster ingenuity in dealing with stress through thoughts or actions. Approach-behavioural coping reduces the stressful situation by interacting with the primary source of stress for the purpose of asserting control over the situation. Approach-cognitive coping consists of a person's thoughts that deliberately manage, empower or improve resources in dealing with stress.
- *Avoidance coping* signifies a conscious effort to ignore the stressor cognitively or physically in order to separate the individual from the origin of the stress and reinstate more positive self-talk. This allows the police officer to deal constructively with low-control situations and preserve the focus of attention when emotional resources are inadequate or surplus of information must be reduced. Avoidance-cognitive coping consists of thoughts that serve to divert, filter out or discount the source of stress. Avoidance-behavioural coping removes the officer physically from the stressor which in turn eliminates thoughts related to the stressor.

Although avoidance has the short-term effect of helping the officer mentally escape from the unpleasant finale of a stressful event, over the long term this is less effective than mentally or physically confronting the source of stress. It is also possible to switch from one style of coping to another as the situation demands.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have endeavoured to sketch a pencil outline of the organisational context of the police officer. More detail will be added to the drawing in the following chapters, but here it can be seen that within the pervading atmosphere of invulnerability, competitiveness, and an inflated "heterosexual orientation often articulated in misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes" (Brown et al., 1999, p. 314), many paradoxes of function, structure

and legitimacy exist. While researchers may never reach agreement as to the extent to which the police are negatively influenced by these stressors, it cannot be denied that in police organisations, within South Africa specifically, note should be taken of these stressors and of the high level of stress, social dysfunction and life-threatening behaviours that are engendered amongst police officials as a result.

This study aims to explore the domain of police functioning through the use of a qualitative approach grounded in the theoretical principles of social constructionism. A context of nonlinear epistemology, emphasising the social construction of relationships and the complexity thereof, should be used to view police behaviour within the context of the broader system in order to describe what is observed in a way that stresses understanding of systems and the interactions between them. If one can understand how a person punctuates their experiences, the person's epistemological way of being can be better deciphered and a holistic view of that individual obtained. The lens of social constructionism through which this research topic is surveyed will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

The Lenses Through Which We Observe the Scene that Inspires the Painting:
Theory and Epistemology



4

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LENSES THROUGH WHICH WE OBSERVE THE SCENE THAT INSPIRES THE PAINTING: THEORY AND EPISTEMOLOGY



Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.

(Simone de Beauvoir, 1908-1986)

Introduction

The lenses through which a scene is viewed are of particular importance to the artist. I have always been short-sighted, and rely heavily on my trusty pair of glasses or contact lenses to get me through each day safely. As an artist, surveying a scene becomes difficult if the lenses you wear are not comfortable for you, if they make you feel as though your eyes are out of focus, or worse, bring on a headache from eye strain. So it is with the epistemology with which we choose to view our research. It has to feel comfortable, like reaching for your old pair of glasses in the evening before snuggling down to watch TV. It has to *fit*. My aim in this research was primarily to achieve a satisfactory balance between my understanding of the subjective experience of my co-researchers, and an interpretation of that experience in order to extract meaning. An important point of departure in this was for me to tell my own story of involvement in the research project itself in order to acknowledge

the role of the larger context of discourses to which I belong. Writing the dissertation became a progression from the barest details of a sketch, to fleshing out an image which I had played a large role in creating. As such, the epistemology I chose to inform my creation had to fit with these ideals of balance, subjective experience, interpretation and reflexivity.

The definition of epistemology varies with the standpoint of the author (Van Niekerk, 2005). Auerswald's definition of epistemology is "a set of imminent rules used in thought by large groups of people to define reality" or "thinking about thinking" (1985, p. 1), while Keeney's use of the term 'epistemology' indicates the basic premises fundamental to action and cognition (Keeney, 1982). Epistemology is described as the nature of knowledge rather than the nature of what is known (ontology); the process of knowing, constructing and preserving a world of experience; charting a conception of the world from the viewpoint that the observer prefers (Amatea & Sherrard, 1994). A person's epistemology leads to a precise manner of assembling observed data, describing the data and elucidating the data. It is a way of recognising how people construct and preserve the methods in which they make sense of the world, and it is impossible not to have an epistemology (Imrie, 2002). The researcher's understanding of his or her own epistemology has direct consequences for the research arena, as for a shared understanding of research to occur, it is essential that all participants have a common ground.

Much contemporary research into the field of workplace violence has involved strictly quantitative techniques, whilst tending to neglect the more qualitative methods. Whilst there can be no denial of the fact that this has contributed to a broad understanding of the subject, it has at the same time constituted a limited, linear approach directed at attempting to address questions such as why some individuals are more prone to committing workplace violence than others. These linear studies, which have been abundant, have traditionally focussed on the frequency and likelihood of acts of workplace violence occurring, establishment of a typology of a violent offender, protocols for the identification, control and resolution of potential situations of workplace violence, and the identification of at risk individuals. In the identification of specific negative relationships attributing risk to factors such as socio-economic class, upbringing, psycho-social antecedents and dysfunctional adaptation, studies additionally tend to re-affirm notions of particular groups of individuals as being more suspect and therefore at risk for commission of violent acts than others. This additionally

may lead to blatant discriminatory practices involving profiling of employees with regard to previous psychiatric histories, certain background variables such as military training or IQ level, and even such arbitrary distinctions as an employee's over-identification with a job. Various connections to and determinants of social systems that have an impact upon and shape individual behaviour have been largely ignored to make way for researchers (who are considered neutral and objective experts) to analyse, interpret and apply the data gathered. This may have the tendency to deny the existence of workplace violence as a deeply embedded social phenomenon with accompanying structural, cultural, socio-historical, ideological and political foundations, and renounces the ability to engage with multiple experiences, thereby restricting the elucidation of underlying systems of significance. As Stevens (2008, p. 46) explains:

This restriction on understanding human subjectivity as it pertains to the enactment of violence reduces our ability to understand how social actors themselves come to understand the act of homicide within a specific social context, and may deprive us of a first-hand account and direct source of valuable information.

Interventions and protocols developed for the organisation (as seen in Chapter 2), have largely relied on the installation of methods such as pre-employment psychological testing, employee surveys, managerial training and introduction of Employee Assistance Networks. Although of worth, especially in a field such as the South African Police Service, these modifications to the organisation tend to deny the social genesis of the phenomenon itself. The most recent processes of researching violence have added little to the understanding of the operation of the socio-historical and cultural contexts that make up the unique environment of the SAPS.

This study affords an opportunity to position the research in the field of qualitative research, an occasion to reframe the traditional approaches and address the deficiencies as identified above. By examining the relationship between socio-historical, political, cultural and ideological factors and the expression of workplace violence, in addition to an ethnographic perspective, a more inclusive and intricate analysis becomes possible. This permits the analysis of the social bedrock in which the phenomenon is entrenched, allowing

for workplace violence to be located as a social act, and broadening the scope for a wider range of prospective intervention policies within the organisation. By positioning this research in the qualitative field, I can move beyond the conventional investigation of risk factors, triggers and associations characteristic of the positivist empirically-based studies, towards allowing participants to express their stories in a way that is unfettered by adherence to the rules and regulations of quantitative research. This approach opens the way for the use of an analytical method such as that of discourse analysis (as discussed in the next chapter), which utilises the experiences of participants as articulated in their narratives, and embraces the irregularity, variability and unique perspective of the reports thus obtained.

This chapter is a brief reflection on the meaning of certain concepts in qualitative research as they inform this study. In order to encompass this particular epistemology, it is also essential that both researcher and reader grasp the theoretical concepts, ideas and beliefs underlying the research in order that a consensual domain can be reached. This comprises a short epistemological journey, tracing the evolution of epistemology from the origins in modernism, and thence flowing to postmodernism and social constructionism, and finally culminating in the applicability of the tenets of social constructionism to this study.

Man is Not a Molecule: The Move from Empiricism to Post-empiricism

Prior to Plato and Aristotle, the concept of *logos* had a scope that included many meaning-making activities, such as poetry, myth and architecture. Works of the imagination and works of reason were not held to be distinct from each other. This changed when the province of *logos* was restricted to analytics, which was especially dedicated to the attainment of truth (Russell, 1991). Empiricism, in which analytic and empirically verifiable observational truths were elevated above rational deductions and metaphysical conjecture, gradually began to dominate rationalism (Bryman, 1984; Durrheim, 1997), and until the end of the 19th century was deemed to be the dominant epistemology underpinning scientific theories (Rogers, 2000).

Empiricism as a formal epistemology insists that knowledge is derived from experience through the testing of hypotheses, aiming to obtain probable facts about the world. Based on the assumption that a real social world exists independently of our observation of it,

empiricism assumes that this independently existing world is singular, constant and predictable (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Atkinson, Heath, & Chenail, 1991; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Concurrent with this idea is the inherent account of meaning, which is defined solely in terms of its truth or falsity; for a statement to be meaningful, we must be able to ascertain its truth in a definite manner (Durrheim, 1997).

Through vigilantly scrutinising the progression of events, empiricist science asserts an understanding of natural laws and endeavours to predict, with certainty and truth, the objective and immutable laws of nature that exist independent of our own conceptions thereof. The object of scientific enquiry was thus confined to that which is observable in order to prevent untruth being acknowledged as truth (Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Durrheim, 1997; Viljoen, 2004). This was achieved by stringent adherence to various principles: the principles of reductionism implied a procedure in which intricate phenomena are reduced to their smallest and most elemental parts, assuming then that these elements can be impartially understood and examined through observing the manner in which they fit together. Inherent in the process of reductionism is linear causality in which one action is the direct cause of another (Becvar & Becvar, 2003). This is alleged to connect the components of the multifaceted phenomenon together, resulting in a one-dimensional cause-effect perception of individuals in which behaviour is studied without bias (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Van Niekerk, 2005).

The implication of this empirical philosophy was that unobservable entities were deemed not to be the objects of scientific observation. As the human mind could not be observed, it was regarded as passive, its only purpose being to characterise external objects in the world as ideas and depict them in language (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Durrheim, 1997). People become reactive and passive organisms, similar to amoeba.

Philosophical Critique

Various Twentieth Century philosophers have criticised the empiricist or positivist approach to the study of human issues, claiming that research metaphors that are applicable to the natural sciences are insufficient to address the complexity of the social sciences (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Viljoen, 2004). Most particularly, the tendency of the

empiricist researcher to view events from an external position, imposing a cluster of empirical concerns upon social reality with little mention of the importance of the observations to the individual, is criticised (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Bryman, 1984; Fuks, 1998; Van Niekerk, 2005; Viljoen 2004). Contemporary thought leans towards the idea that, contrary to what scientists have believed for decades, there is no universal methodology, including the empiricist approach or experimental design, which can guarantee the assurance of an undeniable truth.

Each angle of observation has its own bias and limitations, values cannot be separated from facts, the scientific enterprise has its own elitist agendas and the methodology of conventional science, which involves reductionism and separation of subject and object, has led to harmful unintended societal consequences (Atkinson et al., 1991, p. 164).

We can sum up the philosophical argument: by remaining committed to a predictive scientific approach, many have ignored the quintessential feature of being human, which is the meaningful character of our activities, open to dispute and contradictory explanations (Durrheim; 1997; Owen, 1992). This movement towards seeing human meanings as originating in socially shared constructions has led to placing these at the centre of psychological investigations (Durrheim, 1997; Hoffman, 1990). The resulting ‘ethnographic’, ‘interpretivist’ or ‘constructionist’ perspectives, whilst differing markedly in other areas, come to the common conclusion that knowledge is always based on perspective (Bryman, 1984).

Modernism and Postmodernism

*There once was a man who said “God
Must think it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there’s no one about in the Quad”*

(R.A. Knox, as cited in Ricks, 1999).

Modernist discourse largely had the aim of taming and containing of pre-modern pagan fervour, relying on the concept of total monarchy or sovereignty and autocracy (Boje, 1995). Occurring between roughly 1650 and 1950, the period referred to as the modern age embraced the notions of science, development and enlightenment (Viljoen, 2004).

Yet the advent of World War II, culminating in the use of the atom bomb, caused many to question the promises of the essentialist, utopian system that modernity offered mankind (Viljoen, 2004). Postmodernism began as a response to the impersonal, functional and mechanical social order which was lauded over the personal. Social individuals were shielded against the mechanical synchronization and functional order of modernism. Postmodernism elevated the notions of impartiality, democracy, natural balance in the order of the world and diversity (Boje, 1995). The postmodern age inspired flexibility, multiplicity and the permission to create a narrative based on observations, reflections and connotations significant to the individual. It viewed any solitary conception of the truth with scepticism (Doan, 1997). Knowledge, or what we believe, is seen instead as an expression of the language, values and attitudes of the specific communities and circumstances in which we exist (Van Niekerk, 2005).

Postmodernism is based on the premise that no one absolute truth exists, alleging that people reside in diverse realities that are socially constructed and vary considerably across cultures, time and contexts (Becvar & Becvar, 2003). It embraces the idea of a self constructed in relationships, or rather, multiple selves that are socially constructed in the context of ever more diverse interactions (Becvar & Becvar, 2003). We are no longer able to think of the outcomes of empirical research as representing the real world but must rather consider the subjectivity of the researcher.

Can one ever be purely postmodern?

Postmodernism may not be as complete a diversion from modernism as was first hoped it would be and may potentially not be a new, unrelated period in the development of thought. Equally, 'postmodern ideas' have been present in mainstream Western philosophy, art and literature, and discourse since the time of Plato: for one to claim that the postmodern

ideas are fresh and new possibly reveals an ignorance of the history of ideas. It may simply be that many of these ideas have traditionally been marginalised by a dominant discourse of modernism in the sciences (Viljoen, 2004). Although the basic elements of the ages of modernism and postmodernism are usually considered as discrete stages, the one age vanquishing the other, one can prefer to see each as merely a shift between a focus on either the background or foreground (Boje, 1995). Each stage can be seen as rather rearranging and ordering certain fundamental principles of their opponents in order to restructure their own frames of reference (Boje, 1995).

While many researchers are enthusiastic about constructionist ideas, the majority of social science researchers still use methods based on the ideals of objectivity (Atkinson & Heath, 1987). This could be as a result of researchers feeling that they are giving up on ‘true’ empirical science when letting go of observer-independent facts (Viljoen, 2004).

Focussing in on the Particulars: The Lenses of Social Constructionism Through Which I View the Topic of Work-place Aggression and Violence

“Dear Sir, your astonishment’s odd:

I am always about in the Quad.

And that’s why the tree

Will continue to be,

Since observed by Yours faithfully, God”

(Anonymous, as cited in Ricks, 1999).

Social constructionism can be described as being related to the postmodern movement in that it attempts to replace the objectivist ideal with a broad tradition of ongoing censure in which all productions of the human mind are concerned, enforcing attentiveness to the way in which we observe and experience the world (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Hoffman, 1985). The epistemology is a development of sociology called the “sociology of knowledge” that was instigated by Marx and Mannheim, who based their discipline on the concept that “social existence determines consciousness” (Owen, 1992, p. 385). As in the poem cited above, it is

conjectured that objects only exist with reference to the surroundings that give them definition and the world consists of patterns of relationships. Human beings are seen as components in relationship with each other, existing in explicit situations (Owen, 1992). The idea of objectivity is given up altogether, and all descriptions are seen as creation, which is a principal function of the mind, rather than discovery (Bruner, 1987; Real, 1990). According to Owen (1992, p. 386), it is “the claim and viewpoint that the consent of our consciousness and the mode of relating we have to others, is taught by our culture and society: all the metaphysical quantities we take for granted are learned from others around us”. The discussion that follows provides a concise overview of the basic assumptions underlying social constructionist thought and how they relate to and inform this study.

Constructionism has as its basic tenet an opposition to institutionalised ascendancy of empiricism as the guiding philosophy of the human sciences and the eradication of a notion of a neutral stance or objectivity. It posits that reality is constructed through social discourse and language: what is seen as our knowledge of the world is the effect of our own composing, structuring, formulating, constituting and creative processes as reflected in language and not the consequence of our unearthing fundamental truths about the world (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Durrheim, 1997; Held, 1990). As a result, in this research, language is understood as the means by which individuals come to know their world and simultaneously to construct it. New meanings for words such as workplace violence are produced through a process of reflexivity, the reflection on an action from within a frame of reference or discourse which lends meaning to certain objects and events. My research, stemming from a constructionist perspective, is not in the first place about language, but rather about construing the social world as a system of meanings and practices that construct reality, the aim of which cannot be the institution of an unqualified truth (Bryman, 1984; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

The Application of Social Constructionism to this Research Project

Essential to my research on workplace violence is a reliance on the premise that the co-researchers or participants of the study are agents processing information in the context of cultural practices, beliefs, stories and purposes endemic to the South African Police Service. These are conveyed through channels of dialogue flowing between all sectors of the police,

from hardened cops to new recruits (Sarbin & Kitsuse, 1994). Of considerable interest is the social, historical and collective nature of human consciousness as it plays out in the organisation (Durrheim, 1997), where an individual is viewed as a participant in multiple relationships, thinking and interacting in terms of languages and images which were bequeathed by the culture in which they find their purpose (Becvar & Becvar, 2003). In order to explain the reasoning behind my adoption of a social constructionist perspective in this study, the following section contains the basic premises of social constructionism and how they applied to my research.

Premises of social constructionism

Our knowledge of the world is not a result of our experimentation or investigation into an assortment of hypotheses (Gergen, 1985).

The modern era assumed that a bedrock of universal truths exist on which we can rely, hunting for the uni-verse, the foundational principle that would underlie the truth of everything (Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Doan, 1997; Held, 1990). The naive stance, that there is only one reality and that it is the reality depicted by a specific scientific community, has been termed ‘naive-realism’, and it implies that, as an observer, one is merely an inactive recipient of stimuli from the external world (Tjersland, 1990). Whilst conducting this research, I found it impossible to continue to utilise the foremost political, philosophical and religious root metaphors of our culture and the world at large. As I progressed, it was increasingly more obvious that we live in an endlessly varied cosmos of different meanings, attributions and potential (Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Doan, 1997; Lynch, 1997; Tjersland, 1990). “The logic of constructionism fosters the introduction of multiple perspectives to counter the positivist presupposition of a uniform and objective social reality” (Sarbin & Kitsuse, 1994, p. 8).

Through the lenses of social constructionism through which I approached the topic of workplace violence, I was now conscious that we must beware of any explanation that claims to comprise truth in its entirety. As I listened to the co-researchers, with their multitude of perspectives and diversity of stories, no one singular account appeared sufficient to stand solely, yet I was aware that not all accounts are equally legitimate. An example of this

occurred when I observed that the accounts of the psychiatrist and the colleague contained many references to the alcohol abuse that plagued the main participant, yet the narratives of both the main participant and his daughter denied that he ever drank.

Anderson and Goolishian (1988, p. 378) mention that:

the conceptualisation of reality as a multiverse of meanings created in dynamic social exchange and conversation interaction moves us away from concerns about issues of unique truths and into a multiverse that includes a diversity of conflicting versions of the world.

This location demands that the notion of humankind as able to discover the true essence of nature is abandoned, and a view of individuals taking part in language which creates the nature we know is adopted (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). Social constructionism focused my research on how ideas and attitudes have developed in a social, community context over the passage of time, and I was particularly interested in the discourses that have taken on a median paradigm against which police officers measure and judge themselves, focussing on the concept of knowledge as power (Doan, 1997).

Social constructionism was particularly applicable because it emphasises multiple plausible realities and meanings that are contextually constructed, which I felt to be relevant to the South African Police with its rigid structure and hierarchy, presence of closely-knit cohesive groups, and strong oral story-telling tradition that conveys the traditions and culture of the organisation. Constructionism stresses an orientation to knowledge based on the belief that knowledge evolves from the relationship between an observer and their environment (Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Dean & Rhodes, 1998; Efran, Lukens, & Lukens, 1988). Knowledge is created and not unearthed; context is imperative, for example, consideration of the socio-historical grounding that is essential for understanding the unique perspectives aired by the co-researchers (Dean & Rhodes, 1998; Efran et al., 1988). In this research, it can be clearly seen that the co-researchers' construction of a mental representation of an event is only partly reliant on the characteristics of the occurrence, and is affected by their interpretation of prior events. Thus, the mental processes and structures that underlie a person's insight into and understanding of the world co-create a representation of the

experience. This representation is made up of the circumstances in which the event or behaviour takes place, the people concerned, any preceding events, the consequences and emotional responses thereof, and so on (Van den Broek & Thurlow, 1991). The building of a representation is a constructive and interpretative process. It is subjective rather than objective, including a person's own reactions to an event. The representation is thus open to inaccuracy or incompleteness, and is never a veridical record of external events. As a researcher, I realised early on that a neutral position to the scope of my research topic was impossible to attain, as my values and interests were always operative and the mere act of my observation of a situation changed that which was being observed. One way of managing this is to try and reflect on personal history, values, biases and strengths and the manner in which they aid in the construction of the account (more on this later). In this way, theories may reflect reality, yet it is as well to comprehend that "the descriptions contained in theory are NOT that reality, but are, rather, only accounts of real phenomena" (Owen, 1992, p. 386).

The manner in which the world is understood is socially and culturally informed; a product of historically-situated interactions between individuals (Gergen, 1985).

In research of this nature, it is often impossible to regard the self as alone or remote, because individuals cannot be regarded out of context, but must rather be viewed as people existing in a world of others: "single places of resonance within a field of human forces which pull and push the participants in different directions" (Owen, 1992, p. 387). The mode we have of relating to others is learned at the knee of our mother culture or society, all the metaphysical qualities we take for granted are gleaned from those around us, and we actively co-construct our own and other's experiences in communication with them (Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Owen, 1992). A fundamental issue for my research was my own awareness of and reflection on how I was personally 'situated' with regard to the co-researchers' everyday world. As a psychologist within the South African Police Service, I had a unique perspective of, and influence over, the position of my co-researchers. My stance towards the participants' constructions of their everyday worlds within the SAPS introduced questions about whether and in what ways those concerns influenced my own observations of workplace violence under investigation, since I was also a participant in the repercussions of that violence on a daily basis through my role as psychologist. My involvement and tacit understanding of the participant's daily practices shaped the data produced (Sarbin &

Kitsuse, 1994). The very act of obtaining information from a co-participant from the position that I occupied, with all of the referent power that my position entailed, influenced the form and content of the response (more on the unique position I fulfilled in the conduct of my research later).

The degree to which explicit meanings prevail across time is not dependent on the empirical validity of the perspectives, but rather on the vicissitudes of social processes (Gergen, 1985).

Social constructionism posits a developing system of meanings that surface unceasingly from the relations between people, part of the stream of continuously shifting narratives (Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Efran et al., 1988; Hoffman, 1990). Knowledge is implicitly historically relative, and meaningful only against a background of contemporary social practices. Consequently, social constructionism does not disregard the existence of truths, but maintains that truths and facts are interpretations reliant on distinct perceptions which can only surface within the context of socially shared understandings. Language and action receive significance from social convention (Durrheim, 1997; Efran et al., 1988; Real, 1990), and knowledge is a construction of the human mind. The human mind is constructed in a social context, and its knowledge is created in part by the social and cultural context in which it comes to know the world (Scarr, 1985). Part of my reflection into the dialogues of the co-researchers consisted of placing these within a milieu that was unique to the South African context, with all its socio-historical antecedents and influences. From the apartheid days as a militaristic enforcer of a racist White government, through all of the compulsory changes introduced as the country moved towards becoming the 'new' South Africa, the path of the SAPS had an influence on the co-researchers' perspectives and hence the dialogues that were conveyed to me. It is impossible to divorce the knowledge I gleaned through our discussions from the socio-historical context in which that knowledge was produced (more on this in later chapters). Social constructionism allowed for the broadening of the scope of understanding of behaviour and included levels of description of history, culture and society within the police. The emphasis shifted to the social depiction of the individual within their detailed contexts (Mandim, 2001). In this way, the research wove multiple levels of personal history, culture and society into the stories of the lives lived within the context of work-related violence.

Constructions of understanding that are negotiated through language are of crucial import in social life as they are associated with scores of diverse behaviours in which people engage (Gergen, 1985).

The construction of meaning and understanding, and thus the construction of human systems, is a constantly shifting, inventive and vibrant process, and at the core is the belief that reality is a social construction. Humans “live and take social action in a multiverse of worlds of description” (Anderson and Goolishian, 1988, p. 377). A culture can be thought of as a society of individuals who share understandings of their world (understandings which confer significance to their lives and actions) in a specific way (Efran et al., 1988; Howard, 1991), such as the culture of the police, which is arguably one of the most stringently imposed of any organisation. Education is assumed to be the induction or initiation of the young or inexperienced conscript into the dominant meaning systems of that culture (Howard, 1991), and the young recruit learns his or her way through the mires of the organisation through interaction with the older and wiser hardened cops. The imposed restriction of social role on the individual acts as an external locus of control which provides order (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988), and in few other places are sanctions so rigorously applied to those who go astray or deviate from the natural order than in the police. People are consistent in the type of appropriate behaviour that is open to them according to their role and status, and emotions are seen to be familiar, readily discernible and ordinary ways of relating to others according to the social rules and ethics of the subculture to which the person belongs (Owen, 1992).

In this way, my co-researchers were conceptualised as more than information processing systems, but rather as users of language integrally part of the general human process of creating and dealing with the realities in which they exist, and the organisation to which they belong (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988; Efran et al., 1988). The generated meaning within a particular social context is evolved through the dynamic social process of dialogue and conversation, in other words, language is thought to refer to the “linguistically mediated and contextually relevant meaning that is interactively generated through the medium of words and other communicative action” (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p. 377). In conversation with the research participants, language was seen as a device put to explicit use, a tool which could not be understood or have significance outside the framework of these

interviews as a result of the shared insight that arose throughout the course of our exchanges and also as a result of our belonging to the same organisational culture. Through our language, we were able to fashion the variable systems of meaning to which we subscribed and which formed the context in which we all existed (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988; Efran et al., 1988). An example of this is the participants' frequent references to 'hase' (rabbits, denoting the civilian population), 'penguins' (the black and white uniform of the Metro police, seen as arch-nemesis of the SAPS), and countless other phrases typifying the culture of the SAPS which an outsider to the conversation might not understand.

Constructionism, in contrast to positivism and interpretive research work, holds that language essentially composes human existence; therefore, language itself should be the object of analysis (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Constructionism does not treat language as if it were transparent and impartial, as both positivism and interpretive research do, or as a route to fundamental truths. Much previous research on both workplace violence and the violence that exists within the South African Police Service has been coherent with the modernist epistemology. The researcher has been considered to be in the best position to describe the behaviours or problems observed from an objective, elevated and inviolable vantage point outside the system. In this research, however, I came from the perspective that language helps to construct reality, being concerned with the way in which social meanings are determined through language (Real, 1990; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). As such, through the interactions with my co-researchers, we aimed to construct a reality of social meanings and interpretations that would shift the focus of the research to the police themselves, since they were seen as being in the best position to describe their experiences regarding violence in the SAPS. The importance of this communication lies not in whether their reports precisely replicate 'reality', but rather in how they perceive their experiences, unlocking novel meanings and perspectives to be discovered and investigated. Additionally, our communication explored how meaning is socially constructed, and the consensual realities that exist with respect to workplace violence manifesting in particular patterns of talk. The ways in which the co-researchers were positioned by, challenged, deployed or opposed these realities were of particular interest.

From a social constructionist perspective, the focus falls not only on the individuals and their actions or behaviours, but also on the affiliation between ideas held and actions observed. Participants, both the observer and the observed, comprise the whole, which is incessantly shifting and evolving within a context of relationship through the communication of language, sharing of meanings and constructing of realities (Mandim, 2001). The postmodern perspective allows for this acceptance of multiple realities that are all true at one and the same time.

In summary, the social constructionist framework enabled me to remain flexible and open regarding the emotional experiences of the co-researchers interviewed and further, those emotions that I was experiencing. There was no need for me to feel overwhelmed by knowledge that I could not possibly possess, but instead I was able to remain aware of the social and cultural biases that I brought to the dialogue. In such a way, the purpose of the research was not merely to gather facts, but rather to initiate a dialogue with another person, a conversation lively with interest and understanding. There was an equal engagement of myself and the co-participants, a collaborative and respectful framework that I found especially useful in attaining some understanding of a complex topic.

Conclusion

There is the age-old philosophical question: does the tree exist without the observer? If the empiricist account of the generation of truth through objectivity and representation is correct, science should gradually move towards a greater truth as it identifies knowledge which accurately represents reality. There should be no speculation or debate about a philosophical question such as this – we should undeniably, irrefutably *know*. However, as time passes, conventional scientific researchers are finding it increasingly difficult to convince even each other that their irrefutable results are reliable (Atkinson et al., 1991). In almost all areas of psychological investigation, research has not yet fashioned a universally acknowledged account of behaviour (Atkinson et al., 1991; Durrheim, 1997).

Postmodernism, which moved towards a social consciousness of multiple belief systems and multiple perspectives, formed the basis for the emerging social constructionism, whose belief in the existence of multiple truths still shares the postmodern premise that all

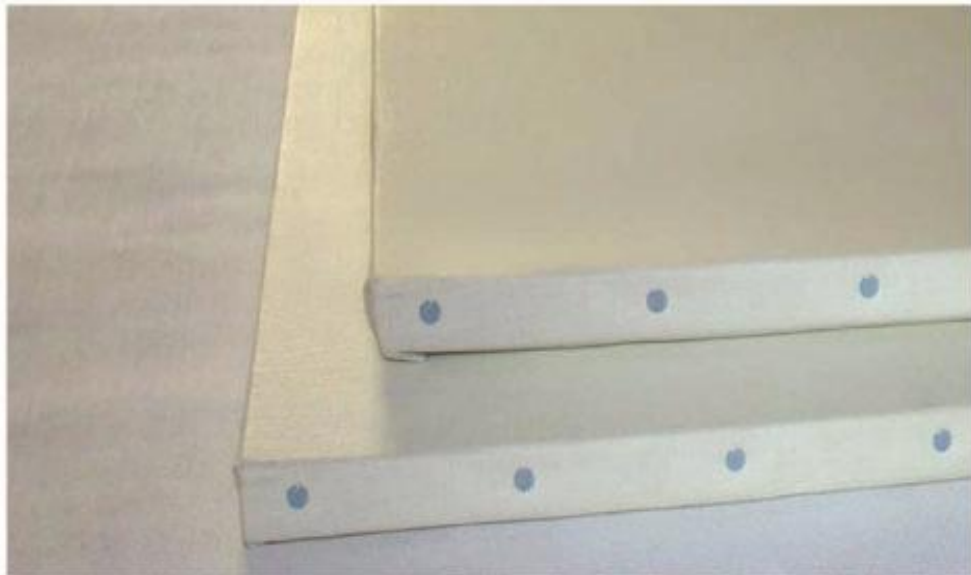
accounts of reality do not hold equal validity. This chapter has been primarily concerned with how the social constructionist perspective informs the nature of this study. From the social constructionist perspective, reality is seen as being co-constructed through language with others in an ongoing interactional process within a wider socio-cultural environment. There is a focus on an exploration of the co-researchers' view of him or herself, which creates opportunities for alternate possibilities to emerge. Meaning is attributed to everything a person comes into contact with; consequently, meaning is subordinate to the circumstances in which it was created and shared.

Given that the above premises of social constructionism felt so comfortable with regards to the research I was conducting, it was inevitable that I would choose to view my research field through its lenses. I took the perspective that all meaning was socially determined and constructed, and through deconstruction of meanings we are able to trace paths back to the social context which allow us to make critical commentary on aspects of the context itself (Stevens, 2008). I was also comfortable with the emphasis that social constructionism places on the reflexivity and positionality of the researcher, given that it presumes that all knowledge is also in part a social construction of the researcher herself. My own historical biases, beliefs and attitudes were of critical import to the representation of my research.

According to the lenses of social constructionism through which I view this research topic, there can be no single reality or truth to be discovered, and only through dialogue, conversation, story, and discourse are multiple realities and descriptions of the meanings surrounding the social act of workplace violence within the South African Police Service uncovered and explored. The next chapter contains more on qualitative research and the research methods I followed in order to uncover more of the panorama that is workplace violence within the SAPS.

Chapter Five

The Material of the Canvas: Research Design and Procedure



5

CHAPTER 5

THE MATERIAL OF THE CANVAS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE



An empty canvas is a living wonder...far lovelier than certain pictures.

(Wassily Kandinsky, 1866-1944)

Introduction

An important consideration in the production of any work of art is the material on which we paint. Will we choose rough canvas, or glossy paper? Is the creative process enhanced by hessian, or rather wood? This choice will affect the manner in which the entire painting is constructed, the method of the application of the paint, the texture, the brushstrokes and the way the piece of art will eventually be viewed by the observer. Likewise, the consideration of the research design that informs a study has just as potent a consequence. In this chapter, I discuss how I went about choosing the canvas of my research method, and the reasoning behind the technique I have chosen.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the post-modern age brought with it the promise of flexibility, multiplicity and the space to author a story conversant with one's own insight, memories and meanings, teaching that the notion of the existence of any single truth must be sceptically scrutinised (Doan, 1997). Within this period, social constructionism focuses on how interpretations and ideas have been established over time within a social, community context and the development of narratives and discourses that take on a normative standard to which people compare themselves. Social constructionism holds that the world of human

existence is essentially constituted in language: language helps to create reality. Constructionism is thus concerned with the broader patterns of social meaning as determined by language (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Viljoen, 2004).

Part of the study comprises the exploration of my own and my research partners' (the people interviewed during the course of the study) experiences of work-related violent behaviour, the underlying motives, emotions and social structures that play a role in the phenomenon. This voyage of discovery is based on a qualitative, post-modern, social constructionist approach, reflected in the research partners' personal accounts of their involvement in work-related violence. As such, the research design demands creativity from the researcher and research partners in allowing for the evolution of meanings, rather than a structured, recipe-like approach. This takes into account the overriding factor of context and the finding of meaning contained in experiences, and permits a holistic micro-analysis of the parts and complex interdependencies within the context of a larger whole (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Camic et al., 2003; Durrheim, 1999; Holliday, 2007). There is a need to achieve a satisfactory balance between the understanding of the subjective experience of the research partners, and an interpretation of that experience in order to extract meaning. An important point of departure in this is for me to tell my own story of involvement in the research project in order to acknowledge the role of the larger context of stories to which I belong. The stories that comprise the research partners' experiences of work-related violence, their subjective interpretations of their own histories, and their personal experience of the interview process then flow smoothly from the first.

This chapter provides an outline of the research approach and method. First, the reasoning behind the choice of qualitative research will be delineated. The characteristics of the design, as well as pertinent reliability and validity considerations with reference to this study, will be discussed. Thereafter, the research method and how it is applied in this investigation will be considered.

A Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research Approach

As has been previously explored, an overwhelming majority of contemporary investigations into social phenomena reveal epistemological, methodological and theoretical

biases towards positivistic, empirical approaches that endeavour to describe or characterise the scope of the violent experience, resulting in linear considerations of causality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), and biased understandings. “Data are consequently something that *exists, is (already) there*, and the task of the researcher thus becomes to gather and systematise them” (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 17). The traditional findings have been immensely useful for the mechanical understanding of workplace violence that they promote, with the bulk of previous investigations attending to measurement of prevalence, profiling a person most at risk for committing an aggressive act through statistical data (Bensimon, 1994; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Kausch & Resnick, 2001; Lewis & Zare, 1999; Paul & Townsend, 1998; Resnick & Kausch, 1995; Rutter & Hine, 2005; Stuart, 1992; Winstok, 2006). These findings have resulted in initiatives aimed at changing organisational protocols and structures. Yet the fundamental underlying social contexts implicated in the behaviours are largely ignored. A definition of workplace violence that is equally valid for all continuously changing circumstances is almost impossible to attain, as is insight into behaviour in social and non-linear terms.

As a result, marginalising of the more qualitative research methods occurs, and the insights that can be gained through the perspectives of the participants involved in the situations themselves are ignored. The ‘scientific’ positivistic approach has silenced a whole host of ‘voices’ that could express their encounters within this subject. Exploration of the multiple realities as they are understood and elucidated by the social creatures themselves is denied.

Additionally, an implicit discourse of social marginalisation is encouraged through proscriptive quantitative research approaches that count diverse innocuous variables as predictive of later aggressive behaviour. This leads to the identification of individuals deemed to be more ‘at risk’ for the commission of workplace violence, and largely ignores the socially entrenched foundations of violent behaviour. The helpless stance that is encouraged by the defeatist attitude inherent in the discourse communicates the inevitability and inescapability of violence within an organisation.

At times, qualitative research has been seen as preparation for the ‘real’ job of quantitative research: as a result of the lack of specified hypotheses, qualitative research is

seen as being essentially exploratory in nature, embarking on a journey of discovery rather than one of verification (Bryman, 1984). However,

qualitative research in psychology has moved beyond the traditional restriction to didactic discourse into hermeneutic and narrative forms. The alternatives retain a commitment to validity and to clear communication, but they abandon the received-view goal of producing lawlike generalisations (Stiles, 1993, p. 599).

My predilection towards qualitative research is based on the fact that this research is guided by the aim of empowering respondents, including them in a more participatory and collaborative role as compared to respondents in the traditional research process. In the mainstream tradition, the nature of interviewing as a form of discourse between speakers has been hidden from view by a dense screen of technical procedures. In contrast, qualitative methodology has a dedication to considering the social realm from the viewpoint of the performer, with a concurrent predilection for understanding behaviour within the meaning systems used by a specific faction or culture (Bryman, 1984). As qualitative researchers, we explore, catch glimpses of, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality (Holliday, 2007). The pictures thus created are themselves only basic interpretations to represent what is a much more complex reality. They are paintings that represent our own impressions, rather than photographs of what is 'really' there. Contexts are never fixed, which implies that choices about which research practice is used can change as the contexts develop, allowing the creation of a collage from all available and useful materials (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Viljoen, 2004).

In this research, space has been allowed for knowledge, actions and associations to be related to the socio-historical context in which they were fashioned in order to engage with the ways in which workplace violence is expressed, vindicated, excused and enforced. This method permits the existence of multiple realities that are all valid at one and the same time (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Becvar & Becvar, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2010), encouraging comprehensive and complex disclosures relating to workplace violence.

My selection of a qualitative research design, therefore, was based on the following tenets (congruent with a social constructionist perspective), which were especially attractive and relevant to the grounding philosophy of this study:

Linguistic Results

Qualitative research tends to differ from more quantitative research in that it reports linguistic results, which are expressed in words rather than in numbers. It explores connotations and configurations, discrepancies in people's thoughts and behaviours (Jaye, 2002). Dialogues, narratives and so on are presented without being rated, reduced to a reaction time, a percentage or otherwise quantified. Data reduction is typically done in the form of summaries and excerpts from a text (Cowan & McLeod, 2004; Coyle, 2006; Stiles, 1993). In this study, I endeavoured to ask questions, the answers to which required new questions and I aimed at developing the art of asking questions not directed at purely unearthing information or accumulating data. In this way, the conversation was geared towards the provision of new information, meaning and interpretation, and not the confirmation of previously held hypotheses or interventions (see Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). I was able to take responsibility for the creation of a conversational context that allowed for mutual collaboration in the development of the concepts. Although difficult to achieve, in my conversations with my co-participants I did not define the research concept of workplace violence nor did I try to steer the conversation towards a definition prejudged by myself to be a more useful definition. Instead, I facilitated an elaboration of the multiple realities about the concept of workplace violence or self-harm in the interest of maximising the creation of new meanings about the topic (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988) through questioning the co-participants about their own lived experience of workplace violence and what they conceived it to be (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In this way, I obtained varied responses – some held the concept of workplace violence to be only applicable to violence they witnessed at work (i.e., committed by criminals), while others applied the topic to actions they had taken within the course of their term of duty as police officers or as it pertained to their understanding of actions taken.

Empathy as an Observation Strategy

Qualitative research often uses empathy with partners as an observation strategy, with researchers using their imperfect grasp of partners' reports of inner experiences as data and making assumptions about partners' experiences based on observed behaviour and events (Stiles, 1993). I endeavoured to encompass the study of meanings, including the purpose and significance that my research partners attached to what they did. I tried wherever possible to learn, appreciate and communicate in the client's language, which is a symbol of the research partner's experiences (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988; Coyle, 2006). Through my own experience of six long years working with the police officers of the SAPS, I was of the impression that I had a greater insight into their motives and meanings than a mere layperson might have. However, during the interviews, I was continually bombarded with new insights into my research partners' lived experience that I was unprepared for, and which I could only react to with empathy, as cognitive understanding evaded me. The relation of tales of horror demanded my wholehearted commitment to being empathetic, and my expression of empathy lead in turn to more disclosures that perhaps might not have been aired otherwise.

Contextual Interpretation

In qualitative research, events are understood and reported in their specific framework as far as is feasible and can be perceived and expressed by the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Mishler, 1986; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Stiles, 1993). I was aware that the context included my own and also my co-partners' cultural and personal histories, as well as the immediate setting in which the observations took place (my office in the SAPS headquarters, with all of its connotations and associations), which was a strong influence (Stiles, 1993). Because experience is fleeting and cannot be recaptured, the account of that experience is particularly bound by context. I kept my enquiries within the strictures of the subject of workplace violence, which in turn expanded options for new meanings and my own understanding of the concept. In mulling over these new meanings, I endeavoured to respect the insights and opinions of all members of the system, including myself as the researcher. I was continually aware of the fact that I had been a member of the very organisation whose workings I was attempting to unearth and that my perspective was radically different to that of a researcher who had no links to the system. As such, I aimed to

stay close to awareness of the moment, work inside it and gradually permit that which was already well-known to me to guide the way to notions that were new and fresh (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988).

Poly-dimensionality of Experience

Variation in meaning and human experience is not limited to a few dimensions, but each term can be considered a different dimension. Qualitative research draws on a vast magnitude of dimensions in order to represent its interpretations (Coyle, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Stiles, 1993). In my research, I continually reminded myself that psychological effects do not remain confined to the dimensions that we as investigators choose to examine. This poly-dimensionality of experience characterises the multitude of dimensions required to delineate experience, presenting a social world that is at the same time comprehensive and intricate (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). I tried to entertain multiple and contradictory ideas simultaneously, endeavouring to show equal enthusiasm and respect for all ideas (not an easy task, since particular notions appear more stimulating than others). I was particularly struck by the characterisation of the officer as both the hero and villain of the piece at one and the same moment, and the justifications offered by the participants that allowed for this portrayal to happen. In allowing for these contradictory depictions to exist simultaneously in the same piece of action, I hoped that the interview would be moved in the direction of a joint investigation of familiar ideas. I was aiming for a man-made construction of new narratives, interpretations and meanings of workplace violence (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988).

Empowerment as a Research Goal

Empowerment of the participants is seen as being a fundamental goal of research (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Mishler, 1986; Stiles, 1993). This view directs consideration towards interpretations that promote partners' interests and involve partners in the creation of the interpretations. I chose supportive rather than disobliging language and in my investigation of what was said I endeavoured to show deference instead of judgement. It was at times extremely difficult to prevent a judgemental tone from creeping into my questioning,

as when one participant described the torture of guerrillas on the border, or his preoccupation with seeing people die. In my position as a psychologist in the SAPS, there was a substantial likelihood that my comments would seem to disparage either the system or the research partners themselves (more on this later). I instead tried to move the interview towards collaborative conversation rather than confrontation (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). In all interviews I endeavoured to be a courteous listener not showing understanding too rapidly in order to encourage dialogue and fullness of understanding (I felt that the more quickly understanding is shown, the less opportunity there is for explication) and I did not want to hinder the development of new meaning (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). Instead, I allowed for the growth of a participant's account by showing interest in it and asking questions relevant to the specifics of the exploits, rather than relying on any enquiries that might have been assumed to be judgemental.

Tentativeness of the Interpretation

Qualitative research entails a much more cautious view of scientific knowledge than was adhered to previously. In the beginning of my research, I formulated general interpretations and theories, but did not expect that my version would be valid in all conditions. As such, I was not surprised by myriad inconsistencies and exceptions exposed (Jaye, 2002; Stiles, 1993). I tried to cultivate the capacity to consider numerous perspectives. As a result, all my views and ideas were tentative, subject to change throughout our conversations, and to be honest, the insights raised by my research partners kept me from any one totalising view of our subject matter. During the interviews, I was continually confronted with the fact that there are no absolutes; at any one time, as in the example above, a hero can be seen as a villain and vice versa. Participants offered themselves as innocent boys, misled by an evil government, yet at the same time, as hardened war heroes, doing what was right and just for the protection of their country; as little girls and as mature women; as competent physicians and helpless bystanders (more on this in following chapters). Any beliefs that I held, and indeed that my fellow research partners held, were seen as occasions to initiate dialogue; and I offered them (mostly) in such a way that the flow of our communication was sustained rather than blocked (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). Qualitative research is reliant on “complex reasoning that moves dialectically between deduction and induction” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 2), allowing for multitudinous interpretations of the same phenomenon.

Researcher as Partner

Unlike quantitative research, which tends to place the researcher in an outside, meta-position to the system observed, in qualitative research, seen as both a partner and an observer of the system, the researcher is in an unrestricted and non-hierarchical location, positioned almost centrally (Gordon, 1997; Jaye, 2002; Stevens, 2008). As such, I did not consider myself to be ‘meta’ or outside of the organisation being observed. It was a position of cooperation, empathy, reverence for and about people and their ideas (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). I endeavoured not to enter with an overarching map of psychological and social theory regarding human nature and workplace violence on which to fit the clinical data and thus my research partners, which was a hard task given my previous extensive research into the subject for the purposes of a literature review. Rather, I tried to involve the participants in the creation of a complex tapestry through our collaborative unravelling of imagery and yarns, which became the new metaphors and scenarios which we continually embroidered into our understandings (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). It is tempting to believe that I opened up new avenues of thought for the participants too, given their expressions such as “I never thought of it that way before”, and in such a way, I became a partner in their exploration of the subject too.

The Researcher is Affected by the Research as Much as the Partners

“The researcher is a master conversational artist, an architect of dialogue, whose expertise is creating and maintaining a dialogical conversation” (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p. 384), while simultaneously making room for the creativity and consciousness of all partners. It is a position where one takes all sides and works surrounded by all conceptions concurrently. As such, the researcher must “remain sensitive to their own biographical/social identities and how these shape the study” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 2). I would be dissembling if I conceded that I was not altered and affected by what was taking place in the interviews. It is difficult to remain uninvolved in tales of death and horror, particularly if one has been blessed (or possibly cursed) with an overactive imagination that manages to place oneself within every scene that is being described. In the course of every interview, I became the frightened soldier, waiting for the attack of the guerrillas; the hardened cop standing at an accident scene rubbing the blood into my hands; the helpless psychiatrist wanting the best for

his patients yet at the same time realising he is being manipulated by those he aims to help; or the daughter whose heart still cries out for a loving touch or a kind word from a father who once was the centre of her universe. In the process, I was changed, challenged, horrified, bereft or frustrated. I was forced to let go of old meanings and by risking having my own views exposed, challenged or changed, gained insight and understanding which I had not possessed before (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988).

Quality Control in Qualitative Research: Attention to Reliability and Validity Issues

One of the main criticisms levelled against a strictly qualitative method is a lack of quality control. Quantitative research is normative, in that it maintains that there is a normality that we can fathom, understand and master by statistics and experiment, and subsequently generalises findings to a greater population. Qualitative research, on the other hand, stems from the conviction that the truths witnessed within a study and the individuals who act in it are inexplicable beings and can only be superficially encompassed by research which merely tries to make sense of the phenomena (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Holliday, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Historically, such variability in research has been considered by the standard social science approach to be a nuisance and an error, yet it shapes the critical and fascinating details of everyday life. As Maxwell (2005, p. 108) suggests:

Qualitative research is not primarily concerned with eliminating variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study.

Rather than finding ways to reduce the effect of uncontrollable social variables in this research, I tried to investigate them directly, by setting up research opportunities designed to lead me into unanticipated areas of discovery within the lives of the people with whom I was working (Holliday, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). I attempted to look deeply into behaviour within the specific social setting of the SAPS as an organisation rather than at broad population variables or statistically-based research, instead locating the study within a setting which

provided opportunities for uncovering potential social variables of workplace violence (Holliday, 2007).

However, in the interests of transparency, it is still deemed necessary to address the issues of ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ as they pertain to this research; consequently, a broad definition of both validity and reliability in qualitative research is considered, as well as the ways in which this study adheres to the definitions and their constructs.

Validity and reliability as concepts were historically borrowed from the natural and experimental sciences as the criteria against which the soundness of a study was judged, a time which has been characterised as “physics envy” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 39). With the advent of post modernity, however, these concepts have been challenged and in the qualitative field of research have been conceptualised as trustworthiness: validity refers to the trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions drawn from the data, while reliability refers to the trustworthiness of observations or data (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Stiles, 1993). Reliability is concerned with whether the results are repeatable after allowing for contextual differences and whether the investigator’s report conveys what an outsider would have seen if observing the same scene. Research should be believable and useful to parties beyond those who participated in the carrying out of the research (Stiles, 1993).

Validity

Validity in its broadest sense refers to whether the research conclusions are sound. Social constructionism, however, rejects the concept that research findings are accurate reflections of reality, and maintains that research should be evaluated according to its *credibility*, which provides findings that are convincing and believable (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). This credibility is established while research is being undertaken, and any effects that extraneous variables may have on the outcomes of the findings should be noted and commented on. Validity concerns whether an interpretation is internally consistent, functional, generalisable, or productive (Stiles, 1993). The discussion of qualitative validity entails a shift of focus from the truth of statements to the understanding of people in order to ensure correct interpretations of results that are linguistic, empathic, poly-dimensional, contextual and non-linear.

Validity with reference to this study

In research of a qualitative nature such as this, the following actions can be taken to ensure validity:

Discussion of the aim of the research.

This refers to whether or not the fundamental concern has been answered or uncovered by the research (Stiles, 1993). The aim of the research should have an ability to enlighten the reader towards a general understanding of the phenomenon. In this research, I have clearly stated the aim of the study in order to uncover whether the fundamental research question has been answered by the research findings.

Change or growth.

‘Catalytic validity’ refers to the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and invigorates partners. This type of interpretation produces transformation or development in the people whose experiences are being described (Stiles, 1993). I anticipate that my questions had personal meaning and significance for the partners, and as such inspired a reflexive journey on the part of the partners, as I know they inspired in me. My own time spent in the Service was brought sharply into focus, and questions I had never had the courage to formulate about my own involvement in the system were asked of me by my research partners, forcing me to evaluate concepts from which I had previously shied away. An example of this occurred with the discussion of my position as a ‘Debriefing’ within the SAPS, a particularly awkward and difficult topic. I felt judged and scorned by my colleague, the psychiatrist, for the ineptitude typically associated with debriefers in general; and uncomfortably venerated by the police officers, who believe debriefing is the one thing standing between them and the development of a psychiatric disorder.

The agreement of the partners.

‘Testimonial validity’ involves the checking of an interpretation’s accuracy by the people whose experience it is supposed to represent, in other words, the research partners

(Creswell & Miller, 2000; Stiles, 1993). I took steps to enhance testimonial validity by continuously clarifying my understanding and interpretation of words and phrases that the research partners used. During our conversations, I checked and re-checked meanings by asking questions aimed at promoting understanding of their lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In later informal discussions with the participants, when I phoned each participant to thank them for their time and insights, I laid out my general impressions of the data in order to allow them to corroborate or refute the credibility of the information.

Evaluation of interpretations.

I took steps to enhance the ‘reflexive validity’ of the study by evaluating and re-evaluating my constantly changing interpretations (Stiles, 1993). Reflexive validity refers to how a theory, or the researcher’s way of thinking about the study, is changed by the data itself. As I made observations and interpretations, novel explanations arose that created fresh problems of their own. I embraced this because I was aware that for a theory to stay alive in a dialectical way, it must continually renew its context and be changed by new observations and observers (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Stiles, 1993). An example occurred in the interview with the psychiatrist, Dr Feel-Good (more details about the participants follows in the next chapters), in which my previously held view of the primary research partner, Inspector (abbreviated to Insp hereafter) Dark-Knight as a damaged and disadvantaged member of a despotic system was challenged by his comment with reference to Insp Dark-Knight: “it’s amazing how people almost really enjoy to kill and maim...” More on these contextual renewals will be included in a later chapter.

The use of many voices.

I took care to promote validity through triangulation of multiple voices (Atkinson et al., 1991). Triangulation is essentially the use of different vantage points and allows for illumination from multiple standpoints, reflecting a commitment to diligence, flexibility and diversity of meanings (Tindall, 1994). Consensus among researchers involves the use of other investigators to test the theories and interpretations made, in order to give the assurance that a number of other investigators found the interpretations made to be legitimate and convincing. Replication, like consensus, reflects investigators’ judgments of a fit between observation and

interpretation (Atkinson et al., 1991). Triangulation involves seeking information from manifold data sources, various methods and numerous prior theories or interpretations and then assessing the convergence (Atkinson et al., 1991; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Three different methods of triangulation were used:

- *Data triangulation*, which involves collecting accounts from different participants involved in the chosen setting, highlighting how experiencing and thus understanding are context bound (King & Horrocks, 2010; Maxwell, 2005; Silverman, 2010; Tindall, 1994). As in Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999), the research ensured that the experience of a single individual, namely the primary research partner (Insp Dark-Knight), was contrasted and compared with the diverse individuals with whom he had come into contact in order to hear his story from the mouths of many. In this, Insp Dark-Knight's former colleague, his psychiatrist and his daughter were all approached to take part in the study of workplace violence, for through the catalyst of Insp Dark-Knight they had all come into contact with the phenomenon in varying degrees and with diverse impacts on their lives and their relationships.
- *Investigator triangulation*, which involves the use of more than one researcher in order to commit to multiple viewpoints and provides the potential for the enrichment of the resulting theory (Creswell & Miller, 2000; King & Horrocks, 2010; Tindall, 1994). Whilst I remained the primary researcher, a close friend and colleague in the health sector was asked to talk through, comment on and challenge the insights I gained in various stages of the research. This provided me with an ongoing opportunity to extend the frameworks and illuminate any blind spots I had with regard to being so immersed in the research.
- *Method triangulation* involves the use of different methods to collect information (King & Horrocks, 2010; Tindall, 1994). In this study, I made use of a number of different sources of information in addition to the interviews, including the written poetry of the main research partner, several of his photographs (taken while he was engaged in some of the incidents he mentions in the interview), and a number of newspaper articles written at the time of the interviews that had relevance to the topic.

Rich Description.

In order to establish the credibility of the study, the setting, the participants, and the themes can be described in lush detail, imparting to the reader the feeling that they have experienced the events being described in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). A constructionist approach conceptualises people studied and brings interactions between the researcher and the participants to life, giving a detailed rendering of experience, action or emotion. Rich descriptions additionally aid the reader in their estimation of the application of the data to other settings.

The use of the research within the wider setting.

‘Generalisability’ or ‘external validity’ refers to the extent to which it is possible to generalise from the data and context of the research to broader populations and settings. In the field of social constructionism, meanings are seen as being highly variable across contexts of human interaction, and generalisable findings are not sought. However, research findings should be *transferable*, which aim is achieved by producing detailed and rich descriptions of contexts in order to provide an account of the structures of meaning developed in a specific context (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). These specific research findings have not been generalised to different types of persons, settings and times: however, it is hoped that the detailed descriptions of the context of the research will provide a structure of meaning which is transferable to other similar contexts.

There is no ‘truth’.

The claims of this research are not that they are the absolute ‘truth’ but that they are rather descriptions and self-referential (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Becvar & Becvar, 2003). As such, the search for contesting evidence plays a vital role in promoting the rigour and usefulness of a qualitative study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I was confronted with the fact that all previously held ideas about the organisation and the place of the primary research partner (Insp Dark-Knight) within the system were described in diametrically opposed ways by the various research partners, forcing me to conclude that, indeed, there is no truth!

Reliability

Reliability has traditionally been described as the degree to which the results of a study are repeatable, and the same set of conclusions are obtained repeatedly in replications of the study. Constructionist researchers, on the other hand, do not attest to the assumption that the reality they investigate is stable or unchanging, but rather believe that partners will behave differently and express diverse opinions in varying contexts (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). Rather, Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999) propose that the findings should be dependable, which refers to the degree to which an outsider can be persuaded that the findings made by the researcher did indeed occur as reported. Dependability is achieved through the rich and meticulous descriptions that illustrate how actions are entrenched in and develop out of contextual relations.

Reliability with reference to this study

In this research, the following actions were taken to ensure reliability:

Disclosure of orientation and engaging in reflexivity.

Throughout this dissertation, I have disclosed my expectations for the study, preconceptions, values and my personal orientation including the theoretical commitments I have embraced (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; King & Horrocks, 2010; Maxwell, 2005). I have also reflexively accounted for any position that I have taken up. This includes “reflection on one’s identity and one’s sense of voice and perspectives, assumptions and sensitivities” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 96). Alvesson & Sköldbberg (2009, p. 9) advocate that “serious attention is paid to the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written”. This provides a preliminary point to inform the reader how the study changes the theory (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Stiles, 1993). Taking time to reflect upon, document, re-evaluate and integrate information relating to the function of the researcher are exercises that can only augment the qualitative process (King & Horrocks, 2010).

Explication of social and cultural context.

Interpretive research has as its aim the investigation of feelings, experiences, social situations and phenomena as they transpire in the real world and there is a requirement that these are studied within their natural setting (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). My intention was to work with the data in context. An investigation's social and cultural context entails many assumptions that channel the analysis. Good practice demands that I make implicit cultural suppositions explicit, by stating mutual perspectives and relevant values as well as the circumstances under which data were gathered. In the following chapters, I have endeavoured to ensure that the reader should be orientated to the perspective from which the phenomena were viewed and to include reminders that all research derives from a particular perspective; for this reason, these aspects will not be discussed here.

Placement of the observations within their context.

A system is one that coalesces around a problem, and language and meaning evolve that are specific to that problem and its "dis-solution" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p. 372). Therefore, my social and cultural context, the research partners and the research setting are fully explained, to ensure the placement of the observations within their context. As will be discussed in the following chapters, my own position as a psychologist in the SAPS had unique implications for the way that each partner related to me, and for the way that I related to the partners and the meanings thus generated. I was wearing, if not rose-tinted glasses, at least a pair tinted a SAPS-serge blue. Human systems are language-generating and simultaneously, meaning-generating systems. Communication and discourse delineate social organisation, with the implication that a socio-cultural system is the creation of social communication (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988).

Description of internal processes of investigation.

There is a danger that the qualitative researcher approaching a new cultural setting will be progressively seduced into settling for the accustomed thought processes that make a person feel secure. This means that the researcher must strive to encapsulate the essence of being an alien within the organisation at the instant when she becomes aware of the system in

all of its strangeness and before the new culture being approached becomes too well-known to her. She has to learn how the system might adjust and adapt because of her existence within it (Holliday, 2007). The researcher must take on the discipline of making everything that is known or familiar into something that appears *extraordinary*, discovering ways to recover the stranger position (Holliday, 2007). My progressive subjectivity as the researcher and the processes I underwent while conducting the investigation are part of the investigation's context. My responses to certain of the insights gained through the investigation may represent a valuable source of information (Stiles, 1993). Of course, certain investigators may be unaware of the internal processes and may distort them. Therefore they must be used judiciously, and without the feeling that they are unfailingly veridical. In the following chapters, I have endeavoured to describe the impact that the research has had on my own experiences, and as far as possible, continually evaluated my own internal responses.

Relationship building.

A relationship of trust was built with the partners as I struggled to understand their lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Meaning and understanding are socially and inter-subjectively constructed, in that two or more people agree that they are experiencing the same event in the same way, yet this concurrence is fragile and continually open to renegotiation and dispute (King & Horrocks, 2010). Through dialogue, human systems communally develop their own language and verify its meaning, and “this evolutionary, linguistic process that produces the regularities, patterns and predictabilities” that develop into models for understanding (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p. 373). As systems are fluctuating, so are the ideas that are generated about them, and theories are meant as transitory lenses rather than symbols that measure up to a social reality (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). As will be seen in the following chapters, the dialogue between the different partners (myself included) continually altered the concept of workplace violence that we were studying, shifting various areas in and out of focus almost as though we were short-sighted people trying on different strengths of lenses. At certain times, a clear-cut concept of workplace violence seemed to jump into focus, at others, unforeseen variables made the concept hazy and indistinct.

Engagement with the material.

Qualitative research is facilitated by the immersion of the researcher in the data. This may involve contact with the research partners or familiarity with a text, long-term commitment, continual observation, debate about the data and frequent verification of partners' reactions to interpretations (Stiles, 1993). It was my belief from the start that engagement requires the establishment of trust with the partners and my continuous seeking to understand their perspective in depth, fostering an internal and empathetic analysis of human experience and expanding understanding on many levels. Understanding may be viewed as a process, never fully achieved, given the potential infinities of meanings of events (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). My observations made, from the first formation of tentative hypotheses based on my previous research to the final immersion in the richness of partners' experiences, continuously changed and evolved during the course of constant engagement with the material.

Iteration or cycling between interpretation and observation.

This requires the repeated encounters of theories or interpretations with the text or research partners and in actuality involved the checking of the accuracy of my understanding or empathy during the interviews by means of reflection. This gave the partners a chance to correct any misunderstandings or negotiate the meaning of any observations I made (Stiles, 1993).

Grounding of interpretation.

Abstract observations are grounded by linking them with more concrete interpretations, and partners are requested to give their comments in order for them to be included in the revisions (Maxwell, 2005). Any interpretations I made were grounded in the unique content and context of the observations, and these cannot be repeated no matter how closely procedures are specified (Stiles, 1993). Thus to the extent that it is both ethical and feasible, the data are made available for inspection in this research by means of direct quotes from the partners. A conversation is a mutual search and exploration through dialogue in which new meanings are continually evolving towards the "dis-solving of problems"

(Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p. 372). All themes and interpretations were grounded by linking them to excerpts from the interview text.

Asking partners questions they can answer.

Although the partners' interpretations may be taken into account, these do not replace the researcher's interpretations. I recognised early on that partners may have no better access to exact observation than I had, and indeed may also be informed or dependent on previous learning about the particular subject under study. An effort was made to ground the experiences of the partners in a context and thereby elicit a rich description of the personal meaning of the partners through the use of 'what' rather than 'why' questions (Stiles, 1993). As will be seen in the following chapters, the many discussions generated through the use of these questions were rich and varied.

The Research Method

In this section, some relevant considerations and applications of the research method will be discussed. First, a discussion of the role of the researcher within the study is included. As the primary data collection instrument, the researcher should clarify his or her role as researcher and acknowledge any biases (Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990). As such, as in all other forms of research, the instrument must be described in order for the reader to make informed inferences regarding issues such as the validity and generalisability of the research. Thereafter, the ethics of the study flow into the methods used for carrying out the study and the analysis of the data obtained.

The Researcher as Instrument

In qualitative research, the research partners' and researcher's roles are more active and participatory than in quantitative research (Moon et al., 1990). In the literature on the subject, the researcher is often referred to as the instrument or method in the research (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999; Van Niekerk, 2005). It is essential that I, as the researcher in this study, was not perceived as merely an instrument of data collection, but also as a co-creative

agent, active in the dispensation and concession of understanding (Viljoen, 2004). My own experiences and preconceived ideas obviously had a considerable impact on my interpretations of various partners' utterances, as it is well known that qualitative researchers tend to draw on their own background and experiences during their research (Van Niekerk, 2005).

Blurring the boundaries: Who is the researcher and who the researched?

A researcher should join with the culture they wish to study in such a way as not to be so close that no significant analysis can be made, but not so aloof that little more can be learned about the phenomenon (Viljoen, 2004). The research partners of this study were expected to play a more egalitarian and active role and to be collaborators in the research project (Moon et al., 1990). We took part in a reciprocal understanding-generating process, which emphasized the role of all as active, creative agents in the construction process (King & Horrocks, 2010). As such, there was a need to blur the boundaries between the researcher and the researched. As a result of my own long history in the South African Police Service, I had a more intimate understanding of the environment and culture than an external researcher might have had. I was able to place myself in the position of both researcher and conversational collaborator (Viljoen, 2004). There was an understanding that the research partners were collaborating with me to gain a measure of expertise and understanding of the complex topic that was under discussion. Additionally, the social constructionist philosophy permits a relationship in which all performers in a conversation have the ability to participate in the creation of a specific truth (Viljoen, 2004). In an attempt to convey the forces of co-creation at work in this research, I have used the interchangeable terms 'research partners', 'co-researchers', or 'co-participants' with reference to those on whom the study is based.

Ethical Considerations

Adherence to ethical principles is of paramount importance, the most crucial of these, as summarised by Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999), being:

A respect for autonomy

The respect for autonomy required me as the researcher to value the self-sufficiency of each partner, including their right to voluntary and informed consent (Kelly, 1999a; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Silverman, 2010; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001), their freedom to withdraw from research at any time, and their right to anonymity within a publication which might arise from the research. It was necessary to obtain the informed consent of each of the partners first, with the assurance that, at all times, their privacy would be respected and guarded. I was aware that the information elicited would probably be sensitive and that the partners could feel apprehensive about the possibility that they could be identified by their comments. I made it clear that I would be grouping their responses in my report in a manner which would disguise their identities. I also offered them the opportunity of reading my dissertation before it was handed in so that anything that made them feel uncomfortable could be removed. However, they all declined this option, feeling confident that such steps would not be necessary. They were informed that the interviews would be video-taped, but were assured that the videos would be safely locked away at all times other than when being used by myself in the transcribing of the data. They were assured that they were free to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable at any time. One partner, the wife of the primary research partner, actually chose to withdraw from the research after initially giving consent.

Non-maleficence

Non-maleficence requires that the research does no harm to the partner or any other group of persons (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In evaluating whether this research design could do harm to the partners, it should be noted that the study does not involve the testing of any intervention that could potentially and intentionally harm any of the participants. However, the research encounter has been likened to an intervention in a person's life, and questions asked of participants can be seen as being emotionally disruptive (Bar-On, 1996). I was aware that the main participant had been under the care of my colleague in Psychological Services for many years, and additionally was still consulting with the psychiatrist, who had prescribed medication and shock therapy for him and was continually monitoring his case.

However, the traumatic nature of the topics aired, even after the successful completion of a therapeutic process, could potentially result in new issues emerging. On further investigation into the topic of the research encounter, however, my misgivings were somewhat assuaged by the research of Griffin, Resick, Waldrop and Mechanic (2003), who believe that previously traumatised people often tolerate research remarkably well, even finding it valuable and an interesting experience in which to take part. Given these considerations, I decided to proceed, but nevertheless to advance cautiously, bearing in mind various options that would make the experience as safe for the participants as was possible.

Consequently, on my first contact with each of the participants, I asked them to take part in an interview comprised of questions which would allow us to embark on an intellectual journey of discovery, and which would endow us all with insight into the concept under study. I informed them from the outset that it was likely that the interview, which consisted of questions that were possibly of a sensitive or disturbing nature, might raise their level of consciousness about issues relating to workplace violence, self-harm and relationships and could possibly cause some emotional pain for them or increase their levels of anxiety. Discussion with the majority of the participants in this regard revealed that their attitudes towards the research were positive, and four of the participants expressed their willingness to be involved in the study even after being apprised of the risks. The main participant, Insp Dark-Knight was particularly motivated by thoughts of being able to help others through his experiences. As he put it later in our interview, whilst discussing the impact he hoped he had on the younger officers, he said:

344 en in n mate het ek hulle probeer (.3) op my manier het ek hulle- ek besef dit nou- het ek op my manier vir hulle probeer sterk maak, meer kleed gee dat hulle nie moet deurgaans wat ek deur was nie. Dat hulle nie moet inmekaar sak waar ek inmekaar sou gesak het nie. Ek het my beste gedoen om hulle tot die beste van my vermoë op te lei.

(And in a way I tried to help them, in my way I tried – I realise that now – I tried to help them in my own way to make them strong, equip them so that they would not go through what I went through. That they would not fall apart where I fell apart. I did my best to train them to the best of my abilities.)

The fifth participant, Insp Dark-Knight's wife, chose rather not to proceed any further with the process, due to her fear of the uncontained emotions that might be evoked through her re-exploration of such a difficult and personally invested topic.

During the interview stage, care was thus taken not to pressurise participants to answer questions that might cause them too much discomfort. From the outset, I again reiterated to each participant the necessity of informing me if the material that we were discussing was of too sensitive a nature for them to manage effectively; reaffirmed their complete control of the research process in that they were able to withdraw from it at any stage; endeavoured to be as open as possible about my own positioning, emotions and reflections with regard to the material; and exhibited suitable levels of empathy with their stories, in the hope of encouraging a reciprocal candidness in the participants. Even though I had encouraged transparency in this regard, it still remained for me to assume ultimate responsibility and maintain sensitivity to overt and subtle signs of distress on the part of the participants. In fact, Insp Dark-Knight, the primary research partner, became highly agitated at one point and time was needed for him to regain his composure in order to continue the interview. He assured me at the time that he was willing to continue, and expressed a relief at 'getting it out'. The nature of the interviews was supportive, in such a way that I felt that a relationship had developed and felt confident that, in our next exchanges, the participants would inform me of any concerns they had that arose out of the research process.

After the conclusion of the interview phase, I was worried about the main participant's clearly suicidal and possibly violent tendencies as he aired them in the interview, a veritable minefield of ethical dilemmas. I did not feel that it was my place or duty to intervene therapeutically in his case, due to his involvement with other professionals at the time of the interview. Nonetheless, I was inclined to alert those professionals to the risk I felt he posed to himself and his family (a topic he frequently referred to openly in our discussion). Insp Dark-Knight had been so honest with me in his frank discussion of his contemplation of his own death that I felt comfortable to ask him for his permission for me to contact the psychiatrist with my concerns for his well-being (after our initial interview), which he permitted me to do. He was also happy for me to get in touch with the doctor over the following months. Thereafter, I regularly telephoned the psychiatrist, Dr Feel-Good, in

order to check on the progress of Insp Dark-Knight and reassure myself that he was still regularly attending sessions and advancing therapeutically.

Additionally, I was inspired to monitor the progress of all the participants after the serious business of information gathering was completed. Whilst they professed not to need extra professional help, I made sure that they were given my personal contact numbers in case of any emerging feelings related to the topics that we had discussed. I additionally encouraged them to keep in regular contact with their therapists (the main participant's daughter and his colleague were both under the care of private psychologists, who were aware of the research we were undertaking), and gave them my assurance that the nature of their disclosures would be handled with sensitivity and total discretion on my part.

Beneficence

Beneficence requires that the design of the research will be of benefit if not only to the research partners but, more broadly, to other researchers and society at large (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). It is my deep desire that this research inspire the investigations of others into the topics of concern that it raises and that other researchers might address this subject to which I feel I have barely even begun to attend.

The Process

Constructionist analysis makes use of unstructured, open-ended qualitative interview materials in which particular linguistic patterns can come to the fore (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The data analysis in qualitative research is inductive and recursive. The goal is not to support a single hypothesis, but to generate rich descriptions of phenomena and to discover theory (Moon et al., 1990). The aspiration is to interpret the data from a position of empathic understanding, placing real-life events into perspective (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999), whilst remaining committed to representing the experiences of the participants (Kinmonth, 1995).

We devise research procedures to fit the situation and the nature of the people in it as they are being revealed. The method of analysis within the realms of this study is discourse analysis, developed originally by a group of social psychologists in Britain led by Potter and Wetherell, whose book “Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour” (1987) challenged the largely experimental research designs of the day (Cowan & McLeod, 2004; Coyle, 2006).

Discourse analysis

Using methods that are non-traditional in approach can provide a novel manner of perceiving phenomena that have become disguised by the repetitive scrutiny of conventional research methods – “all ways of seeing are also ways of not seeing” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 16). In keeping with the ideals of qualitative research, and in contrast to conventional approaches, discourse analysis thrives on variability as an essential feature of the subject matter which is to be understood and not as a problem to be eliminated. Discourse is variable, as talk renders diverse depictions of the world and is orientated to different functions (Wood & Kroger, 2000). In this approach, social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning. I saw my role as the exploration of the relationship between discourse and lived experience (Coyle, 2006; Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Discourse analysis is “the close study of language in use” (Wetherell et al., 2001, p. 5). The use of discourse analysis in this research is motivated by the focus that discourse analysis places on the processes whereby the social world is constructed and maintained. Discourse analysis is a reflexive practice - in using language, producing texts and drawing on discourses, researchers are part of the constructive effects of discourse (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Discourse analysis is reflexive because of the strong social constructionist epistemology that forms its foundation, which sees language as constitutive and constructive. As such, it does not rely simply on what the social world means to the subjects who populate it, but also asks how and why the social world comes to have the meaning that it does (Coyle, 2006; Gordon, 1997; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Discourse analysis involves ways of thinking about discourse (theoretical and meta-theoretical elements) and ways of handling discourse (methodological elements) (Wood & Kroger, 2000). It involves a particularised, detailed, qualitative approach, challenging the taken-for-granted understandings, and undermining the tendency to reify and solidify knowledge. From the perspective of discourse, versions of social reality are social constructions held in place by ongoing processes of discursive production, implying that there are no true representations of reality from which one can critique other, less real versions. It is fundamentally interpretive and aims at uncovering multiple meanings and representations of the social world (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Discursive practice allows researchers to build on already gathered bodies of knowledge and supplements existing work by pioneering novel hypotheses, challenges, and notions, permitting the use of more creativity in the application and more innovation in their interpretations. Language constructs 'reality' rather than forming a tool for the discovery of an objective reality, and as such, texts can only be understood through their relationships with broader discourses and other texts. Voices that are often missed in the more traditional research methods (or those that have been silenced) are encouraged to have their say through discourse analysis. This indicates that discourse can never be studied in its entirety, forcing an awareness of the incomplete nature of any research project and the inevitable absence of some important voices (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Likewise, there is no set recipe for successful data analysis - the aim of discourse analysis is to identify some of the multiple meanings assigned in texts. The breadth of discourse analysis techniques and the diversity of phenomena under investigation mean that the form taken by the analysis will vary from study to study. As a result, the researcher needs to adopt an approach that makes sense in the light of the particular study and establish arguments that will justify the approach taken (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

A description of discourse

Her knowledge of me was so deep, her version so compelling, that it held together my miscellany of identities. To be sane, we choose between the diverse warring descriptions of our selves; I chose hers. I took the name she gave me, and the criticism, and the love, and I called the discourse me

(Salman Rushdie, The Ground Beneath Her Feet, 2000, p.510).

Early linguists and semiologists used the word ‘discourse’ as a synonym for language and this definition of discourse has remained the dominant and legitimate definition of the concept in the social sciences, embedding the concept in the linguistic realm by defining it using the exact same concepts linguists employ to define language (Chalaby, 1996). However,

the long-held Aristotelian belief that language is general and linguistic categories in particular are fully adequate to the task of describing reality as it is in itself must be set aside if we are to begin to fully appreciate the workings of discourse (Chia, 2000, p.515).

According to Chia (2000), the etymological meaning of the term ‘discourse’ conveys a sense of running to and fro, implying that to discourse is to run to and from and in that process, create a path, a course, a pattern of regularities out of which human existence can be seen as more fixed, secure and workable. Discourse is thus primarily the organising of social reality. It attempts to explore how the socially produced ideas and objects that populate the world were formed in the first place and how they are maintained and held in place over time. It attempts to uncover the creation of social reality, rather than simply understanding and interpreting social reality as it exists. It examines how language constructs phenomena, not how it exposes it, maintaining that “the world cannot be known separately from discourse” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 6).

The things that make up the social world – including our identities – materialise out of discourse: our talk and our beings are one and the same. However, individuals do not always have the luxury of choosing their identity or truth, and hence their reality. Experience is largely written for us by the multitude of conflicting discourses of which we are but a part. Without discourse we cannot claim to know social reality, and devoid of the understanding of discourse, we cannot assert to know the truth about our experiences or ourselves (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Discourse works to create some sense of stability, order and predictability and to thereby produce a sustainable, functioning and liveable world from what would otherwise be an amorphous, fluxing and undifferentiated reality indifferent to our causes. This it does through the material inscriptions and utterances that form the basis of language and representation (Chia, 2000, p. 514).

Discourse is viewed as a form of symbolic interaction; discourses are taken to be extended collective conversations whereby partners together make sense of their experience and in this way, subjective experience can become inter-subjective experience (Garnsey & Rees, 1996). To take part in a discourse is to share a set of constructs, a vocabulary; a repertoire of preconceptions which together shape cognitions and the expression of these is a way in which individuals contribute to cycles through which social practices arise. Discourses are a collective means of moulding individual cognitions but at the same time are created through the expression individuals give their own thoughts. Discourse influences individual thoughts but does not determine them (Garnsey & Rees, 1996). It focuses on the connection between language and the social and cultural framework in which it is used; the intimate familiarity with language beyond the simple words, sentences and phrases needed for successful communication; linguistic patterns that occur in the realms of spoken and written language; what people denote in what they say and how they acquire that awareness; and the way language presents diverse perspectives of the world and distinct understandings (Coyle, 2006; Paltridge, 2000).

Discourses are embodied and enacted not only through spoken language but also through texts, which can take a variety of forms such as written texts, spoken words, pictures, symbols and artefacts, although they exist beyond the individual texts that compose them. Through a text's interrelatedness with other texts, and the different discourses on which they draw, it becomes meaningful. Discourse analysis explores how texts are made meaningful through these processes and how they add to the creation of social reality by producing meaning (Chalaby, 1996; Coyle, 2006). It is the connection between these discourses and the social reality that they constitute that makes discourse analysis a powerful method for discovering social phenomena (Chalaby, 1996; Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Phillips and Hardy (2002) categorise discourse analysis on two key theoretical dimensions: the relative importance of text versus context in the research; and the degree to which power dynamics form the focus of the study (or critical studies) versus research which focuses more on "the processes of social construction that constitute social reality" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 19). The combination of these two dimensions results in four main perspectives. These are 'social linguistic analysis', which is concerned with social construction of reality in the form of texts, examining the linguistic devices and strategies that construct emerging discourse; 'interpretive structuralism', which can be described as a focus on the analysis of the social context and the discourse that supports it; 'critical discourse and maintenance of imbalanced power relations as they are performed, replicated and justified by the discourse of dominant groups and institutions; and finally 'critical linguistic analysis', which analyses the details of the mechanisms of power as they construct explicit talk and text.

Interpretive structuralism is the principal method of discourse analysis that informs this study. In this method, although texts may supply some of the data, the description of the context relies mainly on interviews to provide accounts of the insider's interpretations of the context in which they find themselves. Texts, when collected, are considered valuable as background material because the aim is understanding and insight into the bigger picture rather than a microanalysis of individual texts. The study is primarily constructionist and concerns the way in which the broader discursive contexts come into being and the possibilities to which they give rise, rather than explicating power struggles. This study explores "the constructive effects of discourse without focussing on the political dynamics"

exclusively (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 21). However, what makes a research technique discursive is not the method itself but the *use* of that method to carry out an interpretive analysis of some form of text with a view to providing an understanding of discourse and its role in constituting social reality (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

The application of discourse analysis in this study

The data analysis in qualitative research is inductive and recursive. The goal is not to support a single hypothesis, but to generate rich descriptions of phenomena and discover theory (Moon et al., 1990). It is important to interpret the data from a position of empathic understanding, placing real-life events into perspective (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). As such, a set formula for the way in which discourse analysis should be conducted is impossible to attain. Rather, taking into account the fact that mechanical methodology is unfeasible, Potter and Wetherell (1987) laid out ten loosely formulated steps of what to do in discourse analysis, which are not to be taken as 'rules' but rather seen as guidelines for doing analysis. Although these steps are taken from Potter and Wetherell's 1987 book, which is now twenty three years old, I have found some of them to be still practical as a means of recounting the general 'method' I followed in my own discourse analysis. Antaki (2010) loosely gives a brief recounting of the steps of discourse analysis in his online lecture series, which he has condensed into a series of eight steps, which I referred to in this study (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987):

Stage One: Research Aims.

The aims of the research and the resultant questions asked by discourse analysts can be many and varied, and as such, the participants' communications are considered in their own right and not as an inferior way to get to concepts beyond the text such as attitudes, events or cognitive processes (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Discourse analysts focus broadly on research questions that are related to the function and construction of discourse and what is gained by this construction. In this study, I focussed on the discourses surrounding workplace violence in the SAPS, looking at how the participants' accounts were constructed, and the function these accounts served.

More specifically, then, I aimed to:

- Elicit or uncover discursive networks in the personal interviews of the main participant and his colleague, family members, and psychiatrist that pertain to forms of workplace violence committed either towards others or the self.
- Illustrate the social significance and culturally inherited nature of the discourses, giving emphasis to the way in which discourses inform the broader social context of the SAPS in which they are produced.
- Draw attention to the functions and effects of the discourses within the socio-historical context, as well as in the immediate contexts of the interviews themselves.
- Uncover underlying ethnographic or empathic perspectives and psychologies as they are exposed in the stories told by the participants.

More explicitly the research questions resulting from the aims are:

- What are the types of discursive networks that exist in the personal narratives of workplace violence?
- What is the social significance of the discourses and in what way do they inform the broader social context of the SAPS culture in which they are produced?
- What are the functions that the discourses fulfil in the socio-historical as well as immediate contexts, and what are their effects?
- In what way and to what extent do the discourses support or oppose ideologies present in the socio-historical and cultural context?
- What ethnographic perspectives or psychologies are revealed by the participants in their narratives?

Stage Two: Sample selection.

Unlike conventional research, where the validity of a claim depends upon the use of the appropriate statistical test and the adequacy of the sample size, warranting procedures in discourse analysis do not depend on statistical tests. Discourse analysis is a labour intensive

approach, inevitably requiring the reading and re-reading of vast bodies of texts, documents or transcripts and the samples in discourse analytic work are usually large in terms of language instances (Wood & Kroger, 2000). The time-consuming nature of discourse transcription and analysis that was used in this research requires that the sample size (in terms of individual participants) be relatively limited – in this regard, Wood and Kroger (2000, p.81) state: “we would emphasize that discourse analysts have no need to apologise for smaller numbers of partners or texts – bigger is not necessarily better”, and as such, a smaller number of participants is advised.

As mentioned in Potter and Wetherell’s book (1987), I was interested in the language use, and a small sample size seemed able to achieve just as much by way of interest and importance. The sample selection of this research flowed from the research object and how I felt it was manifested in the world of language (Antaki, 2010; Kelly, 1999a; Moon et al., 1990), and the specific research questions or considerations were also a guide to the size of the sample used (Wood & Kroger, 2000). I was aware that discourse analysis also often begins with participants who, although they are similar in certain ways, nevertheless are “different enough that they might give different versions” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 79), and I took this into account when selecting the partners.

A combination of criterion-based selection techniques, namely convenience selection and critical case sampling, were used to choose appropriate units of analysis (texts) and research partners. Certain characteristics were seen as essential in selecting the research partners (Kelly, 1999a). Respondents were selected on the basis of their experience of the phenomenon being researched, but additionally, needed to have excellent communications skills in order to describe the phenomenon in detail, were required to be open and not defensive, and were required to have an interest in, and be of the conviction, that it would be of value for them to participate. Research partners were thus chosen for these characteristics, leaving variables such as age and gender to play a relatively minor role in the selection of partners. However, the main participant had been present in the organisation since before its transformation into a ‘Service’, a fact which was deemed to be of interest given the attention paid by literature to the subject of transformation in police departments: as such, the choice of an older participant was more appropriate to this study. Despite substantial transformations taking place within the Service, enduring patterns of patriarchy, masculinity, sexism, racism

and social relations are still deeply entrenched and reflected in the socio-historical grounding and culture of the SAPS. My specific emphasis on the White male was in part based on the statistics which implicate this category disproportionately in workplace violence both in South Africa and internationally. The value of this and its generalisability will depend on the reader assessing the importance and effect of the phenomenon portrayed in the research in order to resolve whether it has fundamental value (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

As the South African Police Service is the context for the study, the Western Cape formed the larger frame for the partners. The research partners selected needed to be chosen from the large pool of employees of the SAPS who had been involved in a serious workplace violence incident or suicide attempt, and on the basis of their personal knowledge or experience of the concept of work-related violence, whether directed at the self or others within the work context.

It was crucial for the main research partner that I chose to have had intimate personal experience with the topic of violence in the South African Police Service. I asked a colleague to recommend some of the members he had consulted in therapy for their inability to control aggressive outbursts, previous suicide attempts and violent incidents in past behaviour, as prospective candidates for the main research partner. There was no shortage of suitable police officers for this. After consulting on the telephone with those identified by my colleague, I was able to select one on the basis of the above criteria. I arranged for an informal meeting with the one most suited, Insp Dark-Knight, and was gratified to see that he was keen to get involved, and seemed to offer the potential for a unique contribution to my understanding of the topic. Additionally, he expressed himself in a fluent and forthright manner. He agreed to become my main research partner, and recommended those around him that he thought would be best able to contribute to expanding on the knowledge we uncovered during our conversation. These four other research partners (I believed four were enough, due to the massive amount of data that I knew could be gathered during even two interviews with each) were his wife and daughter, a close personal colleague who had known him throughout his career, and his psychiatrist, who had interacted with him for many years. All were willing to offer their thoughts and insights into the topic, and were eager to be involved. Initially I considered the use of a signed informed consent form. Although this is useful for the participants to understand exactly what is required of them, and their rights, I

was hesitant due to the extremely sensitive nature of the disclosures I expected would be aired. Repercussions for any of the participants could be dire if their identities were discovered. Therefore, I decided against having them sign the forms, instead going through the reasoning behind the study, participant involvement and what it entailed, my transcription of data and the possible effects and ramifications of their participation verbally. This was recorded on the video tape, including their consent to the process, and as such, I felt, was sufficient to satisfy the needs of informed consent.

The different voices of these partners, as well as the voice of the researcher, added to the complexity of the stories told, embellishing them with new dimensions from which guidelines can be eventually be drawn (Wetherell et al., 2001). As such, common themes or dissimilarities in the accounts of research partners from different perspectives were of added value. As mentioned previously, this variety of data resources in the study allowed for triangulation to take place: this involves the use of multiple perspectives, various data sources and different analysis methods in order to increase the ‘trustworthiness’ of the research (Moon et al., 1990; Kelly, 1999a).

Stage Three: The collection of records and documents.

I needed accurate records of what was said, but also of the manner in which it was said, which was why I believed a videotaped record of the two interviews I conducted with each participant was the most fitting for my purpose (Antaki, 2010). During our first interview, Insp Dark-Knight volunteered the photographs (descriptions of which are included in Appendix C) and his poetry was obtained through asking if he would mind if I used it as part of the background and collateral information that informed the study. At the time of my conducting the interviews, I kept an eye out for any newspaper articles that had specific reference to violence in the SAPS, and this was hardly an exhaustive selection, as I did not mean newsprint to be the main source of my data, but merely an addition to the interviews with the participants. I noticed that many of the English newspapers did not report on stories of SAPS violence as much as Afrikaans papers did. Through the collection of documents of this nature from many sources, a fuller idea of how participants’ linguistic practices are organised can be gained (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Silverman, 2010).

Stage Four: Interviews.

Interviews hold a prominent place among research methods in the social and behavioural sciences (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Silverman, 2010). Types of interviews run the gamut from those of positivist survey researchers who through sanitised and neutral procedures aim to discover the untainted truth about the natural world, to radical constructionist theories that question the existence of an external reality (Gordon, 1997). An interview is seen as a joint product of what researchers and partners talk about together and how they talk with each other, yet in conventional interviewing, suppression of discourse occurs that is accompanied by a disregard of the partner's social and personal contexts of meaning (Mishler, 1986). Conversely, from a social constructionist standpoint, information and knowledge are created through an interview process rather than discovered. Research is seen as an active interpersonal encounter between individuals (Gordon, 1997; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Potter and Wetherell (1987) advise the use of an interview based on this standpoint because they “apply some of the rigour of traditional positivist psychology” (Antaki, 2010, p. 1) in that the same questions can be asked of different participants, allowing comparison of accounts.

Mischler (1986) proposes an approach to research interviewing that rests on four propositions:

- *Interviews are speech events.* Definitions have traditionally removed from consideration the fact that the primary and distinctive characteristic of an interview is that it is a discourse, or meaningful speech, between the researcher and the partner as speakers of a shared language. This excludes explicit recognition of the cultural patterning of situationally relevant talk; presuppositions that underlie this approach are unexamined. Techniques tend to obscure rather than illuminate the relationship between discourse and meaning. Ambiguity and complexity are present in all situations and types of discourse, for which shared understanding between the researcher and the partner depends on a variety of implicit assumptions and mutual recognition of the contextual factors. It was found, during the course of this research, that even questions that appear to be simple in both structure and topic left much room for interpretation by both me and the research partner. For example, my

question put to Dr Feel-Good regarding the psychiatrist's involvement and understanding of the case of Insp Dark-Knight, the primary research partner, elicited a long monologue about the theories of PTSD, the effects of cortisol on a body, and recent experiments in the Israeli army to do with the aggression enhancing capabilities of cortisol injections. I was forced to rephrase by saying "specifically with regards to Insp Dark-Knight and his whole process through this, what do you think happened in that instance?"

It is essential to remember that speech is the intended object of study, and researchers must be wary of taking their transcript as seriously as the reality that gives rise to the transcript. Encouraging research partners to speak fully means encouraging them to display the variability that is seen as a major feature of discourse – it is not assumed that there is a single, correct answer to a question and that the interviewer's task is to elicit this information thoroughly and accurately (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

- *The discourse of interviews is constructed jointly by the researcher and the partner.* Questions and responses are formulated in, developed through and shaped by the discourse between interviewers and respondents. As meanings develop during the course of an interview, interviewers tend to reformulate questions and respondents structure their responses in terms of their reciprocal understandings (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). The mutual reformulation and arrangement of questions develops the interview by the explicit shades of meaning which are connected to the context. A question may be thought of as a part of a circular process in which the meaning and the answer are fashioned in the discussion between the researcher and the partner as they try to make sense of what they are saying to each other. Both strive to reach meanings that both can understand. An example of this from the research occurred as Insp Faithful (the best friend of the primary research partner Insp Dark-Knight) and I worked our way towards an understanding of the effects of being exposed to violence, which were so much more far-reaching than what I had presumed. We discussed a negative pattern of alcohol abuse, violence, conflict with the law, family and spousal abuse, and eventually arrived at the concept of isolation which causes others surrounding the afflicted man to "laugh it off. They don't understand it". As we spoke, the entrenched negative reactions became clearer.

- *Analysis and understanding are established on a theory of discourse and meaning.* Treating responses as stories, analysing and displaying the findings they generate, brings out problems and possibilities of interviewing that are not visible when attention is restricted to the question-answer exchanges. A narrative format is one of the significant ways in which individuals construct and express meaning. In this way, the co-participants and I were able to participate actively in the creation and understanding of the stories that emerged from each participant's unique stance. Each participant's distinctive relation of the same story from their perspective added to the overall picture of workplace violence that was being built up.
- *The meaning of questions and answers is contextually grounded.* The focus is on understanding how a specific framework has influenced the way the text is fashioned and consumed. At times, the relationship between myself and the research partners influenced how we each composed our accounts and analysis of the events and issues we debated (Dick & Cassell, 2004), as was addressed in the section concerning my own positioning. The research interview represented a specific social context in which we both engaged in the construction of identities, and also signified a particular power relation (Dick & Cassell, 2004). As a psychologist, and also as part of the system of the SAPS, I was perhaps perceived as having more power, which had effects on the identity work that occurred in the interaction. This was taken into account and acknowledged, and will be commented on further in the following chapters.

These propositions formed the basis of the research interviews that were conducted, which took place as follows:

I constructed a schedule of questions to be asked, also including various probes or follow-up questions that I could ask in the interview. On first meeting each research partner, I informed them of the project's basic aims and also that the method was non-traditional in that there was no fixed set of questions. I let them know that I wished for an unrestricted conversation with them around the subject matter. They were informed that the researcher was as much a research partner and learner as they were themselves and that they were free to debate or challenge the issues that arose in our discussions. I tried to maintain fluidity in the

interviews themselves, not forcing my line of questioning onto the participants, but allowing them to move the interviews in directions they chose, and then gently guiding them back to topics that had not been fully discussed.

However, through my own positioning in and guidance of the interview, I was aware that the researcher is a “potentially disturbing or intrusive presence into the data” (Antaki, 2010, p. 1) – the researcher is neither neutral nor indifferently supportive but rather an active and constructive part of the interview itself (Coyle, 2006; Gordon, 1997; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Wood & Kroger, 2002). I was attentive to the fact that the interactions with the various research partners were coloured by the perception that the particular partner had of me within the system. For example, the psychiatrist, Dr Feel-Good, made references to a shared understanding that we both had as a result of our work with policemen. In this context, it is almost as though we were bound together by more than just a shared understanding of technical questions about psychology, but also by a powerful set of common experiences and attributions of professional identity. The role of the researcher became somewhat ambiguous. The psychiatrist immediately took refuge in his abbreviations and research in order to ‘explain’ the pathology to me: “the interesting thing is that they are working on the concept of stress-related disorders for the DSM V and some of the diagnostic concepts they are developing are the so-called complex PTSD or PTSD complex, and also developmental PTSD”. In order to entice him back to the personal experience of workplace violence that Insp Dark-Knight had undergone, and to encourage him to give vent to his own view and feelings, it was necessary for me to redirect him to the specifics of the case.

Likewise, with Insp Dark-Knight and to a certain extent, Insp Faithful, a feeling of vulnerability was engendered through the construction of the researcher as an external threat or judge, which placed the researcher in the position of the expert. Insp Faithful said “sitting back it’s pretty easy for a person, I mean if you are sitting in an office to look at it and say ‘that’s atrocious, it’s awful’. Being there – it’s something else...”

Much work was needed to entice the partners into partnership, and this was partly accomplished by viewing and carrying out the interviews as conversational encounters, by striving to make the interview challenging by providing opportunities for the research partner to produce the most complete report no matter their orientation to myself as the researcher (Wood & Kroger, 2000). In an effort to overcome the influence of the researcher within the

interviews, or at least to pay homage to that impact, I made sure to transcribe my own interjections as completely as I did those of the participants. I also attempted to disclose my own positioning as unconditionally as possible, including my own impressions and biases (please refer to the next chapter for more on this).

Stage Five: A meaningful transcript.

The discourse that is the focus of analysis in discourse analysis does not refer to language in the abstract but rather to language in use – discourse refers to the words that were vocalised or the text that was written (Wood & Kroger, 2000). But what the researcher in effect works with – the data – are audio or video recordings (for spoken discourse) and records (written discourse itself). Spoken communication, being ephemeral, needs to be made tangible in order that it can be examined repeatedly. In particular, the verbal and non-verbal details of the discourse are critical and necessarily entail an interpretation of what was said, not simply a description. Transcription refers to the conversion of spoken discourse into a written version that is fully amenable to analysis and available for inclusion in the reporting of the research (King & Horrocks, 2010; Wetherell et al., 2001; Wood & Kroger, 2000). The data remain the recordings themselves, because regardless of how thorough and successful the analyst is in representing the characteristics that are included, such as tone, or tempo, there are restrictions. The making of a transcript must raise issues of fidelity, of preserving various features of the recording, although it is inevitable that some form of intervention, interpretation or transformation of the discourse by the researcher before the stage of analysis occurs (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Transcription is required in order to make the discourse manageable so that the minutiae can be identified, and that documentation of the data can be made accessible to others for inspection and reanalysis in order to endow the research with transparency.

The considerable emphasis placed on working with recordings of spoken discourse reflects the necessity for safeguarding all the particulars of the interaction, both verbal and nonverbal. Therefore, the transcripts with which the researcher works should include both the spoken words and the nonverbal features, which are interrelated and cannot be divorced from one another (Wood & Kroger, 2000). It was impossible to identify what text was pivotal in each interview I did: therefore, I made sure that transcription was as comprehensive

as possible. I realised that if details of the discourse were omitted, I would be labouring with generalizations, romanticised notions or unsubstantiated interpretations. Additionally, I tried to incorporate as much of the nonverbal as possible, because the verbal system demands a physical (nonverbal) mode of delivery, including gestures, facial expressions, timing of utterances and so on. Everything that might have been notable was deliberated on; the detection of numerous facets or functions of the system and how the features work together was given attention (Wood & Kroger, 2000). The discourse that we analyse must be examined in its own context and cannot be regarded as representative of discourse in another situation but rather as only symbolic of itself.

In order to create this meaningful transcript, the data I gathered was transcribed based on the Jefferson system (as described in Potter & Hepburn, 2005 and Wood & Kroger, 2000 and included in Appendix B). I chose this system as it includes attention to phenomena that are central to the organisation of conversation such as speech onset, overlaps, intonation and so on. I additionally included all significant actions of the participants, and attempted to convey body language too.

Stage Six: Coding.

I found that it was necessary to get a brief overview of the data first, especially looking for anything interesting. The coding that followed was only provisional, and always qualitative, given the fact that no discourse analyst would code their material for the sake of counting up instances of certain references for a quantitative analysis (Antaki, 2010). Sensitivity to the ways in which language is utilised is vital, often requiring the revision and rejection of hypotheses as linguistic evidence to support them is uncovered (Coyle, 2006).

Stage Seven: Analysis.

While Potter and Wetherell (1987) divide the following stage into two disparate and discrete stages of analysis and validation, Antaki (2010) brackets them into a single section. I adhered to this latter approach as a result of my inability to distinguish the validation stage from the intervening analysis of the texts, since I appeared to be iterating from one to the

other and back again continuously. In my original analysis, I was already considering how the participants were oriented towards the discourses that informed their narratives, and so I include validation in the analysis stage, after Antaki (2010).

a. Analyse

A constructive means of determining a transcript's point of reference and context is to read the transcript whilst bearing in mind the functions that it might fulfil (Cowan & McLeod, 2004; Coyle, 2006). I found considerable comfort and freedom in the fact that there is no set recipe for discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), yet I did ask myself, "why am I reading the passage this way and what features produce this reading?" The researcher scans for patterns within the data, but is not sure what those patterns might comprise or of what significance they will be (Wetherell et al., 2001). I found it helpful to ignore nothing, as occasionally even the insignificant took on new meaning in the light of various other data. More specifically, I was on a search for variability and consistency in what was said, and perhaps what was not said (Coyle, 2006).

b. Check for Repertoires

After this, I went through all the data again, scrutinising the appearance of any 'repertoires' or 'discourses' that I started to find. As Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.169) state:

It should be clear, then, that there is no prescriptive method of analysis in discursive psychology, at least as understood in social psychology. Rather, there is a broad theoretical framework, which focuses attention on the constructive and functional dimensions of discourse, coupled with the reader's skill in identifying patterns of consistency and variation.

I was also looking for how the discourses thus identified helped me to understand the consistency of the data as a whole, and also how the participants themselves were located in reference to the discourses. The new problems that were raised were then explored, and their influence on the participants was investigated (Antaki, 2010).

c. *Validate*

According to Antaki (2010), the final phase of analysis demands the identification of how the discourses identified help to understand the overall coherence of the data (or how the discourse coheres and how discursive structure contributes to effects and functions), how participants orient themselves in relation to the discourses (what they see as essential, consistent and different), what issues remain unsolved (new problems that arise), and finally, what the meaning is of the preceding (Antaki, 2010; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This phase consists of forming hypotheses about the functions and effects that people's talk fulfils and searching for the evidence for it (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

At this stage of the analysis, I realised that it was necessary for me to deviate from what is strictly seen as discourse analysis. As the analysis of the texts and conversations that emerged from my research process progressed, I found it necessary to work at the borderline between understanding and analysing people's life worlds, experiences and feelings (a more ethnographic or empathic approach, described by Kelly (1999b, p. 399) as understanding "a human emotion as it is lived in its context"), and an understanding of how accounting for these things is performed in language. I believed that both perspectives could be seen to be of relevance for my research. At times, I had the luxury of managing certain texts in what would be termed strictly discourse analytic fashion. Elsewhere, however, I used the texts to uncover emotions and social worlds of the participants. More information on this is included in the first report chapter.

Step Eight: Reporting of results.

A thorough report of the qualitative research study ideally includes discussion of the theoretical framework that informed the study; the purpose of the study; the guiding research questions and changes that occurred in the questions as the study progressed; the research tradition or design employed; selection techniques; partners, settings and contexts; the role of the researcher and her possible biases; data collection and analysis strategies; findings; and discussion and interpretation of the findings in the form of assertions. Inclusion of these elements enables the reader to make reasonable judgements about the extent to which

the author's assertions are valid and transferable (Moon et al., 1990; Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Potter and Wetherell (1987) include a last stage in their method of discourse analysis, which is the all-important application of the findings. It is regarded as vital that the findings of the research are given practical application. I chose rather to regard this step as a discrete entity and included my version of relevance and applicability of the study in the conclusion of this dissertation (located in Chapter 10).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the ways in which this investigation is suited to the canvas of qualitative methodology within a social constructionist framework. The relativism of social constructionism, which suggests that all knowledge, social actions, interactions between individuals and their relations and behaviour are related to specific socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts, allows the possibility of the existence of multiple realities (Stevens, 2008). Within this frame, a view of language is considered as a textual vehicle for discourses, and consequently is seen as learned through reference to a specific reality whilst paying homage to circumscribed socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts.

For this research, I chose to focus on language as the unit of analysis through the medium of discourse analysis, exploring the effects and functions of referent networks in relation to the social, historical and ideological structures underlying the communication of the participants. Language was seen not only as a conveyer of meaning, but also as responsible for the construction of reality (Thompson, 1990), requiring an analysis of the language itself and reflexivity on the part of the researcher regarding her own positioning (Coyle, 2006). At the same time, however, I also used the texts as a medium for uncovering the emotions and social worlds of the participants as exposed in their language. In the following chapters, I attempt to give a situated accounting of the research process which is reconstructive in that it begins by reconstructing the words of my co-participants, providing enough contextual detail to allow a reader to imagine the situation as it was experienced (Kelly, 1999c).

Chapter Six

The Underpainting of the Canvas: Introducing the Participants



6

CHAPTER SIX

THE UNDER-PAINTING OF THE CANVAS: INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS



We are all the subjects of impressions, and some of us seek to convey the impressions to others. In the art of communicating impressions lies the power of generalizing without losing the logical connection of parts to the whole which satisfies the mind.

(George Inness, 1825-1894)

Introduction

When I was first confronted by the sheer volume of the texts to be analysed, I was unsure of where to start – the task seemed insurmountable. Accounts blurred into each other, and participants addressed the same stories from different angles, blurring the lines of the expectations that I had neatly formed in my mind. Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest that a report of findings is more than a presentation of research findings constituting part of the confirmation and validation procedure itself. They add that the goal is to present the analysis and conclusions in such a way that the reader is able to assess the researcher's interpretations. Whilst immersing myself in the texts, I was aware that in my mind, I was formulating a picture comprised of my own impressions of each of the participants and their stories. In an attempt to show that narratives are never merely pure reflections of deeds, behaviours, events, or even interviews, and that an uncontaminated analysis can never occur as a result of the personal investments of each speaker or listener (including myself), I have included those impressions here. I allude to the influence of the social context on our interpretations of the world, and as such, I have included my own personal feelings and interpretations which

emerged during the interviews I held with each participant. As I later transcribed the data, immersing myself in the reading and re-reading of the texts, more interpretations surfaced. My aim in this chapter is that the reader acquires a sense of the background of each interview, including the role I fulfilled in it (i.e., my positionality and reflexivity). What follows is a brief account of the interviews, the narratives of the participants themselves and my internal voice reflected as genuinely as possible.

I attempted to substantiate the various inferences made about each participant by providing verbatim extracts from each interview, indented so that they are immediately apparent. In presenting the words of the participants in this way, I endeavour to retain and convey some of the richness of the original data and also allow the reader to experience the intensity of the data firsthand. I have taken the liberty of disguising the names of places in order to conceal the identities of those concerned. When a participant has made mention of a place or an area, I have simply substituted the first letter of the name.

A Word on the Selection of Participants' Names

Early on in the research, I realised that addressing the participants simply with their initials (too easy to identify them, given the background that accompanies their narrative), or trite aliases such as Jane or Michael (too simplistic), would not be sufficient to convey the influence that each of the participants had on me, both in their interviews and in my later transcribing of the texts and re-reading of their words. To do justice to my co-researchers, therefore, I deliberated for many days on the pseudonyms I would bestow on each of them, in an attempt to convey in a few short words the impression of themselves they had conveyed most strongly to me.

The first of these is the main participant of the research, the man around whom the other participants cluster like the branches of a chandelier. I was struck by the juxtaposition of extreme fragility and vulnerability that he exuded as contrasted with his sense of impotent rage and need for retribution. He reminded me of the superhero, Batman, a man with a dark,

terrible past, one which has left him battle-scarred and broken in some ways, yet over which he has managed to triumph in order to become the powerful dark knight of the skies, saviour of those in need. Likewise, Insp Dark-Knight stands on the knife-edge of an abyss – he has lived through the tragic past, yet his future is still uncertain: will he rise into the skies on bat-like wings to become a hero over his own calamities, or will he fail, and be cast down forever into the pit of his own despair? This sounds overly dramatic, but read on: his story is of such a nature that it evokes horror and empathy in the reader at the same time.

By our hero's side stands his trusty sidekick, Insp Faithful. Immense, candid and vigorous as only a career policeman with a true calling can be, he is a staunch and loyal friend, dependable and trustworthy almost to a fault. It is he who defends Insp Dark-Knight from the depredations of his ex-colleagues, the ravages of his own past, and the uncertainties of his future. He is expansive and jolly, quick to laugh or smile, yet underlying this joviality is his concern for the well-being of his friend, and a hard edge of grief in mourning for the friend he once knew.

Insp Dark-Knight's daughter, Little Miss Maturity, is a perplexing mixture of mature woman of the world (an impression she most likes to portray), and a lost little girl (an impression she is not aware she is actually revealing). Her charm and ingenuousness is attractive; her distress at the loss of her father-figure, the man who once held her in his arms and hugged her with abandon, is heart-breaking. She has been forced out of her innocence, left stranded in a challenging world without a family on whom she can rely. And yet she has made the best of the situation, strenuously following a path of her own making, fighting off the pain of her disappointment and insecurity in order to better her lot in life. You go girl!

The last participant (but certainly not the least, as he would be sure to tell you), is Dr Feel-Good. He epitomises the category of specialist entitled 'psychiatrist': professional, learned, and just slightly inaccessible and aloof. As a medical professional, he is concerned for his patient, but one gets the inkling that Insp Dark-Knight is one of the many that cross the threshold into the eminent physician's office, and as a result, Dr Feel-Good is wearied at

his lack of power to effect a tangible change when faced with an organisation that denies his right to a professional opinion. There is a certain amount of helplessness thrust upon him by the uncaring and irreverent attitudes of management, yet in spite of this, he continues to battle on in the defence of those who no longer have any other hope.

The Stories Begin

The Wounded Hero: The Tale of Insp Dark-Knight

Frailty was the first word that came into my mind when I met Insp Dark-Knight. He was sitting in the waiting room, seemingly oblivious of the uniformed policemen ranged around him, his body shaking uncontrollably, his hands twisting against each other as though he was trying to wash the sins of the world away. His wispy hair was standing up around his head; his shoulders were slumped as though they bore some dreadful weight. As I spoke his name, he gazed at me uncomprehendingly, his eyes filled with unshed tears. Yet I was surprised, as he stood up to greet me, that he was taller than I am (at six foot, I am not considered small), and that his physique bore the vestiges of the powerful musculature it must have had in his youth, although now mostly layered with an unhealthy coating of fat. His clothes hung on his frame, the rough cloth an unbecoming shade of brown that turned his skin even more sallow, unforgiving of the harsh lines etched into his face. He wore his depression physically, like a shroud, and it coloured his every movement and word.

Unbeknownst to me at that time, a small self-made weapon nestled in the pocket of his trousers, a primitive item fashioned from a ballpoint pen cartridge and a tiny calibre bullet, none the less potent for all its crudity and simplicity. His weapons had been removed from him, he told me later, and, being the man that he was, with the training he had received from the South African Police Service in the time when men were men, he had fashioned a replacement. He was not sure whether he would use it yet – but it was his motto to always be prepared. I did not have the courage at the time to ask for whom that small, blunt-nosed bullet was intended, since the possibilities were legion. Would it be revenge, or love, which drove the little pin forward eventually, I wondered?

“If you had to start with the story of your life,” I asked him, when we were finally seated in my SAPS regulation office, filled with the reprehensible but serviceable items of grey metal furniture so popular with government institutions, “where would you start?” He could hardly have felt comfortable there, surrounded as he was by tangible examples of his career and wasted life. His glance flicked around the room as he struggled to find the words, his hands never ceasing in their rub-rub-rubbing motion, backwards and forwards like the tide rolling over pebbles.

Eventually, when he spoke, his words were soft and tortured, like a voice groaning from the grave, full of torment (please note: translations of Afrikaans dialogue appear in italics).

68 (.3) {agitated hands} Ja (.) as ek (.) as ’n mens begin dink ek aan Oom Mike.

(Yes if I – if a person starts, I think of Uncle Mike)

Thus began his story. Insp Dark-Knight was eight or nine years old when he first made the acquaintance of the man they came to call “Oom Mike” (*Uncle Mike*). In the dusty dryness of E., where Insp Dark-Knight grew up, the middle-aged stranger who came to visit with unusual gifts for him must have seemed exciting, foreign almost. On a holiday, when Oom Mike was one of the invited guests, he described how Oom Mike had a proclivity for getting into his bed naked, fondling him sexually.

76 Dit is wat ek van my jeug onthou, dit is waar dit begin seermaak het.

(That’s what I remember about my youth – that’s where it began hurting.)

He described how he had seen the man, Oom Mike, recently, an old man now, in his eighties or nineties, and his reaction had been one of intense anger –

75 *maar as ek by hom uitgekom het ek hom fokken vrek gemaak.* Ek wil net nie by hom uitkom nie.

(But if I got close to him I would fucking kill him. I just don't want to get close to him.)

He emphasised how no one knew of this, that I was the first person he had the courage to tell. After that period of his life, he began to rebel. His father passed away, leaving his mother with four young children, two boys and two girls, and money became tight. His mother began a relationship with a man he referred to simply as “Smittie”, a violent individual who beat his mom regularly. When he was sixteen, Insp Dark-Knight arrived home to witness Smittie hitting his mother.

86 En uh, toe ek een dag by die huis kom toe sien ek Oom Smittie slaan my ma. Ek kan net onthou dat ek het hom aangerand in so 'n mate dat - ek was daai tyd so sestien gewees - fyftien, sestien - in so 'n mate dat die ambulans hom moes kom haal. Ons het hom nooit weer daarna gesien nie. Hy't nooit weer terug gekom nie - hy het nie sy klere kom haal nie - hy het net verdwyn.

(And one day when I got home I saw Uncle Smittie hitting my mom. I can only remember that I attacked him – I was about sixteen then, fifteen, sixteen to such an extent that the ambulance had to come and fetch him. We never saw him again after that. He never came back – he never came to fetch his clothes, he just disappeared.)

It was after this incident that Insp Dark-Knight first ran away from home, taking two friends with him. They were later caught in B., and spent two months in jail waiting for permission to be flown down to the Cape again. A male friend of Insp Dark-Knight's mother, whom he describes as “almost an older brother to me” met him at the station, getting him bathed and dressed, ensuring that his hair was cut, and generally taking him “under his wings” (line 96). It was decided that he should be sent to a boarding school in C., but it was only two days before he got himself into trouble with one of the other boys there. He

befriended a boy there who lived on a farm, who took Insp Dark-Knight home with him at holiday times. During his holidays there, he learned what it is like to grow up on a farm, raising and slaughtering sheep, and obtained what he referred to as a “*measure of peace*” (line 106).

In Standard Eight, Insp Dark-Knight left school and went into the Prison Services. After completing a stint in the college, he was posted to W. as a warder, for the first time confronted with the spectre of death through his work in the galgkamer (*hanging room*). He was one of the last to be present for a hanging before the death penalty was removed. He admitted that at that time he was exceptionally strong – he never felt sorry for the people condemned to die.

111 Dit is asof ek ’n tipe van ’n satisfaksie daaruit gekry het as iemand seergekry het want ek het basies geen gevoel gehad vir iemand of iets nie.

(It’s as though I got a type of satisfaction when someone was hurt because I had basically no feeling for anyone or anything.)

Yet even in the midst of this satisfaction, he realised that it was not meant for him. He craved something more, something different, and something more dangerous. He was desperate to prove himself, because “*at school I was nothing, my childhood I was nothing, I never even had any friends*” (line 125). From the Prison Services he went to the South African Police (as it was at that time).

After a certain amount of training in the Police College, he was posted to M., where recruiters for the special forces asked the new recruits if there were any who would be interested in joining a unit that would operate in Ovamboland – a Koevoet Unit. The unit was relatively young and the mission was described to him as “*hunting terrorists and then eliminating them*” (line 134). Insp Dark-Knight immediately felt that if he were to do that, he

would gain the satisfaction he was so earnestly seeking because then he would be “*hunting something*” (line 136).

A rigorous training programme followed, during which the Task Force and other high-up people from the police put the new recruits through their paces. “*They tried to break you*” (line 147). Going for days without food, the youngsters were made to carry heavy rucksacks filled with mortars, through forest and desert, “*without end*” (line 152), it seemed. At the end of the training, of the two hundred men that applied, seven were deemed fit to be trained into specialised killing machines that were required. Posted to a unit deep in South West Africa (now Namibia), Insp Dark-Knight was involved in several “*contacts*” (line 159), ranging across the border into Angola. The mission was straightforward – they were to “*search and destroy*” (line 165) the enemy. In stints of between four days and four weeks, the fifteen-man unit would cross the border in their Casspirs (armoured personnel carriers), eating what was in their packs within days and then scrounging for food where they could find it. The landscape was as harsh and unforgiving as the men sent into it. “*If we found a leguaan (big lizard) then we caught it and ate it because it was the only meat there was*” (line 168). With the use of what he termed “*tame terrorists*” (line 162), they would hunt down the groups of guerrillas operating in that area. “*There were many times that we caught people, and you had your ways of getting information out of them...I saw it happen often, how people were eliminated, how they were questioned*” (line 177). He described the feelings it evoked in the following excerpts:

182 Op daai stadium (.) van dit was orders gewees wat ons op gewerk het maar baie van dit was op jou eie toedoen gewees. Jy het daardie verskriklike mag in jou hande deurdat jy kan maak en breek soos jy wil en basies word daar nie eintlik vrae gevra nie. En waneer dit kom in ’n bos oorlog dan word daar nie “freebies” uitgedeel nie - dit is of jy of ek en as jy nie vinniger is as ek is nie, ongelukkig dan is dit maar jou kans.

(At that stage it is partly orders that we were working on, but lots of it was of your own volition. You had that terrible power in your hands in that you could make and break as you wanted and basically there were no questions

asked. And when it comes to a bush war, there are no freebies given out – it’s either you or me and if you are not faster than I am, unfortunately it’s your turn.)

- 225 Jy kan nie sag wees daar nie, Kerry. Jy kan nie vir die mense sê luister jy’s jammer oor hulle nie. Jy kan nie op een plek gaan sit en jouself bejammer of (.3) en jy het ook nie mense met wie jy kan praat nie want hulle sal jou nie verstaan nie. Dit is(.) Hulle sal jou skop en sê vir jou staan op en lat jy jou goed vat en verder baklei. Daar is nie plek vir (.) mense met sagtheid nie - daar’s nie “room for error” nie. Want as jy ’n fout maak dan kan dit die lewe van jou kollega kos. Dit kan die lewe kos van jou mense op die Casspir. (.) Een klein foutjie kan baie mense se lewens kos.

(You can’t be soft there, Kerry. You can’t say to the people you are sorry for them. You can’t go and sit in one place and feel sorry for yourself, and you also don’t have people with whom you can speak because they will not understand you. It’s- They would kick you and say to you “Stand up” and make you take your stuff and fight on. There is no place for people with softness – there’s no room for error. Because if you make a mistake then it can cost the life of your colleague. It can cost the lives of your people on the Casspir. One small error can cost many people their lives.)

- 240 (.2) Ons was hard gewees - ek wil sê somtyds was ons moordadig gewees. Jy raak later soos wat ek later geraak het (1.2) dit was lekker gewees om bloed oor jou hande te voel - die taaiheid van die bloed, die warmte daarvan. Dit het vir jou ’n tipe van ’n satisfaksie gegee. En daai satisfaksie het saam met my vir ’n lang tyd geloop.

(We were hard – I would say sometimes we were murderous. You become like what I later became. It was great to feel blood on your hands – the stickiness of the blood, the warmth of it. It gave you a type of satisfaction. And that satisfaction stayed with me for a long time.)

246 *Jy voel so sterk*. Dit gee tipe van 'n rustigheid. Jy voel magtig, jy voel (.2) ek weet nie hoe om dit vir jou te sê nie - dit was lekker gewees. As jy (3.4) {shakes head} dit maak van jou 'n FOKKEN VARK. Dis wat dit is. Op die ou einde van die dag maak dit 'n vark van jou. Op daai stadium het ek dit nie besef nie.

(You feel so strong. It gives a type of peace. You feel powerful; I don't know how to say it – it was great. If you - it makes you into a fucking pig! That's what it is. At the end of the day it makes a pig of you. At that stage I did not realise it.)

252 O dit was lekker gewees. Dit is so geweldig (.) ek kannie vir jou verduidelik nie maar dit is .HHH die gevoel wat jy oor jou kry is is is 'n verskriklike krag (.) dis (.) lekker. Dit was lekker gewees. Ek het dit geniet. Maar daai geniet het my later gevang.

(Oh it was great! It is so immense I can't explain it to you but it is. The feeling you get over you is a terrifying power – it's great. It was great. I enjoyed it. But that enjoyment later caught up with me.)

Insp Dark-Knight built up strong emotional bonds with the Ovambo people that worked with the unit as trackers, recalling fond memories of one in particular, a man he called “Oupa” (grandfather), a man who later saved his life by pushing him to the ground milliseconds before the air around his head exploded with the noise of enemy bullet-fire. The unit was responsible for the deaths of many of the guerrillas. *“I sometimes wonder what willpower those people had to fight against us with their rubbish firearms, running in between us in the huge Casspirs,”* (line 211) he said.

After the time spent on the border, Insp Dark-Knight headed back to the Cape where he was assigned to the Riot Unit. He freely admits *“I still did not feel fulfilled. I felt that I needed to hunt more. I needed to emerge, I needed to persevere”* (line 257). He admits that it

was the biggest mistake of his life: “*Ovambo land was difficult, but the Riot Unit was (.)*” (line 261) “*I did not see riots there, Kerry, I saw murder*” (line 263).

It was the time during the last riots in the townships, when people were hunted in the streets and shot down like animals.

264 Selfs al het die mense daai tyd gedink dit was reg gewees en ons doen wat ons moes, want dis vir ons gesê om dit te doen (.) hulle (.) ons (.) hhh haai {shaking head} (.) die manier wat mense geskiet was (.4) dit was net nie regverdig nie. En tog ek was deel daarvan gewees.

(Even though the people at that time thought it was right, that we were doing what we had to – the way that people were shot – it wasn't fair. And yet I was still a part of it.)

What could it do to a person, I wondered, to know that you are a policeman, sworn to protect and give succour to the needy and helpless, and then to betray them in such a way? You are simply a coward, Insp Dark-Knight postulated – there is no name for a person like that. But in the midst of a crowd who believe one way is right, you are a fool to stand up and say you believe they are wrong. So you bite your tongue and do what you are told.

It was at this stage in his life that the accident happened, a defining moment that would start to colour the rest of Insp Dark-Knight's life. Barrelling down L. road in a lumbering Casspir, he was aware that a police van had pulled into the road in front of him. Thinking to go around the van he pulled out to the one side, when a utility vehicle pulled in front of him seemingly out of nowhere, and though he tried to avoid collision, it was too late. He described how the people on the back of the vehicle were tossed into the air like dolls. The Casspir was thrown onto its side, yet he managed to jump out of the vehicle and rush towards the bodies, little realising at the time that they were only children. The first two that he came across were dead already, distorted beyond recognition. The third, a small blond

child, he tried to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, the blood on the child getting in his mouth. “And was that when you started feeling?” I asked.

311 Nee, ek was nog steeds (.5) ek het nog steeds basies geen gevoel gehad nie. Ek kan onthou ek het die bloed van my mond afgevee, maar ek het *geen gevoel gehad nie*. Ek het nie simpatie gehad nie. Ek het nie (.) ek het nie jammer gevoel nie. Want dit was deel van my werk, dit het gebeur. Ek was so hard gewees dat ek nog in daai selle Casspir ingeklim het direk daarna en teruggery het.

(No, I was still... I still had basically no feelings. I can remember that I wiped the blood from my mouth, but I had no feelings. Because it was part of my work, it happened. I was so hard that I climbed back into that same Casspir directly afterwards and drove back.)

After this scene, when he was transferred to T. Station, Insp Dark-Knight became obsessed with serious accident scenes. When calls came in over the radio he would hurry to the scene “*like one possessed*” (line 328), his obsession becoming so severe that at one point, his friend, Insp Faithful, found him at a scene with blood on his hands. He was rubbing it into his hands as though washing them free of some taint. He told Insp Faithful at the time that if he ever revealed what he had seen to anyone, the SAPS would become a place too small to hide him. Surprisingly, they remain friends to this day. But he could just not get enough of the gore – he was alone on the scene of two bus accidents, one with 74 injured people, adults and children, though he could not say why he felt the need to be there. “*I felt a type of pleasure, but also as though you are in control of something*” (line 335). It caught up with him all of a sudden, on a scene where he held a dead baby in his arms, and one of his colleagues tried to take the child away from him. The colleague was unable to prise the body out of his grip. It was then that Insp Dark-Knight started to work inside, doing office jobs, withdrawing from the scenes of crimes and accidents, never attending police functions and rather choosing to complete a field-training course in order to enable him to train others. But he still could not stave off the dreams that started at around this time. The scenes he had witnessed started eating away at him, although he insists he was still strong. During all of

this time, he never once went to see anyone for his problems, and was never referred by the police for counselling or debriefing of any kind after the scenes he had witnessed. His marriage was ruined, he felt alone, and without friends. He found himself wondering what to talk about with normal people. He often had thoughts of committing suicide.

370 {looking down at hands} Vir myself skiet, Kerry. Jy weet ek gaan my skiet een of ander tyd. Ek weet dit. Al hierdie goed is *fokkol* {throwing away gesture with hands} (.)

(To shoot myself, Kerry. You know I will shoot myself at some or other time. I know it. All of this is just fuck all.)

More worryingly, he seemed intent on not going alone: “*Today I am alone. Like I wish that I could die. But I will not die alone*” (line 379).

450 En partykeer voel dit of (1.3) jy (.) almal net saam met jou wil vat. Jy’s somtyds selfsugtig. In die begin het ek ’n sterk gevoel gehad dat (.4) as ek iets gaan doen gaan ek nie alleen gaan nie. My familie is myne (gesturing to self in possession). Dis nie iemand anders se gesin nie. Ek sal dit nie toelaat dat iemand anders na hulle kyk nie. Maar dit voel in die laaste tyd asof dit stadig vervaag en hoe meer mense - baie mense sê vir my ek is selfsugtig, en dit druk my al meer en meer weg alleen - altyd asof ek alleen staan. En (.5) daar’s niemand om jou nie. Jy’s stoksiel alleen.

(And sometimes it feels as though you just want to take everyone with you. You are sometimes selfish. In the beginning I had this strong feeling that if I was going to do anything then I would not be going alone. My family is mine – it’s not someone else’s family. I would not allow it that someone else would look after them. But recently it feels as though it is slowly growing less clear, and the more people say to me that I am selfish, the more it pushes me away – always as though I am standing alone. And there’s no one around you. You are absolutely alone.)

The incidents of aggression towards others increased as Insp Dark-Knight struggled to control his temper. At one time he viciously attacked three people; at another, he hit a man at the hardware shop. Twice he attacked his wife, even though he says he would never hit a woman. A case was laid against him for *crimen injuria*, though he swears to his innocence in the matter. At the Departmental hearing, he was heard to swear that he would fetch his firearms and kill the captain that was responsible for the prosecution. His official and private weapons were taken away from him; he was placed in the Clinic for treatment and underwent six bouts of shock therapy. Through all of this, he never received support from the organisation, saying that:

443 Tot en met my siekte het ek nie juis besef (1.2) {agitated hand rubbing} maar alles wat (.) hulle is vir soveel verantwoordelik en jy sal verwag na soveel jare se diens dat jy ten minste 'n bietjie beter diens sal terugkry, of mense wat sal belangstel in jou, of 'n organisasie wat sal belangstel. Maar jy beteken niks nie. Absoluut niks nie.

(Up to the point of my sickness, I did not realise but they are responsible for so much, and you would expect that after so many years service that you at least would get a bit of a better service back, or people that take an interest in you, or an organisation that cares. But you mean nothing. Absolutely nothing.)

His coping mechanisms included alcohol and smoking (“*cigarettes and others*”), swearing, and going out with his brother on the motorbike to escape from reality for a time. Diabetes became a way of life for him, his feet burning with the pain of it, three injections per day becoming his reality to face for the rest of his life. Socially his marriage was destroyed, his children afraid of him, and his friends fallen by the wayside.

Close to the end of our interaction, he brought out the photographs (please refer to Appendix C for a description and Insp Dark-Knight’s account of each). For a long time, I debated with myself whether to include them in this thesis, and for sheer sensationalism, they

would have been effective. But the disturbing nature of the images stayed with me long after the actual photographs had passed from my sight. My mind was filled with the horrors of suicides still hanging from their belts, tongues protruding from dead mouths; children beaten by family members until they were unrecognisable; bodies thrown like dismembered dolls in front of trains; “terrorists” lined up in the desert sun, their still open eyes staring into a sky they would never again see; young men smiling towards the camera as they surveyed their handiwork. The actual photographs were too horrifying in their brutality for me to include, I realised (although I have described and categorised them and included them with Insp Dark-Knight’s descriptions of them in Appendix C at the end of the dissertation).

When Insp Dark-Knight first presented them to me, I have to admit thoughts unworthy of an impartial interviewer flashed through my head. I wondered to myself, what kind of person surrounds themselves with images of such a disturbing nature, almost like trophies of some pompous game hunter, heads to hang on a wall. Insp Dark-Knight had repeatedly referred to his mercenary activities against the guerrillas on the border and in South West Africa as “kills”, bringing to mind the idea of the conceited game hunter, foot on carcass, high-powered rifle in hand, smiling towards a camera. And here was the proof – his “kills” made real, solidified, to be looked at, mulled over, and handled again and again. I was distressed by the thought that after his activities, he thought to go and fetch his camera, or perhaps even had it ready, for that moment when he could point it at the scene and forever preserve the horror with the click of a button. And then, incongruously, nestled amongst the blood and gore, the death and destruction, there was an innocuous picture of Insp Dark-Knight and his wife, in happier times. They are sitting at a table, at a wedding perhaps, or some other function. He has his hand on hers on the table; she is smiling into his eyes. A picture of the man Before. Before the wars with himself and others. Before the heartache and disappointment. Before the betrayal.

577 Res: Why did you take these photos?

578 Insp Dark-Knight: Ek was op ’n tyd lief vir fotos neem - ek het ’n groot tas gehad wat ek net fotos gevat het. Die kamera het orals saam met my gegaan. En veral met die Onluste Eenheid het ek veral vir die Burger fotograaf die

spools gekry en ek het vir hom die fotos geneem. Dan het ek die spools vir hulle gegee dan het hulle dit ontwikkel. Dan het ek ook van die fotos gekry en ek het uitgepick wat ek wil hê.

(At one time I liked taking photos – I had a large suitcase full of photos that I had taken. The camera went everywhere with me. Especially with the Riot Unit I got the spools for the Burger photographer and I took the photos for him. Then I gave them to them and they developed them. Then I also got given some of the photos and I picked out those I wanted to keep.)

After reams of sickeningly dreadful photographs, I could not contain myself. “What does it do to you to see these sorts of photos?” I asked.

619 En ek het (.) ek wil so graag (.) somtyds voel ek asof jy net wil... gaan dit help as jy om verskoning kan vra? Gaan dit help as jy iemand kan sê jy’s jammer?

(And I – I so wanted to – sometimes I feel that I just want to – would it help if I asked for forgiveness? Would it help if you could tell someone that you are sorry?)

621 Res: It’s almost too big to apologise for?

622 Insp Dark-Knight Jy kannie. Jy kannie. Ek weet nie hoe kan jy enigsins vergifnis kry vir iets soos daai wat gedoen is nie. En of ek vir jou gemoedsrus kan gee nie weet ek ook nie. Of dit my gaan laat beter voel weet ek ook nie. Maar dit jaag my. Dis goed wat my aande pla. Goed van Ovamboland wat my in die nagte wakker maak - daai drome wat ek kry. Dit vreet vir my op. Dit vreet my op. (.2) Ek kannie (.2) hierdie is maar net ’n klein vensterjie wat ek oopmaak daarso.

(You can’t. You can’t. I don’t know how you can ask for forgiveness for something like that. And if it would give you peace of mind I also don’t know. If it would make me feel better I also don’t know. But it haunts me. It’s stuff that plagues me at night. Things from Ovamboland that wake me in the night

– those dreams that I get. It's eating me up. It's eating me up, I can't. This is just a small window that I have opened.)

The Trusty Friend: The Account of Insp Faithful

Insp Faithful is familiar in that he is the stereotypical idea one has of a policeman. Big, bluff and hearty, he has shoulders that have probably seen their fair share of tears and have been broad enough to bear them all. His eyes are kind, yet deep in them there is a hint of wariness underlying the smile - the policeman's retreat into assumed nonchalance in the face of a threat such as a mental health professional like myself. For those so long in the police, it has been a matter of "don't trust, don't tell, cowboys don't cry". From under his lowered brows, he listens to my introductory patter about violence at work and how it relates to his colleague and friend, Insp Dark-Knight. But eventually his concern for Insp Dark-Knight as his friend wins out over his distrust of me.

He begins with a description of a man I have not met, a "jovial, jolly person" (line 29) always prepared to help, actively enjoying how he could change others' lives for the better. This was Insp Dark-Knight before the case that "broke him" (line 35). He has had to come to terms with a friend who now does everything in slow motion, who forgets that he is there when he goes to visit and wanders off to do other things. It is not long into the interview before the bitterness surfaces. "You worked for the police as well?" I ask. He nods in the affirmative. Sixteen years, he adds with emphasis. He now runs a small motorbike shop that is starting to make ends meet. A torrent of invective against the police bursts forth - grievances stored and nurtured over every second of those sixteen years: the organisation is collapsing; the officers don't know what they want or how to do it; personal friends of his have been shot and killed in the line of duty; his ten year service medal is still absent even though it is six years past the time when he should have received it; and so on. The litany is familiar. Like stories that the elders once used to pass around the campfires, it is a rote that is learned by every White policeman in the SAPS - being passed over for promotions while others far less worthy are promoted, "people they are busy investigating for rape and bribery and stuff like that" (line 94), no recognition for work above and beyond the call of duty, no

opportunities for a White man, no resources. Yet in spite of all this, Insp Faithful misses the life of a policeman. There is a nostalgia that creeps into his voice as he admits “you know I enjoyed the work tremendously – there’s a lot about it that I miss dearly. I never wanted to be anything else” (line 109). He is quick to point out that there is a sinister note to that enjoyment though.

132 It’s strange – when you’re young, you can take the punch um you get older and older, and things start catching up with you. Um. (.) As I’m sitting here I know that there’s a lot of things that I did and it’s it’s going to catch up - at this point it hasn’t, *but it’s going to catch up*.

I get the impression of a game of Russian roulette, the hair trigger on the revolver set to go off at a moment’s notice, except there is not only one bullet in the gun’s barrel. There are five. Not good odds, I think to myself.

Insp Dark-Knight’s involvement in Koevoet was the start, reckons Insp Faithful. During their drunken bouts together, Insp Dark-Knight’s old home movies would be brought out for viewing, those films Insp Dark-Knight shot while on the other side of the border. So it’s not just photos, I reflect. “Pretty gruesome stuff” (line 146), Insp Faithful sheepishly admits. But he feels he has insight into why those guys in the unit acted the way they did.

148 Sitting back its pretty easy for a person {opens hands outwards}, >now if you’re sitting in an office under these circumstances to look at it and say “That’s atrocious, it’s awful”< Um:m Being there (.2) it’s it’s something else (.) um (.) well I would take it from basically my point of view as well. You sit you’re in this situation you saw what this person did um (.) the whole chase to finally get hold of this guy {opens hands out to side} you get hold of him um it’s a (.) it’s a physical fight {hands balled into fists} with this person um::m and then ja you turn around and you take out your frustrations on him=you

want to make him basically feel the same (.) fear and anxiety that he caused in those people.

186 I think that guilt is maybe the biggest thing. (.4) So that sets in and it's actually I mean but it's also not nice seeing (.) guys that you know, friends that you know he's cuffed that his hands were handcuffed behind his back his own cuffs and he was shot with his own pistol=he's lying there on the beach or lying in the ditch - that gets to you. And when you get that guy, yes, you want to make him pay. Cause, I mean, you feel something here {hands to heart} You want to make him pay. It's as simple as that.

According to Insp Faithful, in order to assuage the guilt he felt from his participation in these acts, Insp Dark-Knight took the younger recruits under his wing. He was a mentor, a good teacher, showing them the ropes, how to deal with people and “basically what it is to be a policeman” (line 211). It was a way of “trying to redeem himself you know just to say, ‘I did these things, but look what I am doing now’” (line 213). His ability to deal with those who were emotionally volatile was an especially valuable skill that he conveyed to his group. The men he trained were highly sought after, with shift commanders fighting to get them on their shifts. “They knew the work, they knew their place, they knew how the whole system operated and what was expected of them” (line 319). Insp Dark-Knight imparted to them the life-skills necessary for coping in the police, ironically, since he himself was not coping.

In spite of Insp Dark-Knight's positive attempts to get over his guilt, his feelings started to surface, especially in those social situations organised by the police, where he had a chance to have a few drinks. Stories of his time in Koevoet would surface, and Insp Faithful could see that it was bothering Insp Dark-Knight, “eating at him” (line 353). The group cohesion that exists between all policemen forms an instant bond between colleagues, who understand the situations others describe simply by virtue of having been in similar circumstances themselves. Even then, the path to self-disclosure is unquestionably smoothed with the liberal application of alcohol.

381 you gonna have this kind of group cohesion cause they have the same- You feel you are amongst equals basically the guys all know what you're talking about. Now you get to (.4) for arguments sake my parents, *>my dad was in the private sector his entire life<*. Then you say, ">this guy got me so worked up I sommer slapped him one< ” and they'll say “you can't do that, that's assault!” Don't judge me - that's not why I am getting it out

Although Insp Faithful sees these social situations involving alcohol and “braais” (barbeques) in the police as a vital coping mechanism, he admits the effect is not universally applicable to “normal people” (line 359), who have no insight into what the policemen experience. The ever-widening gap between the two worlds of the police and civilians is what Insp Faithful blames for the downward spiral of Insp Dark-Knight's relationships and marriage.

429 I think she knows a little bit but I don't really think she knows all of it. I don't think he will ever tell her everything. Um:m I mean, he won't even tell me everything. He will sit- you know- somebody else that was in Koevoet, they will sit and they will relate. But um I mean he would tell me a bit more than he would tell her, cause I can more or les:s- But I think she's fed up with it and ja and it's cause it's a different world I don't really think she understands what he is going through.

Insp Dark-Knight's position is not so difficult to understand, Insp Faithful thinks, if you imagine that you have been isolated on the border for a year, no contact with anyone, where you are a law unto yourself, and then to return to a civilisation filled with the hustle and bustle of people, demands and busyness.

419 And ja, I mean he also put her though a tough time but you know that was also in the process of him trying to (.3) change gears into a >totally different environment and different stresses and different problems< uh (.) I mean up

there, if you've got a problem, >you chase a guy and he shoots you, you shoot back and YOU kill him<. Here you can't do that so (.5)

Over time, Insp Dark-Knight's behaviour became more erratic: he would race into the middle of things seemingly without care for his own safety; his motto "ag no, it's a good day to die" (line 222). As things started catching up on him, he began isolating himself more, working inside more, distancing himself from people. At least, qualifies Insp Faithful, from those people that were alive.

229 he started living for accident scenes. BLOOD AND GUTS. Ja one day - I mean I was still busy and he was I mean he was in a world of his own (.) you know he touched of the blood and >he was smelling it and rubbing it on his fingers<. He was out of it.

As a close friend, Insp Faithful was understandably worried about Insp Dark-Knight. Even though he was surrounded by people who cared for and about him, he was pushing them away, creating the façade of a grumpy old man unwilling to interact with anyone. Met by a constant barrage of hostility from Insp Dark-Knight, even his most ardent supporters began to fade away.

250 [They laugh it off]. Um They don't understand it. You know they they *"Ag he's bedonderd [*insane*]. Hy's bossies"* [*crazy*] uh:h they make a joke of it. (.2) I think that deep down (.) they realise that the >same thing can happen to them and they don't wanna face it<, so they laugh it off they make a joke of it they {shrugs}

At present, isolated from all who care about him and feeling as though he has no hope, Insp Dark-Knight's risk for taking his own life is high, Insp Faithful believes. He

doesn't need a weapon to do it. "A piece of pipe and a nail" (line 522) is all it would take for one as resourceful as Insp Dark-Knight. His family is also at risk, he mentions.

726 You know if he sits and if in his mind he doesn't see a future for his family without him, then he's going to sit and argue eventually and say but it's gonna be better if they also go. (2.3) Ja it's- .hhhh To try and get behind the reasoning of a person that is bent on suicide - it's just difficult and not easy to understand for one that's not there. Um:m (1.1) But I mean ja that's the reasoning you get from these people is that there is not going to be a future for my family and without me they are not going to make it. You get raised and you grow up with this whole thing that the man is the head of the household and you're supposed to care for your family, provide for their needs, now if you're not there, who is going to do that? It's also upbringing that plays a big role in that decision. Um but I mean the fact that women- That's changed a lot, women also have professional careers and they can also provide for their families, but you know it still it's a era of um (.) yes his wife has got a career of her own and his daughter has got a good job and ja they will be- (.) but it's in his mind - what he believes, that's that's *going to be the clincher*.

Insp Faithful's interview reveals an ominous quality to our men in blue, the seedy underbelly of the great organisation that few know about. Coping mechanisms are far from positive, including drinking heavily on duty, aggression, suicidal thoughts, and black humour, all of which are much more common amongst the general population of police officers than is widely publicised.

452 (Absolutely). And DRINKING that's definitely the most popular! Ja It's actually not something to laugh about but I mean, what else? We *used to drink on duty something terrible*. But that was also a way of.....and I mean your commanding officers, (.2) they knew you had in a shot or two. Um but they didn't really do anything about it. (.) um Cause going out, maybe just

drinking those one or two brandies and coke just got you (.3) you weren't you weren't drunk you were (.2) >ok, technically speaking under the influence<, but it< just got you> to the point where you could operate efficiently you know

492 Jeez I was aggressive. I was on a knife's edge. Um You couldn't talk to me and I'd be down your throat. Um I'd get physically violent. Don't even think about prodding me with a finger. I'd really climb into you.

509 And the thing is um (1.2) I mean you sit huh ja I sat many a night you sit two o'clock three o'clock in the morning, and you sit with a (mimes holding gun)...and I mean, ja, I looked down the barrel of my service pistol. You see that bullet down there. >You think, "Jeez, I won't even hear that shot go off< - it's it's INSTANT. Um And ja, I sat like that a couple of times. And you think and you think. And you get up in the morning and you try to think of reasons to go to work. You try to think, ok what is going to make today worth MY while to actually get up out of this bed and not just >end it all<. You start looking for reasons not to commit suicide.

636 you are (1.2) a disposable weapon and >we are going to use you as such<. And if you die, we are going to say ag ja you know we are sorry, and we will fold the flag and give it to your parents, and uh after that we are all going to go and sit in the pub and have a few shots and laugh at this how stupid he was to get shot in the first place. That's basically what happens. Uh I mean I've seen it - guys that march all sombre faces, right into the pub, after a couple of shots - "ja he was an idiot to get shot."

Amongst these coping methods are the bizarre fantasies of what the policemen would like to do to those they see as being responsible for all the heartache and trouble – the

commissioners and top-dogs of the police organisation. The training they are exposed to makes them formidable weapons, Insp Faithful feels.

571 It's going to take one guy that's been pushed too far (2.1) to one day walk in to a meeting or to go and sit outside his house, then once again it's going to be this big issue, and the real reason for it is *never going to come out*. It's going to be that this guy was a whack-job, and that's it. But I mean P has got his body-guards, these two huge okes - they look like Nigerians, but I mean let's face it - I know what I want to do - they don't know what I want to do. Um (3.3) .hhh Having been trained the way I have been trained, um having done what I've done for so long, knowing the ins and outs - for me to walk into any place - I mean I mos know how it works. Nobody's going to suspect me of anything. I am going to walk in and know my way around inside the police structure. I can get any information I want, I can get anyone I want. It It's a joke. They think they are untouchable but it's a joke.

But these methods of coping are justifiable, after all, as he says,

367 You can't stand there and break down - you got to do the job<. So you you gotta deal with it. Um (.) You stand at an accident scene where the person is basically burning to death in a car because they're trapped in the car and the fire brigade is coming you gotta take it you gotta to deal with it. You can't break down and cry, you gotta deal with it at that point. And then later on, obviously - you bury it so deep, and later on, after a couple of drinks, then it comes out and you can start talking about it.

Positive coping methods are viewed with deep suspicion by any dyed-in-the-wool policeman worth his salt. Any attempt at seeking professional help is seen as a sign of weakness by the others, having far-reaching consequences for promotions and future reputations.

256 the problem is (.2) things might have changed now, but try and get things through to the guys because way back if you went to see someone, it went on your file, it was there. If you tried to put in for promotion, “oh no, you are flaky”. Boef that’s it shot down=The people used to discuss you at braais and in bars and stuff as “Hey jy’s daai bedonderde ou” not necessarily as a sign of weakness but you knew that nothing was said in confidence=It came out (.) and it was made a joke of and you were the laughing stock of the entire station, and you know basically everyone around you and that is why the guys (.) {shakes head}.

Yet it is the most powerful concept for a policeman to understand, Insp Faithful says – that to ask for and accept help is not a sign of weakness. He found that a simple course on hostage negotiation helped him to come to terms with some of the things he was bottling up inside. But not all of them.

782 The first thing they start off with is (.) I mean it’s very personal, the whole thing. But they they they force you basically to (.) dig inside yourself and face yourself basically and then the rest of the course now goes on. Um and (.) It’s easy to say but listen do some introspection” but it sounds a lot easier that it actually is. To sit and accept things about yourself I think is the most difficult thing to do. And then of course a lot of things I just buried – I don’t think about at all. But that’s what I am afraid of because I know at some point in time that’s - (.) and I just hope that the day it does ja I’m going to be in a position to be able to deal with it all.

The deadly game of Russian roulette is being played out for Insp Faithful too, I muse. In the silence of the room, I can almost hear the barrel of the gun turning. And will it be your turn next, Insp Faithful, I wonder? He describes it as follows:

793 The best description I got was from an old Ovambo - he was actually in Koevoet for many years, and* we were in Walvis bay - I actually did border duty there*. And he told me, um (.) “It it you your past, the things that you have done, is like a dog that walks behind you, patiently, till one day when it jumps up and it will bite you in your throat. But it will walk there quietly in your shadow for many, many years till the right time. And my dog’s walking - it’s there.

I am almost afraid to ask. “And Insp Dark-Knight’s dog?” I finally enquire.

“I think it’s bitten him” (line 801), he says. Then the big, bluff and hearty policeman breaks down in tears, sobbing as though his heart will break.

From the Mouths of Babes: The Story of Little Miss Maturity

On the telephone, Little Miss Maturity comes across as everything an attractive young woman at the start of her career and life should be. She is confident and outgoing, not waiting for my call, but rather phoning me to make an appointment to see me. “I am Little Miss Maturity,” she announces, “and my dad told me to phone you.” She asks if I would rather be able to come and talk to her at her offices in a prestigious law firm in the centre of the city, where she works as a personal assistant to one of the lawyers. She is extremely busy at the moment, and my humble SAPS office is too far to travel. “Of course,” I assure her, since it is in fact Little Miss Maturity that is doing the favour here. We make an appointment for later in the day when the lawyers will have left for home, and she will be alone in the office. Her tone leads me to believe that she has things to say that she would not feel comfortable sharing with her boss.

The offices are in the older part of the city, in a street where the branches of the trees mingle across the road like lovers sharing secrets (or perhaps conspirators would be a better description, given the nature of our “clandestine” assignation). The typical Cape Dutch style house converted to a place of business confronts me as I pull up outside, the SAPS logo on

the sides of my car blazing like a yellow beacon, an affront to the peaceful neighbourhood. Everything about the place speaks of opulence, from the heavy oak door that swings open silently on its hinges as I approach, to the inlaid stained glass windows at either side of the front porch.

Little Miss Maturity, who has clearly been awaiting my arrival, is not as I imagined her from our brief telephone conversation – in my mind I had conjured a long-limbed sophisticate, cigarette clamped in hand as though surgically grafted there. Rather, she is short, curvy, with shiny dark hair cut in a serviceable bob and twinkly eyes. She gives the impression of irrepressible good humour, an effervescence that is underscored rather than overshadowed by the dark line that is her childhood.

From the first, she tells me about her loss and grief at her father's recent changes in personality and mood. It is as though a flood, held back for too long, is suddenly allowed to burst the banks of memory.

22 My dad he always has the impression – he's said it out to us straight – that we think he has some sort of illness, that we're trying to avoid him, which is NOT the case. It's just because my father – he's only changed recently – I would say the last (.) ok I've been out of school for three years now. When I was (.) I would say the last year, maybe two years of high school, his personality has just changed totally.

28 Res In what way?

29 Little Miss Maturity He's not as affectionate as he used to be. My father's the type of person that would walk up to me and hug me and tell me that he loves me – he just doesn't do that any more. He (.) um (.) and (.) ja, I just I don't (.) I can't really pinpoint it.

She is not the only one to notice the changes. Her conversation is filled with examples of how her mom and dad are not getting along, complaints that her mom is not supportive of what her dad is going through, concern about her mom's suspicions of affairs with other colleagues, all of which is hidden from Insp Dark-Knight. Her mother has chosen to punish him with her retreat into frigid silence, Little Miss Maturity believes.

120 But right now – I don't feel that I know any of them. Because my dad has just... he's just not the same person. I don't know how to explain to someone who doesn't know him as well (.) even – >cause my grandmother lives with us and his eldest sister in one of the flats< – even they, even they are saying that (.) my gran said to me about a week ago that that is not her son. And for a mother to say that about her child. I don't know if – I think it's hopeless.

“What do you think has made such a big change?” I ask. Little Miss Maturity is unsure of the exact cause – their family make a point of not discussing what is happening, but she mentions the *crimen injuria* case against her dad, wondering how such a small thing could have such a powerful effect on him.

56 And I walked into the bedroom and he was sitting on the bed crying. And I mean my father is (.) he is an emotional person but he's not the type to cry and he's not the type to (.) voice anger or um any sort of negative feelings. And for me to see my father crying – that was something (.) you know that I just couldn't deal with. And then when I asked him what happened and he told me about the court case because I didn't know about it beforehand and then everything just went downhill from there. But you know – I can't see how something like that can just change him that much, so it needs to be something that happened – you know – ages ago. >Because he doesn't talk about his past<. He also does not talk about anything that happened in the police service. At all.

She hesitantly describes what it was like growing up with a father who was involved in the macabre side of human existence on a daily basis. As a child, her involvement, although vicarious, was none the less horrifying for her distance from the source. As she talks, her eyes get a far-away look as though she has seen the scenes she describes through her own eyes, instead of merely hearing them related by her father.

67 Um (.2) I know he has told me a few times about cases that he has had, and (.) >you know it's pretty bad<. I don't know how they can switch off. How they can just- you know he would come home and especially when I was in primary school, starting for high school, he would tell my mom, "no, tonight, there was a car accident and there was like three kids in the back seat," and he would walk up to the scene and he would see the brains splattered all over. And to him it's just like, "Oh." And to me – I say to him "no don't tell me that – it upsets me." He says "Ja, but that happens every day." It's like he's become cold to violence. It doesn't affect him any more.

One occasion that struck her as particularly tragic occurred when a close colleague of her dad was killed. She mentions almost flippantly that he went out drinking that night. Yet somewhere it must have been affecting him, she admits. After drinking his sorrows away on the night of his friend's death, he came home to face recriminations from his wife.

78 and he must have just flipped, because I was in my bedroom and I just– we've got a dining room table with these big heavy chairs – you know you struggle to pick one up, and he had picked one up, and when I walked into the dining room he was holding it up in the air and my mom was cornered. And I said to him "stop", and he took it and he threw her with it. And it actually hit her. And that's when I walked to them, and he took me and I don't know what he did but he grabbed me and he threw me against the TV. And my shoulder was all bruised up and then um (.) I don't know what happened then– I know he left and he came back later that afternoon or that evening and I was actually

sleeping on the couch in the living room – I didn't want him to get close to my mom.

It was the first time that Little Miss Maturity had witnessed her father's violence firsthand. From that moment on, his cruelty was often taken out on things that could not fight back. A dog that the family had as a pet had to be given away for its own safety – Insp Dark-Knight had a habit of picking it up and hitting it around the head when he was frustrated. His bizarre death threats against the lives of the family grew to be a commonplace occurrence. More and more often, her father would say that he would kill them all.

159 Um I remember when I was in high school standard eight– that would make me about sixteen, that was when I had just had enough of his threats cause he and my mom would have an argument and he would say to us “I am going to kill you all.” Then that evening I told him, “if you ever say that to me again, I will never speak to you again,” and he actually called me on my cell phone at school just before school started and he apologised. But his apology means nothing because it happened again about a month later and he still does it – he still does it. And my mom came to me two weeks ago and she said to me that >he had said to her that he is going to slit her throat<. Heh heh What sort of a father-figure does that?

His frequent threats towards his family were often interspersed with threats of suicide.

536 But especially when he threatens us he says “ja but I'll kill myself in the process.” I don't think my dad would be the type to just kill himself. He'll want to take the rest of us with him. He won't just just kill himself. Which is (.) I know it's a bad thing to say, but, rather take my life than my sister or my mom's. Especially my little sister. But there's nothing I can do to stop it.

Her flippant and casual reference to these threats was chilling for me to observe. On more than one occasion, her laughter when discussing her own father's threats to take her life was jarring, disturbing, allowing a glimpse into a soul forced forever into the twilight zone between half woman, half child. But for Little Miss Maturity, it is just part of her daily life.

546 You know (.) it's not a matter of- it doesn't upset me as much anymore because now it's just become part of the routine - he threatens you, you threaten him back. You know? When is it going to mean...when that threat back is going to trigger him? I know I should just shut up sometimes but I just don't - that's just not the type of personality that I have.

Underlining this woman-child duality is Little Miss Maturity's sense of fear and responsibility for her little sister. "I can take care of myself," she reiterated on numerous occasions, but as a sensitive and perceptive little ten-year old girl, her sister began asking questions of various family members to find out what was wrong with her dad. Although all automatically answered "Nothing that you need to worry about" and her questions gradually stopped, Little Miss Maturity could tell that the little child was still brooding on it, taking all her dad said and did to heart.

171 They need to take into consideration that they have got a very young daughter<. I can take care of myself, and the effect that they are having on her- you can see it. She is very- my sister is a very frightened little child in-compared to the way that she used to be.

Little Miss Maturity, forthright and practical, decided to take matters into her own hands. Knowing that her sister was traumatised by the constant fighting and tension in the household, Little Miss Maturity gave her a much-used set of earphones and a radio to listen to so that she would not have to hear the raised voices and threats.

175 cause that's what I used to do when I was younger when they would fight – I'd put my earphones on, so I never heard it. So that's why I'm- When I was in high school I never heard all of their arguments because as soon as they used to fight I used to put my earphones on. You can even ask my father behind my back if I listen to earphones with music a lot and he'll say yes, that I do it all the time – it's because it's a habit that I acquired over the years and now you know it's just something I do because I enjoy it. Heh heh It kind of takes you away from reality.

This has led to Little Miss Maturity assuming a mother-role to her sister.

402 My little sister has latched onto me – I don't know if she kind of sees me as some kind of mother-figure, but she is always asking me to do everything, which at times gets irritating because I am twenty-two – I don't want to take care of a ten-year-old. But she does say to me you know she needs to do this for school, or she needs to do that for school because my parents just don't care. They don't realize that they have a kid.

Throughout our conversation, there is a pervading sense that Little Miss Maturity is the one ultimately responsible for the family's safety – an arduous position for a girl of her tender years. With her incredible feeling of vulnerability on the one hand, and her tough, no-nonsense approach on the other, it is a curious juxtaposition.

661 Cause I remember when he was just booked at the clinic the first time – my mom wasn't there and I had to actually hand the firearms over myself because I was the only one. I think I actually took the safe key off of him when he got into that deep depression because these threats have happened so many times before, I have never seen him like this you know? What if he is going to kill my mom tonight, you know? And my sister and myself. So I did take the key and I did hide it and my mom didn't even know where it was and then my

mom called me and she said some captain or something is going to come and take all the firearms out of the safe. So I don't know if I gave everything to him or – wait I think I opened the safe up and he took everything out. But I do still check regularly, I do open it up – the safe key is always in a different place but I do scratch through my father's stuff to find the key and open the safe up to see what is inside – to remove it if I find something there. It's a way of protecting not only myself but the rest of my family. And um (.) you know maybe people who are in a state of mind like that they are capable of anything and I am not going to put anything past them. I know my dad – I know you can't say stuff like that – you can't (.) pre-judge him but (.) I am not going to leave it to chance.

Little Miss Maturity's sense of accountability for her family is accentuated by the fact that her mother does not do anything to rectify the situation. In witnessed conversations to friends, her mother has often remarked that if her husband raises his hand to her again she will leave. Yet Little Miss Maturity views this with scepticism, thinking “you know he has done that and you've just let it slide” (line 208).

209 When is it going to happen again? Because if you allow once it's going to happen again cause now you've shown you've shown him it's ok. And I am just waiting for the day that it happens again cause then I am going to go and report him – even if he is my father but I need to take- it is my mom and it is my sister ultimately.

Yet in spite of being wise beyond her years, Little Miss Maturity admitted to knowing little of what had happened to drive her father into the downwards spiral of violence and aggression. She is aware of her dad's participation in the Koevoet Unit and blames the sights he saw there for his radical departure from the father she once knew and trusted, but all else is speculation. While she was looking for a tent to go on a camping trip once, she saw the

photos her dad had kept in the back of his closet: “bodies lying all over and peoples’ faces that were shot away” (line 231).

238 and it’s SHOCKING! Has he told you about the photos? There was one photo of an old lady – her body was burnt but she was tied with a telephone cord, and she was undressed but you could see the bones and everything and I think that’s the one that stuck with me the most as well as one of a little boy or girl that was shot between the eyes – you could see the chair was standing there and the child just fell forward onto the floor. I mean why does he keep those photos? Hehe Surely you wouldn’t want something like that in your house? I think those are- but I saw those when I was very early on in high school – that’s where I remember seeing them – I haven’t seen them recently
(.)

She credits images like these for the nightmares that drive him screaming from sleep, waking the whole household with his inarticulate cries almost every night of his life. She found the images “so unbelievably disturbing” (line 249), yet somehow, he “just manages to deal with it” (line 250). And they haven’t seen the worst of it yet, she feels. While feeling relatively calm because he has no weapon with which to kill his family at present, she uses the word “creative” in a way that is both novel and unsettling.

254 Well hhh as long as he doesn’t have a firearm or any means of killing my mom or the rest of us I am quite (.) calm but– but you know he is (.) he can heh heh he can find a way. If he really wants to he’ll find a way. He’s very creative. I know he does everything in the house. He’s the type of guy you can say you know, I want this, you know, build me a gate or something and he’ll be able to do it. That’s what he did with our house. He set up our entire front gate with electric system and everything. And that’s the type – he’s like a handy man – he can do anything he can um (.) he’ll find a way. He’ll

definitely find a way. And he'll make sure he's not alive to live through the consequences. *I don't think he'll be able to cope with that*.

Little Miss Maturity has not been unscathed by sexual abuse in her past either, though like her father, she prefers to keep this secret from everyone, including her parents.

314 my parents don't know this but I was molested when I was younger and- well
(.) I think they should know – I didn't admit it directly to my dad because his
way of asking me was “is there any way that we raised you that was wrong?”
And I said to him “No”, cause to me that is not asking me directly, so I can
bypass but- And I also lied to my mom and said to my mom “no” because I
had a cousin who was abused by the same man as I was. And he told my
parents that I was one of them as well and I just denied it because my father
would just totally lose it. And I have seen the way he has reacted to
everybody else – stuff that he reads – um but it's mostly sexual abuse that he
doesn't (.) agree with (.)

I commented that her coping mechanisms of keeping silent about what happened appeared to be remarkably similar to the silence employed by her dad, and she found it an amusing parallel.

561 Blocking it out? Heh heh I know it's a bad thing to do. Ja. That is just how a
father creates a daughter. It's a way of (.) look I have got no intention of
killing myself. I will admit that I did a few times when I was in High School –
thinking maybe I just want to end it all but I am over it, I have kind of worked
through it and I have accepted that my home environment is not my fault – it's
not my creation, it's my parents?. And to ruin my life because they couldn't
be proper parents. It's not my fault.

It is her belief that talking about the past situations in some sort of counselling session would help her father to get over it, although she admits he would be unlikely to accept help from a professional.

473 but you know back in the day, all those stubborn old men – like my dad. I am actually quite surprised he agreed to go for counselling. Because it's not – he's the type of person that would say there's nothing wrong with him. You know – “I don't need something like that”. And that he actually accepts this and went to the clinic – I thought it was actually a step forward, but in actual fact everything went downhill from there – everything is just getting worse. But I would say that counselling you know would be good. I don't know if everyone would accept it - I think females will – but the men might be more difficult to convince – because they have the attitude you know of “we're MEN, we're not supposed to be weak.”

In spite of his resistance to talking to anyone else about what he has been through, she sees Insp Dark-Knight's meaningful interactions with colleagues as being especially influential.

504 I do think so because especially to Insp Faithful because I know that he talks to Insp Faithful quite often and the things he says to him he can't ...I don't think he can say to my mom because my mom will be, you know, “Deal with it”. She doesn't understand where it's coming from. And they do and that does make a difference. I can't even help my father because that's not what it's all about. I don't know what he went through, I don't all these emotions that he has to deal with. They do – they can support him. And I think that that is what he needs the most right now.

Yet even these interactions have a down-side. Her dad has become more paranoid over time, putting passwords on everything from his computer to his cell-phone, afraid that he has no one to turn to or trust.

492 Um (.) They are very supportive, but he has also come to the point where he gets paranoid – where he says, you know, “is this person really here to support me or are they here to backstab me?” I don’t know um (.) I don’t know in what sense he says that - he is really – he is not as trusting as he used to be, my dad used to ... he had a lot of friends but ... now they are few and far between.

514 And I think that as soon as he left the police force a lot of his friends kind of *disappeared*. Because of the whole racist allegation – >it was like a negative stigma that was attached to him<. And (1.0) um (.) he’s (.) I think to him it is more (.) I think it was a bit of an eye opener for him to see that now he can see who his true friends are. But (.) I do think that that hit him hard – I think it’s (.) I don’t know if it started off there or if that’s just what put him over the edge. I think it’s more what pushed him – that’s the last nudge he needed you know just to lose it all.

“What scars have been left on this young life?” I wondered to myself. Placing myself in her shoes, I was left speculating what it must be like if each day your life was threatened, if each moment could be the last, until the moments grew so numerous that it no longer mattered anymore, that you grew accustomed to living with the spectre of death hovering like some dark and dangerous dog at your heels. Worse than changing your fear of what could happen to you in the future, it fundamentally changes *who you will be* in the future.

566 And that is why I am DEAD scared of having kids cause I am scared that I am going to end up like him. That I am going to tell my kid that I am going to kill them, which is not right, but because you hear it so much you know – from my

own parents you never know when that might happen because you have (.) seen instances where people say no, but he is exactly like his father – I don't want them to say that about me. And I have been holding off on relationships because it just terrifies me. I don't want to...I am so scared of ending up (.) with a man like my father like he is now.

The most heartbreakingly honest sentiment of all that she expressed came out close to the end of our interview. Once again I was reminded of the child she is, hidden under the poised and self-confident exterior.

615 But I do love him dearly and I'll try and support him as much as possible but .hhhh it's only up to a certain point that you can go and I think I have kind of reached the point you know where the rope is getting short. There's only so much more that I can take.

The Great Physician: The Saga of the Psychiatrist, Dr Feel-Good

The air-conditioning in the hushed office was set just to the point of chilly discomfort. In the plush office, ensconced deep in the plush chairs, no person met another's eyes and smiled. The silence was so complete that when someone inadvertently coughed, the effect on the room was as though a bomb had gone off, a collective startle response and glared furtive glances cast at the uncomfortable perpetrator. Eventually the coiffed and manicured receptionist appeared in the doorway. "The psychiatrist will see you now," she intoned, and all eyes in the room swivelled surreptitiously to watch my progress from the outer courts into the inner sanctum of his office.

Dr Feel-Good, when he met me at the door, was about half my height, a fact which immediately made us both uncomfortable. Though having worked together for many years on shared clients through the medium of the telephone, this was our first meeting.

Exchanging the pleasantries customary of such a meeting, we both made haste to sit as quickly as possible, he behind the protective shield of his large desk, me on one of the upright chairs ranged in front of him.

“It’s almost like a chandelier approach to the concept of violence and to this case and what has happened here” (line 1), I explained, as I introduced the topic and Insp Dark-Knight’s participation to him. Dr Feel-Good did not allow me to finish, instead launching straight into a monologue on the concepts of stress-related disorders, diagnostic concepts and what is being “worked on” (line 3) for inclusion into the DSM V. In short order, he covered such topics as Post Traumatic Stress disorder, Acute Stress Disorder, and Developmental PTSD, which is part of a new system of classification that is being introduced.

11 Some of these guys including Insp Dark-Knight probably comes from a background where there’s (.) dysfunctional families, substance abuse, some physical, sexual or emotional abuse. I am not saying he is - but he doesn’t sound as if he has had a very easy childhood. So obviously that already changes the way you know the personality uh evolves, the way the coping mechanisms and stress management and so on uh develop. The vulnerability to stress increases, and that’s the one factor that they show that will predispose people to PTSD that’s physical abuse in childhood, which is rife in Afrikaans families with *sortof corporal punishment and hitting children and violence in the families* and so on in certain spheres.

The other new concept he mentioned is that of complex PTSD, where a long diagnostic list starts coming to the fore: Axis I diagnoses such as depression, anxiety-related disorders; Axis II personality disorders, on the aggressive and impulsive spectrums; and concurrent substance abuse.

27 But if you go back into the history, there’s not that clear personality disorder prior to the exposures, to the traumas, and then the physical uh manifest-

complications of either the abuse or you know the effects of the treatment and so on and other metabolic problems. Look at Insp Dark-Knight with his diabetes, hypertension and lifestyle problems and so on. So that is really what they talk about when they talk about that complex PTSD – PTSD complex- those people are somehow vulnerable to start off with. And maybe they have the developmental PTSD - then they have these traumatic events - in Insp Dark-Knight’s case and other people’s cases several uh accumulated episodes of trauma. And then you know they develop probably what is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Uh uh that tends to be related to the flow of stress hormones in the brain.

He went on to describe research being done by colleagues on the effects of cortisol on the developing brain, the hippocampus and ultimately the formation of memory patterns. He delved into the minds of Israeli soldiers going into battle situations, into pre-medication in order to mitigate effects of stress, into beta-blockers and toxic reactions. “That is fascinating,” I agreed, but I was more interested in how all the research and cerebral wanderings related to the case of Insp Dark-Knight, adding “what do you think happened?” (line 61).

63 Well you see if I – I I can’t remember much about his developmental history - we didn’t go much into it, but there was so much stuff to deal with in the beginning anyway {paging through notes in file}. But I I think his problems started with Koevoet, we all know what happened there and um. Also that accident where he was actually driving the van that vehicle that killed those people. That seems to be something that got stuck in his uh memory for a long time. Uh and I think he has already had problems since then. It’s been long standing. And I think substance abuse also played a role from an early stage on in that process. Um and uh his personality – he really has - there seems to be really an antisocial profile.

Dr Feel-Good went on to describe a decidedly different Insp Dark-Knight to the one that had appeared in my office, quivering with anxiety and stress, not two days earlier. During his time in the police, it seems an entrepreneurial Insp Dark-Knight had made time for illegal activities in order to supplement his meagre income from the police. The extensive renovations and upgrades to Insp Dark-Knight's house, Dr Feel-Good contended, were courtesy of dabbling in illicit abalone smuggling, possibly other, shoddier, criminal activities. He painted a picture of a man who, prior to 1994 and the extensive changes in the South African Police Service, was able to comply happily with the orders of superiors to maim, kill and destroy, while never developing a hint of PTSD. Yet the same hardened man, unable to adjust to the socio-political changes taking place in the system from 1994, was now unable to witness much "lesser traumatic incidents" (line 87) without developing full-blown PTSD, a fact Dr Feel-Good attributed to the sense of foreshortened future, no chance for promotion, no support from superiors and the chaos of the police structure falling apart.

100 I think so for many of the people that we see, because suddenly there was a huge increase in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder being reported, treated, people being booked off work or medically boarded after 94. And what changed after 1994? The government changed. The set-up changed. The police were forced and to an extent I think lost some of it's uh lost a lot of their status and their power. And they still didn't have support. They didn't have support from their superiors and then they felt victimized. And uh that's often a reason or a trigger for the people that come to me and decompensate and sort of feel they can't carry on, is the fact that they feel they've been victimized, they don't see any chances of promotion.

White or Coloured police officers are discriminated against by their Black counterparts for having taken part in the Riot Units, as well as by the public who see them "as part of the old apartheid system" (line 112). There are lots of motives to get rid of these people, Dr Feel-Good contended, those who "don't fit into the new system, perhaps the new vision if there is one for the police force" (line 115). With their obsessive-compulsive personality structures, the old "career policemen" (line 118) can't seem to adjust to the

corruption, the lack of order, and the promotion of people that they can see are not qualified or experienced enough to take on the positions. He hastened to add:

121 Um you know and that's difficult ground that I am moving on because it then starts becoming political, but those aren't my views, it's just the perceptions of the patients just what they say.

He also mentioned that there is “lots of secondary gain” (line 127) to be had through claiming occupational inadequacy on the grounds of a negative work environment. Policemen, when given the option to retire quietly, or retrain in a different profession, feel that they will lose too much, having given their lives to the police. It makes sense for them to claim occupational inadequacy on the grounds of the severity of their medical conditions, applying instead for a medical retirement which will see them catered for, their medical aid bills covered, their salary still paid.

His discourse revealed a different side to Insp Dark-Knight, leaving me wondering if we were talking about the same man. While Insp Dark-Knight and his daughter Little Miss Maturity had mentioned that he seldom drank, Dr Feel-Good revealed a darker picture of an alcoholic abuser, with disturbed social relationships with family and colleagues, racist tendencies and an inability to adjust to a changing police system. Added to this were the personality vulnerabilities of an external locus of control which ensured that he was unable to learn from past mistakes, and definite “antisocial personality disorder” traits (line 161). Insp Dark-Knight's cruelty to his wife, new members of the police, lack of respect for other people's rights, “even animals – I think he's kicked the dog – he's killed a dog somewhere. You know it seems there was cruelty to animals as well there and it has an early onset” (line 168) seem to imply some sort of conduct disorder. There was a metabolic syndrome present too, Dr Feel-Good said, which Insp Dark-Knight used to superb effect to garner sympathy.

172 You know even that he used as part of his attempt to be seen as perhaps more impaired than he was – we sent him to an endocrinologist who made a lot of

effort to explain to him the diet and to increase his insulin because he ended up here almost in a coma one day and they had him admitted. But he wasn't really – he's not making any adjustments to his diet, lifestyle, and exercise. Uh He really is not looking well after his diabetes. So there could be various motives. Myself and the physician thought that he's you know doing it on purpose uh to actually to present himself as more impaired than he possibly is. Or adding – you know if he adds more physical problems to the emotional that will contribute to our sort of assessments of the severity of his impairment.

Quite a lot of the blame for the reactions of the policemen in these situations could be laid at the feet of the organisation. If these men were accommodated where their skills could be used, if the recurrent patterns of victimisation and unfair practices could be reduced, those practices of reverse discrimination and racial prejudice, then there might be some hope. Some type of recruitment process with a personality assessment might be helpful too.

259 there should really be a bit more of a personality assessment of a past you know sort of a almost like a background study done of recruits. And um uh you often see people that are recruited with severe personality problems or even criminal or conduct disorder things in the background you know who are not suitable – that should never have been in the police force. I've seen a couple of people that were recruited that I thought were definitely not suitable – and giving them a firearm and then letting them loose on the public. You know so maybe with the recruitment they should be stricter with their assessments. There should be some way of screening people.

The attempts that the organisation makes at “debriefing” those traumatised are problematic too, if not “dangerous” (line 285).

267 the so-called debriefing work that is being done which I often think is not being done correctly. Unfortunately it's very traumatizing. It's not dealing

with emotions and feelings but letting people graphically describe the details of the event is just reinforcing the whole process. And where people think that debriefing is actually not such a great way of dealing with it. A lot of people come to me and say “I’ve never been debriefed I’m going to sue the minister of police” and I say “Be glad you’ve never been debriefed because the way it’s done you’ll probably end up being more traumatized.”

I asked about the culture of being a policeman, the essence that seems to be passed on from one policeman to another, a resilience which can act as a buffer to protect them in some way. Dr Feel-Good mentioned that the youngsters, when starting out in the police, go through almost an initiation when they first see a dead body, or shoot someone, and it acts as a type of hardening. If in the past a policeman presented with stress or emotional problems it was frowned upon, the man involved was seen as being unable to cope, placing a burden on his fellow colleagues. Commanding officers and even people in the Human Resources departments were known to be devilishly unsympathetic to those presenting with psychiatric problems. Along with this goes the necessity for some kind of risk assessment, to decide what type of risk the person holds in terms of their own safety or that of other people and the public. This “can be seen as very manipulative” (line 356) especially in a case like that of Insp Dark-Knight where he threatened harm to both colleagues and his family. His manufacture of primitive weapons went along with this, felt Dr Feel-Good, an almost traumatic gesture which he utilised during therapy sessions to convey clearly the message of threat or harm to others or himself if he didn’t get his way. Although manipulative in the extreme, his history of violence, coupled with his instability of mood and personality profile placed him at high risk to harm either himself or another. This was put into a report, ratified by both himself and another psychiatrist, along with a recommendation in terms of his risk analysis that Insp Dark-Knight was not suitable to continue working for the police. Despite this, his medical retirement was not successful, and he was deemed fit to return to work.

388 They are never going to get him to function much better than he is at the moment and I think the risk of putting him into an operational position is just too high. I personally hope there was a mistake – that’s what I hope for- that

maybe they didn't- that there was a confusion about reports or they didn't read the correct recommendation or there was a language problem, but I can't understand how this could have happened. It beats me.

402 And then to top it all, I get a letter from the police to say that no further sick certificates from me will be accepted – thereby disqualifying me to have any opinion on any future changes in his condition – I mean, he could have a change in his condition next week which may make it necessary to book him off. So I recommended that he see another psychiatrist. If I can read this {finds paper in file and reads from it} – “Your attention is drawn to the fact this point – that when a decision is made for an employee to resume duties no further medical certificates for similar medical conditions will be accepted. This implies that the employee must resume duties on a stipulated date unless different clinical symptoms emerge.”

The implication of this was that if Insp Dark-Knight was again booked off sick for a similar psychiatric condition, such as a re-occurrence of the PTSD symptoms, the letter of absence would not be accepted. Dr Feel-Good felt that it might be because the police structure does not trust the treating psychiatrist's clinical judgement, or else they do not agree with it, even though two of their own psychiatrists previously confirmed the findings and made the same recommendations. All of this had led to Insp Dark-Knight's severe lack of future vision. I enquired further of the doctor what the prognosis for the future would be. He was not encouraging.

448 Yes yes- But he's probably going to, if not you know take his own life, then his lifestyle is probably going to kill him. So there's a death wish – he's not doing too well.

More worryingly, Dr Feel-Good felt that more than just Insp Dark-Knight's life was at risk. His family too had a role to play. His wife would never have the courage to leave

him because of the direct threat that Insp Dark-Knight had made to kill her if she left him. Although slightly calmer than before, he didn't allow her any space, ensuring that she would not be able to escape even if she wanted to.

457 she came here once and showed me how bruised she was – she was really severely bruised all over her arms and neck and face and so on - she had bruises all over her body, rib injuries and so on – so he really attacked her quite severely. It doesn't happen on a regular basis, I think that was also an extreme example but uh I think it has happened in the past – not to that extent. But that was the most severe.

Yet he still considered Insp Dark-Knight to be a ticking time bomb – a much higher risk of an irrational action like killing his wife and children and then himself than the cases of other police officers so prominently displayed in the media at the time. He described Insp Dark-Knight as more impaired and with much less to live for, and “when he loses the plot it will be in a spectacular way. He will make a huge example of it,” (line 492). And his role as a doctor in this relationship? Dr Feel-Good saw himself as the thin line holding Insp Dark-Knight back from the irrational depths of the spiral of his life. He admits to constantly trying to keep him “hanging on to the rational side,” (line 494), making sure that Insp Dark-Knight remembers that there are only a few years until he is eligible for early retirement.

499 “even if it means you just have to crawl on for the next two years rather do that than do something silly and harm someone and messing up your life or that of your family or whatever and just try and get to the end of that road.” Because that's the only other option that's open to him is just to give it time

There is the sense of Dr Feel-Good as a potent being, the *psychiatrist*, that creature who through learning and experience is far above mere mortals, including other specialists such as simple “physicians” (line 475).

463 It's difficult to to build and maintain a relationship with him, but I think there's a bit of an idolisation because I'm quite powerful in the process – his perception is that I'm quite powerful and that I could get him medically boarded you know. I play a pivotal role so I have to- he sort of treats me with a distance. He was a bit threatening at some stage, I think, because things were not going his way and it's always difficult to maintain that kind of a relationship with a patient like this but you can't let yourself be intimidated by him – then you rather refer him out to someone else. But he wouldn't really go now – because of the process and the path that we've been going. Uh But you have to I think keep a fairly neutral relationship with him – not get over involved, refer him out for second opinions, which I have done, you know, to other colleagues for second opinions and um ja – I sent him to the physician who said “who's this psychopath that you're sending me?” heh heh. Without me saying a word – you know, that was his perception of him. But he's not a psychiatrist – he's just a physician.

At the end of our strictly time-managed one hour slot, I asked “Do you think, out of all of this, that he wants to live in a different way? That he wants something better?” (line 503). Dr Feel-Good considered this for a while. Insp Dark-Knight is “so trapped” (line 505), he finally said.

517 So I think his potential to modify his behaviour or control his emotions better or deal with stress better is never going to change. As a matter of fact I think it's going downhill. He won't get much better than this. I think he remains a high risk to commit suicide at some stage in his life or to harm someone else. So.

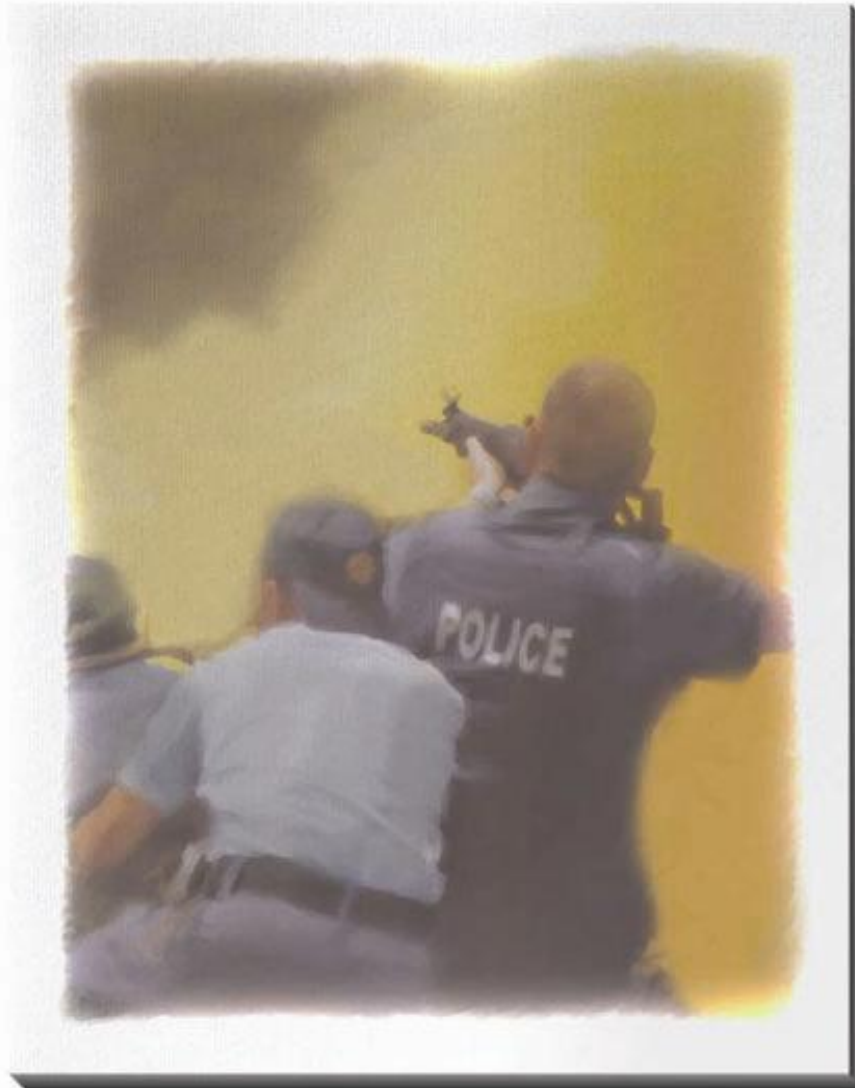
Then he shrugged – the first time I had seen the doctor look (dare I say it?) *helpless*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have made a passing acquaintance with the individuals who have made this study possible. Their tales have tinted the undercoat of the painting, ready now for the embellishments of shadows, highlights and tones. The participants were prepared to give unstintingly of their time, and share insight into their lives, at times at considerable emotional cost to themselves, and for this I am grateful and humbled. In the following chapters, I will delve more into the dialogues of the participants, the underlying ecologies and ethnographic perspective, and the discourses that inform their belief systems concerning the organisation, workplace violence and their world view.

Chapter Seven

Adding Layers of Paint: The Tones of the Organisation



7

CHAPTER SEVEN

ADDING LAYERS OF PAINT: THE TONES OF THE ORGANISATION



Cover the canvas at the first go, and then work on till you see nothing more to add ... Don't proceed according to rules and principles, but paint what you observe and feel. Paint generously and unhesitatingly, for it is best not to lose the first impression.

(Camille Pissaro, 1830-1903)

Introduction

In continuing the use of the metaphor for the research process which follows: consider a painter at her canvas, the bare sketch in pencil propped on the easel before her, the expanse as yet unembellished. The discourses and discussions that follow in these next three chapters can be seen as the layering of the different tones, colours and textures of paint in order to achieve the fullness of dimensionality, revealing the picture of workplace violence that emerges from the interviews of the participants.

The Dangers of Painting in Mixed Media: Discourse Analysis and Ethnography

Before moving towards the actual analysis of the corpus of texts, a delineation of the process I followed requires clarification in order to orientate the reader. Because qualitative research is intended to give priority to the meanings and attributions that all research partners bring to bear on a question (Hoddinott & Pill, 1997; Kelly, 1999a; Kinmonth, 1995), it is necessary to view the researcher as someone actively involved in constructing those meanings rather than as someone who is present to collect them passively (Chew-Graham, May, & Perry, 2002). It has been well-documented previously (refer to Chapter 5) that the researcher's own contributions have a direct bearing on the nature of the research process itself, and the way in which the researcher is positioned within the shifting social networks, whilst at the same moment relating to others in the research (such as the research participants), is of paramount importance. Research is increasingly not seen as either professionally or politically neutral (Chew-Graham et al., 2002), but is more concerned with making sense of human behaviour from "within the context and perspective of human experience" (Kelly, 1999b, p. 398). Therein lies the rub.

Traditionally, discourse analysts have set strict methodological prescriptions that limit the ways in which the psychological can be brought into investigations of language use (Wetherell, 2007). The underlying dictum of discourse analysis stresses that it offers simply a theory of language in use, strictly avoiding the contribution of the analyst in any interpretation of viewpoints or the personal order of the participants in the research project, an association which would assume that the analyst's perspective is more salient than that of the participants in research (Edwards, 1997). However, in the analysis of the texts and conversations that emerged from my research process, I found it necessary to deviate a fair bit from what is strictly seen as discourse analysis, deliberately working at the borderline between an analysis that seeks to understand people's life worlds, experiences and feelings and an analysis that seeks to understand how accounting for these things is performed in language. It appeared that both of these perspectives had relevance to my research, and it was my belief that neither one on its own could do full justice to the material – the one being in danger of providing an interpretation that was too naive; the other an interpretation that was too distanced and sceptical.

And so I boldly stepped up to my canvas with a mixture of the two. At times, I was able to treat certain texts in what would be termed strictly discourse analytic fashion, as performances that draw on cultural resources (discourses) to achieve effects (such as coherence and plausibility). In this way, I found that the characterisation of discourse analysis as a fluid movement between different stages of coding, analysis, validation and writing was especially applicable to this research (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In the tradition of discourse analysis, the research process took on a dynamic, iterative and cyclical form (Hodkinson & Pill, 1997; Kinmonth, 1995). This involved my careful reading of the transcripts, an initial identification of potential thematic categories and then several re-readings of the transcripts themselves to confirm and to refine the thematic categories. I observed that certain categories required elaboration, whilst others became a conflation of various other themes previously identified (Stevens, 2008).

Elsewhere, however, I found it necessary to use the texts as a window onto the ‘real’ feelings and social worlds of the participants – taking them as indicators of what actually happened or what people actually felt. This stance was in part supported by the view of Wetherell (2007), who is of the impression that “the study of language and culture are not sufficient in themselves” (p. 662), advocating instead that psychological assumptions and presuppositions are unavoidable when language is studied in its contexts of use and as such, linguistic ethnography needs to engage further with the psychological. As Wetherell (200, p. 671) puts it:

this leads to a different, truly psycho-social, psychological theory of the social actor. What it means to be a person, the formulation of an internal life, an identity and a way of being in the world develop as such ethnomethods are worked upon.

Consequently, in the following report chapters, I attempt to move seamlessly between an empathic or ethnographic perspective and a discourse analytic perspective. The socially constructed account that thus emerges from the analytic process cannot, therefore, be seen as a definitive or conclusive analysis of the texts, but rather as a set of reasonable products that

is neither exhaustive nor the singular interpretive outcome that could be generated from such a rich collection of narratives.

This chapter begins the analytic process by attempting to uncover the discourses within the narratives of the participants that relate to the organisation itself and examines the ways in which they reflect, reproduce and contest existing broader discourses within South African society and the SAPS. In addition, it addresses the way the participants relate to their life worlds, experiences and emotions from an empathic or ethnographic perspective. Discourses allow for a degree of fame (or perhaps infamy) or immortality for the speakers, drawing on the vocabularies of motive and justification, providing opportunities for managing impressions and a negotiating self-presentation, providing us with partial and oblique understandings of violence and the range of referent discourses that support, reject or contest violence within a particular social context, such as an organisation (Stevens, 2008). All self-disclosures are instrumental in achieving certain social goals, such as self-presentation, the establishment of credibility and the attempt to ensure that participants are well-regarded and approved of by others. This interpersonal accounting is not simply a set of linguistic manoeuvres that occur within a vacuum, but is bound by the positioning of the speakers within specific socio-historical, relational and cultural contexts (Stevens, 2008).

The analysis of language itself presupposes reflexivity and sensitivity on the part of researchers with regard to the socio-historical and personal locations, and as such, objective distance is neither possible nor desirable in this frame, as our use of language also constitutes a construction of reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). First, it is necessary to uncover the contexts within which the discourses are produced, which includes analysis of the position of the researcher within the research, the socio-historical grounding of the texts, and finally scrutiny of the discourses themselves and the manner in which they represent the broader socio-historical features of contexts.

Socio-Historical Grounding for the Discourses

The study of symbolic forms and meaningful constructions, actions, utterances or texts is fundamentally a matter of understanding and interpretation. All too often, symbolic forms are analysed in isolation from the contexts in which they are produced and received, yet to neglect these contexts of everyday life and the ways in which the individuals within them interpret and understand the circumstances is to disregard a fundamental starting point for analysis. Thus, no analysis would be complete without a brief sketch of the socio-historical terrain in which the discourses were produced and situated (Thompson, 1990). The socio-historical world is not merely the sphere of objects there to be observed, but is also made up of subjects who in the course of their everyday lives are relentlessly involved in understanding themselves and others, and interpreting the actions, utterances and events which take place around them. Essentially, when a researcher attempts to interpret, she is seeking to interpret an object which may in itself be an interpretation, and which may already have been interpreted by the subjects, thus making any research an interpretation of an interpretation. As such, the re-interpretation is related to, and informed by, the pre-interpretations which exist already amongst the subjects who make up the socio-historical world. Features of the social terrain such as the structural, institutional and historical conditions that permit, and are sustained by, the construction of certain discourses are indispensable in the understanding of those discourses (Thompson, 1990).

While much of the context of discourse production surrounding violence in the SAPS has been alluded to in previous chapters, some additional clarification and summarisation of this particular context as it relates to the interviews of the participants is necessary. Given that apartheid sought to classify South Africans by race and ethnicity, and given that the legacies of this system cannot be easily undone, such categorisation has significantly affected and continues to influence South Africans of all races. As such, it is impossible to reflect the history of the South African Police Service without reference to these categorisations, for which the indulgence of the reader is requested.

The South African Police (SAP), the precursor of the present-day SAPS, was formed in April 1913 and in the course of the following eight decades this event was seen as an inauspicious occurrence for the majority of the population of South Africa. As government institutions, the cultures of police forces are determined by the governments of the day, as was clearly seen in the SAP, which was expected to serve the regime and not the community, through the use of force, alienation from the community and abuse of human rights and power (Cawthra, 1993; Conradie, 2001; Marks, 2000; Mofomme, 2001). The SAP never transcended its dubious origins as a colonial police force, and whilst other forces around the world modernised, the SAP was always structured by the colonial-like role it continued to play (Brewer, 1994; Brogden, 1994; Cawthra, 1993). Arguably, its primary task had been to police race relations and to control Black South Africans by keeping them in their political, economic, social and moral place as a subject population (Brewer, 1994; Brogden, 1994; Cawthra, 1993; Marks, 2000; Shaw, 2002).

Crime control under apartheid was indistinguishable from political control, as the police sought to prevent crime largely through controlling the movement of Black people, the putative perpetrators, into White areas (Shaw, 2002, p. xi).

The composition, approach and procedures used for this throughout the twentieth century remained characteristic of those in the nineteenth with its centralisation under political control, control of the populace, performance of several non-police duties on behalf of the government (including involvement on behalf of the South African government in the bush war in the then Rhodesia and suppression of the insurrection that started in South African townships in the mid 1970s) and dependence on brute force as a final alternative. Additionally, the SAP remained a masculinist organisation, with women being excluded from the force for more than fifty years until 1972, when White women were allowed into the force but only to execute functions in keeping with accepted social roles. Black women were recruited into the force in the mid 1980s, although numbers remained small, and while more women were gradually recruited over time, their roles were restricted to administrative tasks in order to free men up for active policing duties (Cawthra, 1993).

During the 1970s and 80s, what was termed the “Bush War” was being waged in Namibia, and in 1976, Koevoet, the most notorious of Namibia’s police units (in which Insp Dark-Knight served), was formed. It was modelled on Rhodesia’s Selous Scouts and included ex-guerrillas who were useful for intelligence-gathering, having as its main function the tracking down of guerrillas in order to eliminate them. Koevoet gradually took on a combat role when it was supplied with Casspir armoured vehicles and heavy weaponry in order to provide an advantage of speed and firepower. However, widespread lawlessness was rife in the unit due to the lack of control or supervision, in addition to reliance on quick interrogation while in pursuit of guerrillas, and indiscriminate torture methods. By the end of the war Koevoet had accumulated “an appalling record of atrocities, usually involving torture or intimidation” (Cawthra, 1993, p. 93). Many guerrillas died under the interrogation, which was not limited to adults, but included even children.

Back in South Africa, members of the forces involved in the Bush War were highly sought after. Emphasis on militarism within the force, the development of universal riot-control training and the deployment of armoured vehicles was seen as necessary, given the police role in subjugating the majority of the population (Brewer, 1994). Insp Dark-Knight, as a result of his extensive experience in the bush war, was included in the Riot Unit, of whom Cawthra (1993, p. 19) remarks:

Riot squad members were selected on the basis of their bush-war experience and had to complete intensive counter insurgency training. Like the rest of the police, these units were issued with rifles instead of less lethal anti-riot equipment, and they were unprotected by visors or shields. They took to the streets in their camouflage outfits and, armed with automatic rifles, operated on a ‘shoot first, ask questions later’ basis.

Racism was widespread; Black police officers were only recently given authority over White civilians or their White subordinates in the SAP. They were under instructions that they were not sanctioned to arrest Whites, and additionally a White policeman of any rank

implicitly had authority over a Black officer. Access to resources was extremely limited, and Black officers were often deployed in areas remote from their homes (Cawthra, 1993).

As a result of these factors, the SAP acquired a reputation for being one of the most divisive, unaccountable and oppressive police forces in the world (Brogden, 1994; Marks, 2000; Weitzer, 1993). The SAP closely epitomized the representation of a military hierarchy, with military ranks, central command, a bare minimum of discretion, life-endangering weapons as the major resource, and a primary function of imposing a social order established by the central state (Brogden, 1994), as well as a strong gender bias (Cawthra, 1993).

In spite of this, South Africa was never a police state in the sense of having a well-equipped police force: the SAP endured continuous under-staffing, under-funding, and officers were badly paid and ill-equipped (Brewer, 1994; Brogden, 1994; Marais, 2001; Singh, 2004), topics which are still liberally scattered throughout the discourses of the police men and women of today's SAPS.

Accountability for the way race boundaries were enforced was rarely required, and mostly consisted of rationalisations of police misconduct by means of official commissions of enquiry into specific cases. These rarely uncovered error on the part of the SAP and never disputed their right to regulate the Black population (Brewer, 1994; Brogden, 1994; Cawthra, 1993; Marks, 2000). As a result, the SAP was never viewed as a crime prevention, detection and protection agency by the majority of the population, but rather as a menace answerable for their persecution and intimidation. As an organisation, it was viewed by township residents as incompetent and unsuccessful in the management of everyday crime (Brewer, 1994).

The instatement of a new reformist government in late 1989 held the promise of many considerable modifications within the police, including amendments to the ethos, the instruction of recruits, the mechanisms of accountability and proposals to advance police-community relationships (Brewer, 1994; Marks, 2000; Mofomme, 2001; Shaw, 2002;

Weitzer, 1993). The SAP was confronted with a difficult reality: the high degree of violence in the country that it was under pressure to bring under control was contested by the SAP's concomitant reputation as being immoral from the beginning. New challenges faced those officers such as Insp Dark-Knight, who had been involved in tracking down, spying upon, arresting, interrogating and eliminating members of freedom movements or guerrilla forces in Angola, and almost all chose to terminate their careers as a result (Bucaille, 2007).

Given the impracticality of creating a totally new organisation, a new police organisation would have to be constructed on the foundation of the previous, and in order to instil a notion of a service-oriented organisation, the new police agency was to be known as the South African Police Service. Included in the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995, which radically changed the face of policing in South Africa, the police had to be demilitarised. The duties of the police, in order to develop a partnership with the communities which they served, were to:

- ensure the safety and security of all persons and property in the national territory;
- uphold and safeguard the fundamental rights of every person as guaranteed by Chapter 3 of the Constitution;
- ensure cooperation between the Service and the communities it serves in the combating of crime;
- reflect respect for victims of crime and an understanding of their needs; and
- ensure effective civilian supervision over the Service (The South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995).

New requirements of accountability to the public whom the SAPS policed were imposed and the re-establishment of legitimacy through a sustained focus on community policing was enforced (Shaw, 2002). Such a radical and sweeping transformation of the police, whilst essential, could not occur without opposition, as in many ways, the police reflect not only the nature of the state, but are responsible for the prevention or promotion of state change (Marks, 2000, 2003; Skogan, 2008). There are many instances in which police agencies that have been through change processes continue to employ officers who display a

lack of respect for human rights, and who behave unprofessionally, implying that continued police transformation is complicated, if not unattainable (Marks, 2003, 2004). Major forces within the state, the police and civil society are still struggling to hinder the extent and tempo of the change, to conserve as much of the old order as possible. Additionally, the SAPS is at the receiving end of a constant stream of criticism (Bruce, 2007). For White police management, the transition process became a difficult act of balancing such internal and external constituencies while still defending their own interests. To a certain extent, these forces were, and still are, successful in their attempts to hinder the changes taking place, and in this they are supported by the police culture itself (Marks, 2000, 2003, 2004; Weitzer, 1993). Managers of this transformation process have failed to identify the influence of the police subculture, which informs their reasoning, understanding and action, and their consideration of the people with whom they interact, all of which can jeopardise the efforts towards police organisational change (Marks, 2003).

Police Mission and Sub-culture

A sense of vocation is part of the core sub-culture of the police – policing is not only a job; it is a cause. Under the circumstances of considerable societal revolution, the mission of a police force may be altered drastically, and while a new philosophy may be understood readily by management, those rank-and-file policemen devoted to the traditional principles in which they have been indoctrinated since their first days in the police may begrudge and undermine a new viewpoint. Fundamental cultural transformation needs to transpire, changing the most primary assumptions and beliefs held by the police members, those factors which are responsible for their understanding and interpretation of their own deeds and intentions, as well as those of others (Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004; Marks, 2003; Steyn & De Vries, 2007). The defence of a social order based on White supremacy was transformed into impartial, apolitical and independent law enforcement within a democratic political system, reflected in the training and new policies governing conduct (Weitzer, 1993). The implementation of a new code is indeed commendable, but experience has shown that management's formal instructions have little influence on the everyday actions of police who enjoy significant independence and personal discretion in the performance of their work, and whose socialisation by colleagues may conflict with and supplant official rules. It is often the

lack of change in the cultural knowledge of the police that seems to be liable for opposition to change, and changes in approach, beliefs and assumptions tend to be delayed compared to the more perfunctory behavioural change (Marks, 2003). Reports in the major newspapers around 1990 suggested that a sizeable number of the rank-and-file police protested strongly against, or at least lacked enthusiasm for, the new culture (Weitzer, 1993). This has resulted in an approach to service that can be classified as neither first-rate nor poor, but rather irregular, with examples of outstanding police work continually being set off by ineptitude or indifference, and a concurrent lack of clarity about the role of policing and the true meaning of the term 'crime prevention' (Bruce, 2007; Marks, 2003). Members regress into the former and venerated approach to behaviour, and the indefinable ideal of 'proper police conduct' perhaps reveals the greatest deficiency of the SAPS, which, although it has a decent assertion of principles, has no unswerving commitment to these values in organisational practice.

Additionally, a racist culture had been bred into the force during the eighty years since its inception, a racist culture that even Black policemen are socialised into adopting (Brogden, 1994; Cawthra, 1993; Marks, 2000; Shaw, 2002). Finding themselves isolated from their communities through deployment to areas remote from their families, and even targeted for physical attack, Black policemen have become just as indifferent in their attitudes towards their own communities (Cawthra, 1993). A police force can only be seen as democratic when it reacts simply to the requirements of society and assists individuals and groups irrespective of race, borders or societal standing (Kertesz & Szikinger, 2000). Many policemen have persisted in acting with insensitivity and antagonism toward Black residents, in spite of external demands to the contrary, and it is alleged that cop culture is independent of the larger societal context. Many years may be necessary before the novel philosophy of universalism saturates the police (Weitzer, 1993).

Internal and External Agencies Opposed to Change

Efforts to execute change and policing reforms have often failed in the face of opposition by mid-level and top managers, frontline supervisors and ordinary rank-and-file officers, as well as external police unions. Mid-level managers see authority as being

removed from them, and redistributed amongst the subordinate levels of the organisation. Opportunities for advancement are seen as dwindling due to the flattening of the formal rank structure. Terms such as 'employee empowerment' seem to intimidate managers, conjuring a picture of a lazy, corrupt workforce, which may make them nervous (Skogan, 2008).

To the rank-and-file, reforms seem like a fleeting whim, and in particular, programmes that promote the inclusion of civilians are regarded with profound suspicion (Marks, 2003). There is also resistance to doing their old jobs in innovative, newfangled ways, and being required to take on tasks that they had not envisioned would ever be theirs. Expectations frequently lie beyond the long-established roles which police officers have felt comfortable executing.

Police unions, with contracts that constrain members to certain regulations and expectations, can run counter to organisational change (Skogan, 2008; Skolnick, 2008), and police managers and employers persist in viewing police unions as troublesome entities that resist reform or challenge managerial prerogative, violating the militaristic constitution of the police organisation (Marks & Flemming, 2008).

Composition

Traditionally, the SAP was composed of a large number of Black rank-and-file policemen, and an officer corps of a majority of White Afrikaner males (Marks, 2000; Shaw, 2002). The policy was to avoid appointing non-White policemen to senior ranks in the force. However, the refinement of the policy has meant that Black policemen can now be installed within the top strata. The problem is the relative dearth of Black policemen who can be promoted to senior positions (Schonteich, 2004; Weitzer, 1993). Increasing the number of Black police officers has not been traditionally demonstrated to result in more sensitive behaviour towards Black citizens or to develop police-community relations noticeably, as a result of the fact that police behaviour is fashioned largely by the disposition of the police function rather than the officers' social backgrounds. Conduct is principally seen as a

consequence of on-the-job socialisation by peers and the everyday demands of police work (Shaw, 2002; Weitzer, 1993). In addition, whilst adherence to employment equity and affirmative action is both necessary and unavoidable, the SAPS have been accused of being somewhat fanatical in its application thereof, particularly where implementation of these policies is combined with nepotism and favouritism, contributing to general negative staff morale (Bruce, 2007).

Accountability

The police in democratic countries are monitored and supervised by multiple mechanisms, not only with instruments of inner control, but also by dedicated inspection by elected politicians, civil organisations, the mass media, the judiciary, and human rights organisations (Kertesz & Szikinger, 2000). The elusive ideal of police accountability can be enhanced by measures such as having an independent body responsible for overseeing police policy or handling complaints against the police. South Africa has established certain special units to investigate complaints against the police, such as the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) (Du Plessis & Louw, 2005). These commissions have made valuable contributions by criticising policies and practices and by advocating corrective measures, some of which have been implemented. For society at large, they may also have symbolic value, demonstrating that the police are no longer isolated from external public enquiry. More far-reaching controls are essential, however, to thwart and discipline police guilty of misconduct (Weitzer, 1993). Unwillingness to make crime statistics accessible tends to undermine the SAPS's own policy of delegating responsibility to the local level in order to strengthen local partnerships. Participants in partnership structures require these crime statistics to interpret the local crime situation (Bruce, 2007). This has also contributed to a climate of anxiety in the SAPS regarding the provision of information and seriously hampers open and effective communication.

Police-community Relations

Traditionally the police in South Africa do not inspire the admiration or confidence of the majority of the public (Brewer, 1994; Cawthra, 1993; Conradie, 2001; Marks, 2000; Marks, 2003; Shaw, 2002; Weitzer, 1993). Subordination of races was guaranteed by an authoritarian police force that did not hesitate to use forceful methods. Little attention was paid to the associations between the SAP and the Black majority, and remarkably few exceptional initiatives were commenced that would improve those relations within the community. Many communities still feel that collaboration with the police is synonymous with joining forces with the enemy (Marks, 2003; Weitzer, 1993). This suspicion and abhorrence of the police can be seen in the increasing numbers of police either assaulted or murdered, a large percentage of whom are young Black male officers (Conradie, 2001). Especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, police are perceived as being egotistical and brutal rather than as prospective collaborators and fears are rife that more personal attention from the police will result in harassment. Nothing in the past has equipped members of the police for new approaches to policing, and it is improbable that they understand the goals or associated strategy. Broken promises litter the past, and they are rightly dubious that any assurances of reform will be any different (Marks, 2003; Skogan, 2008).

In theory, the SAPS have embraced a new approach and attitude toward policing – community policing – and have promoted civilian supervisory bodies and new procedures to ensure accountability, suggestive of a high level of dedication to transformation within the SAPS (Marks, 2000; Kertesz & Szikinger, 2000; Steyn & De Vries, 2007). There has been a gradual recognition of the fact that local governments have a distinctive role in preventing and combating crime in South Africa. More recently, a few triumphs of synchronised crime prevention operations between the SAPS and local governments have occurred, buoying deflated feelings of confidence and trust somewhat (Bruce, 2007; Marais, 2001; Marks, 2000). General cooperation appears to be on the rise and results in an improvement of relationships and ultimately a lowering of crime, but positive changes are mitigated by some occurrences of oppressive policing of protest rallies, assertions of prejudice among elements of the police and abuses committed against members of social movements implicated in political activities opposed to the government (Bruce, 2007; Marks, 2000). However, when

the public becomes concerned with setting police priorities, a new set of challenges emerges. Agencies tend to believe that community policing is solely the jurisdiction of the police department, and they accordingly resist altering their own professional and budget-constrained priorities (Skogan, 2008).

Police Bias and Misconduct

As a result of the reforms, some officers who supported right wing political organisations resigned from the SAPS. On the other side, allegations of complicity between the police and right-wing Black groups in the support of conservative Black vigilantes in order to defuse the threat of opponents of apartheid have been rife (Bruce, 2007; Shaw, 2002; Weitzer, 1993). Additionally, the intensity of public pressure and a perception in the police that they had little political backing led to deterioration in morale, with a concurrent increase in police corruption, police involvement in crime and general decline of discipline (Bruce, 2007; Shaw, 2002). Sporadic improvements in public estimation are often undermined by reports of police corruption, violence or excessive force (Skogan, 2008).

Control Over Police Abuse on the Streets

Police violence in daily routine has been generally permitted by South African law, with police killings and more wide-ranging use of extreme force (either in relation to demonstrations or pursuit of suspects) constructed as legitimate practice (Bruce, 2007; Brogden, 1994). Given a legal regime in which non-Whites were rendered impotent as non-citizens, the distorted and culturally biased discourses proliferated in the old SAP. Brutality has continued to characterise policing in post-apartheid South Africa, with recurrent rumours of fatalities in police custody resulting from torture or abuse. The risk is that the pressure to fight crime is ensuring a police and government policy which is less sensitive to the dual requirements of accountability and a respect for human rights (Shaw, 2002).

Spiralling Crime Rate

During the period from 1994 to 2004, the number of recorded crimes increased by over 600000, or thirty percent, while the proportion of government expenditure on the criminal justice system increased by less than two percent, and the number of police officers decreased by twenty percent (Schonteich, 2004). It is difficult to get an accurate picture of the crime rate: on the one hand, recorded crime is not seen as being a true reflection of the actual volume of crime, with many crimes going unreported; and conversely, the reporting biases and other erroneous systemic surveillance problems cast doubt on the accuracy of crime statistics. Regardless, the concomitant frustration engendered by the high case loads, lack of financial and logistical support and lack of prosecutions from the courts has fostered a vigilante attitude amongst some of the police, where use of unwarranted force is easily vindicated. Unremitting exposure to violence and crime has taken its toll on the workforce, causing high levels of retirement due to stress-related psychological disorders, ill health, and high suicide rates, which restricts the capacity of the SAPS to serve as an important contributor to the stability and economic growth of the country (Mostert & Rothman, 2006).

What is evident from the above brief sketch of the historical context is that discourse production is fundamentally shaped by the socio-historical situation and it has immense influence on the authorial nature of the members of that system's rich discursive networks. This allows for the prediction of the types of discourse we could expect to uncover in the narratives of the social actors with whom we interact, as they form part of the culture of the South African Police Service and the greater society in which these discourses are widespread. Reflecting the socio-historical contexts, ambivalence towards race, dissatisfaction with resources, the characterisation of the noble calling of the policeman, lack of faith in the justice system, militaristic culture and bearing and discourses of frustration, justification and retribution are all to be expected.

Brushstrokes: the final painting emerges

From the above characterisation of the socio-historical context of discourse production and its influence on the nature of the participants' emergent discourses, the following section provides a more formal interpretation of the narratives and examines their effects and functions.

Professional perspectives, personal experiences, as well as frames of reference, as essentially a re-interpretation of an already existing elucidation (Thompson, 1990): all form part of the preconceptions with which a researcher approaches the research, and care must be taken not to neglect the responsibility the researcher has to clarify these personal presuppositions to herself and her readers (Malterud, 1993). Although addressed superficially previously, it is necessary to account for my own positionality as a researcher within the research context, then that of the participants, and lastly the nature of the interview context in which the power relations are enacted.

The Perspective of the Artist: The Position and Reflexivity of the Researcher

Because qualitative research accentuates the meanings and attributions that research partners raise, one can view the researcher as someone dynamically assembling understandings rather than accumulating them inertly (Chew-Graham et al., 2002). The identity that research participants attribute to the researcher plays a vital role in the eventual data that are collected, with respondents seeking to protect themselves from external adjudication, and the researcher's theoretical outlook, interests and expectations inevitably influence the response (Chew-Graham et al., 2002; Kinmonth, 1995; Richards & Emslie, 2000). The ability to reflect on one's own position within the unfolding nature of the research is thus of critical importance if readers are to understand the peculiarities of the research and the findings that are generated from them (Stevens, 2008). Researchers are required to be explicit about their personal and professional perspectives, pondering on the

influence these might have on data collection and analysis (Kinmonth, 1995; Richards & Emslie, 2000).

The qualitative researcher frequently becomes motivated through practical experience or personal or political connection, raising questions to be pursued by means of research through their own dealings with the phenomenon being researched (Malterud, 1993; Wetherell et al., 2001). My own position within the research study was motivated by a concern for the ease with which weapons were returned to policemen who had made suicidal threats or had threatened the lives of those around them. Being of the opinion that previous behaviour is one of the best predictors of future behaviour, I was alarmed to note that within a short time after a policeman's threats to take the life of a colleague, wife or child, his weapon was returned to him, with all of the responsibility and power which that entails. My interest was piqued, and I began to do some research, which culminated in this study.

In the context of my research, my employment as a psychologist within the South African Police Service placed me in a difficult position. Although I tried to minimise my customary role as a clinician in the organisation, and tried actively to be a co-participant, it was a fact that all the participants knew who I was and the function I fulfilled in the SAPS, which coloured their perceptions and created tension around this positioning. For three of the participants, namely Insp Dark-Knight (the main research partner), Insp Faithful (his best friend and colleague), and Little Miss Maturity (his daughter), I was constructed as the expert where they were constructed as the 'patients', and in certain places the interviews were characterised by the submissive approach of the patient towards the learned doctor. The similarity between a research interview and a therapeutic interaction in the very non-directive stances taken encourages participants to articulate problems in their own terms inspired by the involved and compassionate listener who is the researcher (Marks, 2004; Richards & Emslie, 2000). Participants disclosed personal and sensitive information, which at times was painful for them, and in this way, the boundaries between research and therapy were blurred, causing them to ask clinical questions of me at times. They frequently expanded on mental-health issues and gave their opinions of others within the helping professions.

Yet conversely, my presence as part of the 'system' and organisation of the SAPS possibly led to participants being more open to discussion than they perhaps would have been with an outsider. The group cohesion existent within the boundaries of the SAPS leads to a mistrust of the outsider, a categorisation of the civilian as not able to understand, as needing to be protected or shielded from the harsh realities of life within the police. My presence within the rank-and-file of the organisation led to frankness on the part of the participants, whose later utterances within the context of the interviews revealed an 'us versus them' mentality that flatteringly included me in the 'us'.

My position with the fourth participant, the psychiatrist Dr Feel-Good, was more complex, our relationship previously having been characterised by collaboration on the cases of our mutual clients. It was an awkward interaction, with the atmosphere tending towards more formality than those of the other participants, and I was under the general impression that the doctor was vacillating between his respect for me as a long-standing colleague and his need to be seen as the expert in the situation. While he asserted the benefits of being interviewed by a 'peer' through discussing the technicalities of the case in sumptuous detail and with the use of many acronyms, I nevertheless found myself positioned as the humble student sitting at the master's feet. Through our shared understanding of the technical questions at play, we were bound together by a powerful set of common experiences and attributions of professional identity (Chew-Graham et al., 2002; Richards & Emslie, 2000).

In spite of the 'master-pupil' nature of our interaction, I nevertheless gained the impression that, in my position as a researcher, I was constructed as an external threat, exposing Dr Feel-Good to a vulnerability regarding his professional behaviour and conduct towards Insp Dark-Knight. At times, I might have been constructed as a moral judge on the consultations, which could also have led to his long and detailed explanations of the mechanics of the case. In the beginning of the interview, this might have been responsible for the doctor's immediate retreat into quoting from journals and the DSM-V. Much of that interview was spent refocusing his attention on the discussion and avoiding the inevitable lectures that crept in around the topic in which he saw himself as the specialist.

It has been noted that gender is often highlighted when women interview men because the qualitative researcher is required to take on a feminine role that encompasses an acquiescent, attentive and assenting stance traditional to notions of femininity (Marks, 2004; Richards & Emslie, 2000; Wetherell et al., 2001). Women in the police often find themselves having to prove themselves as trustworthy, intrepid and competent again and again, while still maintaining a feminine disposition. I found this to be true with the male participants, some of whom took the stance of ‘protecting’ me from the gruesome aspects of their work by lowering their voices and speaking unusually fast when it came to utterances of this nature. However, the fluid nature of an interview leads to these characteristics being dynamic and interdependent, constantly constructed during the process of the interview. At certain times, I found that it was exaggerated, as in the above example, and at others relatively muted.

Attempting to negotiate between these various positions whilst remaining aware of my position and point of departure clearly had an impact on the process of the research. At times, I felt my positioning as the expert and psychologist elicited responses from me that were more consistent with a clinical encounter than the position of co-participant in a research project. I found I was constantly questioning motives and underlying thought processes, finding it difficult to prevent myself from being drawn into empathising too fully with the narratives, comprised of brutal accounts of horror and violence. The participants’ preconceptions about me as a researcher also influenced the content of the interviews, and I needed to take care to explain my current role as researcher explicitly in order to avoid or minimise this confusion.

My own time as an employee of the SAPS revealed to me the critical value of my own ethnographic approaches in understanding violence in the organisation, and through my immersion in the culture, I was able to note frequent incongruities between behavioural responses and the formal statements of change. I was able to identify members’ attachments to the past and their consequent resistance to the change that was sweeping their memories away. There are, no doubt, many matters I may have missed or did not fully comprehend, yet I was entrusted with sensitive information that allowed me to understand some of the complex mechanisms that underlie the concept of workplace violence in the SAPS.

Emerging Discourses and Perspectives

The discourses and perspectives that emerged from the interviews fell into three overarching categories of interest. Those discourses stemming from and revolving around the peculiarities of the organisation itself, the issues related to policemen's characterisation of the SAPS with its mission, subculture and particular ethos, and their discussion of factors related to this, are discussed first. The second group (discussed in the next chapter) comprises the attitude of those interviewed towards violence specifically, their views of its nature and the way it affected their own lives. The third group (in Chapter Nine) is related to the world view held by the participants, their personal attitudes and beliefs.

Organisational Issues

As was briefly mentioned above, certain discourses and perspectives emergent from the socio-historical context of the SAPS as an institution or organisation are to be expected from the participants; a fundamental hermeneutical condition of socio-historical enquiry is in operation, namely that the object domain of the investigation is also a subject domain in which symbolic forms are pre-interpreted by the participants who comprise the domain (Thompson, 1990). The following emerged throughout the participants' interviews, grounding their experiences within the social institution, cultural climate and historical context of the SAPS.

"Betrayal by any other name": Socio-political-racial change in the SAPS

Policemen in the former SAP were accustomed to being part of an organisation which they felt comfortable with, although it was not perfect by any means. There were certain predictable standards to adhere to, a specific way of management that was accepted by all as immutable, and a precise regularity to the structure and existence of the police in which officers saw themselves as integral cogs. For many of the policemen and women who

weathered the change from the SAP to the South African Police Service, years of service lay behind them, years in which they believed in the fundamental rightness of their occupation as officers which culminated in dedication to the organisation of which they were a part. They had a deep sense of calling to a noble profession for which they would be suitably recognised. Yet the radical restructuring of the organisation, taking place over such a short period, disturbed their sense of justice and belief in the natural order of things. An organisation that had previously been safe and reliable in its rigidity was now altered beyond all recognition, but what was altered most dramatically was the positioning of each officer within the new structure as they were expected to adopt a foreign and totally contradictory ethos. An organisation for which they had given much of their lives, now seemed to be ashamed of them, refusing to give recognition to previous deeds by withholding promotions, sidelining men of certain races, marginalising and imposing feelings of non-essentiality on those who had once been vital to the mechanism of the establishment. This discourse of perceived organisational rejection, marginalisation and lack of recognition can be encompassed by the expression “*when it was required of us, we gave you our all, now you regard us as worthless*”. Policemen seem to struggle with a lack of acknowledgment in the face of all they perceive themselves to have done for the organisation. People whom they recognise as lacking in either experience or training are suddenly given promotions that they felt should have belonged to them, arousing feelings of insignificance and placing undeniable tensions on the already strained race relations within the police. Dr Feel-Good puts it in this way:

- 115 It seems that they feel that they can't fit they just can't adjust, especially with people with a very obsessive-compulsive personality structure, all the perfectionists you know - the real old, uh if I can call it 'career policeman'. They feel that they are sidelined and they can't stand the corruption the lack of order and the change and the fact that people are promoted that they perceive to be not you know sort of experienced enough and trained enough uh to take on those positions.

Insp Faithful is more forceful in his expression of his disgust at the manner of change taking place within the SAPS. His words convey a sense of the confusion and lack of stability that he feels, partially brought on by the promotion of unqualified officers to positions to which he feels he was entitled.

61 And just, after sixteen years I know what I'm supposed to- I know my job, I know what I'm supposed to do um (.) but it's the organisation itself is busy collapsing, and it's...it's...you can't get to do your job cause you got to do ten different things at the same time. Um (0.2) the officers don't know what they want cause >this one tells you, must go and do that, you're on your way and the other one tells you no, no, no, leave that you must do this< you know you- at the end of the day you get it from three sides cos nothing's been done uh you can't get to do the work that you are capable of, that you know you've...you can do. >

There is the idea that certain recompense is expected; yet not received. A feeling of entitlement is conveyed in the dialogue, that as a result of the change in organisational philosophy, the SAPS should somehow make amends for the discomfort caused. Insp Dark-Knight mentions it on several occasions: his sense of betrayal is clear in his juxtaposition of his many years of faithful service against the attitude of the "them" (management). He blames them for his feelings of being sidelined, alienated and ignored. There is a sense of hopelessness in his communications, his expression of a need for his efforts to be recognised and rewarded, which has not taken place. This is also used as a justification for his later breakdown, the suggestion that he was the victim of a flawed organisational process that led to his eventual breakdown and threats against the lives of his colleagues, wife and family, and self. While it did not erase his participation in later abuse, it served as a strategy to highlight the unfair victimisation and infringement of his rights that he was forced to undergo. This tactic is used as an attempt to evoke a sympathetic response amongst audience members.

- 408 Die Polisie skuld my baie, Kerry. Tot en met my siekte het ek nie juis beseef (1.2) {agitated hand rubbing} maar alles wat (.) hulle is vir soveel verantwoordelik en jy sal verwag na soveel jare se diens dat jy ten minste 'n bietjie beter diens sal terugkry, of mense wat sal belangstel in jou, of 'n organisasie wat sal belangstel. Maar jy beteken niks nie. Absoluut niks nie.

(The police owe me a lot, Kerry. Up until my sickness I did not realise, but everything that – they are responsible for so much and you would expect that after so many years of service that you at least would get a better service back, or people that would show interest in you, or an organisation that would care. But you mean nothing. Absolutely nothing.)

- 414 (4.3) {withdrawn, slight shaking of the head} Daar's geen (1.3) daar's niks van bo af nie. Daar kom niks terug nie. Jy kry niks terug nie, jy (.) hulle gee net eenvoudig nie vir jou om nie. Hoeveel kere was ek op tonele gewees? {Shakes head}. (.2) Daar word nie vir jou gevra "luister, het jy hulp nodig?" nie. Dan sê hulle vir jou "ja jy moet vra vir hulp". Nou hoe die donder moet ek weet of ek hulp nodig het?

(There's no – there's nothing from above. Nothing comes back. You get nothing back, you – they simply do not care about you. How many times was I on scenes? You are never asked "listen, do you need help?" Then they say to you "Yes, you must ask for help." Now how in hell should I know if I need help?)

According to participants, the fundamentals of respect which were beaten into new recruits in the past no longer exist in the new SAPS. Attempts to make the organisation more approachable and accessible to the community and its own members have led to a general breakdown in the discipline and boundaries that were once so essential to the rank-and-file functioning of the force. Blind obedience to an authority figure is now no longer present, and recently promoted authority figures are objects of ridicule because they have not received the same training as those in 'the good ol' days'. To add insult to injury, older cops are expected

to cover for newly promoted rookies, who are perceived to be undeserving of their positions. These older, more experienced officers are required to train their new 'superiors' in the ways of the police. Insp Faithful's dialogue underlines this.

288 Like I told my brother as well = it's not (.) the work, it's the whole the whole system busy collapsing in on itself. Hhh Um they threw away discipline, (.) and what happened you had the guy apparently lying on his back when the National Commissioner came to visit the station and >he just lays back and greeted him "Ja I know who you are."< Now when they want to bring back discipline it's not going to work. It's too late. You've got a whole generation of policemen that's in now um that comes out and= I don't know what they do in their basic training at college (.) it looks like they get taught how to put in a grievance and go and discuss things with their commanding officer, cause they come out they don't know what a pocket book is, >they work they don't know how to do so we've got to train them<. Um If (.) we had FTO's (Field training officers) (.) our training that I had way back, that at least you know what the work is all about, then you had FTO's to show you physically the ropes - >that would work much better than the system they got nowadays<. But now they come out, its "ju" and jou" " [*forms of address usually used when speaking to an equal in an informal situation*], from a constable! I mean (.) When I was a constable you didn't even I mean an Inspector was god, an officer, you never saw him because you disappeared from him. >If you saw him coming down the passage you disappeared< Now it's ju and jou for the officers and . An officer will give them an order and now it, they're not going to do it, they're busy. You know it's the blatant disregard for rank and the whole structure and it's now they've created this monster, and it's it's busy growing up - it's getting bigger. Now you have got guys like- you've got older guys that had this kind of training, sitting, and the younger guys, they just don't care. You see the discipline is out the window and they're trying to get it back, but those guys just don't care. And it's now about rights and it's the unions and it's a laughing stock.

The promotion and lauding of men of colour is one of the first socio-historical changes to have occurred within the SAPS, another nail in the coffin of the betrayal discourse maintained by the older White cops. Promotion of Black officers over them challenges a long-held antagonism between the hegemonic crime-fighter and the traditional subordinated criminal (the quintessence of the 'other'), and, not surprisingly, Black policemen have traditionally struggled against segregation, harassment and limited advancement (Miller, Forest, & Jurik, 2003). Yet the stringent organisational reforms mandating zero-tolerance for discrimination have made for careful disclosures of any reference to race within the accounts of the participants, although it is clear from their utterances that racial tensions exist just below the surface. The research participants made many oblique references to the changes that are experienced by a White, middle-aged policeman struggling to adjust to a new police culture and ethos. There is a particularly awkward, careful approach taken when mentioning any issues to do with race, although one might expect the opposite of these bluff, hearty, and direct policemen. Whilst changes taking place in the police are mentioned easily, it is only by implication that racial issues are addressed and are almost never voiced explicitly. Dr Feel-Good felt confident to mention the changes taking place only through the vehicle of the "socio-political changes" he witnessed taking place within the police. From his position as psychiatrist to many of the policemen and women affected by the changes, he was able to confidently expound on his theories of lack of support within the police hierarchy, victimisation and eventual decompensation of the members who were unable to adapt to the new ways brought about by the socio-political changes. Nevertheless, he was exceedingly vigilant to make sure that it was understood that he was not referring simply to one race, although most of his speech reveals that he is, in fact, doing just this.

102 And what changed after 1994? The government changed. The set-up changed. The police were forced and to an extent I think lost some of its uh lost a lot of their status and their power. And they still didn't have support. They didn't have support from their superiors and then they felt victimized. And uh that's often a reason or a trigger for the people that come to me and decompensate and sort of feel they can't carry on, is the fact that they feel they've been victimized, they don't see any chances of promotion. And that's not only White uh uh policemen, it could be anyone.

His insistence on including all race groups in his account of victimisation is contradicted a few moments later:

238 Because they have their adjustment problems, they have their prejudices. Their racial prejudices. I am talking just from the point of view of the typical White group of policeman they are the people I see most often and they just really need a lot of intervention I think to adjust to the system.

An important result of this socio-political-racial change within the police is the perceived marginalisation that the White policemen hesitantly express. Much of the dialogue centres on binary concepts of 'before' and 'after', with actions taken by the organisation not seen as merely effecting change, but rather being personally malicious towards those who supported the previous regime. Denunciation of previous achievements within the police and feelings of rejection are the result. Insp Faithful addresses the changes, while guarded in his expressions of racial tension:

759 And that is unfortunately that's where it is. Um It's not affirmative action, it's (.) racism in reverse. It's payback that's what we looking at it's payback. I don't care how you try and disguise it, it's payback. Um (.) The police used to be a White police force now we gonna make it a Black police force. IT's as simple as that. Same thing happened in Namibia - Nampol - now I think they've got a hundred White cops there. That is that's the truth of it. So are they worried about the White cops? No. (2.1) The irony, and the sad thing about it is that they are not even worried about the Black policemen, on grassroots level that's going through the same thing either. You are disposable, you are a number on the persal system that we just delete. That's all you are.

Although never stated outright, race is ultimately seen as being the motivational factor in all promotions, implied by all the participants, but never definitively stated outright. Insp Faithful adds his unique interpretation to this:

102 Um:m you get officers turn around and tell me, don't tell me that there isn't career opportunities for a White person. I said yes - if I go to the Transkei, there is, I said to the officer but would you pack up your entire family and go sit in the Transkei? You won't but you expect me to do it.

This underlying discourse of rejection and marginalisation highlights the victimisation policemen are perceived to endure and can be manipulated to explain and excuse the fantasies of revenge that are firmly established in the minds of many of these policemen. The unfairness and faithlessness of the organisation leads to dreams of how the 'downtrodden and unappreciated hero' will get his own back. In Insp Faithful's account of what he would do if given the chance, this can be clearly seen (although he does not use the first person, making use of a ubiquitous "one guy that's been pushed to far" until later in his speech, when he reveals himself as the main actor in his own fantasies of revenge on the betraying system):

571 It's going to take one guy that's been pushed too far (2.1) to one day walk in to a meeting or to go and sit outside his house, then once again it's going to be this big issue, and the real reason for it is *never going to come out*. It's going to be that this guy was a whack-job, and that's it. But I mean D [*the Commissioner*] has got his body-guards, these two huge okes - they look like Nigerians, but I mean let's face it - I know what I want to do - they don't know what I want to do. Um (3.3) .hhh Having been trained the way I have been trained, um having done what I've done for so long, knowing the ins and outs - for me to walk into any place - I mean I mos know how it works. Nobody's going to suspect me of anything. I am going to walk in and know my way around inside the police structure. I can get any information I want, I can get anyone I want. It It's a joke. They think they are untouchable but it's a joke.

In spite of the deep insinuation of betrayal that one gets at his words, there is still the inference of Insp Faithful's underlying feelings of responsibility towards the organisation;

making it work to the best of his ability, and taking on duties to ensure that the profession that he has followed for so long remains true to his belief in it. In this way, he manages to avoid the dissonance that would be aroused if the system he has for so long supported and believed in were to be proved a monumental sham. One aspect of police culture that is highly esteemed is the concept of honour, embodying a need to protect not only the honour of society, but one's own culture too. Choosing law enforcement as a career provides the policeman with the social reinforcement to live by a custom of honour, and if that honour appears to be threatened, he will do anything in his power to protect it (Woody, 2005). This is clear in Insp Faithful's descriptions - he is striving to avoid the cognitive dissonance that would result from allowing the profession that he holds so highly to fall into disrepute:

99 You see these things happening, I mean these guys get promoted, he don't know what to do so he walks in and tells me I must handle, I must do...so I end up running the whole shift, but you don't get recognition, nothing happens.

All of which begs the question – why do so many policemen stay within the system they feel has betrayed them so seriously? Dr Feel-Good has his own ideas: he believes that while the policemen are genuinely suffering, there is also a large amount of secondary gain to be had in remaining in the police until being medically retired by the state instead of simply resigning.

130 you can give them the options, to say rather to retire early or resign - retrain, find yourself a profession, and they say, “No but I am going to lose too much you know. I've given all my life to the police force, I've been there for twenty-five years and if I resign now I'll not gain anything.”

It is one explanation, but I believe there is another: as in battered woman syndrome, where it is impossible to believe that someone who has loved you before will not do so again, no matter how violent the abuse or forceful the rejection. These officers cling to the hope that at some stage, they will once again be the blue-eyed heroes of the nation; those who

could do no wrong. Their sense of betrayal is subsumed by thoughts of return to former glory, or fuelled by hopes of revenge on the system for its perfidy. Either way, they remain in the organisation, giving their all, and even sometimes their lives, for a system that they believe has been disloyal to them.

“Us versus them”: The police subculture of group cohesion - binaries of integration and isolation

Within the police, the unusually high degree of social cohesiveness that stems from a powerful socialisation process creates an informal occupational culture. This subculture has an accompanying emotion vocabulary which is governed by the moral order, rules and practices of the local group (Frewin, Stephens, & Tuffin, 2006). Member identity refers to the extent to which employees identify with the organisation or their job or field of professional expertise (Mofomme, 2001). In the old SAP, members had an incredibly strong organisational identity, to such an extent that they isolated themselves from their families and the community. In the new SAPS, there is an endeavour to move towards the other end of the continuum (Mofomme, 2001). Yet still, within the police organisation, internal norms and external pressures work together to create a unique discourse of strong integration and identification within the group, and concurrent segregation from the community, or “*us versus them*”. This is a discourse which values solidarity within the group, and seclusion from and consequent mistrust of an external and potentially hostile world. It has the effect of conditioning officers to treat individuals external to their way of life with suspicion and caution. What emerges is a fraternity of those engaged in what they perceive as duty fraught with danger, a battle against the underworld, replete with the bonding, the secrecy, the loyalty and the war metaphors that have historically accompanied those engaged in the noble calling of dealing with, and at times exterminating, the ‘other’ (Nolan, 2009; Steyn & De Vries, 2007). This hypervigilance, reinforced by a perceived hostility or lack of appreciation from the civilian community, as discussed earlier, serves to create an “*us versus them*” mind-set (Johnson, Todd, & Subramanian, 2005; Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004; Mofomme, 2001; Nolan, 2009; Perrott & Kelloway, 2006; Pershing, 2006; Skolnick, 2008; Woody, 2005). From my own experience in the SAPS, I can only confirm this to be true, with policemen even going so

far as making reference to civilians with the derogatory term of ‘hase’ – hares or rabbits (Mofomme, 2001).

More than simply a mistrust of the external environment, this discourse additionally conveys the sense that two entirely different worlds exist: the sphere of the police organisation, and the realm of the civilian population. They are mutually exclusive from each other, comprising those members who are part of the select group (or the protectors), and those who need to be protected (and who consequently form the out-group). Insp Faithful mentions this sacred duty of defending, and the subterfuge he has to engage in simply to put the minds of the civilians in his life at ease. He sets himself up as the guardian, casting himself in the paternal role that most officers feel obliged to fulfil at some time in their careers:

398 Ja that’s right cause you never get to a point- you don’t get to a point where of understanding. I mean, no guy in the private sector knows what it is like to have a customer come in and physically want to assault you, and go at you with something, or actually shoot at you or- I mean hmph I mean I got shot through the hand, >I got home, bandages and stuff<- my mother said “what happened?” and I said, “no I cut myself on some barbed wire.” I can’t tell her I was shot - she’d go bonkers. As it was night shift and when I worked night shift she wouldn’t sleep. She’d wait until I got home. So I can’t tell them REALLY what happened. They haven’t got a clue what I did. Ja at work little snippets, but they *don’t really know what happened*.

Insp Faithful reiterates the divide between civilian and police, between husband and wife, though from his perspective as the husband of a policewoman himself, he is able to share those vital pieces of his day with someone who has insight into his world, a luxury that Insp Dark-Knight does not have.

431 He [*Insp Dark-Knight*] will sit- you know- somebody else that was in Koevoet, they will sit and they will relate. But um I mean he would tell me a bit more than he would tell her, cause I can more or less- But I think she's fed up with it and ja and it's cause it's a different world I don't really think she understands what he is going through. And the fact that I think it's triggered a whole lot of old memories that he buried deep down that came out now and I think (.2) I think that's the big problem.

As a daughter, Little Miss Maturity is particularly aware of the supportive and enclosing nature of her father's relationships with his police colleagues, which have the tendency to shut his family out. While Insp Faithful, her father's closest friend and colleague, features a lot in her discussions, she readily admits that there is a 'brotherhood' that exists amongst those who have shared common experiences. She feels isolated and separated from that secluded part of her father's life; she reflects and expresses her mother's frustration and lack of understanding for it too.

503 Researcher: Does that make a difference though – that they [*in group*] know what's happening?

504 Little Miss Maturity: I do think so because especially to Insp Faithful because I know that he talks to Insp Faithful quite often and the things he says to him he can't ...I don't think he can say to my mom because my mom will be, you know, "Deal with it". She doesn't understand where it's coming from. And they do and that does make a difference. I can't even help my father because that's not what it's all about. I don't know what he went through, I don't all these emotions that he has to deal with. They do – they can support him. And I think that that is what he needs the most right now.

In-group bonding is often intensified when, given the potential for danger inherent in the job, men feel their lives and personal well-being depend on their colleagues. Emphasis on the formation of in- and out-groups because of the primarily dangerous nature of the work

provides members with a sense of support and back-up for one another, and this can contribute to universal group thinking within the members. Group bonding serves positive functions during situations of high stress and danger through instilling values of reliability and self-sacrifice. However, it can become dysfunctional during other times when inappropriate behaviours are promoted and wrongdoers are protected by an encompassing code of silence (Frewin et al., 2006; Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004; Nolan, 2009; Pershing, 2006; Steyn & De Vries, 2007; Woody, 2005). It influences the socialisation of the members and their way of thinking, and can lead to certain dysfunctional adaptations in the organisation (Mofomme, 2001; Pershing, 2006; Woody, 2005), such as alcohol or drug abuse, denial of psychological problems, the use of black humour, dysfunctional use of violence, and so on. Relations among males in military-like institutions traditionally have involved a culture of mateship built on competitive banter and the emphasis of stereotypically masculine exploits such as drinking alcohol (Flood, 2007; Frewin et al., 2006), which allow for the lowering of inhibitions and thereby reinforce the bonding process. Insp Faithful's frank discussion of the in-group's use of alcohol as a coping mechanism, as well as a social lubricant allowing them to talk more easily about the exploits they have been involved in, confirms this:

357 Um Cause you have a couple of shots and then you (.2) then you can actually start talking about it. But you also don't talk to normal people about it. You talk to the guys that's with you cause they understand what you *talking about* and you GET IT OUT. And talking about it helps a lot, so you get it out and then you know you basically you've dealt with it, >you're over it you feel you carry on.<

Emphasis on performance of masculine feats and the consequent denial of softer emotions further reinforces the tight bonds. Dr Feel-Good mentioned the dysfunctional management of psychological illness amongst the tightly-knit group members, based largely on a denial of the reality of psychiatric infirmity and a widespread closing of ranks against the one exhibiting such signs of 'weakness'.

323 But I think you're right it's probably just part of the police culture – it's how you deal with it you know and if in the past if you presented with stress or emotional problems it was frowned upon – you were seen as bad you can't cope and so on. And even now, there's those kind of comments when people return to work – I think it's frowned upon still. People are not happy about people being booked off because they see that they take time off and it puts a burden on the remaining people. And uh I have seen several commanding officers, senior officers who said that they - that even people who worked in Human Resources who said that they were always very unsympathetic towards the people who presented with psychiatric problems

A lasting stigma attaches to those who are perceived as caving in under the pressure of the job and talking to an outsider such as a psychiatrist. Not only is it perceived as a sign of weakness, in that the police officer cannot keep his emotions under control and is perceived as less of a man (and simultaneously less worthy of being part of the group), but it is also seen as a betrayal of the secrets of the in-group to an outsider. Insp Faithful gives an insight into the group culture in the glorification of masculine strength and the consequent derogation of one who breaks the code and cracks under the pressure. Denial and retreat into black humour in an attempt to dispel any thoughts of it ever happening to oneself are common results.

257 things might have changed now, but try and get things through to the guys because way back if you went to see someone, it went on your file, it was there. If you tried to put in for promotion, “oh no, you are flaky”. Boef that's it shot down=The people used to discuss you at braais and in bars and stuff as “Hey jy's daai bedonderde ou” (*Hey, you're that nutty guy*) not necessarily as a sign of weakness but you knew that nothing was said in confidence=It came out (.) and it was made a joke of and you were the laughing stock of the entire station, and you know basically everyone around you and that is why the guys (.) {shakes head}.

Inclusion in the in-group is reliant on the performance of masculinity, a key component of the ideology underlying the discourse of integration and isolation. Policemen's lives are said to be highly organised by the relations between men, in which males demand the endorsement of other males, both associating with and competing against them and attempting to improve their position through attachments in masculine social hierarchies (Flood, 2007; Higate & Hopton, 2005), of which the police is one example. This male *homosociality* (a term coined by Kimmel in 1997) plays a crucial role in perpetuating gender inequalities and the dominance of masculinity, in which the ritual organisation of the tight bonds between males is achieved by the prohibition of women and any others not deemed part of the group (Flood, 2007; Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004). There is a pre-eminence given to male-male relations, rather than to the relationships with the women that co-inhabit their lives. The great divide between the two worlds of police and civilian can be the cause of much stress for a marriage (Woody, 2005). Insp Dark-Knight believed the situation to be responsible for the demise of his own marriage. The police discourse of "*us versus them*", whilst strengthening members within the environment, tends to push the police officers towards isolation from their social and family relationships; causing mental, physical and behavioural problems. Their need to protect their families from the truth forces them to become emotionally guarded, suppressing their feelings whilst with their loved ones, and being more distrustful and distancing in their social relationships, as Insp Faithful describes:

389 I think that's why the divorce rate is probably also where it is, cause for any person to try and relate to a policeman's job and what they're going through without ever having been there, that must be terrible. It must be hell to try and live with somebody I mean my wife comes home and she's like "this guy really got me going" and at least I know what she's talking about, I know the frustration and everything. Uh (.) But having to sit there - with the private sector, it's so totally totally different *from the police* it's different It's it's two different worlds.

There is the strong likelihood of this inhibition and distrust leading to emotional isolation and inability to access support even when desired.

449 And go home to your wife and kids and go hug them and kiss them and you can't go tell them what happened because it will not only upset you it'll upset them. And I think it's all the holding in – keeping everything to yourself – over the years it does bottle up and eventually you are going to burst.

Male homosociality is implicated in men's use of interpersonal violence, which articulates and preserves the hierarchies of power (Flood, 2007). A different, almost dysfunctional, sense of morality seems to pervade the group, the shared understanding leading to a collective condoning of violence that is seen as justified and a perception of it as almost 'normal' behaviour. Insp Faithful mentions this in passing while discussing his own sense of cohesion with other police officers (even those officers with whom he was not previously acquainted), merely through their belonging to the organisation.

376 Cause you get it out and you are talking to people that knows what you going through. Ja (.2) I would- if I walk into any police station, and say, "Jeez, I got this taxi driver and he went over a stop street red robot, and I pulled him over and all I get is this attitude you know, all sorry sir, and you pulled him out and you slapped him a couple of times" you know THE GUYS ARE ALL JA you gonna have this kind of group cohesion cause they have the same- You feel you are amongst equals basically the guys all know what you talking about.

He freely admits that boundaries are overstepped in the application of the law and with the support of the group as added incentive.

151 You sit you're in this situation you saw what this person did um (.) the whole chase to finally get hold of this guy {opens hands out to side} you get hold of him um it's a (.) it's a physical fight {hands balled into fists} with this person um::m and then ja you turn around and you take out your frustrations on him=you want to make him basically feel the same (.) fear and anxiety that he caused in those people. >Cause you have seen what he did to them - to the

victims basically< and you want that person to (.) to know what it was like to be helpless and not *be able to do anything*. And yes you do overstep your bounds {slight shake of head} you do. Um (.3) and it's in this whole situation it's it's >maybe there's a group of you, there's five or six guys, and the one guy will slap him and it escalates from then<. There's nothing to (.) there's no bounds=the boundaries (.) disappear {hands closed in front like a wall, then opening out to sides}.

Later, when not surrounded by the group, reality sets in and the processing of violence occurs.

182 There's a group cohesion you know it goes (.) you work - now you get back (.) um you try and forget about it or you forgot about it, *as a matter of fact* then something happens and it comes out and you sit there and you think *ja but what I did was actually wrong*

Members of the group can become dependent on each other to the extent where a group disempowerment and helplessness occurs, where the group needs a powerful father-figure who can protect and take care of them. This is inherent in the rank and hierarchy of the police, where it is frequently possible to defer decisions to someone of a higher rank. If the need for dependency is not satisfied, it can cause a lot of anxiety, and there is an implication that the SAPS structures are not designed for the effective performance of tasks, but rather for fulfilling the need for dependency (Mofomme, 2001). Insp Dark-Knight was essential in filling a paternalistic role for the raw recruits, probably as a way to try and “make up” (line 199) and “redeem himself you know just to say I did these things but look what I am doing now” (line 211) as Insp Faithful describes:

326 [He he] taught them life skills in the police. Not just about the work, he taught them how to deal with people. And I think that that's just plain experience

that came through there (.) Years of dealing with people. Uh (.) I think that was the biggest thing.

Insp Dark-Knight clearly felt that need for restitution in some manner too – where he felt that he had failed, his paternalistic attitude and guidance of the recruits under him could make them strong where he had been weak. It is clear that he seeks some form of absolution – his hesitancy and repetition of the word “probeer” (*tried*) make him seem unclear as to whether he feels he has succeeded.

318 En toe het ek 'n field training kursus gaan doen (.) en ek het poliesmanne opgelei, en in 'n mate het ek hulle prober (.3) op my manier het ek hulle- ek besef dit nou- het ek op my manier vir hulle probeer sterk maak, meer kleed gee dat hulle nie moet deurgaan wat ek deur was nie. Dat hulle nie moet inmekaar sak waar ek inmekaar sou gesak het nie. Ek het my beste gedoen om hulle tot die beste van my vermoë op te lei.

(And then I went to do a field training course and I trained policemen, and in a manner, I tried to – in my way I realise it now – I tried to make them stronger, to give them the apparel so that they would not have to go through what I went through. That they would not collapse where I collapsed. I did my best to train them to the best of my abilities.)

Although the in-group dependency serves to bond the members of the group to each other, an intriguing juxtaposition occurs when they are forced to confront each other within the system. This struggle for occupational survival is another dynamic clearly seen in the conversations of the participants. As a result of the limited promotional opportunities available, as well as severely limited capital, human and financial resources, the success or failure of one police officer is possibly only accomplished at the expense of another (Mofomme, 2001). The survival anxiety of the officers stimulates a desire to spoil the other's success, or remove themselves from harm's way when they perceive that the other is experiencing difficulties. “*Us versus them*” takes on a sinister note: those who tread safely

and obey the unwritten rules within the herd, and those who have erred. Little Miss Maturity noted this particularly in the case of her father, remarking on the fact that once he had appeared to have fallen from grace, his friends and close colleagues disappeared, leaving him to battle on by himself. The ranks were closed against him, with little chance of his reinstatement in his previous role in the organisation. There is a sense that what can taint one can be applied to all with whom they associate, and in a desperate attempt at self-preservation, the one is cut ruthlessly from the herd in the hope that the predators will be drawn to the weakness and leave the others alone.

492 Um (.) They are very supportive, but he has also come to the point where he gets paranoid – where he says, you know, “is this person really here to support me or are they here to backstab me?” I don’t know um (.) I don’t know in what sense he says that - he is really – he is not as trusting as he used to be, my dad used to ... he had a lot of friends but ... now they are few and far between. Um (.) The friends that he does have – they are people that you can trust.

511 And I think that as soon as he left the police force a lot of his friends kind of *disappeared*. Because of the whole racist allegation – >it was like a negative stigma that was attached to him<. And (1.0) um (.) he’s (.) I think to him it is more (.) I think it was a bit of an eye opener for him to see that now he can see who his true friends are. But (.) I do think that that hit him hard – I think it’s (.) I don’t know if it started off there or if that’s just what put him over the edge. I think it’s more what pushed him – that’s the last nudge he needed you know just to lose it all.

Whether the officer is marginalised first, or protects himself through isolation, is uncertain. Insp Faithful sees the situation differently to Little Miss Maturity in that Insp Dark-Knight’s isolation from his friends and colleagues drove them away from him:

242 Ja {nodding} It does um:m cause he was very well liked he worked there a long time and the way he started distancing himself from the people, even (.2) old friends that >had been with it started “ja but he’s bedonder”< [*yes, but he is crazy*]. He he gradually he became isolated in the environment where he actually had a lot of support and a lot of friends = he got isolated in that environment.

In summary, the discourse of strong integration and identification within the group, and concomitant isolation from families, friends and the greater community, or “*us versus them*”, is reliant on the performance of masculinity, which encompasses male bonding, the use of dysfunctional behaviours and dependence on rank-and-file. This dependence has the function of protecting the police officers from an external and potentially hostile world, but it concurrently has the effect of separating them from those who love them, conditioning them to treat individuals outside police culture with suspicion and caution. Ironically, it is this very discourse of group inclusion that instigates officers to mistrust each other in circumstances of occupational survival, causing them to turn on an officer who has not conformed.

“They don’t give a damn”: Deprivation, cynicism, and lack of support

Policemen come into the profession with many idealistic notions of what it will be like in the service, but the way of the organisation and the harsh reality of the world tend to make them increasingly intolerant of faults or mistakes in others. As such, they lose their sense of purpose over time. Unless the organisation can provide that significance, as well as the physical resources necessary to perform the job, cynicism is the members’ only way of coping with what appears to be a hostile, unstable and insecure organisational environment (Perrott & Kelloway, 2006; Richardsen, Burke, & Martinussen, 2006; Steyn & De Vries, 2007). Positive and rewarding aspects of any job often mitigate for some of the more demanding and stressful aspects, but the lack of physical resources has been shown to decrease engagement with a job whilst increasing levels of cynicism, and lowering organisational commitment and work efficacy (Mostert & Rothmann, 2006; Richardsen et al.,

2006; Singh, 2004). The prediction of job satisfaction in the police has been clearly linked to organisational stressors (Brough, 2004), and the principal concerns for police remain centred on the work structure and climate rather than job-specific hazards, although they are exposed to stressors of a traumatic nature on a daily basis (Brough, 2004; Collins & Gibbs, 2003; McCreary & Thompson, 2006). A common discourse in all participants' accounts, as well as in contemporary newspaper articles, was the lack of resources, which was a large factor in the development of cynicism towards the organisation. Translated into "*they don't give a damn*", the discourse of organisational negligence is intended to convey the police officers' sense of frustration at the lack of vital resources necessary to perform their everyday duties, and more, their dissatisfaction that the bare requirements necessary to keep them safe whilst performing their jobs are lacking. Insp Faithful complains of the lack of vehicles to do patrols, lack of equipment and also lack of basics such as bulletproof vests for the men that had been in the police for a while.

269 So the guys they really they don't ask THAT much but it is just not forthcoming so the whole the whole system (.) they they feel betrayed by the system it's not =You work your backside off (.) um I'm going to give you a VERY stupid example. Up until the day I left, I didn't have a bulletproof. (.2) Now (.) um (.) bullet-proofs came out long before these new students started pitching up um (.) they come out the college issued with a bulletproof, I put in requests - but you just I never had a bulletproof. For sixteen years. But they say you are not allowed to work outside without one, but then they don't give you one. But I must work outside because I am a senior, and I am supposed to check the new ones. Now what the hell must I do? So now I say "I'm not going to work outside, I'm working inside because I don't have a bulletproof."(.) "You will work outside". The whole time it's it's (.) It's not a matter of the one hand not knowing what the other one does, the one hand doesn't even know about the other hand.

For Insp Faithful, who saw his life's calling as being in the police, the organisational stressors were nevertheless enough to drive him to hand in his resignation:

- 448 Res It was a calling, almost?
- 449 Almost. No ja it was, it WAS. You didn't want to do anything else. This was wh:at I wanted to be, this was what I wanted to do, my entire life. And the system (1.2) let me down so much to the point where I resigned. I walked out. Twenty-four hours, pft that's it. Um I mean to have someone that (.) wanted to do nothing else (.6) to get to that point *it takes a lot. It really does* I mean I >want to do the work< I crave it, I miss it, (.) but when I think about (.) the organization itself and what's happening, that part, I don't want EVER again in my life.

Deficiencies on the part of the organisation have the effect of making the individuals feel betrayed by the system that fails to nurture them. Organisational changes, made without consultation with the individuals that would be most affected and involved, are experienced as intentionally malicious. As an example, shift-work has been mentioned as a highly stress-provoking phenomenon in a large amount of research (Collins & Gibbs, 2003; McCreary & Thompson, 2006), and Insp Faithful was no stranger to this, mentioning the changes that an adjustment from a twelve-hour shift to an eight-hour shift caused.

- 465 They changed from the twelve hour shifts to eight hour shifts which is- that is a nightmare, cause now you rush home, you rush back, you can't sleep cause now it's the middle of summer and you can't sleep cause it's too hot, you get up you tired and frustrated and you are back into this whole thing and you worked up again. (um) it's (.2) But they they they always mess where they shouldn't. The twelve hour shifts worked great but the problem was that nobody will tell you officially the guys - because of rest days, their leave lasted longer. >It was nice to get twenty-four days if you off for twelve days<.

Although organisational issues are seen as being the principal motivators for the development of cynicism within the police, many authors agree that the critical incidents experienced by police officials exert little disruptive influence directly, but rather operate

through the exacerbation of daily hassles that occur in the organisation (Regehr, Johanis, Dimitropoulos, Bartram, & Hope, 2003). It appears that the majority of response measures that police organisations take to address these problems have focussed on the provision of welfare support or employee assistance programmes, which, although beneficial in reducing strain in certain occupational groups, have had little effect in the police as a whole. This may be as a result of such programmes being secondary interventions designed to moderate the strain response rather than eliminating the stressor, such as lack of basic essentials, at the source (Brough, 2004; Collins, & Gibbs, 2003).

The primary intervention within the SAPS has traditionally been the availability of a debriefing session for those officers who have experienced trauma. The main model of critical Incident stressor debriefing used by the SAPS, also referred to as the ‘Mitchell Model’, is a formalised seven-phase discussion pertaining to a critical incident, traumatic experience or disaster. It was developed as a means of restoring the individual and the organisation to levels of former functioning swiftly, and was never proposed to be a substitute for psychotherapy or impede the natural resurgence of human resiliency (Malcolm, Seaton, Perera, Sheehan, & Van Hasselt, 2005). However, this term, ‘debriefing’ has come to have almost mystical significance in the SAPS, with sessions being carried out by individuals with little or no formal training in any of the psychologically grounded disciplines. Debriefing serves as a salve to the conscience of the organisation and management, who feel that this one-off debriefing session has the power to mitigate any traumatic effects that the witnessing of a gruesome or horrifying scene might have. Through unofficial and official organisational channels, there is the feeling conveyed to the members that if you have been ‘debriefed’, all should be fine, and exposure to events which have the potential to engender serious dysfunction will not cause any future inconvenience. This stance was clearly reflected in the conversations with participants, who saw debriefing as a way for them to escape the overwhelming nature of the incidents they were exposed to, as well as the consequences of the incidents. Insp Faithful made mention of it numerous times.

70 Um:m I mean how many guys, close friends of mine, got shot, uh got killed and I am still waiting to be debriefed.

There is a definite sense that debriefing is a miraculous cure-all – if one can only access the support structures that make it possible. This is clear in Insp Faithful’s recounting of an incident in which a particularly traumatic suicide scene had been attended by a young police woman. The organisation once again serves as a punching bag for the frustration engendered, the lack of resources being seen as yet more evidence of the deprivation forced upon the members.

113 BUT you don’t get support - there’s no support. The one woman, one of the new constables I had, it was the first suicide that she attended and (.) it really it got to her, she was very stressed out. So I went and sat down with her - I was a hostage negotiator for five years as well - so I sat down and I spoke and said look here if you need help, come to me, if I can’t help, I’ll get you people that can. Anyway, so the next day she comes to me and says she needs help, she’s not sleeping and so on. So I went to my Human Resource department and said “Look, please organise a debriefing for her”. A year later a year later they contacted her, phoned back and said, listen is it still necessary for them to come out? (0.3)

Once again, while the exaggeration of masculine characteristics has reached an art-form within the police sector, with physical strength, ruggedness and invulnerability playing a crucial role in the survival and protection of members from a dangerous physical and psychological environment, the behaviours have been typically associated with the repression of feelings and emotional distancing. As a result, immense shame is involved in the seeking of help such as debriefing or counselling. While police members pay lip-service to the idea of speaking about their emotions to a professional, in reality remarkably few would for fear that they would be seen as losing their minds or their professional edge (Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Regehr et al., 2003). Problems remain untreated, and officers strive to suppress emotional dis-ease, yet need an outlet to blame their lack of coping on if the need should arise. Little Miss Maturity was convinced that debriefing was necessary, though she was sceptical that the hardened policemen would accept the help if it was offered.

479 I don't know if everyone would accept it - I think females will – but the men might be more difficult to convince – because they have the attitude you know of “we're MEN, we're not supposed to be weak.”

Insp Faithful, in contradiction to his previous statements that if a policeman spoke about emotions it would count against him, now sets himself up as a champion of emotional disclosure:

748 (2.4) .hhhhh the only thing that the guy can do is to realise that to ask that and to accept help is not a sign of weakness. That's the biggest thing cause from management's side, nothing is going to happen. It's not going to happen. That's the reality. Um (.) They don't care.

Research findings have tended to show that one-shot, relatively brief debriefings have low overall effect sizes (Malcolm et al., 2005). Dr Feel-Good was the only one among the participants who was not fooled by the ‘one debriefing cures all ills’ fiasco. Through his relatively intimate knowledge of the management of traumatic incidents in the police, as well as hearsay accounts from his patients, he takes a decidedly dim view of the SAPS manner of debriefing.

267 And um (.2) the other thing – it's not related, but I am thinking of another story about the so-called debriefing work that is being done which I often think is not being done correctly. Unfortunately it's very traumatizing. It's not dealing with emotions and feelings but letting people graphically describe the details of the event is just reinforcing the whole process. And where people think that debriefing is actually not such a great way of dealing with it. A lot of people come to me and say “I've never been debriefed I'm going to sue the minister of police” and I say “Be glad you've never been debriefed because the way it's done you'll probably end up being more traumatized.” So that's another thing that needs to be looked at. There are ways of dealing

with debriefing in a constructive way with debriefing – but not the way it’s being done at present.

Insp Dark-Knight also mentioned the lack of counselling that he perceived as a sign of lack of support from the organisation, especially where it concerned court cases or charges laid against him. Organisational response to allegations of wrongdoing or public enquiry are viewed as highly significant by police officers: if an officer feels supported by senior officers when he has allegations laid against him, he will normally react by being complimentary of management and will still exhibit a high sense of commitment to the organisation (Regehr et al., 2003). Conversely, those officers who experience no support, or worse, feel that management “*don’t give a damn*”, tend to feel humiliated and ostracised, as Insp Dark-Knight’s response clearly demonstrates. His feelings have crystallised into a diatribe of impotent threats against the organisation:

292 Ek het nie inspuittings of iets gekry nie. Ek het nie “counselling” gekry daarna nie - niks nie. Ek het nie counselling gekry deur my hofsake nie - hulle het my aangekla vir drie klagtes en hulle was strafbare manslag gewees.

(I didn’t get injections or anything. I didn’t get counselling afterwards – nothing. I didn’t get counselling through my court cases – they charged me with three accounts of culpable homicide.)

472 Hulle is baie arrogant. Hulle het geen respek vir die mediese wereld nie. Hulle het geen respek vir hulle lede onder hulle nie. Hulle voel vere vir hul lede. Of daai persoon net werk op wat in teendeel vir hom of vir haar gesê is - of hulle die uithou vermoë van ’n polispersoon, polislid toets - of wag hulle tot ek nou eers heeltemaal vernietig is? Maar hulle speel vir tyd - daar sal ’n dag kom. Hulle sal weet van my. Ek sê vir jou, Kerry, hulle gaan weet van my.

(They are very arrogant. They have no respect for the medical world. They have no respect for their members under them. They feel nothing for their members. If that person is working in contradictory ways to what has been

prescribed for him or her, if they try to test the perseverance of a police person, or are they waiting until I am totally destroyed? But they are playing for time – there will come a day. They will know about me. I say this to you, Kerry, they are going to know about me.)

The desperate cries for help from the police officials are reported in the major newspapers at the time of the research interviews, and many scathingly discuss the lack of resources and assistance that the officers receive from the organisation. The articles are graphic in their descriptions of the gruesome murders committed by the officers, their fantasies of violence, or their self-injurious behaviour; at fault is the organisation and the lack of resources, reports declare:

“Die soeveelste krisis, toe Morney die afgelope week onder meer sy suster aangeval het, gedreig het om sy vrou en hul twee seuntjies ‘in stukkies op te sny en met haar kop voetbal te speel’ en wou selfmoord pleeg, het sy pa, Dr Johan Theron, nou genoop om te praat oor die onhoudbare omstandighede waarin polisiebeamptes werk en die ontoereikendheid van hulp binne die stelsel wanneer hulle dit nodig het”

(The umpteenth crisis, when Morney, amongst other events, attacked his sister, threatened to cut his wife and their two sons up in pieces and play football with her head and wanted to commit suicide, all during the course of the week, drove his father, Dr Johan Theron to speak about the unbearable circumstances in which police officials work and the unavailability of help within the system when they need it) (Kühne, 2005, p. 6).

In a letter to the provincial police Commissioner, psychiatrists made mention of the fact that “die bestuurstyl van die Polisie kry die skuld vir psigiatriese probleme by lede en selfs van hul gesinslede” (*the management style of the police gets the blame for psychiatric problems in members and even those of their family members*) (De Beer, 2005, p. 3). They are extremely perturbed that, in that province alone, seven police members killed themselves

since April that year, including a superintendent who shot himself with his service pistol in his office in the provincial section for Human Resource Management.

“Elders in die land weier sommige psigiaters om polisielede te behandel weens hul frustrasie oor die gebrek aan ondersteuning vir hul pasiënte binne die polisie. Terapeute landwyd is dit eens dat die situasie gevaarlik is, nie net vir polisielede en hul gesinne nie, maar ook vir die gemeenskap wat die lede dien”

(Elsewhere in the country some psychiatrists are refusing to treat police members due to their frustration over the lack of support for their patients in the police. Therapists countrywide are unanimous in agreeing that the situation is dangerous, not only for the police members and their families, but also for the communities that the members serve) (Kühne, 2005, p. 6).

There is no doubt that the blame for the policemen’s aggression and violence is laid squarely at the door of the organisation; and the lack of adequate emotional support is seen as the main reason a man might choose to murder his family in such a gruesome manner. To blame is the “spanningsvolle omstandighede wat die polisielede en hul gesinne so negatief beïnvloed” (*stressful circumstances that negatively influence the police members and their families*) (Kühne, 2005, p. 6). In this way, the individual is absolved of all responsibility, washed clean in the consuming fire of the organisation’s guilt.

However, the one resource mentioned by all the participants as lacking, the embodiment of the deprivational discourse of “*they don’t give a damn*” (and possibly causing the greatest amount of strife), was the officers’ perception of lack of support from management or the organisation itself (McCreary & Thompson, 2006). A primary factor of this is the perceived support an officer receives, particularly from superiors, with a resultant sense of heightened devaluation, levels of stress and burnout experienced with lower levels of support from management (Regehr et al., 2003). Authority without power leads to an undermined, dispirited management, as power without authority leads to an authoritarian

establishment, which in turn often leads to work-related stress and ultimate burnout (Mofomme, 2001). Dr Feel-Good reports on the feelings of the majority of his clients:

95 uh but it's just interesting how the changes and the perception – that there's no- there's now a foreshortened future, there's now really no chance for promotion and they don't have the support of their superiors and the structure's falling apart and you know everything is chaotic.

104 And they still didn't have support. They didn't have support from their superiors and then they felt victimized. And uh that's often a reason or a trigger for the people that come to me and decompensate and sortof feel they can't carry on, is the fact that they feel they've been victimized, they don't see any chances of promotion. And that's not only White uh uh policemen, it could be anyone.

Tygertalk reports in a newspaper article, “The suicides and alleged murders should not happen – it is an indication of the absolute lack of support that members experience every day” (“Cowboys Don't Cry”, 2006, p. 3). Insp Dark-Knight mentioned it in the sense of his feelings of betrayal from an organisation he had given his life for and now saw nothing in return. His long career in the police (prior to the charges laid against him) allowed Insp Dark-Knight to gain the sense that all of his positive contributions were lost in the face of this one allegation. His integrity was called into question, and his reputation was undermined.

414 Daar's geen (1.3) daar's niks van bo af nie. Daar kom niks terug nie. Jy kry niks terug nie, jy (.) hulle gee net eenvoudig nie vir jou om nie. Hoeveel kere was ek op tonele gewees? {Shakes head}. (.2) Daar word nie vir jou gevra “luister, het jy hulp nodig?” nie.

(There's nothing – there's nothing from above. Nothing comes back. You get nothing back, you – they simply do not care for you. How many times was I on scenes? I was never asked if I needed help.)

- 336 Nog nooit in my lewe het ek 'n sielkundige gesien - voor daai het ek al mense gesien - met die laaste met die siekte, maar ek het nog nooit counselling gehad nie, niks nie. *(Never in my life did I see a psychologist – before I saw all of those people with the last illness, but I never had counselling, nothing.)*

It is clear, then, that the youthful idealism of new recruits in the police Service is quickly subsumed by the way of the organisation and the harsh reality that they are exposed to over time. Unless the organisation can provide a true sense of purpose, as well as the physical resources necessary to perform the job, the discourse of organisational negligence and lack of support or “*they don't give a damn*”, with its resulting cynicism, will be the members' only way of coping with a hostile, unstable and insecure organisational environment.

“How else can we cope?”: Passive-aggressive substance abuse, criminality and manipulation

Flowing seamlessly from the discourse of organisational negligence and lack of support is the reactionary discourse of “*how else can we cope?*” This discourse has as its main tenet the organisation's culpability in the maladaptive functioning that the officers demonstrate. Officers take refuge in alcohol or drug abuse, criminal activities performed for illicit gain, and manipulation of the system in order to obtain financial rewards, all under the auspices of the vindictory discourse which blames the organisation for the need to take matters into their own hands in this way. As a result of the organisation's lack of investment in its personnel, officers feel a certain entitlement in their distortion of organisational mandates and rules in order to achieve benefits that they feel would not otherwise be

forthcoming, whether financial, or simply a sense of achievement at manipulating the system. It is their mode of coping with and surviving an untenable situation.

As has been discussed previously, relations among males in military-like institutions have customarily involved a culture of masculinity and camaraderie built on competitive repartee and the prominence of stereotypically masculine deeds such as the consumption of copious amounts of alcohol and the performance of aggressive acts (Flood, 2007; Frewin et al., 2006). There has been much research to establish alcohol abuse as a major problem in police officers, with exposure to work events, PTSD symptomatology and organisational stressors being alluded to as major causes of excessive alcohol use (Violanti, 2004). The police culture reinforces the use of alcohol as a social and psychological device for coping with stressors of the job, increasing prevalence of mental disorders to nearly twice that of the normal population (Violanti, 2004). Most of the participants mentioned the use and abuse of alcohol in some degree or another, although Little Miss Maturity was the exception that stated “my father doesn’t drink” (line 76). Dr Feel-Good thinks that, in Insp Dark-Knight’s case, “substance abuse also played a role from an early stage” (line 69), and that “physiologically you know he’s got an alcohol problem – he’s got all the metabolic syndrome things” (line 171). He mentions the use of alcohol as a coping mechanism even from Insp Dark-Knight’s early days in the force.

291 Um I just think about it – if I remember what people used to tell me, you know, from their military service and the Koevoet people and so on – I mean they would go killing people and then go back and drink, you know. It would be like a drinking session. That’s the way they dealt with it.

Insp Faithful, while referring many times to the ‘canteen ethos’ subscribed to by the police (Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004) - (“we used to drink quite a lot together”- line 143) - also mentions several incidents of drinking alcohol whilst on duty, which were, he said, attempts to cope with the pressure of the organisational stressors. From his account, it appears that the police officers took it as a personal affront when drinking on duty was restricted. He implies

that without alcohol, many of the police officers would not be able to cope with the job efficiently and also that the management was aware of the issue but were prepared to turn a blind eye to it as long as it did not get out of hand.

452 And DR.INKING that's definitely the most popular! Ja It's actually not something to laugh about but I mean, what else? We *used to drink on duty something terrible*. But that was also a way of.....and I mean your commanding officers, (.2) they knew you had in a shot or two. Um but they didn't really do anything about it. (.) um Cause going out, maybe just drinking those one or two brandies and coke just got you (.3) you weren't you weren't drunk you were (.2) >ok, technically speaking under the influence<, but it< just got you> to the point where you could operate efficiently you know you can- And they knew that, but obviously they just kept tabs just to make sure it didn't get out of hand but I mean they knew but <they kind of let it sli:de> and that helped cope with a lot of things as well. On the job you just have that one and you feel ok shit- it just relaxes you it calms you just that bit and I mean now they are clamping down on the guys and they sit and they get worked up and worked up and worked up.

The media, reporting on the case of a family murder in which three children were shot and killed by their father, who then turned the gun on himself, implies that it is the trauma of the work circumstances that causes maladaptive functioning. “Die trauma van sulke voorvalle word onderdruk en maak sy verskyning in die vorm van alkoholisme en gesinsgeweld” (*The trauma of such cases is repressed and makes its appearance in the form of alcoholism and family violence*) (Hume & Box, 2007). Insp Dark-Knight's narrative includes more than the simple imbibing of a few brandies and coke while on duty, as Dr Feel-Good implies with his use of the words “substance abuse” rather than simply ‘alcohol abuse’. Insp Dark-Knight refers to drugs, especially marijuana, which help a person to relax and calm down after a stressful time, and mentions that he was certainly not the only one under the influence of drugs, although he implies his own innocence by mentioning that it was “*others*” that encouraged him onto the path of drug abuse. His use of the words “*a few*

times” which he uses to describe the pattern of his abuse in the beginning of his dialogue, he later contradicts with “it did become a habit slowly”.

497 (11.4) {looking down, rubbing hands} *Ek het al ’n paar keer gerook (2.3) sigarette en ander. Dit laat jou rustig voel. Niemand weet daarvan nie. (4.2) Ek het nie gevra daarvoor, maar hulle het gekom. Dis my een - hoe sal ek sê? - vriend, ’n persoon wat ek ken. Hulle het dit gedoen. Toe vra ek vir hulle “hoe voel dit?” Toe het hulle vir my gesê “Probeer”*. Ek is nie seker ek het baie hard probeer nie, maar dit begin stadig ’n habit raak. Elke keer as ek bedruk voel dan voel ek dit is ’n tipe van ’n uitkomstans.

(I smoked a few times, cigarettes and other things. It makes you feel calm. No one knows about it. I didn't ask for it, but they came. It was a – how should I put it – a friend, a person that I know. They did it. I asked them “how does it feel?” and they said “try”. I am not sure that I tried very hard, but it did become a habit slowly. Every time if I feel pressurised, then I feel it is kind of an escape.)

It is undeniable that communities demand a higher standard of ethical conduct from their police officers than they do of the general population, the implication being that a police officer should aspire to highly principled behaviour both in their private lives and professional capacities (Faull, 2008; Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004). Understandably, it is disconcerting when police officers fail in maintaining their ethical standards, and leads to a lack of trust in the police as a whole. The SAPS’ predecessor, the SAP, suffered from low integrity, with a reputation of a brutal force that regularly engaged in human rights’ violations. It was a semi-military organisation characterised by a strong code of silence, by means of which many secrets were effectively concealed. This atmosphere of low integrity was carried across into the new SAPS. In this environment, there are many challenges: the salaries are extremely low; the dangers of the job necessitate taking out expensive life insurance policies leaving little money for basic living expenses; communication is poor; there is a general lack of morale; and members of the organisation feel undervalued or marginalised by the management. As such, certain forms of corruption are perceived as

being excusable (Faull, 2007, 2009; Singh, 2004). There is a distinct danger that disclosures concerning the lack of money as a primary reason for police corruption are likely to result in greater acceptance from both the public and the police. The reactionary discourse of “*how else can we cope?*” which inspires this position additionally provides a means to justify corrupt behaviour and allow the police to assume a victim position in the debate (Faull, 2007). Officially it is seen as being a police officer’s duty to maintain his or her integrity in the face of temptation, yet given the informal code of silence that prohibits members from informing on the misdoings of their colleagues, members are reluctant to mention if they know of any criminal doings (Dean et al., 2010; Skolnick, 2008). Many are involved in criminal activities of some degree or another too, and as such, do not want to draw attention to their own doings unnecessarily. Supervisors are not prepared to investigate, since fingers might be pointed at their management abilities, and they prefer to turn a blind eye (Faull, 2007, 2008). Additionally, in South Africa the political commitment to fighting corruption within the Police seems to be ambivalent, suggestive of a more tolerant view of corruption within the ranks (Faull, 2008; Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004; Sauerman & Ivkovic, 2008). In these conditions, a personality type that Dr Feel-Good refers to as “antisocial” (line 71) thrives. He is amused as he mentions Insp Dark-Knight’s unwitting revelations of criminal activity when he was undergoing ECT treatment for his severe depression. Under the influence of anaesthetic, Insp Dark-Knight revealed much about his clandestine operations.

75 And he started relating all sorts of activities hehe in which he was involved, cause at one stage he and his wife did some scuba diving, but it sounds as if the scuba-diving was around um uh uh the illegal collection of abalone and its trade. And I was surprised to hear of all the projects and building going on around his house - it seemed as though he had somehow made some income out of this process. But it seems as though there are sort of certain criminal activities in the background despite the fact that he was in the police force.

Insp Faithful also alludes to the police officers conducting private business out of police hours on their rest days; one of the reasons that the shift changes were so maligned was that these extra-mural activities were curtailed by the fewer rest days afforded to each

officer. When the officers were working twelve hour shifts, four days of duty entitled them to four days off, a privilege strongly hampered by the introduction of the eight hour shift. Many police officers took advantage of the previously greater amount of rest days to indulge in other occupations, and many of these were not strictly above board. Insp Faithful uses as justification the need for the officers to feel validated by being able to afford luxuries to which their police salaries do not entitle them. His closing words convey the definite sense of prerogative that the supporting discourse demands: it is seen as a right of the police officer to make extra money where he can, and when that right is taken away, the system is at fault, not the officer.

470 But they they they always mess where they shouldn't. The twelve hour shifts worked great but the problem was that nobody will tell you officially the guys - because of rest days, their leave lasted longer. >It was nice to get twenty-four days if you off for twelve days<. Um:m But the guys started doing *private jobs*, and that was what they had the biggest problem with. The private jobs weren't interfering with the work, but it just gave the guy that little bit of money to have one or two luxuries that he wanted to give his family or GIVE himself, maybe a bike, or >whatever the case may be<. Um Just to feel that you know I'm worth something. Now they go take that away as well. So where's it going to end?

Intimate knowledge of how a system works, and also how to get around obstacles, serves as a great temptation to those of lower moral fibre. Certain police officers see opportunity for easy success because they know the system, and also how lax it is (Faull, 2008), and are therefore in the best position to abuse it, all neatly packaged under the rationalisation that it is the only method they have of coping with an untenable situation. An inability to resist for-gain temptations of integrity results in sporadic accountability, and has the concurrent result that police tend to enforce the law in an erratic and biased manner, under which the concept of democratic policing cannot be achieved. Insp Faithful's convenient justification illustrates the tenet that, as a result of working with the lowest of

society, the police internalise those values, and in a certain manner, become like those they are trying to prosecute.

673 Well ja you see, you get a lot of aggression towards you and let's face it, you become what you work with. You work with (.) the scum of society.

As a result of certain financial advantages that exist when a police officer is medically boarded, many police officers take the route of trying to convince the system that they are so impaired as a result of the trauma they have been through at the hands of the SAPS that they are no longer fit for work. Most, however, would not simply resign because of the monetary implications. If officers are retired for medical reasons (referred to as 'medically boarded'), they still continue to receive a salary from the SAPS, as well as medical expenses, and are additionally freed to be able to pursue their own private work at the same time. Obviously, a lot of corruption can creep into such a system, and Dr Feel-Good is acutely aware of this, having seen many police officers who were trying to be boarded.

127 cause there's obviously lots of secondary gain now. In terms of- often you know we discuss that very extensively, that we shouldn't (.) consider uh uh occupational incapacity on the grounds of a so-called negative work environment or the financial advantages that can play a role to the patient. But that's often what people would say to you- you can give them the options, to say rather to retire early or resign - retrain, find yourself a profession, and they say, "No but I am going to lose too much you know. I've given all my life to the police force, I've been there for twenty-five years and if I resign now I'll not gain anything. I'll lose my medical aid and you know." So so the there are other motives in terms of looking at that possibility as an option.

The treating psychiatrist is thus placed in a difficult position: while being aware of the possibility that they are being manipulated by the members of the organisation, they are nevertheless worried about the patients that they treat and the very real possibility of one of

them committing suicide or worse. He implies that Insp Dark-Knight has taken the route of deliberately not taking care of his health in order to seem more impaired than he actually is.

171 uh physiologically you know he's got an alcohol problem – he's got all the metabolic syndrome things. You know even that he used as part of his attempt to be seen as perhaps more impaired than he was – we sent him to an endocrinologist who made a lot of effort to explain to him the diet and to increase his insulin because he ended up here almost in a coma one day and they had him admitted. But he wasn't really – he's not making any adjustments to his diet, lifestyle, exercise. Uh He really is not looking well after his diabetes. So there could be various motives. Myself and the physician thought that he's you know doing it on purpose uh to actually to present himself as more impaired than he possibly is. Or adding – you know if he adds more physical problems to the emotional that will contribute to our sort of assessments of the severity of his impairment.

Defining oneself as ill tends to make it easier to gain the empathy of society, as opposed to categorising the self as evil, especially for those involved in human rights violations. PTSD and other symptoms of overt illness may be a useful way for officers to deal with being implicated in deeds committed on the wrong side of the political conflict; once again, although very manipulative, this behaviour does not negate the potential for harm – as Dr Feel-Good sees it, Insp Dark-Knight is a “*time-bomb*”, just waiting for the right time to go off. It is a delicate line that he treads, given the manipulation of the police officers in order to get the psychiatrists to do what they want, but also the extraordinarily real threat of ability to harm either themselves, their families or their work colleagues.

352 Um uh Apart from that you need to make some sort of risk assessment which I think is important – to decide what risk does this patient or this member of the police force hold in terms of his own safety and that of other people. It's not only the police force but it's the family, it's the public. And that's something

that is often seen as a threat as well, which makes it very difficult to assess and which can be seen as very manipulative – especially in Insp Dark-Knight’s case as well where he has threatened harm to colleagues and harm to the family. And he won’t allow his wife to divorce him, he’d rather kill her sort of “wait, when they send me back they’ll see what I’ll do” and manufacturing primitive weapons that he carries around with him almost in a traumatic gesture – you know, producing it and showing it at therapy sessions but clearly conveying the message of a threat – not even veiled you know of potential violence or harm to others if he doesn’t get his way. But still, once again, I think he has a high risk to harm himself or somebody else and that could be predicted by his personality profile, and by the past history, by the instability of mood. He has been shown to be violent and unpredictable in the past so I think those things need to be taken into account as well. He is probably not suitable to be a policeman, but then who is? And who would be willing to do that work you know?

The possibility of the officers manipulating for personal gain has not been ignored in the media either, although there is a tendency to view these occurrences as being in the past. An article in *Rapport* states:

“n Deel van die probleem lê by die polisiebestuur se wantroue jeens lede wat aan stresversteuring ly. Hulle is wantrouig omdat polisielede in die verlede versinde geesteskwale as verskoning gebruik het om met gunstige pakkette uit die polisie ontslaan te word”

(A part of the problem lies in the police management’s distrust of members who suffer from stress disorders. They are mistrustful because the police members in the past used fake mental illnesses as an excuse to be discharged from the police with favourable remuneration packages) (Kühne, 2005, p. 6).

Insp Faithful mentions it too, citing financial motives on the part of the organisation for the reinstatement of officers, many of whom are deemed too impaired to function within the police.

499 [The bottom] line um:m (.6) top management turning around saying (.2) stress is not a disease, not a sickness, number one. Denial of that um (.) that's where the problem is, bottom line. Um you've got guys like Insp Dark-Knight that are (.4) totally stuffed, I mean, he picks up his phone when he's on his medication and stuff, he's in slow motion- he picks it up like this- {acts out} I mean he's not he's this slo:w mo:tion human being. Um to tell that person, "ja, you got to go back to work". I mean, that guy he' he's stuffed, now you throw him back - why are you doing that? Um because and I mean I know why they doing it. Um finances is the biggest issue.

The result is that many members of the service are afraid to leave, fearful of being tarred with the same brush and being seen as manipulative in their attempts to leave the police. Kühne (2005) blames this for the high number of police suicides. Professionals, such as psychiatrists or therapists outside the police service, are also seen as being untrustworthy, motivated by their compassionate need to obtain the best for their patients whilst ignoring the welfare of the organisation.

“Volgens Brook is die polisiebestuur geneig om terapeute buite die diens te wantrou en dit maak dit baie moeilik om krisisse te beheer. ‘Ek kry die indruk dat ’n psigiater se verslag soms minder gewig dra as die mening van die bevelvoerder”

(According to Brook, the police tend to mistrust therapists outside the service and this makes it very difficult to handle crises. ‘I get the impression that a psychiatrist’s report carries less weight than the opinion of the commander’) (Kühne, 2005, p. 6).

“Die polisiebestuur gee nie gehoor aan die aanbevelings van plaaslike psigiaters dat lede ongeskik is om met hul werk voort te gaan nie. Dan verval die mense net verder in depressie”

(The police management does not follow the recommendations of local psychiatrists that members are unfit to carry on with their work. Then the people just get more depressed) (De Beer, 2005, p. 3).

Die Son reports a case of attempted suicide in which a psychiatrist advised that a member be booked off for two months as a result of post traumatic stress. “Maar daar het ’n senior polisie-offisier van Parow hom meegedeel hy ‘lyk nie siek nie’ en hy ‘moet kom werk’ *(But there a senior police officer from Parow told him that he ‘did not look sick’ and he ‘should come to work’)* (Van Loof, 2006, p. 2). He was advised that should he choose not to return to work, he should rather decide to resign, as a transfer was not an option for him. This leads to a great source of frustration for psychiatrists such as Dr Feel-Good, whose advice (in his view) is deliberately ignored by the organisation.

412 No – if I book him off for the same condition they will not accept it. Unless he has some other diagnosis. They are probably making it clear that they don’t trust the treating psychiatrist or physician’s uh uh clinical judgment or they think that they don’t agree with it.

Once again though, police feel that they are owed by the system – “*they owe me a lot, Kerry*” (Insp Dark-Knight) - as a result of this they feel justified in taking whatever they can from the organisation whenever they get the chance.

Conclusion

Discourse analysis is primarily concerned with destabilising the apparently continuous nature of meanings within a corpus of texts (Stevens, 2008), and within this study, this was achieved through the consideration of oppositions within the narratives as well as the reasoning for the use of certain justificatory dialogue and consequent ideological effects. An effort was made to ground these discourses through revealing how they are socio-historically located, which allowed for alternative meanings to emerge from the texts. Additionally, I have attempted to empathise with and give insight into the perspectives of the participants themselves, deliberately blurring the boundaries of what is traditionally considered discourse analysis through the addition of an ethnographic perspective. In this way, I have intentionally manoeuvred between investigating people's life worlds, experiences and feelings and trying to understand how accounting for these things is performed in language.

Much of the discourse regarding the organisation locates the police officers in the role of the helpless, passive subject against whom deeds are committed which propel them into actions not of their own volition, paying homage to an all-encompassing meta-narrative of an external locus of control. This avoidance coping, of which methods such as cynicism, alcohol or substance abuse and blame of another party are most notable, could have many origins. The two most likely are the limited mandate of the police to act as first responders (which could also be seen as a lack of authorisation to act), and certain aspects of the police sub-culture.

As first responders to a crisis situation, the police are often called upon to provide the first line of aid, which responses, although seen as superficially successful, are soon recognised as marginally effective when dealing with the intractable nature of the problems the officers address. Given the overwhelming amount of crime, lack of efficient support on the part of the organisation, and the nature of the justice system which most police feel is ineffective in prosecution of criminals, officers feel disillusioned about the roles they are playing in the struggle, since even their small triumphs in the arrests of offenders are marginalised by the courts. Although the police are seen as being action-orientated by nature

of the roles they fulfil, it is improbable that they would be regarded as *problem solvers*, which encourages a “band-aid”, or short-term approach to problem solving (Perrott & Kelloway, 2006, p. 220). Enhancing this effect, the militaristic structure of the police is dependent on a rank-and-file system in which the subordinates are reliant on the orders of their commanders to act.

Furthermore, when the officer feels marginalised, de-authorised or impotent, the self-concept embracing powerful masculinity that is demanded by the in-group is undermined. One way of managing the crisis that occurs in the self-concept and need for belonging in this masculine world, in the face of constant disillusionment and emasculation, is to adopt a justificatory dialogue that locates the fault for failure in an outside agency rather than within the self. In order to avoid feelings of defencelessness and defeat, the officer depends on discourses that rely on an external locus of control, and thus manages to maintain the image of him or herself as potent within the group, still able to exert influence on an untenable situation. An organisation that fails to provide basic necessities for its members to function within their positions is thus held to blame in many of the justificatory discourses of organisational negligence, betrayal and the concurrent organisational culpability in the maladaptive functioning of the officer.

Within the organisational culture, discourses of strong group integration and isolation, (with the inherent identification and cohesion, such as “*us versus them*”), depend on the expression of masculine repertoires, amongst which are the denial of weaker or ‘feminine’ emotions and the ability to act violently if the situation deserves. The need to perform in a masculine way in order to adhere to the strong group identity and cohesion often determines that if violence is not committed in certain cases, such as in retribution for an act perpetrated against the group, the officer neglecting to act is less worthy of being deemed a man. Commission of an aggressive act against another who is not part of the ‘in’ group is, if not overtly, at least surreptitiously lauded. Overt and covert institutional, socio-historical and cultural practices thus venerate male dominance and, by implication, violence at a personal level. Denial of personal agency in aggressive actions through blaming another provides a convenient scapegoat for many activities that would not otherwise be performed, and creates

an environment in which officers can deny all sense of complicity or responsibility. As such, the effect of any violence is minimised, either through justifications and rationalisations that support the idea that the ‘other’ was deserving of the act of violence directed at them, or excuses that cast another in the position of motivator for a deed.

Taking advantage of the system through the abuse of rights, criminality and coping methods such as substance abuse is not only seen as being justifiable, but is also implicitly and covertly encouraged by the underlying discourses adhered to by the police subculture. One outcome of this is that the “*us versus them*” discourse broadens in scope to imply not only the police officer against the civilian, but the cohesive group of police officers against the might of the uncaring organisation to which they all belong. This is clearly seen in the sometimes bizarre fantasy in which the lone officer sees himself as capable of taking on the might of the organisation with a view to “*making them pay*”, and is present in many officers’ narratives.

The following chapter expands on these lines of inquiry, augmenting the investigation with the participants’ beliefs and conceptions of the concept of workplace violence and how these are revealed in the discourses to which they subscribe.

Chapter Eight

Adding Layers of Paint: The Shadows of Violence



CHAPTER EIGHT

ADDING LAYERS OF PAINT: THE SHADOWS OF VIOLENCE



One day it will have to be officially admitted that what we have christened reality is an even greater illusion than the world of dreams.

(Salvador Dali, 1904-1989)

Introduction

As has been discussed previously, contemporary research postulates that the suicide rate for police officers is many times higher than that of the general population. In a recent report, Senior Superintendent Mohlabi Tlomatsana, a national police spokesperson, confirmed that more than five hundred policemen had committed suicide in the years from 2001 to 2006 in South Africa (Hume & Box, 2006), making it a serious concern. What is more worrying is that many of the police officers who are implicated in suicidal behaviour have also shown tendencies towards violence aimed at others close to them, whether family members or colleagues.

As a point of departure for this chapter on violence, it is fascinating to re-visit the profile of the violent workplace offender as encountered in the empirical evidence garnered by many quantitative studies over the years (see Chapter Two for the full profile of the

violent offender). What would the predictive typologies of the typical 'at risk' individual make of the case of Insp Dark-Knight? If we can briefly review in the form of a case study:

Insp Dark-Knight is indeed a White male, slightly older than the suggested 30 to 40 year age limit. Due to his volatile nature, and a disciplinary charge laid against him, he has been removed from active policing, and placed in a desk job, where he answers telephones and acts as a SAPS-public interface. Whilst this is not strictly involving the loss of his job, his identity has previously been fused with his performance of the tasks of a functional officer: this demotion to office work might as well be a termination for the loss of prestige, fulfilment and even monetary reward (he automatically loses the 'danger pay' stipend used to remunerate the active members of the police) it entails. Although I believe him to be intelligent, his coping mechanisms are simplistic in the extreme, such that he reacts in a 'black or white' manner, and is not able to deal with his stress in varied or constructive ways. Since he was just a child (only sixteen), his identity has been woven into the fabric of his calling to police work, and it is almost impossible to separate the man from the officer. His withdrawal from friends and family members into a world of limited personal interactions has made his job all-important, and as such, his over-enmeshed relationship with his career has led to Insp Dark-Knight feeling diminished without it.

His background both within the police and in his personal life is liberally peppered with violent incidents, suicidal threats and behaviour, threats of intimidation or death levelled against his family and colleagues, spousal abuse, and cruelty to animals. Over his last few years in the police, he has gradually withdrawn himself from relationships with colleagues (apart from Insp Faithful), and his family relationships have soured (as in the case of his daughter) or totally disintegrated (as in his relationship with his wife). On many occasions in the interview he admits to liking the responsibility of working alone, of making decisions for himself for which he does not have to answer. His locus of control, like that of many police officers, is external, with many other entities being blamed for paths he has chosen in life.

He has a strong history of compulsive behaviour exhibited in his alcohol abuse, and more recently admits to being addicted to other substances such as marijuana. His fascination with weapons is clearly demonstrated in his ability to fashion a potent harbinger of death from a ball-point pen, which item he produced at our first session.

Post traumatic Stress Disorder with concurrent depression and suicidal ideation is his official diagnosis, bestowed by Dr Feel-Good, who mentions that Insp Dark-Knight's co-morbid diabetes has a deleterious effect on his cognitive reasoning abilities. While it is difficult to say whether Insp Dark-Knight often relives his past experiences of violence in conversation, his display of the photographs of his violent episodes (and Insp Faithful has mentioned video footage too) tends to support an idea of his preoccupation with his gruesome past. It is abundantly clear that his history of trauma, sexual abuse and violence has played havoc with his perception of self and his self-esteem. His past has also played a role in the construction of elaborate defence mechanisms such as his 'flights of fancy', in which he imagines himself as taking on the might of the system in order to "make them pay" for what they have done.

If we evaluate, the typology is spot on in predicting that Insp Dark-Knight has a high risk of committing an act of workplace violence (though I am not convinced that anyone, if given the above description, would not have pointed that fact out relatively quickly). It is a typology that is straightforward to apply: fitting snippets of his complex history neatly into one or other category takes on an almost astrological feel and it becomes easy to believe that the categories themselves are valid. This fragmentary approach leads one to question, then, given the clarity of the signs pointing towards an incident of workplace violence waiting to happen, why the organisation is so eager to reinstate Insp Dark-Knight within the ranks? Not only this, but also the decision to return him to a position that will engender utter frustration in him, given the social and situational triggers inherent in the job (such as Insp Dark-Knight's perception of injustice, his interactions in a workforce of increasing diversity, the excessively autocratic micro-managerial supervision, and negative appraisals of his performance). Not so clear, however, are the complex, enmeshed and socially-embedded conditions that form the bedrock of the above. The story is lost in the naturalistic psychology

that attempts an explanation as opposed to the qualitative approach to human science psychology that attempts understanding. This chapter is an attempt to address some of the discourses and perspectives in the interviews of the participants with a view to understanding more of the facets of this complicated phenomenon.

Emerging Discourses and Perspectives

Violence Towards Others and the Self

The participants made numerous references to the commissioning of violent acts, which can be classified according to the three umbrella dimensions of aggression postulated by Neuman and Baron (1998) and Rutter and Hine (2005), as well as the eight dimensions of violence identified by Buss (1961), as discussed in Chapter Two. To give a few examples (and there are numerous references to choose from), these ranged from:

- *Verbal-passive-indirect*, seen as failure to transmit information needed by the target, blamed on the organisation in this case: “The whole time it’s it’s (.) It’s not a matter of the one hand not knowing what the other one does, the one hand doesn’t even know about the other hand” - Insp Faithful, line 265;
- *Verbal-passive-direct*, comprising isolation of the target out through methods such as the silent treatment: “but he has also come to the point where he gets paranoid – where he says, you know, “is this person really here to support me or are they here to backstab me?” I don’t know um (.) I don’t know in what sense he says that - he is really – he is not as trusting as he used to be, my dad used to ... he had a lot of friends but ... now they are few and far between” – Little Miss Maturity, line 492;

- *Verbal-active-indirect*, seen in the belittling of the target to others, spreading false rumours: “Jy gaan vir jou in onguns bring, jy gaan vir jou...jy gaan jou naam gat maak, jou naam sleg maak, hulle gaan vir jou lag. Hulle gaan jou uitwerk” - Insp Dark-Knight, line 276;

(You are going to bring yourself into disfavour, you are going to – you are going to make your name ridiculous, you are going to make your name bad. They are going to laugh at you. They are going to work you out.)

- *Verbal-active-direct*, seen as flaunting authority, insults, yelling and shouting: “soos hulle sê, jy was n slegte donder gewees. Hulle het jou probeer breek. Jy het vir dae sonder kos gebly, jy was in die bos gewees, jy was in die sand. Hulle het goed op jou skouers gedra – gelaai” - Insp Dark-Knight, line 147;

(Like they say, you were a bad bastard. They tried to break you. You lived for days without food, you were in the bush, you were in the sand. They loaded things on your shoulders.)

- *Physical-passive-indirect*, expressed in the failure to take steps to ensure the target’s safety, an act of aggression committed by the organisation in this case: “Up until the day I left, I didn’t have a bulletproof. (.2) Now (.) um (.) bulletproofs came out long before these new students started pitching up um (.) they come out the college issued with a bulletproof, I put in requests - but you just I never had a bulletproof. For sixteen years. But they say you are not allowed to work outside without one, but then they don’t give you one. But I must work outside because I am a senior, and I am supposed to check the new ones. Now what the hell must I do? So now I say ‘I’m not going to work outside, I’m working inside because I don’t have a bulletproof.’(.) ‘You will work outside” - Insp Faithful, line 260;

- *Physical-active-indirect*, including threats of violence, or expressions of hostility, damage to the property of others: “And my mom came to me two weeks ago and she said to me that >he had said to her that he is going to slit her throat<. Heh heh What sort of a father-figure does that?” – Little Miss Maturity, line 155; acts of violence towards inanimate objects and animals important to the other participants: “he’s killed a dog somewhere” – Dr Feel-Good, line 167; “he would pick it up and just hit it really, really hard and my mom gave the dog away” – Little Miss Maturity, line 90;

- *Physical-active-direct*, comprising

- physical attack and assault, and overt aggression: “en uh daar was verskeie kere wat ons (1.4) {agitated hands} mense gevang het en lat jy maar jou (.) manier gehad wat jy inligting uit hulle kon kry. Eks nie seker baie aandaadig aan dit gewees nie maar ek het baie gesien - hoe dit gebeur - hoe mense geelimineer was, hoe mense (.) geondervra was” - Insp Dark-Knight, line 176;

(and uh there were different times that we caught people and you had your way of getting information out of them. I was not very involved with it but I saw it a lot – how it happened – how people were eliminated, how people were questioned.)

- spousal abuse: “Insp Dark-Knight has been an aggressive individual, even in his house, you know, assaulting his wife and so on” – Dr Feel-Good, line 298;
- acts of murder and aggression towards unarmed persons: “Ek het nie onruste gesien nie, Kerry, ek het moord gesien. Selfs al het die mense daai tyd gedink dit was reg gewees en ons doen wat ons moes, want dis vir ons gesê om dit te doen (.) hulle (.) ons (.) hhh haai {shaking head} (.) die manier wat mense geskiet was (.4) dit was net nie regverdig nie. En tog ek was deel daarvan gewees” – Insp Dark-Knight, line 244;

(I did not see unrest, Kerry, I saw murder. Even if the people at that time thought it was right and we did what we had to, because it was something we were told to do. {shaking head} The way that people were shot, it was just not fair. And yet I was part of it.)

- hunting and elimination of terrorists: “Look I mean Insp Dark-Knight obviously took out a lot more people than I have and on a lot more personal – I mean to shoot someone is quick. To cut his throat with a knife is something else. But that’s what you’ve got to do to prove yourself. Um And ja the first one is difficult, but thereafter (1.2) *it becomes easier and easier because you get used to it*” – Insp Faithful, line 621;

- the frank discussion of suicide: “You try to think, ok what is going to make today worth MY while to actually get up out of this bed and not just >end it all<. You start looking for reasons not to commit suicide. Not to just say “stuff it”. Cause that’s THAT’S where they push you, and they push you and push, and it’s(shakes head)” – Insp Faithful, line 477;

“And the first time that happened was at Flying Squad - they did that to a guy, and he went three o’clock in the morning- he booked himself a firearm out, went into the toilets and shot himself” – Insp Faithful, line 492;

- contemplation of family murder, or expressions of hostility: “En partykeer voel dit of (1.3) jy (.) almal net saam met jou wil vat. Jy’s somtyds selfsugtig. In die begin het ek ’n sterk gevoel gehad dat (.4) as ek iets gaan doen gaan ek nie alleen gaan nie. My familie is myne {gesturing to self in possession}. Dis nie iemand anders se gesin nie. Ek sal dit nie toelaat dat iemand anders na hulle kyk nie” – Insp Dark-Knight, line 450.

(Sometimes it feels as though you just want to take everyone with you. You are sometimes selfish. In the beginning I had the strongest feeling that if I was going to do something, I would not go alone. My family is

mine. It's not someone else's family. I won't allow anyone else to look after them.)

Additionally, in line with traditional research opinions, participants' speech made reference to the four types of workplace aggression and violence as identified by Bowie (2011), Kennedy et al., (2004), and LeBlanc and Kelloway (2002):

Type 1 – External or intrusive violence, including:

- acts of terrorism against members of the organisation:

“uh n klomp terroriste het deurgebreek daaikant toe - en ons sê vir hulle dat as jy by n sona kom - dit is n groot oop stuk water - 'n plat area waar water in was as dit reen, maar daar's nie bome in nie - as jy daar kom, m'oenie ingaan nie, gaan om die plek. En toe die persoon het toe nou gedink dat ons praat nie die waarheid nie en toe wil hulle nou oorgaan. Toe slaat hulle die RPG van vooraf. Daar het agt mense binnekant gesterwe en uitgebrand - hy is onder andere een van hulle gewees” – Insp Dark-Knight, line 233;

(uh a group of terrorists broke through there – and we said to them that if you come to a pan – that is a big open piece of water – a flat area where water collects if it rains, but there are no trees in it – if you get there, don't go in, go around the place. And so the person thought we weren't telling the truth and wanted to go over. Then the RPG [rocket propelled grenade] hit them from the front. Eight people died in there and were incinerated – he was, amongst others, one of them.)

- and violence motivated by gain:

“And I am wondering also about um (.) you know the paranoia that goes through the population you know because I think one gets so traumatized by listening and seeing this sort of stuff all the time that uh I think it becomes

evident in one's behaviour – you know how people you know what they do at their homes, putting up alarms and security systems – and you just hear all these horrific stories” – Dr Feel-Good, line 300;

- in which the criminal is violent in nature, and the crime is opportunistic, such as robbery:

“I remember a policeman saying he was sitting in his car with his family and then they got hijacked and what he did was he had his firearm with him and he shot the person – he killed the person in front of his children and his wife and so on and how that caused him so much more trauma than anything else that he had ever experienced because of that situation where his family could have been killed or harmed or his children – um uh that created almost like a greater vulnerability” – Dr Feel-Good, line 310;

Type 2 – Consumer or patient related violence, occurring when an employee is placed at risk because of the service-based nature of their work:

“I said if I get into a taxi in Durbanville or Bellville to come to work, before I get to Goodwood I am flipping dead cause they'll KILL me just for my firearm” – Insp Faithful, line 617;

“I mean, no guy in the private sector knows what it is like to have a customer come in and physically want to assault you, and go at you with something, or actually shoot at you or- I mean hmph I mean I got shot through the hand, >I got home, bandages and stuff<- my mother said “what happened?” and I said, “no I cut myself on some barbed wire.” I can't tell her I was shot - she'd go bonkers” – Insp Faithful, line 370;

Type 3 – Staff relationship violence, occurring when the employee is placed at risk because of interactions or conflict between co-workers:

“Jeez I was aggressive. I was on a knife’s edge. Um You couldn’t talk to me and I’d be down your throat. Um I’d get physically violent. Don’t even think about prodding me with a finger. I’d really climb into you” – Insp Faithful, line 455;

“En van daar af kan ek nie baie onthou nie. Ek kan basies niks onthou nie. Maar wat vir my gesê was, is dat ek wil huis toe kom en my vuurwapens kom haal het of ek het my vuurwapens kom haal en ek wil vir Kapt W. wil gaan doodmaak. En ek is betyds blykbaar gestop deur die mense - die polisie - en hulle het my toe deur C. Kliniek toe gevat. My vuurwapens is - my privaat vuurwapens en my departementele vuurwapens - is van my weggevat. Ek mag glad nie meer n vuurwapen besit nie” – Insp Dark-Knight, line 426;

(I can basically remember nothing. But what was said to me was that I wanted to come home and fetch my firearms, or I did come and fetch them and I wanted to kill Capt W. And apparently I was stopped in time by the people – the police and they took me through to C. Clinic. My weapons were – my private weapons and my departmental weapons were taken away from me. I am not allowed to own a weapon anymore.)

Type 4 – Organisational Violence, or the violence committed by the organisation itself manifesting in:

- the ways it is structured and managed:

“And the system (1.2) let me down so much to the point where I resigned. I walked out. Twenty-four hours, pft that’s it. Um I mean to have someone that (.) wanted to do nothing else (.6) to get to that point *it takes a lot. It really

does* I mean I >want to do the work< I crave it, I miss it, (.) but when I think about (.) the organization itself and what's happening, that part, I don't want EVER again in my life" – Insp Faithful, line 450;

- the uncaring nature of the organisation towards its employees:

"FUJIA - that is what this whole system is built on - it stands for Fuck you Jack, I'm all right" – Insp Faithful, line 745.

The interviews of all participants are liberally scattered with references to violence, both towards others and towards the self. These formal accounts of violence tend to reveal two crucial dimensions: first, the individuals' perception of the wrongness of the actions and second, whether they believe themselves to be responsible for the act. Individuals often provide excuses (where the individual admits that the behaviour was wrong, yet denies responsibility), and justifications (where the individual accepts responsibility for his actions while denying that the behaviour was wrong). Excuses thus provide acceptable accounts for perceived unreasonable behaviour by holding something external to blame. Justifications, on the other hand, typically hold an outside source (or one removed from the account maker's position) responsible for behaviour that is not deemed wrong as a result, such as another's actions which have directly provoked an aggressive deed (Mullaney, 2007). These strategies are central to understanding how the participants reflect on their deeds, negotiate their identities, and engage in tactics in order to enhance self-perceptions, and will be considered in this chapter.

The following section discusses some of the discourses of violence, the participants' justifications of violence, and the consequences of violence in their lives, as taken from an ethnographic, empathic perspective. In some of the accounts, by making oblique reference to culturally endorsed storylines, the narrators are compensated with an ideal self-presentation and thus circumvent more awkward positions, such as those of victim or perpetrator. Much of the speech seems to construct a morally legitimate use of violence and negotiates the issue of what appears to constitute violence itself.

“The hunter becomes the haunted”: Violence towards others and the self

The speech of all participants appears to involve a radical denial of personal responsibility or complicity. In the face of any violence committed or contemplated, another agency’s influence is implicated: either the perpetrator’s personal experience of or exposure to violence in the past, which is blamed for later reliance on aggressive methods, or the influence of another body, such as the actions of the organisation which provoke violence. This can be characterised as a discourse of personal absolution through previous exposure to trauma – “*the hunter becomes the haunted*”, or absolution due to another’s involvement – “*they drove me to do it*”.

Participants seemed to feel the need to justify any aggression they committed by citing examples of how violence was initially perpetrated against them, citing this as a reason for their later aggression. Insp Dark-Knight’s course of action appeared to be fairly typical of this pattern. He begins by implying that all of his later aggressive behaviour was linked to one incident of abuse as a child where “Oom (*Uncle*) Mike” climbed into bed with him and fondled him. “*That is when it began hurting*”, he says. He made sure I was aware of the import of this admission by repeating it, even though I asked another question in the intervening time:

72 Insp Dark-Knight: Dit is wat ek van my jeug onthou, dit is waar dit begin seermaak het.

(That is what I remember about my youth, that is where it began hurting.)

73 Res: What was it like growing up for you?

74 Insp Dark-Knight: Kerry, jy’s die eerste mens wat ek dit ooit vertel het. Ek het dit nog nooit vir iemand vertel nie. Ek het (.) direk daarna het ek begin - ek besef dit nou eers - het ek begin rebeleer.

(Kerry, you are the first person that I have ever told this to. I never told it to anyone else. I then – directly thereafter I began to – I realise it only now – I began to rebel.)

His emphasis on the abuse is used as a convenient justification for the direction of his life and his consequent defiance of the rules of society. In our interview, he made certain that I understood that his reliance on using violent solutions to resolve problems that were facing him started early in his life, and was always justified by an intervening occurrence. Occurring shortly after the above excerpt, his brutal assault of his mother's boyfriend was justified by citing the man's original behaviour: "En uh, toe ek een dag by die huis kom toe sien ek Oom Smittie slaan my ma" (*and when I came home one day, I saw Uncle Smittie hitting my mother*) (line 81), although the subsequent degree of violence in the attack seems excessive for a boy of only fifteen. By implication, it is not his fault – he was acting in an aggressive manner purely as a reaction to someone else's behaviour. His narrative also relies on evincing a righteous male anger culminating in an aggressive deed – by insinuation, he is taking care of his family (his mother), and defending his own honour through his aggressive behaviour: in this way he is merely expressing his conception of masculinity, and what it means to be a man.

82 Ek kan net onthou dat ek het hom aangerand in so 'n mate dat - ek was daai tyd so sestien gewees - fyftien, sestien - in so 'n mate dat die ambulans hom moes kom haal. Ons het hom nooit weer daarna gesien nie. Hy't nooit weer terug gekom nie - hy het nie sy klere kom haal nie - hy het net verdwyn.

(I can just remember that I attacked him in such a way that – I was sixteen at the time – fifteen, sixteen – in such a manner that the ambulance had to come and get him. We never saw him again after that. He never came back – he didn't come to get his clothes – he just disappeared.)

His defiance continues with him running away from home directly after the incident, being thrown into jail for two months and then being sent to boarding school as a

consequence. After leaving school in Standard Eight, his first induction to the world of dealing in death consisted of his job in the prisons, working in the room where bodies were left hanging after execution, and he vividly recalls the scene: the closed room, and the bodies swaying. He does not reveal what kind of work he did there, but does mention that he never felt any empathy for those who were to hang, instead gaining a “tipe van n satisfaksie daaruit gekry het as iemand seergekry het want ek het basies geen gevoel gehad vir iemand of iets nie” (*a type of satisfaction when someone got hurt because I had basically no feelings for anyone or anything*) (line 120). Yet he reports that he still felt like he needed to prove himself, find something more than the prison services, a feeling he justifies by his belief of his own worthlessness: “want op skool was ek maar niks gewees nie, my kinderlewe was ek maar niks gewees nie, ek het nie eers vriende gehad nie” (*because at school I was nothing, in my childhood I was nothing, I didn’t even have any friends*) (line 124).

114 Ek moet iets anders kry - ek moet iets meer kry, iets meer (.) miskien iets meer gevaarliks. Ek wil my graag op ’n manier bewys.

(I needed something else, I needed to get something more, something more, maybe something more dangerous. I wanted to prove myself in some way.)

This speech conveys his adherence to the underlying tenets of masculinity – the need to spur oneself on to feats of dangerousness and the concurrent need to prove oneself in a situation that demands courage. After that, it was a small step to the police and eventually the Koevoet Unit where he acquired his thrill and need for “hunting”. It is intriguing to note the detachment that he conveys through reference to the terrorists as animals to be “hunted” and “eliminated”, as though they are pests.

124 jy (.) jag terroriste in die bos en dan elimineer jy hulle. En dit is my gevoel dat as ek dit miskien doen kan ek miskien satisfaksie daaruit kry want ek jag nog iets.

(You hunt terrorists in the bush and then you eliminate them. And it was my feeling that if I could do that then perhaps I could get satisfaction out of it, because then I would still be hunting something.)

Insp Dark-Knight's training for the specialised Koevoet unit is the vindication given for the hardness he later cultivated. Although his performance was seen as just a job, disguised as patriotism and heroism, his enjoyment of it was not muted in any way. In stark contrast to his protestations that the military had sculpted him through the intense training process (dialogue which cast him as the unwilling victim), Insp Dark-Knight freely admits to his joy at the feeling of blood on his hands. He revels in the toughness of the unit, their lust for blood. It is a glorification of the ultimate ideals of manhood. Often hunters describe a 'blood-lust' that comes over them, with the concurrent rituals of eating the raw liver or heart, or smearing themselves in the blood of their kills. This excerpt from Insp Dark-Knight's speech is strongly reminiscent of that, yet the blood he refers to is that of fellow human beings. Satisfaction is only to be obtained at the death of another.

223 Ons was hard gewees - ek wil sê somtyds was ons moordadig gewees. Jy raak later soos wat ek later geraak het (1.2) dit was lekker gewees om bloed oor jou hande te voel - die taaiheid van die bloed, die warmte daarvan. Dit het vir jou 'n tipe van 'n satisfaksie gegee. En daai satisfaksie het saam met my vir 'n lang tyd geloop.

(We were so hard – I will say we were sometimes murderous. Later you get like what I was – it was great to feel blood on your hands, the stickiness of the blood, the warmth thereof. It gave you a type of satisfaction. And that satisfaction walked with me a long time.)

Like the game hunter with trophies, he showed off the pictures of himself with his "kills", the word serving to detach him personally from the actuality of the pathetic body, which once was a human being, lying at his feet in the photograph. Although purporting to express shame in the words he chooses: "jy kan gelukkig nie my gesig sien nie" (*you luckily*

can't see my face), there is a definite sense of pride in the recounting of the tale of that “kill” in the second excerpt.

594 En hierdie eene - dis die enigste een wat jy my sal sien - jy kan gelukkig nie my gesig sien nie waar ek staan by een van my “kills”. Dit is in Ovamboland.

(And this one – this is the only one in which you can see me – you can luckily not see my face is where I am standing next to one of my kills. That was in Ovamboland.)

170 Jy het daardie verskriklike mag in jou hande deurdát jy kan maak en breek soos jy wil en basies word daar nie eintlik vrae gevra nie. En waneer dit kom in ’n bos oorlog dan word daar nie “freebies” uitgedeel nie - dit is of jy of ek en as jy nie vinniger is as ek is nie, ongelukkig dan is dit maar jou kans.

(You have this terrible power in your hands in that you can make and break as you will, and basically there are no questions asked. And when it comes to a bush war then there are no freebies handed out – it’s either you or me and if you are not faster than me then it’s just unfortunately your chance.)

He mentions the close bond he had with his Ovambo “brothers”, establishing the intimate attachment they shared before citing examples of how they were shot and killed by the terrorists, a justification for his later actions against the rebels. As a result, he “*could not be soft – you can’t tell people that you are sorry for them*” (line 225), but rather saw it as a competition in which the strongest man won. From these accounts, murder is seen as being an every-day occurrence, merely a job that needs to be carried out, initiated and condoned by the agency of the Armed Forces, who thus take the blame for any violence executed, absolving the individual from censure.

Once out of the unit and back in every-day life, Insp Dark-Knight could not merely relax and deny it had all happened. He conveys a sense of the horror of the actions he was

involved in, but refuses to mention what they were – reinforcing the cloak of secrecy that exists between men who experience hardship together (Nolan, 2009; Steyn & De Vries, 2007). His shame at his actions, which he conveys by his unwillingness to talk about his experiences, is belied by the next sentence in which he admits that he did not feel “*satisfied*” yet, that he still needed to persevere. He reports that his hardness was now an entrenched part of him, an inability to relax his vigilance, because he still needed to “*hunt*”.

236 Ek het (.2) ek het toe Ovamboland het ek klaargemaak, en ek het nooit vir iemand vertel wat ek.. En ek sal nooit vertel wat ons presies daar gedoen het nie. Dit bly maar in die kop. Ek het teruggekom Kaap toe (.) en (.) ek het nog steeds nie (.) gevoel dat ek vervul is nie. En ek het gevoel dat ek moet nog gaan jag. Ek moet nog uitkom; ek moet nog aanhou.

(I then, I then finished in Ovamboland and I never told anyone what I – I will never tell precisely what we did there. That stays in the head. I came back to the Cape and I still did not feel as though I was satisfied. I had the feeling that I still needed to hunt. I must still persevere.)

Likewise, he took up his new position within the SAP, and when the calls to accident scenes came in he would rush like one possessed to be the first one there. It was as though he was reliving and enjoying those feelings the blood gave him in Ovamboland – the power and control in a situation where no control existed. Directly implicated is his past history in the Bush War, which is seen as being a prime inducement of his later conduct. He infers that something was ‘broken’ at that time, causing psychological trauma that is now impossible to fix:

299 My een vriend Insp Faithful het my een keer gevang waar ek met die bloed in my hande gestaan en vryf het op ’n ongelukstoneel. Ek weet nou nog nie hoekom ek dit gedoen het nie, maar ek weet ek en hy het groot woorde gehad daaroor.

(My one friend Insp Faithful caught me one time where I was standing with the blood in my hands, rubbing, on an accident scene. I still don't know why I did it, but I know that he and I had a big argument about it.)

Insp Faithful reiterates this:

228 he started living for accident scenes. BLOOD AND GUTS. Ja one day - I mean I was still busy and he was I mean he was in a world of his own (.) you know he touched of the blood and >he was smelling it and rubbing it on his fingers<. He was out of it.

While both mention the actions as evidence of Insp Dark-Knight's worsening mental state, it is nevertheless compelling to note that personal complicity in atrocities and traumas, in which one is an active agent in the death of others, has been related to severe numbing of emotions and a heightened suicide rate in the perpetrator of the violence (Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Pienaar, et al., 2006; Violanti, 2004). The suicide rate for South African police officers has been cited as being five times that of other police suicide rates elsewhere and much higher than that of the normal population (Pienaar, et al., 2006). The implication is that continuous traumatic exposure, such as that purported to be experienced by Insp Dark-Knight in the Bush War, with the concurrent increased avoidance behaviour that occurs, reflects the person's psychological need to deny the impact of trauma in order to maintain resilience. It has been postulated that because stressors in the SAPS are ongoing, it appears to be in the police members' best interests to avoid or deny severe stress reactions initially. As a result, they seem to handle trauma well at first, during which period external assistance appears unnecessary and is rejected. As time passes, it appears that the ability to utilise the denial-avoidance process breaks down, and officers' coping becomes compromised (Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Pienaar, et al., 2007). As time passes, these scenes of trauma and personal complicity in the demise of others are implicated in the resultant feelings of negativity directed inwardly, towards the self (Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Pienaar et al., 2007; Violanti, 2004). Policing in South Africa is seen as highly stressful: the socioeconomic and political

turmoil of apartheid rule, the consequent political upheaval and transformation since its abolition, organisational restructuring, and heightened crime rate are held responsible for having affected the internal solidarity among police employees. This creates a volatile situation regarding mental health (Pienaar, et al., 2007). Officers who were once able to cope, or appeared to do so, now were unable to cope professionally, personally or organisationally with the high demands placed on them (Violanti et al., 2009). The first sign of Insp Dark-Knight's inability to avoid previously experienced ordeals appeared when his dreams were disturbed by the past creeping up on him. Insp Dark-Knight started to question the past and its effect on his behaviour, and mentioned that it was hunting him, through the night, eating him up.

622 Ek weet nie hoe kan jy enigsins vergifnis kry vir iets soos daai wat gedoen is nie. En of ek vir jou gemoedsrus kan gee nie weet ek ook nie. Of dit my gaan laat beter voel weet ek ook nie. Maar dit jaag my. Dis goed wat my aande pla. Goed van Ovamboland wat my in die nagte wakker maak - daai drome wat ek kry. Dit vreet vir my op. Dit vreet my op.

(I don't know how I can get forgiveness in any way for the things that were done. And if I can give you peace of mind I also don't know. If it's going to make me feel better I also don't know. But it is hunting me. The things that plague me in the nights. Things from Ovamboland that wake me in the night, the dreams that I get. It's eating me up. It's eating me up.)

There is no doubt that his personal contribution to the atrocities committed was catching up on him. His daughter remembers the time well, and it must have been frightening and confusing for her. Previously, her father had shown himself to be unmoved by his past, and unaffected by incidents of horror in his present, yet now a total breakdown seemed inevitable.

217 And um he doesn't have (.) he used to have dreams where he would wake up in a cold sweat and he would- have you ever (.) it sounds like somebody

muffles you when you scream but it's really really loud and he would wake up the entire household. And it came to the point where my mom wouldn't wake him up anymore – she didn't sleep in the same room as him and I would have to go and wake him up because my sister wouldn't go and wake him up she is too scared. He says that he can't describe the dreams he has but he says that it's a feeling of being scared – I don't understand where it comes from or what triggered it but I remember it's been going on for a long time.

The mighty hunter was being haunted by his own demon, and that demon was relentless, pursuing its victim even as he slept. Insp Faithful had insight into the situation from his own experiences, but also through his relationship with Insp Dark-Knight. He described the violent past as an implacable dog, patiently stalking its prey, waiting for an opportunity to strike.

793 The best description I got was from an old Ovambo - he was actually in Koevoet for many years, and* we were in Walvis bay - I actually did border duty there*. And he told me, um (.) “It it your past, the things that you have done, is like a dog that walks behind you, patiently, till one day when it jumps up and it will bite you in your throat. But it will walk there quietly in your shadow for many, many years til the right time”. And my dog's walking - it's there.

Of particular relevance, the relation of the tale of Insp Dark-Knight's fall from grace illustrates the concept of the vicious past catching up with the unwary warrior. Insp Dark-Knight's dog started hunting him in earnest when he was charged with racism and perceived that he did not have the backing of supervisors or management in his case, at which time he fell apart, and his past caught up with him. In a time of political upheaval, the SAPS could not afford to overlook any inference of racism, and Insp Dark-Knight's case was made an extreme example of. Suddenly the organisation that had, if not outright supported or condoned, at least turned a blind eye to, his violent indiscretions, had turned on him. The

discourse that relied on absolution due to another's involvement could no longer be used as his justification for the deeds that he had perpetrated. Abruptly, the world which he had perceived to be predictable and organised was out of his control. His intense fear of being prosecuted culminated in the threats that he made against a commanding officer's life after the man was asked to testify against him at a departmental hearing. His justification relies on the supporting discourse of "they made me do it".

393 Ek kan basies niks onthou nie. Maar wat vir my gesê was, is dat ek wil huis toe kom en my vuurwapens kom haal het of ek het my vuurwapens kom haal en ek wil vir Capt W gaan doodmaak. En ek is betyds blykbaar gestop deur die mense - die polisie - en hulle het my toe deur C. Kliniek toe gevat.

(I can basically remember nothing. But what was said to me was that I wanted to come home and fetch my firearms, or I did come and fetch them and I wanted to kill Capt W. And apparently I was stopped in time by the people – the police and they took me through to C. Clinic.)

Insp Dark-Knight expresses his spiralling hopelessness and lack of personal complicity or control in his poetry, blood and death being common themes. Once again, an outside agency, the "cruelty of the night", is held responsible for his later action of taking his own life. Whereas the feeling of blood was once an enjoyable sensation, with the ability to thrill, satisfy and calm at the same time, it now has the power of knife-points in his soul. He implies that he is still ambivalent about taking his own life in this poem, yet knows the end must come – only the manner of the end is still in doubt.

Die bloed syfer deur die vel.

Dit voel soos die mespunte van hel

Ek skree my hart skeur oop

Daar is geen meer hoop.

Die wreedheid van die nag
Dit het my dierlik verkrag
Jy voel die einde is hier
Dis net op watter manier.

*(Blood trickles through the skin.
It feels like the knife-points of hell
I scream my heart tears open
There is no more hope.*

*The cruelty of the night
It has brutally raped me
You feel the end is here
It is just in what manner.)*

Suicidal ideation, such as that above, has been seen as one domain of the suicidal behaviour pattern and is seen as a distinct form of psychological disturbance. Although not all individuals who experience suicidal ideation attempt suicide, such thoughts of death may be a precursor to desperate behaviours for many, and have been considered an indication of deep psychological problems (Pienaar et al., 2007; Violanti et al., 2009). In *Dark-Knight's* suicidal ideation is made clear on numerous occasions, but is especially poignant in his poetry in which he appears no longer to be ambivalent about death, but welcomes it, and its harbinger, the pistol, as a lover. He asks death to take away the pain and bitterness of his life, which by implication has led him to this grave decision.

DIE UITKOMS

O jou prag en praal
Hoe wonderlik is die krag van staal

Jy met jou soepel donker lyf
Kan jy die pyn uit my verdryf

Ek neem jou saggies in my hand
Aan jou wil ek my lewe verpand
Waar gaan jy my laat woon
O jou kragtige 9millimeter patroon

Ek ken jou krag
Net jy laat agter die dood van dag
Waarheen waarheen nou
Het JY met vele name 'n plekkie gehou

My finger bewe op jou lyf
Neem my saggies wanneer dit verstyf
Die uitkoms le in jou
Neem weg die bitterheid in my opgebou

(The Escape/outcome

*Oh your beauty and radiance
How wonderful is the power of steel
You with your supple dark body
Can you drive the pain out of me?*

*I take you softly into my hand
To you, I want to surrender my life*

*Where will you let me live
O you powerful 9 Millimetre bullet*

*I know your power
Only you leave behind the death of day
Where to, where to now
Did you, with your many names, save a place?*

*My finger trembles on your body
Take me softly when it tightens
The outcome lies in you
Take away the bitterness built up in me)*

It is in itself a manipulative cry for help and attention. Manipulation seems to be a tool which he uses to provoke awareness for his plight, as is evidenced by a frequent reference to my name in his dialogue, which conveys a subtle emotional privation that only the affirmation of the listener can fulfil. He displays a need to draw the audience in to his confusion and pain, yet he freely admits that he plans his suicide when questioned.

343 {looking down at hands} Vir myself skiet, Kerry. Jy weet ek gaan my skiet een of ander tyd. Ek weet dit.

(to shoot myself. You know I am going to shoot myself at one or other time. I know it.)

Although many threats of suicide do not end in the ultimate gesture, Dr Feel-Good thinks Insp Dark-Knight's threats and suicidal ideation are of the serious type, though given

Insp Dark-Knight's history of violence and abuse, he warns that Insp Dark-Knight will not want to go alone.

363 But still, once again, I think he has a high risk to harm himself or somebody else and that could be predicted by his personality profile, and by the past history, by the instability of mood. He has been shown to be violent and unpredictable in the past so I think those things need to be taken into account as well.

Thoughts of suicide are not only Insp Dark-Knight's prerogative, either. Insp Faithful readily admits that eventually the past catches up with all of them, and he too has had those thoughts.

509 And the thing is um (1.2) I mean you sit huh ja I sat many a night you sit two o'clock three o'clock in the morning, and you sit with a (mimes holding gun)...and I mean, ja, I looked down the barrel of my service pistol. You see that bullet down there. >You think, "Jeez, I won't even hear that shot go off< - it's it's INSTANT. Um And ja, I sat like that a couple of times. And you think and you think. And you get up in the morning and you try to think of reasons to go to work. You try to think, ok what is going to make today worth MY while to actually get up out of this bed and not just >end it all<. You start looking for reasons not to commit suicide. Not to just say "stuff it".

The newspapers are quick to report on the prevalence of suicidal and self-harming behaviours: "ek sit voor die televisie met 'n lemmetjie. Ek kan myself nie keer nie. Insp Shane McMillan se voorarms is vol snytjies met dun rowe" (*I sit in front of the television with a razorblade – I can't help myself. Insp Shane MacMillan's forearms are full of cuts with thin scabs*), (Steenkamp, 2007b, p. 6). These behaviours are ascribed to the high prevalence of PTSD in members of the police service (395 members were declared medically unfit for duty in the previous six years alone, an interesting fact when reflected against the

more than 500 individuals who, according to the national police spokesperson, Senior Superintendent Tlomatsana, committed suicide in the same period of time), which reports say lead to a high likelihood of suicidal attempts (Hume & Box, 2006), supporting the discourse of “*they made me do it*”. It is interesting to note that many of the reports of suicidal attempts occur directly after the officer, who has been placed on long-term sick leave, is asked to return to active duty. These men pose a threat to “*themselves, their families, and society*” (Steenkamp, 2007b, p. 6), as a result of their inability to cope with the symptoms of their Post Traumatic Stress. The SAPS as an organisation is blamed for being “*reckless*”, “*misunderstanding their rights*” as an organisation by choosing to ignore absentee letters and insisting that these members with diagnosed PTSD return to active duty or risk having their salaries stopped (Steenkamp, 2007a, p. 6). Thus the organisation is ultimately seen as being accountable for any atrocities committed by those officers either towards their families or themselves, thereby absolving the officers themselves of any complicity in their actions.

“Die lid sal selfmoord pleeg om uit die situasie te kom. Of hul frustrasie en aggressie bou so op dat hulle op ’n dag daar instap en mens skiet. Die opgehoopte aggressie kan dus teen hulself of ander gemik word”

(The member will commit suicide to get out of the situation. Or their frustration and aggression builds up so much that they walk in one day and shoot people. The built-up aggression can thus be directed towards themselves or others) (Steenkamp, 2007b, p. 6).

There is a fascinating juxtaposition of the helpless, depressive stance of the suicidal officer and the vindictive, marginalised stance of an officer who is at the same time able to take an aggressive stance and threaten the lives of others, particularly those in authority over them, with considerable planning and forethought. These binary fantasies of ‘if I kill myself, they will be sorry’, and ‘if I kill them, they will be sorry’ are clearly seen in both Insp Dark-Knight’s and Insp Faithful’s dialogues. Both have the fantasy of walking into a commanding officer’s presence and making him “*pay*” for what has been done. This reaction is often seen in police officers who actively engage and confront stressors in different ways. They are able to combat negative work experiences aggressively, and their translation into suicide ideation

through the use of fantasy (Pienaar et al., 2007). Insp Dark-Knight's personal decision-making repertoire is simplistic in the extreme, and he seems unable to consider any other conclusion than his own manipulative death and thereby his revenge on the system that he feels has betrayed him to such an extent. Incapable of decisions or actions other than those involving the commission of aggressive deeds, Insp Dark-Knight, like the other participant, Insp Faithful, freely indulges in dark fantasies of retribution against the system – the iniquitous “they” are going to pay for their deeds. This supports the notion that the organisation is responsible for any negative occurrences in the officer's life, liberating him from any individual culpability.

475 Maar hulle speel vir tyd - daar sal 'n dag kom. Hulle sal weet van my. Ek sê vir jou, Kerry, hulle gaan weet van my. En dis nie dreigemente nie. Ek is nou baie goed in staat - ek is nou baie goed opgelei en ek weet hoe hierdie goed werk. Ek weet hoe om dit te maak ook (weapons). {Looking down} Om goed te maak is vir my klein katjies. En *dan gaan dit te laat wees*. Maar sal hulle nou oort luister? Nee hulle sal nie luister nie.

(But they are playing for time - there will come a day. They will know about me. I am telling you Kerry, they will know about me. And that is not a threat. I am now totally capable – I am well-trained and I know how these things work. I know how to make these things [weapons]. To make things like that is simple for me. And then it's going to be too late. But will they ever listen? No, they will never listen.)

Dr Feel-Good classifies these fantasies and suicidal behaviour as manipulative and traumatic gestures, but does not deny the potency of the threat that Insp Dark-Knight is making, believing him capable of carrying it out at some stage.

355 And that's something that is often seen as a threat as well, which makes it very difficult to assess and which can be seen as very manipulative – especially in Insp Dark-Knight's case as well where he has threatened harm to colleagues

and harm to the family. And he won't allow his wife to divorce him, he'd rather kill her sort of "wait, when they send me back they'll see what I'll do" and manufacturing primitive weapons that he carries around with him almost in a traumatic gesture – you know, producing it and showing it at therapy sessions but clearly conveying the message of a threat – not even veiled you know of potential violence or harm to others if he doesn't get his way. But still, once again, I think he has a high risk to harm himself or somebody else and that could be predicted by his personality profile, and by the past history, by the instability of mood. He has been shown to be violent and unpredictable in the past so I think those things need to be taken into account as well.

His account supports the idea of the organisation being liable for the commission of a violent deed: "they" will be responsible for him committing suicide and taking his family with him. It is again a denial of personal complicity in a violent act: *"he'd rather kill her sort of 'wait, when they send me back they'll see what I'll do'"*.

In review of this discourse, however, I freely admit that my long involvement with the members of the SAPS has clouded my interpretation: in my experience, officers tend to use the location of control in an entity external to themselves as a grounding premise for their discourse of denial of personal responsibility for violence. Participants subscribe to it wholeheartedly, giving fealty to the premise that they are ultimately not responsible for their behaviour, and moreover, it is a discourse strongly supported by the greater community and society at large, as evidenced in the excerpts taken from various newspaper articles. It appears to be a relatively ineradicable stance due to the fact that so much relies on subscription to it: the ability to maintain an image of the self as noble; the passive aggressive manipulation of the system; and a convenient exploitation of the organisation as a repository for the negative feelings of deprivation, betrayal and isolation that result in violent behaviour.

However, there is another stance that can be taken which is at seeming odds with this perspective: from an empathic hermeneutic viewpoint, Insp Dark-Knight's spiral into the realms of violence is occasioned by the intervening occurrence of his childhood molestation, rather than justified by it. His later performance of violence becomes not an act of

masculinity, but rather a quest for absolution (“*Ek moet iets ander kry - ek moet iets meer kry, iets meer (,) ... Ek wil my graag op ‘n manier bewys*” – line 114). His training in a specialised unit, such as Koevoet, is the point at which he becomes a willing victim, throwing himself into hell in order to try to find a part of himself that has been lost. The satisfaction of merely being able to feel *something* (as someone who self-injures does so in order to be convinced that he exists, that he *is*), drives him to smear himself in the blood of his kills in order to take the essence of the other in. He becomes one with his kill and the pain thereof, his hunt transforms into a frenzied search for his own self. In a sense, although he commits violence, the greater violence has been done to him: the institution, the state, the very community of which we are a part sends young men like Insp Dark-Knight into battle, in order to preserve the integrity of the borders we have drawn. The youngsters are sanctioned by the authority of these entities, provided with uniforms, weapons of destruction, and symbols of power. With the confusing complicity and studied ignorance of society, they are given the complete discretion to act as they see fit. In the process, they lose their souls and yet when they return, the communal responsibility for their actions is summarily withdrawn, effectively individualising the blame, making the responsibility for atrocities committed solely that of the soldier. Apologising can be seen as the desperate pleas for forgiveness, and yet the only ones who can grant the absolution and exculpation are no more. It is the young man’s realisation of his guilt, and his inability to be free of it, that makes a mockery of the concept of the “*courageous hero*” of the poem, leaving behind only the “*rattle of an empty shell*”.

This begs the question: can both interpretations exist at the same time? Is this a circumstance where only one interpretation is valid at the cost of another? I believe there is ample room for both interpretations. In a situation where it is imperative to appear damaged to the utmost extent in order to realise personal gain, motivation is high to make the most of insults to the self. However, this fact does not deny that the self is indeed assaulted by the experiences encountered, that the soul can be lost on its journey through hell. Additionally, taking on the might of the enemy, glorying in masculinity and prowess can be a point of pride in itself, even as it costs someone their very soul. I would like to suggest then, that these interpretations, while seemingly mutually exclusive, are instead distorted reflections of the same concept, and as such are equally valid and worthy of consideration.

“Just another day’s work”: Professional justifications of violence

Much of the communication justifying violent behaviour emphasises the normality of violence in the daily lives of police officers. As was briefly addressed above, police officers, due to the nature of their work, are routinely exposed to the effects of traumatic incidents in the form of dangerous, horrifying or unpleasant situations. Speakers construct events that would be seen as horrifying by a majority of people in a way that normalises the violence, a logical extension of a pre-existing pattern or history (Frewin et al., 2006; Stevens, 2008), and as a result, police vocabularies reflect different practices and serve different functions than those of other organisational cultures. This is conveyed through the informal interaction of officers during their everyday work lives, serving a common purpose of self-preservation, and needs to be understood as a discourse specifically established through the police culture (Frewin et al., 2006). This professional discourse, in which appalling events are normalised and dismissed as “*just another day’s work*”, ensures that the organisation is represented as a system in which even legitimate emotional responses are silenced, and emotions are constructed as dangerous or unspeakable and demand management and control.

It is indispensable for those adhering to the discourse to communicate a blunting of sensitivity to violence and human horror, conveying the impression that even the most extreme of circumstances are within the realm of normal experience. The expression of weaker emotions is regarded as being inadequate to the tasks at hand, which are dependent on a stoical, masculine stance. The violent act is constructed as a normal and logical extension of the work life, with participants not attempting to distinguish it as an extraordinary event. Justifications or rationalisations form the primary basis for constructing meaning and qualifying the level of involvement in violent acts. Insp Dark-Knight’s blasé recounting of the hanging of criminals forces this point home. For him, it was just another job, one of the many deaths he had been exposed to, and as such was within the realm of his ordinary experience.

104 En daar het ek vir die eerste keer met die dood kennis gemaak waar ek gewerk het in die galgkamer. Ek het vir twee jare in die galgkamer gewerk daarso. Die laaste twee jaar wat ek daar was, was ek die laaste persoon toe hulle nog iemand gehang het in Windhoek was ek by gewees, want jy werk in die galgkamer en dan stap jy met die trappies op tot bo in die galkamer dan hang hulle die mense daar bo.

(And there I was first introduced to death: where I worked in the hanging room. I worked there for two years and I was the last person there when they still hung someone in Windhoek, because you worked in the hanging room and then you walk up the steps to above and the people are hanging above you.)

There is a tendency to exclude any emotional language that suggests fear or other ‘softer’ emotions. Instead, there is a significant emphasis placed on the everyday nature of the occurrences, implying that, as the type of work particularly chosen by the participant, certain experiences were only to be expected. With an almost deadpan expression, Insp Dark-Knight tells the stories of his involvement in the Riot Unit during the unrest in Cape Town. After particularly vicious fighting in the streets, the police with their high-powered guns, the populace armed with their stones, Insp Dark-Knight panders to the discourse of normality by shrugging off his experiences: “*it was part of my work. It happened*”.

261 En dan kan jy sien hoe lyk dit as mense geskiet word tussen hokkies - hoe hulle lê daarso. En dat daai nie net een gat is nie maar verskeie gate in die liggaam is. Maar dit was die tyd van onruste gewees.

(And then you can see what it looks like when people are shot between the shacks, how they lie there. And there is not only one hole, but many holes in that body. But that was the time of unrest.)

288 ek het nog steeds basies geen gevoel gehad nie. Ek kan onthou ek het die bloed van my mond afgegee, maar ek het *geen gevoel gehad nie*. Ek het nie

simpatie gehad nie. Ek het nie (.) ek het nie jammer gevoel nie. Want dit was deel van my werk, dit het gebeur.

(I still had basically no feeling then. I can remember that I wiped the blood off my mouth, but I had no feeling. I had no sympathy. I didn't – I didn't feel sorry. Because it was part of my work. It happened.)

As a result of his constant daily exposure to men and women from the police and their narratives of everyday brutality, with the concurrent tales of the horrible and the horrifying, the psychiatrist, Dr Feel-Good supports the discourse by admitting:

305 Because some of these policemen seem to – and that's a well known fact – some of them within the context of their work perceive the violence just as being part of their daily work so probably in that specific context it is not out of the ordinary experience of what they go through.

In the days before the force became a service, there were only a few career opportunities open to young men who had not been able to finish school, and policing was one of those. In Little Miss Maturity's narrative, one gets the impression of a heedless decision made by a rash youngster; a decision made because it was the tolerable route to follow rather than through any cerebral planning and forethought.

597 It was just the acceptable path to go when you are that age – either you go to varsity or you go to the army. And my father is (.) he (.) the impression that I have of him in high school he was the type of guy who stands out in the crowd, one of the cool guys – that was just the normal acceptable route to go – you know you're seventeen, eighteen, what do you know?

605 it's a job, it's a salary. It's a future. I actually think it was exciting for him.

Joining the police, although once seen as a high calling, today takes on more of the connotations of a last resort, with young men and women joining up because nothing better exists for them to do at the time. The newspaper, *Rapport*, reporting on a police father's shooting of his eighteen-month old baby, makes mention of the fact that entering the police is the "enigste uitweg toe werk in die boubedryf nie vir hom 'n vaste inkomste kon waarborg nie" (*only way out when work in the building industry could not guarantee him an assured income*), (Jansen & Van Aart, 2007, p. 1). It is implied that anyone in their right mind with other options would never voluntarily enter the police, along with the implication that the SAPS is responsible for the majority of the violent episodes occurring in the lives of the members.

Incorporated into the discourse of normalisation, officers cast emotion, equated with a feminine position (which prevents viewing a scene as part of the day's work), as undermining control, rationality and correspondingly, performance (Frewin et al., 2006). For a civilian, the concept can be hard to understand. Dr Feel-Good discusses the normalisation of the trauma and violence that had taken place during the Bush War and the methods used to cope with what was characterised as everyday experience:

290 Um I just think about it – if I remember what people used to tell me, you know, from their military service and the Koevoet people and so on – I mean they would go killing people and then go back and drink, you know. It would be like a drinking session. That's the way they dealt with it.

Likewise, Little Miss Maturity struggles with her father's seeming lack of emotion towards the scenes he faced on a daily basis, finding it difficult to equate her conception of a typical day's work with that of Insp Dark-Knight.

67 I know he has told me a few times about cases that he has had, and (.) >you know it's pretty bad<. I don't know how they can switch off. How they can just- you know he would come home and especially when I was in primary

school, starting for high school, he would tell my mom, “no, tonight, there was a car accident and there was like three kids in the back seat,” and he would walk up to the scene and he would see the brains splattered all over. And to him it’s just like, “Oh.” And to me – I say to him “no don’t tell me that – it upsets me.” He says “Ja, but that happens every day.”

248 Because you read stuff about four year olds raped by seven guys – that is just – I find it so unbelievably disturbing. And .hhh (.) somehow he just manages to deal with it.

Justifiably, people not exposed to this ‘normality’ find it hard to comprehend the approach, and she was unable to grasp the rationale behind Insp Dark-Knight’s need to have the photos of his ‘kills’ within easy access. While her attitude is reflective of many a civilian surveying a similar scene, less explicable is Insp Dark-Knight’s willingness to be persuaded by Little Miss Maturity into showing her the photographs which are of such a horrifying nature (see Appendix C for a compilation of descriptions of the photographs).

230 And (.) I would love to know what happened there, because I think I saw the photos of (.) of bodies lying all over and people’s faces that were shot away and the way that he is just so accepting about it is disturbing because that is not normal.

Perhaps Insp Dark-Knight, in the act of showing Little Miss Maturity the photographs, was attempting to reach out to her, begging without words for her understanding of how he came to be, and registering his plea for her unconditional love in spite of this. It may be that his act of showing me the same photographs in our interviews was his attempt to use the identical gesture on me.

One has to question the results of incorporating such a disturbed discourse into the fabric of one’s daily life. The repercussions are far-reaching in that the witnessing of

violence seems to seep into the soul: as it becomes more normal, it becomes easier to overcome moral objections and simply react. To the average recruit coming into policing, the job glorifies masculine ideals and heroics, portrayed as adventurous and exciting, whilst the disturbing aspects of it are merely glossed over by the seasoned cops who have been acculturated and adhere strictly to the discourse of “*all in a day’s work*”. Officers frequently exposed to the adrenalin rush engendered by high-stress situations have often become addicted to the excitement and immune to the violence of their everyday lives (Violanti, 1996). There exists a physiological as well as social dependency on the police role, to such an extent that officers often physiologically adapt to excitement and danger, and become psychologically depressed in calm or normal periods, appearing listless and detached from anything else unrelated to the police role (Violanti, 1996). The increased physiological stimulation engendered by risky or exhilarating events decreases an individual’s ability to measure the nature of current challenges and interferes with the judicious decision-making processes. There is the possibility that these officers then convey the thrilling facets of their jobs to the recruits without preparing them for the darker side of the work. This also relies heavily on the other organisational or cultural discourses of heroism and group unity (discussed elsewhere). Insp Faithful, whilst not involved in the same sort of situations as Insp Dark-Knight, had insight into the slippery downward spiral. In the throes of experiencing his first shooting, with all of the consequent guilt and emotion, he reports: “it was a pat on the back and “Jussie maar jy het goed geskiet!” (*Wow but you shot well!*) (line 566). Likewise with dealing with gruesome or tragic scenes: the reactions of the veteran officers manage to convey to the new recruit that this is all to be expected of a day in the police, and that their reactions (or lack of reactions) are of critical importance to their progression through the ranks of their chosen career. Newcomers ultimately have to ‘prove’ themselves worthy, as having the stomach to turn away from a mind-numbingly atrocious event, shrug, and declare with equanimity “It’s no big deal”.

338 Well I mean you can’t stand at an accident scene (.) >where a car went into a bus and a piece of steel went through a three month old baby’s head {shows size with his hands between thumb and middle fingers} and is sticking out the back of the car the baby’s still skewered= You can’t stand there and break down - you got to do the job<. So you you gotta deal with it. Um (.) You

stand at an accident scene where the person is basically burning to death in a car because they're trapped in the car and the fire brigade is coming you gotta take it you gotta to deal with it. You can't break down and cry, you gotta deal with it at that point.

The discourse of normalisation by implication marginalises those who are unable to accept the gruesome and horrifying with the outward appearance of composure. It has the consequence that officers who cannot subscribe to its tenets feel unworthy and as if they have failed. Yet the strong organisational discourses of heroism and group unity which are closely linked to this make it difficult for the one who has failed to address these feelings, as will be seen next.

"I need a hero": Heroism and retribution

The discourse of heroism is an integral part of the police sub-culture and identity, and as a construct and constructor of symbolic meaning, is integrally tied into the concept of masculinity (more on this in the next chapter). Wetherell and Edley (1999) identified what they termed a "heroic position", wherein interviewees narrated particular productions of the self that coincided with a heroic masculine persona. They described the self in terms of the key elements of what it means to be a man, such as courageousness, physical toughness and the ability to be composed under pressure. The police hero exemplified in the communications of the participants can be viewed as an idealised and idolised figure of manliness representing the condensed and purified qualities of masculinity: the essential features of aggression, vigour, valour and fortitude (Andersson, 2008; Bantjes, 2004), with an added dimension of the heroic instigator of retribution in the face of injustice.

Much of the speech of especially Insp Faithful revolved around the need to make those who had transgressed pay the price for those transgressions, and any violence done to a perpetrator as a result was seen as more than legitimised. In this heroic discourse of retribution and justified violence, the policeman committing violence is classified in the

position of the hero, the avenger who fights for justice, his prey seen as the perpetrator of a deed that is deserving of punishment. This discourse functions to construct the policeman as necessarily violent within those contexts demanding violence, and as a reasonable man acting reasonably within such frameworks, rather than as one being gratuitously brutal (Mullaney, 2007; Stevens, 2008). Insp Faithful showed his support of the discourse by providing clear rationalisations as to why certain actions were justifiable in the context of defence of the self and the protection of others, incorporating registers in which there was an apparent compulsion to act violently. These justifications, excuses and rationalisations are articulated through the references to the victimisation that other innocents were forced to endure at the hands of criminals: the cops in these situations were reacting to atrocities already committed.

151 You sit you're in this situation you saw what this person did um (.) the whole chase to finally get hold of this guy {opens hands out to side} you get hold of him um it's a (.) it's a physical fight {hands balled into fists} with this person um::m and then ja you turn around and you take out your frustrations on him=you want to make him basically feel the same (.) fear and anxiety that he caused in those people. >Cause you have seen what he did to them - to the victims basically< and you want that person to (.) to know what it was like to be helpless and not *be able to do anything*. And yes you do overstep your bounds {slight shake of head} you do.

With the slight shake of his head, Insp Faithful seems to convey his sense of surprise at his own actions, a man not totally in control of his own behaviour and losing control of himself enough to “overstep the bounds” given a situation that is untenable, as above. Although he is participating in the discourse of retribution and justified violence that most cops engage in, he is nevertheless conveying his astonishment at the deeds he ‘involuntarily’ commits. He pays homage to the discourses of both heroism and group solidarity in the following speech, his implacable utterance of “you want to make him pay” conveying his abhorrence for an act perpetrated against one of their own within the bonds of the police brotherhood.

187 So that sets in and it's actually I mean but it's also not nice seeing (.) guys that you know, friends that you know he's cuffed that his hands were handcuffed behind his back his own cuffs and he was shot with his own pistol=he's lying there on the beach or lying in the ditch - that gets to you. And when you get that guy, yes, you want to make him pay. Cause, I mean, you feel something here {hands to heart} You want to make him pay. It's as simple as that.

It is made abundantly clear that it is not the policeman that starts the spiral of violence; his use of force is put forth as a response, a reply to someone else's activity. There is a deflection of blame in that the choice to commit an act of violence is forced on the participants (Mullaney, 2007; Stevens, 2008; Westmarland, 2005). Therefore, the other person (the criminal) is responsible for any action that occurs after his initial attack (Andersson, 2008). Not positioning himself as an instigating party indicates that Insp Faithful cannot be defined as a perpetrator of violence, rather calling on his right to be able to defend (whether himself or others), without having to claim any responsibility for the use of that violence, and without the stigma of being classified as either 'violent' or non-violent. In this way, he manages to avoid falling into either the victim (through non-action) or perpetrator categories (Andersson, 2008). Rather than admitting personal complicity in his actions, the justifications Insp Faithful uses frame his deeds and those of other cops as mere behaviours, in no way indicative of one's essential being. He is imploring an audience to regard the violence as coming not from a heartless perpetrator, but instead from a heroic man pushed to an aggressive act. This is a vital defence mechanism, allowing the participants to classify themselves as non-violent individuals.

The positioning of the hero, standing against injustice, was clearly seen in some of Insp Dark-Knight's poetry about himself, in which he refers to himself (ironically) as a 'courageous hero' (a concept possibly borrowed from a traditional Afrikaans folk song, "Slaap rustig, dapper helde!" – *sleep restfully, brave heroes!*):

DIE NAGMERIE

Slaap rustig jou dapper held
Saggies nader skuiwer die geweld
Die oë begin rol in jou kop
Die liggaam begin ruk en skop
Al wat uit kom is die roggel van 'n leë dop

(The Nightmare

Sleep peacefully, you courageous hero

The violence creeps quietly closer

The eyes begin to roll in your head

The body begins to shake and kick

All that emerges is the death rattle of an empty cartridge)

The irony of the poem lies in the depiction of the hero as doomed from the start: if he is not dead already, then he is at least certain to die. There is a sense of hopelessness in the notion that, however worthy the hero has been in life, however striking his courage in the face of terrible odds, the sinister and constantly lurking but nameless violence that exists is yet more powerful. His demise is consequently fated to happen. He conveys his familiarity with the portrayal of a violent form of death that is shocking and confrontational, implying more than a passing acquaintance with a hands-on approach to being the harbinger of violent death. Insp Faithful unconsciously echoes this imagery when he mentions Insp Dark-Knight's knowledge of how to "cut his [*a guerrilla's*] throat with a knife".

There is an idolisation of this masculine ideal that is displayed in the justificatory dialogue. A certain amount of pride is attached to the exhibition of characteristics of bravery

in the face of danger: the righteous man doing what needs to be done, seemingly against all odds. This is reinforced by the police culture which rewards those displays of heroism (Kopel & Friedman, 1997; Miller et al., 2003), either tangibly, with medals and praise, or undetectably with subtle approval-laden non-verbal communication. The broader role of militaristic organisations such as the police reflects and reproduces the apparently global system of patriarchy; there is no doubt that the organisation is highly masculinist, remaining dominated by men and giving the foreground to traditional male principles of competition, aggression, power and control. As such, these organisations constitute a significant arena for the construction of masculine identities and play a role in defining and shaping images of masculinity within the broader society (Miller et al., 2003; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). Employees of such an organisation have to internalise the culture through a process of socialisation, which in the police comprises the prominence of creating sturdy cops who are aggressive, do not display emotion and follow regulations without questioning (Bantjes, 2004; Frewin et al., 2006; Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004; Mofomme, 2001; Nolan, 2009; Pershing, 2006). These sought-after attributes of heroic behaviour and masculinity diffuse into the impressionable minds of young recruits. A trainee receives indoctrination in the lingo, behaviours, codes and routines that will guarantee effective adaptation and integration into the organisation (Nolan, 2009). Learned discourses, such as those of heroism and justified violence, allow the officers to save face as men: they are able to present their violence only as a positive, or at least, not as a negative, because it is a means of reinstating the rights to which they feel entitled given their fealty to the organisation. Insp Faithful describes his first ‘kill’ at a young age and the subtle reinforcement of his actions by the older cop:

611 Your first one on one (3.1) I’ll give you ja a simple example. >I was sixteen when I joined the police, eighteen when I shot my first guy<. Umm the result was, when the detective came there and he saw it, it was a pat on the back and “Jussie maar jy het goed geskiet!” I thought ok! And the problem is the first one is hardest, and it gets easier after that. And every time it gets easier and easier and easier, and I ended up eventually, a guy would give me hassles or lip and I would literally I would be looking him in the eyes, and I would be thinking to myself, “I am going to take my gun out and blow you away.”

>Cause that's an end to this argument right away<. And it got to the point where I physically would start going for my my sidearm cause I am going to kill him that's it.

Minimisation of the potency of utterances through the use of euphemism is utilised as a valuable device to lessen the gravity of the violence, disconnect from the event and to soften the register of the narrative (Mullaney, 2007). Participants try to generate credibility, present themselves or colleagues in a positive light and to construct themselves as the unsung heroes in any interactions through the use of euphemisms such as “took out”, “first one”, “my kills”, “blow you away”, “eliminate”, “your first one on one”, “overstep your bounds” and “make him pay”. Insp Faithful shows his hero-worship of Insp Dark-Knight in this manner, with his euphemism “took out” reinforcing rather than detracting from his admiration, and Insp Dark-Knight’s responsibility is clearly deflected and avoided through the need to prove himself to others. Violence is mitigated by the fact that it becomes easier the more one commits it.

Concessions are made to Insp Dark-Knight’s involvement in brutal acts in that the accountability for the violence is either banished or renegotiated through the use of exculpatory registers which place blame on the unspecified ‘other’, thus ensuring a degree of moral credibility and positive presentation. No full responsibility of the violence is accepted at any time, however, with anything that appears to be an admission being swiftly followed by a defence that presents the violence as logical and rational in some way. Euphemisms such as “took out”, and “the first one” all serve to distance the speaker from the actual commission of an aggressive deed. In a situation where the guerrillas are classified as evil personified, proving oneself by killing a “terrorist” carries the implications of valour and boldness; the soldier protecting his country and his people.

621 Look I mean Insp Dark-Knight obviously took out a lot more people than I have and on a lot more personal – I mean to shoot someone is quick. To cut his throat with a knife is something else. But that’s what you’ve got to do to

prove yourself. Um And ja the first one is difficult, but thereafter (1.2) *it becomes easier and easier because you get used to it*.

Heroic discourse of retribution and justified violence can culminate in ‘moral cause’ corruption, which can take place where an accused is seen as guilty, but bureaucratic rules prevent the conviction from taking place. The cops concerned are forced to take the law into their own hands if they want to see a criminal pay for his actions. In the war against crime, deviation from the rules is seen as being in the interests of justice and police officers tend to view their role as the domination of crime. This results in intense identification with police cultural ideals and dealing with the harsh reality of policing the community in what is perceived as a successful way: a vigilante type of justice (Westmarland, 2005). Hence, part of the validation and necessity for the masculine ideal of a hero who takes the law into his own hands is the lack of faith in a justice system that most officers feel is all but useless. Insp Faithful’s actions are based on the premise that nothing will be accomplished unless he takes up his position as a hero:

195 (The justice system) Does nothing. I mean he goes to jail, and it’s a jol. When he walks in there and he murdered a policeman=he’s a hero so it’s ja you wanna make him pay. (.3) That’s basically what it boils down to.

Denials and disclaimers are often used to distance participants from actions that could be constructed as extreme or pathological in some way. As strategies, they maintain the actor’s precarious hold on the idealised image of the champion. These were evidenced by the clear discontinuities contesting the heroic discourse. Little Miss Maturity, in the midst of recounting tales of her father’s abuse and threats against her life, makes reference to her father as non-violent, in an attempt to differentiate between the violent person she fears her father is becoming, and the hero father-figure to which she prefers to cling. She seems compelled to use these strategies to minimise any judgement that might attach to her father, eliciting sympathy from the audience and promoting a positive presentation of Insp Dark-Knight:

88 And my father's not the violent sort.

200 I wouldn't say my dad was violent except for those first few outbursts – he's not the type to throw stuff and slam stuff, except when me or my mom lose his stuff then he gets all agro, but that's not to the point of being violent.

It is necessary to include another dimension in the categories of rationalisation: that of apology, in which the participants perceive themselves as accountable and own up to their deeds without providing more validations or defences. Apologies require both a negative evaluation of the act and the acceptance of responsibility thereof. As a result, they have the detrimental outcome of impeding the aggressor's portrayal of a 'hero' image. Yet apologies may work well during situations where the image of one's self is in jeopardy, since good people own up to mistakes and recognise the error of their ways. Confessions of personal culpability and demonstrations of penitence allay the aggressor's own fears that he might be a dreadful person (Mullaney, 2007), and preserve the illusion of heroism. There is no doubt that the valiant defender has a real desire to obtain forgiveness, and that he has a need to appease his conscience, or offer symbolic restitution for his transgressions. However, as an apology might serve to mitigate anger or abhorrence reactions of the audience, thereby presenting a concern for the maintenance of the relationship, it has the added benefit of preserving the wholesome image of the narrator. Although this approach is undeniably strategic in dimension, this does not imply that the person undertaking the tactic is insincere (Bucaille, 2007). Insp Dark-Knight uses this approach to achieve a moral effect, signalling intentionally that he does know these things are wrong:

622 Jy kannie. Jy kannie. Ek weet nie hoe kan jy enigsins vergifnis kry vir iets so daai wat gedoen is nie. En of ek vir jou gemoedsrus kan gee nie weet ek ook nie. Of dit my gaan laat beter voel weet ek ook nie. Maar dit jaag my. Dis goed wat my aande pla.

(You can't. You can't. I don't know how you can in any way receive forgiveness for something like that which was done there. And if it will bring

you peace of mind, I don't know either. If it is going to make me feel better, I also don't know. It is things like that which plague me in the evenings.)

It is tempting to view this apology as a manly way of owning up to one's wrongdoings, but the focus does tend to fall on what the apology will do for the perpetrator of violence rather than the receiver thereof. This particular instance allowed for his construction of himself as a wrongdoer, someone who had erred and had subsequently embarked on a path of self-knowledge or enlightenment. In this way, he proved to his audience that he had achieved some measure of growth and rehabilitation (Stevens, 2008).

One questions whether apologising, then, is simply a way for the narrator to save face whilst clarifying his actions to the researcher within the framework of the hypermasculine report which is proffered, or if there is a heartfelt sentiment of repentance. It is also difficult to predict whether a male researcher would have had a different account portrayed, perhaps one that stressed the hypermasculine more to the detriment of the apology, because the common gender of participant and researcher would foster a setting in which men would feel more comfortable about voicing their opinions about the commission of violence. Whatever the reasons for the apology, it is clear that it supports the heroic discourse of retribution and justified violence.

"The age of innocence": Delusions of candour, idealism, naïveté and blind obedience

Participants evoked the ideals of serving their country in a way that emphasised a common discourse of innocence perverted by others. Their naïveté, idealism, patriotism and willingness to serve are construed as being misused by the organisation, whether military or police, and their subsequent actions are interpreted as being the responsibility of the formidable establishment. Insp Dark-Knight mentioned his enlistment into the force as an attractive opportunity for a child from a modest family background, as it represented an adventurous way of life that he was keen to experience. In this way, he placed himself as outside of and impervious to any political consideration; simply a boy out to enjoy the world. His self-representation draws on his memories of the convictions and feelings of his youth,

giving the impression of an idealistic and perhaps even romantic adolescent hiding behind the battle-scarred older policeman. His youth and simple origins are offered as proof of his innocence and sincerity, the way he merely happened upon his later career by accident, as it were. His appellation of the word “terrorist” is useful in this case too, since he can present himself simply as a minion, protected by the argument of compulsory obedience to a commanding officer.

120 Ek het 1980 het ek begin in die Polisie en (.) ek is van die College af direk deur na Milleeuskop toe. By Milleeuskop het hulle vir ons gevra wie van ons belangstel om na 'n spesiale eenheid toe te gaan in Ovamboland - dit was 'n Koevoet Eenheid gewees. Ek het deur hulle uitgevind wat doen hulle, en hulle het gesê die eenheid is maar toe nou net drie jaar gestig gewees en wat jy doen is jy (.) jag terroriste in die bos en dan elimineer jy hulle. En dit is my gevoel dat as ek dit miskien doen kan ek miskien satisfaksie daaruit kry want ek jag nog iets.

(I started in 1980 in the police and I went directly from the college to Milleeuskop. At Milleeuskop they asked us who would be interested in going to a special unit in Ovamboland – it was a Koevoet Unit. I found out what they did, and they said the unit was founded only three years previously and what you do is you hunt terrorists in the bush and then eliminate them. And it was my feeling that if I perhaps did that, perhaps I could get some satisfaction out of it because I was still hunting something.)

As a mere twenty-year old, his ingenuous youth is offered as an underlying factor in his enthusiasm for the lifestyle, his indifference to rough living, and ignorance of political causes. As is the case with many young recruits, honest and full of illusions, he paints the picture of his commitment; his idealism culminating, unfortunately, in his being led astray by cynical leaders who issued commands that were to be obeyed. The wide-eyed youngster is again evoked: a humble, conscientious and faithful worker who was merely overtaken by the political agenda of others.

In direct contrast to the discourse of the innocent boy misled (yet not incompatible therewith), Insp Dark-Knight also suggests an image of a virile soldier (Bucaille, 2007), who joins up by choice, enjoying the physical exploits of surviving in a harsh and merciless terrain with few or no resources at his disposal. He embodies a spirit of solidarity with his colleagues, and demonstrates the capacity to go above and beyond the call of duty. In this pursuit, he emphasises the particularly harsh selection and training process of the unit which are used to break them down in order to rebuild them as soldiers, the covert infiltration of enemy territory, and the exciting commando operations. All the while it is subtly inferred that he was one of the select few who could cope, those who were incarnate of that idealised soldier so venerated by other males.

- 133 Ons was gewees tweehonderd wat deurgegaan het en van die tweehonderd ek dink dit was sewe gewees - sewe of agt van ons wat toe nou geslaag het op die einde van die dag.

(There were two hundred of us that went through and of the two hundred I think it was seven, seven or eight of us who passed at the end of the day.)

- 137 Hulle het jou probeer breek. Jy het vir dae sonder kos gebly, jy was in die bos gewees, jy was in die sand. Hulle het goed op jou skouers gedra - gelaai.

(They tried to break you. You lived for days without food, you were in the bush, you were in the sand. They loaded things on your shoulders.)

In the accounts of the participants, the discussion of violence is thus elevated to a desirable and successful form of masculine performance, throwing into relief the incongruity of a society that makes allowances for violence on a certain structural, institutional level, and yet deprecates it on an ethical level (Stevens, 2008). Insp Dark-Knight is able to present his professional achievements in the specialised unit in a positive light, with a sense of pride. It was a period when his merit was acknowledged and rewarded, and his inclusion in such unit gave him prestige (Bucaille, 2007).

154 Ons was “Search and doodmaak”. Ons het tot en met drie/vier dae ag drie /vier weke het ons in die bos gebly en jy het nie jy het nie jy het nie vars kos gehad nie. Jou beskuit wat jy agter op die trok gehad het het na diesel geruik, jou vleis het die eerste twee dae opgeraak. Um As jy maar ’n likkewaan teen die kant gekry het - ’n likkewaan is daai wat teen die boom op loop - ek het ’n skyfie daarvan - ek kan dit bring en jy kan sien wat dit is - en dan het ons die gevang en dit ge-eet want dit is die enigste vleis wat ons kon kry.

(We were “Search and destroy”. We went for three or four weeks living in the bush and you didn’t have fresh food at all. Your rusks that you had in the back of the truck smelled like diesel, your meat was finished in the first two days. And if you could find a leguaan on the side – like those that climb up the trees – then we caught it and ate it because it was the only meat that we could get hold of.)

In order to maintain their narrative of incorruptibility, both Insp Dark-Knight and Insp Faithful are always careful to name the opponents “terrorists”, so as not to be seen as champions of an Apartheid system. In this way, they are insisting on the emphasis of the crimes of the opposing party yet at the same time denying the political nature of the conflict. Through this careful construction, the suggestion of being a prisoner of the political environment is imparted: calling the system into question amounted to marginalising themselves, which made it imprudent and possibly harmful to articulate disagreement with any injustice they witnessed (Bucaille, 2007). The refusal to take politics into account in their explanations again calls on the disarming naïveté. It is implied that, in their innocence, they had no other points of reference, and even if they remained critical of the actions they were ‘forced’ to carry out, they reported themselves as powerless to affect any change or behave in a different manner. In this way, they were able to regard themselves as ignorant, a situation which, in their eyes, exculpates them.

254 Want jy is- alhoewel ek dit nie wou doen nie op daai stadium nie want tog, jy is een persoon tussen daai klomp uh riot mense en as jy vir hulle sê “maar luister, wat julle doen is verkeerd” - jy kan nie dit doen nie. Dit dit dit- Jy gaan

vir jou in onguns bring, jy gaan vir jou...jy gaan jou naam gat maak, jou naam sleg maak, hulle gaan vir jou lag. Hulle gaan jou uitwerk

(Because you are – although I never wanted to do it at that stage because – you are one person amongst that crowd of riot people and you say to them “but listen, what you are doing is wrong” – you can’t do that. That that that – you are going to bring yourself into disfavour, you are going to – you are going to make your name ridiculous, you are going to make your name bad. They are going to laugh at you. They are going to work you out.)

There is little personal investment in the stories Insp Dark-Knight tells, a defence mechanism for accepting too much individual responsibility for the decisions that were made. His narratives are purely technical or entertaining, a few exploits or operations described in minimalistic terms, yet still emphasise the camaraderie he experienced. He accentuates the physical and moral ordeals he faced without breaking, conveying a sense of triumph.

182 Ons was in ’n kontak gewees van dertig terroriste gewees - dertig plus - ons het daai dag ek dink seventien doodgeskiet. Van ons mense het ook seergekry. Ons was net anderkant die J. Rivier gewees naby die grens want ons spoor gejaag het. Dit was ’n baie maklike spoor gewees om te jaag en(.) um (.) toe het ek op die spoor gehardloop en Oupa het saam met my gehardloop en toe slaan Oupa my op die skouer en toe ek val val ek agter ’n (.) dis ’n (.)- daars baie doringboompies en En uh toe ek val toe druk hy my kop plat en hy lê langs my en toe ons plat lê toe begin die skote te klap. Met die geval het my hoedjie wat ek gedra het bo in die takkies vasgehak. En ek het die hoedjie vir jou saamgebring - dis die enigste iets wat ek nog van daai lot oor het wat ek graag- miskien was dit net nie my tyd gewees nie.

(We were in a contact with thirty terrorists – thirty plus – we shot seventeen dead that day I think. Some of our people also were injured. We were just the other side of the J. River near to the border where we were tracking spoor. It was a very easy spoor to track, and I was running on the spoor and Oupa was

running with me. Suddenly Oupa hit me on the shoulder and I fell behind a – there's a lot of thorn trees and when I fell he pushed my head flat and lay beside me and when we were lying flat, then the shots began. With the fall, my hat that I was wearing caught above me in the branches. And I brought that hat for you – it's the only thing that I have left from that time that I really want to – maybe it was just not my time then.)

There is a camaraderie that Insp Dark-Knight highlights between the White men of the unit and the Black trackers that evokes a sense of nostalgia, the grand old days, a time that he misses.

173 Daar is baie van my kollegas raakgeskiet - as ek praat van kollegas dan praat ek van my Ovambo vriende ook want ek en die Ovambos was broers gewees. Ons het in dieselle slaapsak geslaap, ons het uit dieselle bord kos uitgeet. Ek het een gehad daarso - Oupa - Oupa was basies my - ek wil amper sê my pa gewees, want as ek afgeklim het en ek het spoor gekry was Oupa by my gewees; as ons op vleis afkom lat ons kan vleis eet, was my vleis eerste vir my afgesny gewees en vir my gebring gewees. So Oupa het vir my (.2)

(There were many of my colleagues shot – when I speak of colleagues, then I am also speaking of my Ovambo friends, because the Ovambos and I were brothers. We slept in the same sleeping bag, we ate out of the same plate of food. I had one there – Oupa – Oupa was basically my – I almost want to say father, because when I climbed off to find spoor, Oupa was with me, if we came across meat that we could eat, my meat was cut off for me first and brought to me. Oupa did this for me.)

There was coordination and confidence in the unit and the fact that they risked their lives together created strong bonds. He particularly emphasises the unique relationship that existed between them and the Ovamboland trackers, to whom he referred as “*terrorists that were tamed*”. His communication, such as that above, while underlining an impression of a

youngster out in the bush having fun with his mates, aims to show that he neither adhered to the idea of White racial superiority nor to racism. He thereby exculpates himself from any racist feelings, made clear in remarks such as “as ek praat van kollegas dan praat ek van my Ovambo vriende ook want ek en die Ovambos was broers gewees. Ons het in diesel slaapsak geslaap, ons het uit diesel bord kos uitgeet.” (*if I speak of colleagues, I am referring to my Ovambo friends, because the Ovambos and I were brothers. We slept in the same sleeping bag, we ate from the same plate of food*). No political agenda is to be seen, emphasising his innocence and naïveté. In this, one gets the impression that apartheid did not exist in their unit, that there was already integration taking place, and the racial diversity and acceptance is offered as proof that equality existed between Black and White. However, it is amusing to note that the Ovambo he refers to as his “*father*”, Oupa, still cut off the first cuts of meat for him, brought him his food, and that he ate first, the time-honoured tradition of the White man in the bush. He never mentions politics in his dialogue, his avoidance of it serving to underline its importance rather than detracting from it.

Insp Faithful particularly made use of bravado (accompanied by little indication of remorse) to describe how the men are conditioned to following orders, illustrating the dominant discourse of innocence perverted through the orders of others, but adding another dimension to this: “well they weren’t told not to do it”. He utilises an effective strategy of shock value to convey the legitimacy of the violence as an expression of successful action to the researcher and invisible audience:

167 So I think that was in the era where (.) you know where (.) what they did was justified by the officers = you go out (.) you supposed to (.) the whole {ball with hands} idea of Koevoet was to terrorise the terrorists (.) that was the whole idea of it. Hhh So they were told to go out and >torture these people, you know= tie them over the Casspirs= go bundu-bashing=body-parts go flying<. That was something (.) it was a practice (.2) you know they were told (.2) well they weren’t told to not do it.

Dr Feel-Good is of the opinion that the commission of acts of atrocity based on the orders of management seemed to protect many officers from the psychological effects of their violent behaviour. A vital point is that the men perceive a sense of support from their superiors, which imparts the implication of invulnerability and power.

82 how people enjoy going out and kill and maim and throw batteries from Casspirs on people and never develop PTSD. They are part of the system, they have the backing of their superiors, that was their – that was their instruction to go out and control you know the violence and so on.

Insp Faithful seems to confirm this, implying that the organisation trained the soldiers to function without any higher-order thoughts of their own, comparing them to vicious dogs that have no ability to reason, but rather purely operate in the way in which they have been trained. As an animal cannot be held responsible for its actions, so too are the men absolved from their behaviours because they were “trained” not to reason. They are able to maintain a sense of virtuousness in spite of the facts to the contrary by referring to their schooling, which was able to overcome all human moralities and inhibitions.

552 Prior to ‘94, you were a pit-bull [*fighting dog*] that they just pointed and let go, and they knew that whatever was there in front was going to get stuffed up. But that’s *what they wanted*, and we were trained as such.

556 Res They don’t take into account the minds of the people?

557 *No a pit-bull doesn’t mos have a mind, you see*.

As a consequence of the discourse of innocence perverted by others, Insp Dark-Knight reveals a chilling development – that of enjoyment, the feeling of the power that control over another’s life gives you. For a twenty-year old youngster, the feeling is heady: all the power and none of the responsibility – oh how the fallen are mighty! He conveys the

impression of revelling in another's demise, and talks of his need for blood – “the stickiness of it, the warmth of it” – flowing over his hands.

169 Op daai stadium (.) van dit was orders gewees wat ons op gewerk het maar baie van dit was op jou eie toedoen gewees. Jy het daardie verskriklike mag in jou hande deurdat jy kan maak en breek soos jy wil en basies word daar nie eintlik vrae gevra nie. En waneer dit kom in 'n bos oorlog dan word daar nie “freebies” uitgedeel nie - dit is of jy of ek en as jy nie vinniger is as ek is nie, ongelukkig dan is dit maar jou kans.

(At that stage some of it was orders that we were working to, but a lot of it was on your own volition. You had this incredible power in your hands in that you can make and break as you will and basically there are no questions asked. And when it comes to a bush war, there are no freebies handed out – it's either you or me and if you are not faster than I am, then it's unfortunately just your chance.)

The adrenalin rush of absolute power covers a multitude of sins, as Insp Faithful reports. The organisation completes the conditioning of the men, training them to see only the faceless enemy and not individuals (“[They train you] (.2) to be emotionless,> to have no emotions, to feel nothing<”), and he positions himself as one of the innocent victims too – after all, it is not his decision to shoot, but the command of the officer, he who must be obeyed. His innocence is used to justify his actions, his personal convictions are subsumed by forces beyond his control.

602 Um I mean (before you go to the border) you sit there for six weeks, and right from day one, it's not the crowd or the people, it's the enemy. That's all you hear for six weeks - the enemy, the enemy, the enemy. You get out and get into your first situation where there's a riot, and the officer gives a command to shoot and you see the enemy, that's what it is all you see. And you go out

and you must now (.) kill this person. And it it comes easy. um That's in a crowd situation you're shooting it's um (.)

Through the justifications of training, subtle subliminal influence, and following orders from a higher power, police officers are able to maintain an image of themselves as innocent of committing unwarranted aggression, and preserve a portrayal of themselves as blameless. It is the discourse of naïveté and the perversion of innocence by other agencies that makes this possible.

Conclusion

The references to the commission of violent deeds are numerous in all of the participants' speech, and it is interesting to see their adherence to common discourses surrounding the concept of workplace violence. In their perception of the inappropriateness of their actions and whether they accept that they are liable for their actions or not, participants make use of the strategies of justification, denial, disclaimer, excuse or apology to provide acceptable accounts for behaviour. Supported by the dominant discourse, these strategies enable an understanding of how deeds are reflected upon, identities are negotiated, or perceptions are enhanced.

A common characteristic of the police role is the overuse of distinctive behaviour patterns, such as resorting to an external locus of control. Police assimilate a mode of dichotomised decision-making – the situation is either right or wrong with no discretionary middle ground (Violanti, 1996). Such thought processes may be the effect of the officer's striving to maintain impartiality, but can develop into an unconditional form of resolution for individual problems. An officer may be said to make use of a relentlessly restricted cognitive approach in managing crises in which an inability to process more suitable options occurs (Pienaar et al., 2007; Violanti, 1996). As in the previous chapter, many of the strategies used to present a positive self-image involve the use of an external locus of control, confirming the existence of a precedent or archetype in the dominant coping mechanisms of the police

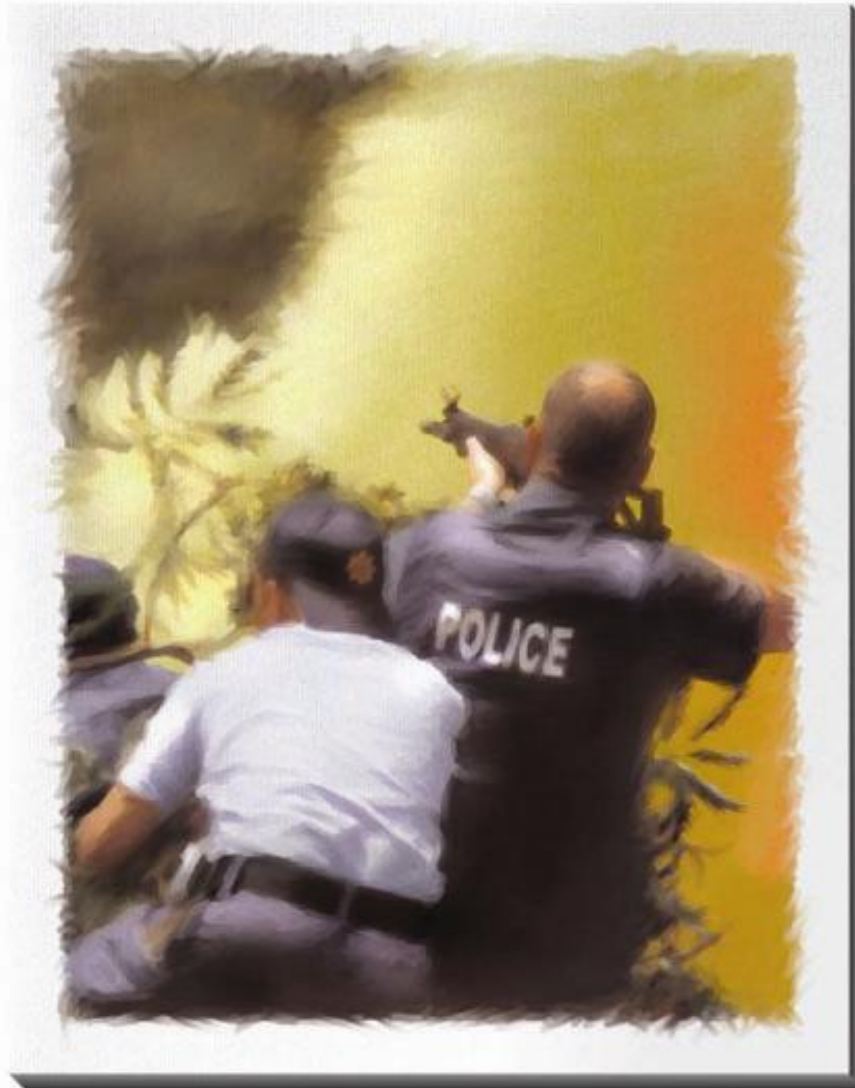
officers themselves, and an inherent homily in the organisation, that endorses the use of a strategy that places the blame for deeds committed onto others rather than oneself. From discourses of absolution due to another's involvement ("*they drove me to do it*"), to discourses of retribution and justice ("*they need to pay for what they have done*"), to discourses of innocence perverted by a stronger agency ("*I was following orders*"), all involve the inherent characteristic that another's actions are directly responsible for the consequent violence that is used to resolve the situation.

Also inherent in these discourses is the implication that deeds of an aggressive nature are expressions of masculinity committed against those who are somehow deserving of the violence in some way. Male violence thus appears to occur as an outflow of the expression of masculinity, deeply embedded in the social and ideological constructs of what it means to be a man. The glorification of the ideal man, and the heroic position he assumes, reinforce a subscription to the feats that a man should be able to achieve within the routine performance of his daily duties.

The following chapter looks more deeply into this premise while concentrating on the participants' world view and how it informs their choices, perceptions of and justifications for workplace violence.

Chapter Nine

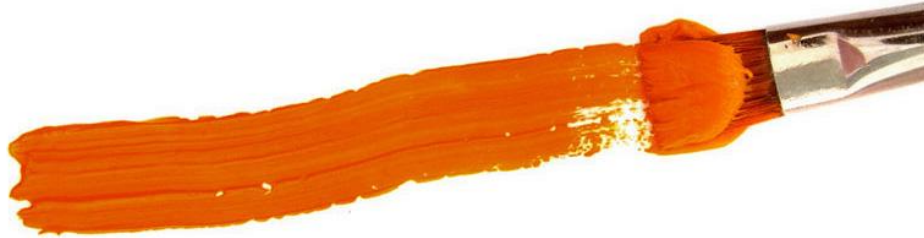
Adding Layers of Paint: The Highlights of World View



9

CHAPTER NINE

ADDING LAYERS OF PAINT: THE HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD VIEW



The job of the impressionist painter is to say just enough without forcing the story on the viewer... detail kills imagination.

(Colley Whisson, 1966 - present)

Introduction

The third category to emerge from the participants' narratives was related to their view of the world; their personally held beliefs, attitudes and predispositions that informed their dialogue. Participants are analysts themselves, capable of understanding, reflecting and acting on the basis of their understanding and reflection. Research participants, being embedded in historical and social traditions, are themselves elements of the history related and not mere observers or viewers of it. They conform to the multifaceted constellations of meaning and significance that are bequeathed from one generation to another (Thompson, 1990). As such, the participants' view of the world was essential to the understanding of the concept of workplace violence as seen through their unique lenses.

Emerging Discourses and Perspectives

World View

A person's view of the world is vital to understanding their use of, and adherence to, the discourses and perspectives that inform every sphere of their lives, and to understanding how they in turn are used and shaped by these discourses and psychologies. Deeply socially embedded, their perceptions, philosophies and ideologies enforce the ways in which they act and react. This chapter uncovers the dominant discourses and perspectives of the participants' philosophy, way of thinking or inherent biases that informed their view of the social order.

“(Cow)Boys don't cry”: Masculinity

Modern Westernised society imposes specific standards of conduct and expression for boys and men. Valorisation of masculine values is conveyed through types of toys boys are traditionally encouraged to play with, such as guns, soldiers and fantasy-figures (Higate & Hopton, 2005), and through books, media, computer games and films that glorify militarism. Ordinary men construct themselves as both gendered beings and as masculine, describing the self in terms of key elements of what it means to be a man (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Those acting in what is considered a 'masculine' manner are continually collaborating, constructing and imitating the behaviours that are deemed necessary by the ideals of masculinity, which are sustained by the immediate culture and social structures (Andersson, 2008; Nolan, 2009).

Cultural discourses of masculinity in Western societies associate masculinity with domination. Being a man implies being tough, commanding and in control, virtues highly prized by policemen. The binary opposite of this position is that of the feminine, a position that is perceived as being weaker, and hence more emotional. From an exceptionally young age, males are taught that 'boys don't cry', a strong discourse in the culture of the SAPS,

where it is transmuted into “(Cow)boys don’t cry”. Thus, youngsters are trained to smother tears and other emotional exhibitions in order not to be counted pitiable or a disappointment (Bantjes, 2004). As a result, a boy in Western culture is forced into a carapace of masculine hardness that denies him the occasion to develop a full array of emotional assets and inhibits emotions such as fear or vulnerability in spite of the situations he might face. Arguably, in no other profession is this proscription of emotional expression more vigorous than in the police, where the discourse of masculinity or “(Cow)boys don’t cry” has become a mantra, those specific words being repeated or implied by all of the participants at one time or another. Insp Dark-Knight’s dialogue reveals:

420 Ja (.) wat is daai gesegte in die Polisie? “Cowboys don’t cry” ne? Ek het altyd vir die polismanne gesê “it’s a good day to die”.

(Yes what is that saying in the police? “Cowboys don’t cry” hey? I always said to the policemen “it’s a good day to die”)

The newspaper, *Tyger*talk, explains it as such:

“We come from a history during which a generation of police men and women were taught that cowboys don’t cry. They weren’t supposed to experience the trauma associated with their work on a personal level, but the reality is that they are not super beings and are affected by trauma just like any other human being” (“Cowboys Don’t Cry”, 2006, p. 3).

Historically there has been a reciprocal relationship between militarism and masculinity that valorises the notion of strong, active males risking their lives for the good of the community and concurrently idolises risk-taking, imperturbability, and violence (Higate & Hopton, 2005). Behaviours that characterize masculinity, such as protection, provision, competition and position are continually reinforced and approved by the sub-culture, whilst the appearance of weakness is deplored. Even violence is seen as a wholly tolerable and vital

constituent of masculinity, and there is a supplementary conviction that being male is connected to achievement, bravery, heroism and even combat (Bantjes, 2004; Frewin et al., 2006; Higate & Hopton, 2005; Kopel & Friedman, 1997). Elucidation of feelings could easily produce a sense of vulnerability and consequently endanger the self or others. As such, the ‘un-masculine’ feelings such as fear, shock or sadness, are constructed as a prospective obstruction to the performance requirements of a capable police officer.

The participants pay homage to this discourse on several occasions, where the articulation of any ‘un-masculine’ emotion is judged in terms of hindering officers in performing their duties, or endangering colleagues. Within the discourse, emotions are understood as improper behaviour in situations that require the dynamically demonstrated manly characteristics of bravery, toughness and fortitude (Frewin et al., 2006). Insp Dark-Knight describes it as follows:

209 Jy kan nie sag wees daar nie, Kerry. Jy kan nie vir die mense sê luister jy’s jammer oor hulle nie. Jy kan nie op een plek gaan sit en jouself bejammer of (.3) en jy het ook nie mense met wie jy kan praat nie want hulle sal jou nie verstaan nie. Dit is(.) Hulle sal jou skop en sê vir jou staan op en lat jy jou goed vat en verder baklei. Daar is nie plek vir (.) mense met sagtheid nie - daar’s nie “room for error” nie. Want as jy ’n fout maak dan kan dit die lewe van jou kollega kos. Dit kan die lewe kos van jou mense op die Casspir. (.) Een klein foutjie kan baie mense se lewens kos.

(You can’t be soft there, Kerry. You can’t say to the people listen I am sorry for you. You can’t go and sit in one spot and feel sorry for yourself or – and you also don’t have people that you can talk to because they won’t understand you. It’s... they will kick you and say to you stand up, take your stuff and fight further. There is no place for people with softness – there is no room for error. Because if you make a mistake, it can cost the life of your colleague. It can cost the lives of your people on the Casspir. One small mistake can cost many lives.)

A tolerable way to evade personal complicity when conversing about proceedings of a traumatic nature is to depersonalise the interpretations of experiences (Kopel & Friedman, 1997). Emotional wording is shunned, and personal recognition of difficult emotion is only alluded to, as in Insp Faithful's speech:

367 You can't stand there and break down - you got to do the job<. So you you gotta deal with it. Um (.) You stand at an accident scene where the person is basically burning to death in a car because they're trapped in the car and the fire brigade is coming you gotta take it you gotta to deal with it. You can't break down and cry, you gotta deal with it at that point. And then later on, obviously - you bury it so deep, and later on, after a couple of drinks, then it comes out and you can start talking about it.

This attitude is summed up in the mantra "uithou, aanhou, bekhou" (*bear up, keep up, shut up*) ("Cowboys Don't Cry", 2006, p. 3). There is a definite diffusion of the discourse of "*(Cow)boys don't cry*" into the raw recruits by the older cops in the police, whether intentional or not. Sometimes the method is subtle, such as in Insp Faithful's dialogue, where the ability to stand firm in the face of trauma is seen as an immutable fact of being a policeman. However, dissemination of the discourse can be more overt, as in the previous extract from Insp Dark-Knight above, where officers who act fearfully in a difficult situation are more likely to be openly castigated, or become the subjects of disparaging comments. It is the articulation of the weaker emotions that serves as a measure of competency, and consequently, acceptance as a satisfactory colleague or not (Frewin et al., 2006; Kingshott & Prinsloo, 2004; Woody, 2005). Dr Feel-Good, familiar with the concept through his dealings with policemen and women from the time that they entered the police, described how it happens:

318 If you listened to policemen when they start out – you know when they see their first dead body and when they first shoot somebody or see someone get shot, it's probably like a hardening – it's like a part of an initiation it's a

process and that's the way the older guys would deal with that. Um And strangely enough, people don't develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – they may have a couple of nightmares or sleep poorly for a few nights and then settle down and they may carry on for years with that kind of exposure. But I think you're right it's probably just part of the police culture – it's how you deal with it you know and if in the past if you presented with stress or emotional problems it was frowned upon – you were seen as bad you can't cope and so on. And even now, there's those kind of comments when people return to work – I think it's frowned upon still. People are not happy about people being booked off because they see that they take time off and it puts a burden on the remaining people.

Insp Faithful also mentions the subtle forms of emotional regulation from the policeman's point of view. The discourse of masculinity evokes a negative evaluation of actions, at times subtly subliminal and at times derogatory in an overt way. Emotions are interpreted as fear-related: fear is understood as a weakness and detrimental to professional conduct. Men are not men unless they can prove that they do not cry:

260 The people used to discuss you at braais [*barbeques*] and in bars and stuff as “Hey jy's daai bedonderde ou” [*hey, you're that crazy guy*] not necessarily as a sign of weakness but you knew that nothing was said in confidence=It came out (.) and it was made a joke of and you were the laughing stock of the entire station, and you know basically everyone around you and that is why the guys (.) {shakes head}.

Other members of the police mention the same thing happening. Newspaper articles in *Rapport* and *Tygerstalk* underline the negative stigma that attaches to officers forced to come back to work after being booked off on long-term stress leave.

“If you dare to admit that you are stressed and need to see a professional, you are labelled as weak and incompetent” (“Cowboys Don’t Cry”, 2006, p. 3).

“Intussen maak my kollegas of ek mal is. Jy staan alleen, almal verwerp jou”

(Your colleagues act as though you are mad. You stand alone, everyone rejects you)
(Steenkamp, 2007, p. 6).

The result of expression of emotions (and thus perceived weakness) is untenable – as in the accounts and newspaper article above: your police colleagues will mock you and it will ruin your reputation. Even Little Miss Maturity is not immune to the dominant discourse of masculinity within the culture of the police. She addresses this discourse of “(Cow)boys don’t cry” and policemen’s inherent denial of emotion, with her typical forthrightness. Scathing in her summation of the attitude, her voice is filled with her contempt of the mindset that she feels is partly responsible for her father’s breakdown:

480 because they have the attitude you know of “we’re MEN, we’re not supposed to be weak.” Generally, what do they look for in a policeman? Somebody who is strong, somebody who can stand their ground, somebody who is not going to break down crying within the first few weeks. Those are the types of people that I think they do hire. People that they think can deal with it. And what are they naturally going to be? They are going to be stubborn and obviously they are going to you know think to themselves “I am a policeman – I am supposed to be strong”.

She makes sure to contrast the masculine approach with the tactics a woman might follow in the same circumstances – women would more likely be prepared to admit that they need help and accept counselling than men. This lauded masculine portrayal of lack of emotion is perceived as a strength, the opposite of which is by implication the expression of weaker feminine emotionality: “you can’t be soft”; “we’re MEN, we’re not supposed to be

weak”; “there is no place for people with softness”; “I am a policeman – I am supposed to be strong”. These implied gender disparities are taken for granted, constructed around inherent personality diversity and behavioural repertoires. The result is an essentialist discourse which reinforces patriarchal, masculinist and sexist ideologies that excuse the consequent marginalisation and subjection of women associated with these men, whether female colleagues or family members.

However, there is a price to pay for the endless denial of emotions and the ‘weaker feelings’. Insp Dark-Knight mentions that his hardness had internalised to a point where he was no longer able to feel: all that was left was the hardness and no ability to empathise or deal with another’s emotions or hardships.

- 110 Kerry, op daai stadium was ek (.) ek was baie sterk gewees. Um Al die goed wat ek gesien het het net ingegaan - ek het nie (1.2) ek het nie jammer gevoel vir die persoon nie. Dit is asof ek ’n tipe van ’n satisfaksie daaruit gekry het as iemand seergekry het want ek het basies geen gevoel gehad vir iemand of iets nie.

(Kerry, at that stage I was – I was very strong. Al the things I had seen just went in – I didn’t – I didn’t feel sorry for the person. It is as though I got a type of satisfaction from it if someone was injured because I had basically no feelings for anyone or anything.)

- 223 *Jy voel so sterk*. Dit gee tipe van ’n rustigheid. Jy voel magtig, jy voel (.2) ek weet nie hoe om dit vir jou te sê nie - dit was lekker gewees. As jy (3.4) {shakes head} dit maak van jou ’n FOKKEN VARK. Dis wat dit is. Op die ou einde van die dag maak dit ’n vark van jou. Op daai stadium het ek dit nie besef nie.

(You feel so strong. It gives a sort of peace. You feel powerful, you feel – I don’t know how to say it to you – it was great. If you – it makes you a fucking

pig. That is what it is. AT the end of the day it makes a pig of you. At that stage I didn't realise it.)

Insp Dark-Knight describes an accident he was responsible for causing while driving one of the massive Casspirs through the streets. He had hit another vehicle in which there were three children, one of whom lived long enough for him to perform mouth to mouth, but later died in his arms. He describes how he simply wiped the blood off his mouth and got back into his vehicle to drive back to the station dispassionately:

288 ek het nog steeds basies geen gevoel gehad nie. Ek kan onthou ek het die bloed van my mond afgevee, maar ek het *geen gevoel gehad nie*. Ek het nie simpatie gehad nie. Ek het nie (.) ek het nie jammer gevoel nie. Want dit was deel van my werk, dit het gebeur. Ek was so hard gewees dat ek nog in daai selle Casspir ingeklim het direk daarna en teruggery het.

(I still had basically no feelings. I can remember that I wiped the blood off my mouth, but I had no feelings. I had no sympathy. I didn't – I didn't feel sorry. Because it was part of my work – it happened. I was so hard that I climbed back into that same Casspir directly afterwards and drove back.

Now, looking back on that time, it is almost as though he cannot believe his reactions on the scene. He is remorseful, recounting the death of the blond child with tears, long pauses in his tale, and smacking his hands together in agitation. It is difficult to assess the source of this agitation: is it simplistically a way for a perpetrator of horrific deeds to save face whilst justifying his actions within the context of offering the researcher a glimpse into 'softer' feelings heretofore denied? Alternatively, is this the expression of a sincere feeling of remorse and guilt offered by a broken and soul-destroyed individual desperate to make amends, but powerless to do so? Perhaps both scenarios are not mutually exclusive in this situation.

283 Die tweede enetjie was dood gewees en die derde enetjie was n blondekoppie gewees. (1.2) Ek het hom probeer red deur vir hom mond tot mond te gee (1.0) dis net bloed wat jy uitgespoeg het, en stukke (1.4) {smacking hands together}

(the second one was dead, and the third was a little blond boy. I tried to save him by giving him mouth to mouth – it was just blood that you spat out and bits)

This crystallisation of the ‘weaker’ feelings into diamond-hardness is seen as the pinnacle of maleness, the ultimate degree of indifference to which a ‘true’ man can aspire. Yet at what cost is this discourse of masculinity venerated? How long can vulnerability be sacrificed on the altar of über-maleness? If the dialogue of Insp Dark-Knight can be taken at face value, it is clear that the subservience of emotionality to impassivity takes its toll eventually, and when the price is to be reckoned, it is a high penalty to pay indeed. In fact, the ultimate irony is that it does not make a man into more of a man, but cements his descent into “*varkdom*”, into the expression of bestiality of a violent nature as the participants themselves so often come to realise: “*FOKKEN VARK*”, “*a pit bull*” without a mind, “*op die ou einde van die dag maak dit ‘n vark van jou*”. The crystallisation occurs not into the realms of indifference, the ultimate goal to which all subscribe, but rather into the realms of horror from which none can escape.

“*She belongs to me*”: Female subjugation and survival

Flowing directly from the discourse of masculinity is a discourse adhering to naturalised gender differences between men and women: a referent discourse of female subjugation to the more potent and powerful male, or “*she belongs to me*”. It is commonly believed in most Westernised societies that men need to be high achievers, leaders, superior, dominant and in power at all times (Bettman, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Miller et al., 2003; Mullaney, 2007; Nolan, 2009; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007; Walton, Coyle, & Lyons, 2004). This serves a justificatory function in that discourses of different cultural groups shape men’s

understandings of masculinity and sense of entitlement to use violence in an intimate heterosexual relationship.

In South Africa specifically, colonial discourses about sex and gender have traditionally separated men and women, instituting a separated male sphere of work in public that is divorced from a domestic world of child and household management applicable to women (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn, & Moletsane, 2007). Given this disparity, and adding the traditionalist religious discourse that a man is supposed to be the “head of the household” (with the innate features of providing for his wife and children, being the higher earner and subduing the professional world), violence is sometimes seen as a natural means of coping or type of tension release and therefore excused (Bettman, 2009).

As above, the characteristics of a man are expected to include his ability to disengage from emotional things, to be dispassionate, analytical and emotionally tough, to bottle up his emotions within until he reaches the point where he explodes. He compensates for his lack of control by being excessively dominant with someone of inferior position or power than himself (Bettman, 2009), which frequently results in his taking it out on his wife or family. By contrast, women are perceived to be the weaker sex: feminine, nurturing, fragile, empathetic, acquiescent, emotional, not taught how to reason for themselves, and incompetent in the performance of tasks, thereby necessitating a man’s support (Bettman, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Miller et al., 2003; Mullaney, 2007; Nolan, 2009; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007; Walton et al., 2004). Within the police, there is a militaristic code which utilises the physical manifestations of rank and hierarchy, weaponry, and an insistence on the wearing of a uniform decorated with the insignias denoting their position within the chain of command, to convey a unique concept of powerful manhood (Nolan, 2009). Men in this type of super-masculine work situation often take up a position of hypermasculinity, in which there is a belief that violence or the commission thereof is manly; they experience emotions differently to other males, and perceive danger as exciting (Johnson et al., 2005; Nolan, 2009; Rigakos, 1995; Vass & Gold, 1995). Hypermasculine men are sometimes seen as more at risk for committing aggressive acts towards their intimate others because of their inclination to express rage and restrain empathy. As a result, there is an increased risk of intimate

partner or family violence as well as marital discord and high levels of divorce within the personal relationships of police officers, with reasons as disparate as limited social networks, danger on the job and the presence of weapons in the home being cited (Erwin, Gershon, Tiburzi, & Lin, 2005; Johnson et al., 2005).

The police culture embraces unswerving loyalty towards fellow officers, with a concurrent climate of secrecy being the method used to ensure police solidarity, factors which exacerbate the problem of intimate-other abuse. Adherence to the institutionalised culture of deception, misrepresentation, lies and silence existent in many law enforcement organisations has connotations of a sect subscribed to by males (Nolan, 2009), and has the potential of covering up severe police blunders from public view. Families of police officers are equally expected to adhere to the same standards of secrecy, which can become difficult when the family is exposed to the threat of violence by an abusive family member who is a police officer, and petitions for protection against that member (Johnson et al., 2005; Pershing, 2006; Skolnick, 2008; Westmarland, 2005). Other police officers are unwilling to get involved: they are unlikely to want to risk being seen as a traitor by their strongly-knitted brotherhood. This leads to the dangerous situation in which cops get the impression that personal deeds committed against their families are above the law. This entitlement leads to Insp Dark-Knight's expressions of ownership of his family, including his belief in his right to decide when their lives should end as a result of them "*belonging to him*" and no one else. He is drawing upon broader discourses of the established role of the father as provider and protector within a nuclear family: as the major breadwinner, Insp Dark-Knight is classified as the "head of the household", entitled to make decisions that affect them without their consent. He states:

450 En partykeer voel dit of (1.3) jy (.) almal net saam met jou wil vat. Jy's somtyds selfsugtig. In die begin het ek 'n sterk gevoel gehad deur (.4) as ek iets gaan doen gaan ek nie alleen gaan nie. My familie is myne (gesturing to self in possession). Dis nie iemand anders se gesin nie. Ek sal dit nie toelaat dat iemand anders na hulle kyk nie.

(Sometimes it feels as though you just want to take everyone with you. You are sometimes selfish. In the beginning I had the strongest feeling that if I was going to do something, I would not go alone. My family is mine. It's not someone else's family. I won't allow anyone else to look after them.)

As in the previous section, the discourse of naturalised gender differences, culminating in the suppression of women, flows from disparities in personality and behavioural repertoires linked to dominance and submission. It reaches its zenith in the man's commodification of the woman, implying possession of "his" women. In a chilling view into Insp Dark-Knight's psyche, his poem entitled "Lappop" (Ragdoll) makes use of the idea that the woman he is referring to "belongs" to another, although he would like her to reside in his "poppekas" (*doll-case*) and by insinuation belong to him instead. Women are reduced to property, dolls or chattels that can be positioned where he deems fit. In the words "ons albei is nie wees", two interpretations are possible: in the first, he distances himself from human emotion and interaction by implying that he is not human, is not alive, and does not exist in the true sense of the word (*we both do not exist*). A second interpretation of the line comprises the idea that neither of them is an orphan (*we are both not orphans*), in other words, they both have commitments to other people. His appellation at the end is indicative of his feelings of possession and entitlement – "Die Poppemaker" (*the Doll-maker*), and gives the impression of where he has made, he can also break.

Met 'n drup van die oog plaas ek jou in die tas

Ek weet jy behoort in 'n ander se poppekas

Dis nie vir ons gevoel

Dis vir die mens bedoel

Was dit maar 'n ander tyd lappop

Sou ek my nooit so kan verwyf

Moet nie vrees lappop

Ons albei is nie wees.

Die Poppemaker

(With a drip of the eye, I place you back in the case

I know you belong in another's doll-case

Feeling is not for us

It is meant for people

If it was but another time Ragdoll

I would never be able to deny myself so

Do not fear Ragdoll

Neither of us exists/ is an orphan.

The Doll-maker)

An indispensable element of the expression of masculinity is seen as being the capability to act aggressively when the situation demands. There is a suggestion that police officers obtain both overt and implied societal endorsement for being in command, and explicit occupational instruction for wielding force when confronted with unmanageable situations, including those of a private nature (Johnson et al., 2005; Pershing, 2006; Skolnick, 2008), and this is clear in both Insp Dark-Knight's and Insp Faithful's accounts as has been discussed previously. Yet now the dialogue broadens to include use of force and commission of violence against those closest – the family members. Insp Faithful, whilst admitting that women are probably able to take care of themselves in these emancipated times, still supports the dominant discourse of “*she belongs to me*”, understanding and showing insight into the reasoning behind Insp Dark-Knight's decision to kill his family. A principal justification he uses is the work a man does as “the head of the household”, suggesting that, as men, they provide for the women in their lives. As such, their family would not exist or continue

without them. This discourse, whilst reinforcing the man's position of power within the family due to his productivity, draws on ideologies of patriarchy and reinforces principles of masculinity. As such, the belief is generated that there is some degree of tenure due to the man as a result of his positioning in, and provisioning of, the family. By implication, leaving matters such as finances or the running of their own lives to women would have disastrous consequences: "without me they are not going to make it". In this way, even whilst discussing the possibility of the commission of family murder, he manages to validate and uphold the image of the man as the protector of his women even to their deaths, thus preserving the position of the 'noble man'. His strongly traditionalist values reflect those of Insp Dark-Knight: the man is the head of the household; he is positioned as the source and caregiver; and ultimately he is solely responsible for the family. Insp Faithful is careful to locate himself outside this perspective, managing to negotiate his position as non-violent, but not as non-masculine. Through his tentative setting forward of his opinions, his constant change of tack and use of the words "these people", Insp Faithful distances himself from the traditionalist perspective, working to situate himself beyond it, yet shows his comprehension of the discourse through his inclusion of himself in the "you".

622 But I mean ja that's the reasoning you get from these people is that there is not going to be a future for my family and without me they are not going to make it. You get raised and you grow up with this whole thing that the man is the head of the household and you supposed to care for your family, provide for their needs, now if you're not there, who is going to do that? It's also upbringing that plays a big role in that decision. Um but I mean the fact that women- That's changed a lot, women also have professional careers and they can also provide for their families, but you know it still it's a era of um (.) yes his wife has got a career of her own and his daughter has got a good job and ja they will be- (.) but it's in his mind - what he believes, that's that's *going to be the clincher*.

This work-to-family overflow of violence is to be expected, Dr Feel-Good believes: the evidence of man's superiority over his women, and the unequal distribution of power in

the relationship comprising male domination and female subordination are clearly not foreign concepts to Insp Dark-Knight's family. Dr Feel-Good describes one of the occasions he was consulted by Insp Dark-Knight and his wife:

457 she came here once and showed me how bruised she was – she was really severely bruised all over her arms and neck and face and so on - she had bruises all over her body, rib injuries and so on – so he really attacked her quite severely. It doesn't happen on a regular basis, I think that was also an extreme example but uh I think it has happened in the past – not to that extent. But that was the most severe.

In spite of the attacks, as well as threats to her life and the lives of her children, Insp Dark-Knight's wife is hesitant to leave the situation. Dr Feel-Good's account contains numerous references to the possibility of family violence, and the possibility of family murder taking place, yet qualifies her decision to remain with her husband:

451 I think they (family) are always at risk. But I think his wife will never be able to leave him. Because that was a direct threat – that if she ever wanted to divorce him he would kill her.

Little Miss Maturity struggles with the naturalised gender discourse: her need to appear an emancipated woman of the world wages war with her strongly traditionalist upbringing, in which she has been taught by word and deed that men are superior to women. She seems torn between accepting her father's subjugation of her and rebelling against it. Her need to be seen as an individual, capable of caring for herself, and positioning her as equal to a man, creates a tension in her classification of her relationship with her father as violent, abusive or coercive, as it is inconsistent with the way she supposes a modern young woman should describe her identity. The contradictory pressures make her resistant to speaking of her father as aggressive. She demonstrates equalising strategies of emotion work in which she gives evidence that she has learned to manage his demands and threats

adequately. She utilises her limited knowledge of men to excuse her father's behaviour, which as a result of his long exposure to violence, she classifies as not being entirely his fault. Her ambivalence is reflected in the fact that she never classifies her father as an aggressive individual, but rather as a loving and caring father figure who has fallen on hard times and she justifies his reactions by referring to those.

200 I wouldn't say my dad was violent except for those first few outbursts – he's not the type to throw stuff and slam stuff, except when me or my mom lose his stuff then he gets all agro, but that's not to the point of being violent. It was only that one time where I literally caught him with the chair and throwing it at my mom and then you know throwing me against the wall.

Young women are often resistant to defining relationships as abusive as a result of the shame incurred by having a family member who uses violence against them. They are unwilling to define themselves as victims, as this assumes they have little agency to effect change and are not equals with those who abuse them (Chung, 2005). This is demonstrated in her passive submission to his right to take her life:

537 I don't think my dad would be the type to just kill himself. He'll want to take the rest of us with him. He won't just kill himself. Which is (.) I know it's a bad thing to say, but, rather take my life than my sister or my mom's

At other times, she shows spirit in fighting against his behaviour towards her and her family, standing up to him in order to protect her younger sister:

159 Um I remember when I was in high school standard eight– that would make me about sixteen, that was when I had just had enough of his threats cause he and my mom would have an argument and he would say to us “I am going to kill you all.” Then that evening I told him, “If you ever say that to me again, I

will never speak to you again,” and he actually called me on my cell phone at school just before school started and he apologised. But his apology means nothing because it happened again about a month later and he still does it – he still does it. And my mom came to me two weeks ago and she said to me that >he had said to her that he is going to slit her throat<. Heh heh What sort of a father-figure does that? No – I have um I have said this to him straight on – I have no problem saying this to him, that if I ever get married and my husband says that to me even once, I will leave. I have been threatened my entire life – I do not want that when I am older and I do not want that for my children.

In young women’s accounts of their experiences of violence and abuse a common discourse is that of “*I will survive*”: whilst they feel that the event is significant enough to describe to a researcher, they do not present themselves as indelibly scarred by it (Chung, 2005), as in Little Miss Maturity’s case. She often mentions her ability to cope with the situation, contrasting it with her younger sister’s inability to cope, and reports having reflected on the experiences in order to be less likely to be vulnerable to such a situation in the future. An individualistic communication predominates as Little Miss Maturity presents a positive outcome of the violence to demonstrate that she is not a victim, but rather has triumphed over the adversity.

157 No – I have um I have said this to him straight on – I have no problem saying this to him, that if I ever get married and my husband says that to me even once, I will leave. I have been threatened my entire life – I do not want that when I am older and I do not want that for my children.

354 But (.) you know (.) it only makes you stronger – makes you a better person. But I made my choices and I do plan to stick with them. I just hope that my parents are going to make it through this. They don’t really need to be worried about me – I’ll survive. I have done it for the past twenty-two years and I can do it again.

Her confusion is increased by having a mother who often makes threats to leave the abusive marriage, but then does not carry them out. Her mother's evident support of the discourse of female subjugation to men is a powerful model to Little Miss Maturity, and the source of much of her ambivalence. In the absence of a strong female role model, Little Miss Maturity is left floundering, trying to make a way for herself in a situation that is untenable. Like her mother, she has threatened many times to leave herself, yet had never carried out one of these threats, even though she is of an age where it would be perfectly acceptable for her to be living by herself.

206 And my mom still when she speaks to friends says you know if my husband ever raises his hand to me she'll leave him, but I think to myself you know he has done that and you've just let it slide. When is it going to happen again? Because if you allow once it's going to happen again cause now you've shown you've shown him it's ok. And I am just waiting for the day that it happens again cause then I am going to go and report him – even if he is my father but I need to take- it is my mom and it is my sister ultimately. But he is always right at this stage – you can't argue with him.

309 And it's – you know I feel I am the child – it's not my place to push for things like that - that's my mom's responsibility but (.) I don't think she's – I don't think she's willing to take it up.

Her idolisation of her father as a masculine figure in her life is clear, although his creativity and ability with his hands is turned to the unusual pastime of killing his family. Her speech reveals the pattern of family interactions, maintaining the discourse of female repression: the male as the all-powerful head of the house, able to do anything, fix anything, take charge of any situation, no matter how challenging. This is clearly contrasted with her rendition of an ambivalent, weak-willed mother, who threatens to do things and then never carries out those threats.

254 Well hhh as long as he doesn't have a firearm or any means of killing my mom or the rest of us I am quite (.) calm but– but you know he is (.) he can heh heh he can find a way. If he really wants to he'll find a way. He's very creative. I know he does everything in the house. He's the type of guy you can say you know, I want this, you know, build me a gate or something and he'll be able to do it. That's what he did with our house. He set up our entire front gate with electric system and everything. And that's the type – he's like a handy man – he can do anything he can um (.) he'll find a way. He'll definitely find a way. And he'll make sure he's not alive to live through the consequences. *I don't think he'll be able to cope with that*. But (.) heh heh ja (.) I don't know (.) I don't want my life to end like that.

To recapitulate, in a scenario where male anger is evinced and articulated as physical violence, the display of violence is constructed as maintenance of a typically masculine subject position, i.e. the “head of the household”. This is especially valid where it appears that the security of that position is threatened either in the broad context of social expectation about masculine behaviour or within the framework of heterosexual relationships (Mullaney, 2007; Walton et al., 2004). The individual's responsibility for the male display of violence is mediated and disavowed by the man's need to take up his position as leader in his own household. The naturalised gender difference discourse and consequent female suppression, is reflected in issues of:

- male dominance, such as “the man is the head of the household”; “my familie is myne” (*my family are mine*);
- male provision, such as “they are not going to make it without me”; “you need to provide for their needs”;
- male protection, such as “you are supposed to care for your family”;
- repression of weaker and more feminine emotions, such as “you can't stand there and cry”; “you gotta deal with it”;
- and acting violently towards their families and others, such as “almaal net saam met jou wil vat” (*just take everyone with you*); “slit her throat with a knife”.

Most frequently used is the rhetorical strategy of assertion of fact, with the immutable and non-tentative reliance on deterministic concepts such as “you get raised and you grow up with this whole thing” to reveal the unquestionable nature and historical continuity of their utterances. This discourse is deployed for exculpatory purposes, allowing for a deflection of personal responsibility for the use of violence in the family: environmental factors of upbringing are responsible for the disparity perceived between the sexes. Intrinsically, a binary opposite for what is expected of women endures, and serves to reinforce ideologies of domination, control, and suppression of females. These contrary expectations of dominance and submission unevenly position men and women within societies and support the ideological processes of male domination and female subordination. In so doing, male violence against women (particularly those women over whom the man purports to have power), is legitimised.

Conclusion

The participants’ world views reveal much about how the discourses underlying their narratives function with relation to the commission of violent deeds. Inherent in all of the discourses, including those involving the organisation, is a deep socially and historically embedded conception that facilitates violent action as an expression of maleness. Participants’ world views are strongly polarised around the classification of masculinity and femininity. Given that the naturalisation of gender differences is one of the most stable and traditionally persistent classification systems through which to comprehend the male commission of violent acts, its extensive informing of the participants’ world views is to be expected. While the narratives of the participants overtly denounce the expression of maleness through violence, most discourses uncovered appear to form a breeding ground for what is deemed ‘masculinity’ to be articulated through acting violently. At the same time, justifications, excuses and rationalisations allow for the convenient denial of responsibility for those actions through the employment of discourses that promote an external locus of control.

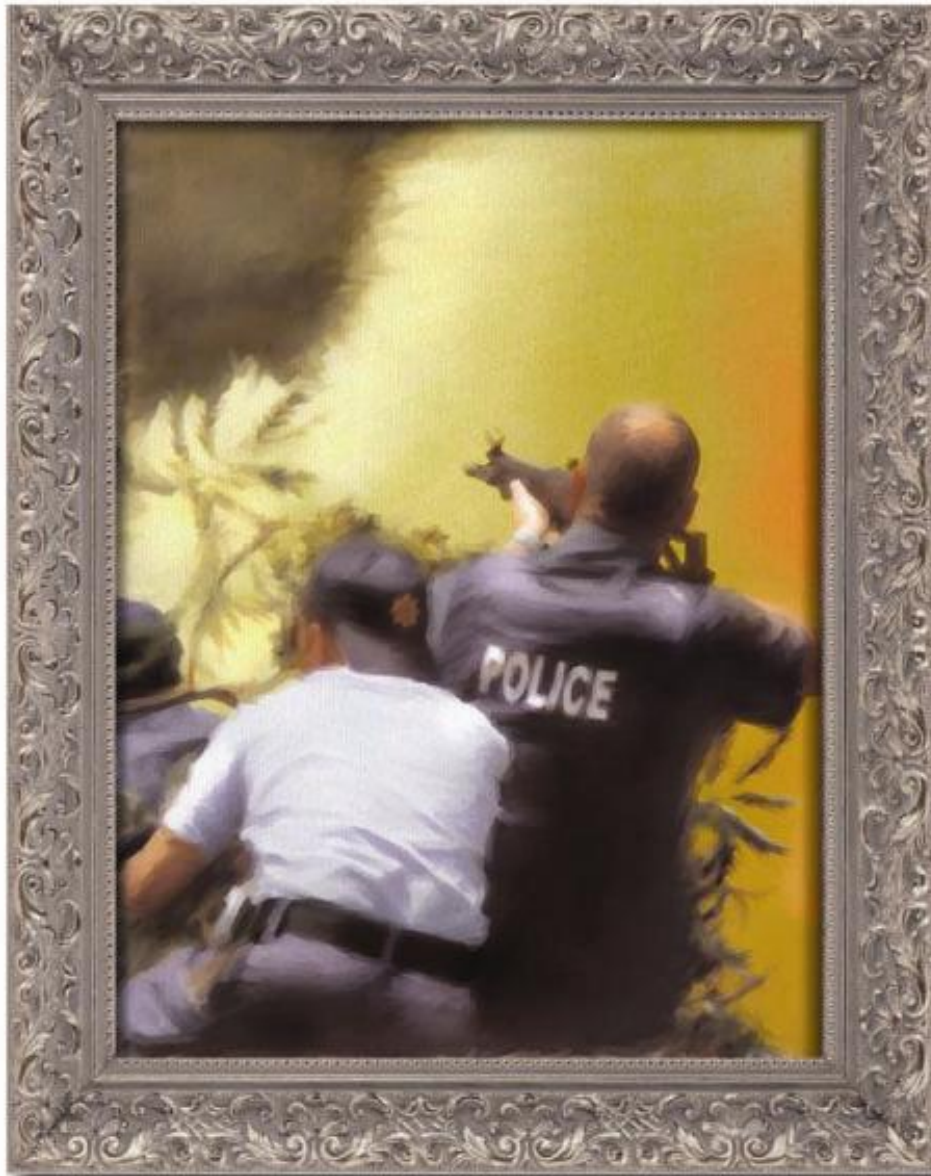
There is a suggestion that masculine power, as evidenced through the ability to remain unemotional in situations of turmoil, or act aggressively when the situation demands, is a highly-prized attribute of maleness, especially in a hypermasculine situation such as the police. Weaker sentiments are seen as the sphere of the feminine, and masculinity needs to be preserved through the stifling of emotional displays in order to defend status, which reinforces constructions of masculinity as dispassionate and violent.

Discourses of masculinity which establish men as dominant, more controlling and naturally more violent than women allow for a corroboration, justification and maintenance of male violence in general, but also reinforce the gendered ideologies that allow for the man's domination of the women in his life. Social discourses of female subjugation and commodification as a binary to masculinity are used as a means to deflect responsibility and as justifications for actions of violence towards women.

In this chapter, the finishing touches have been added to the rendition of the South African Police Service and its influence on its members and their families, friends and acquaintances. Through the use of information gained through texts and transcribed interviews, the poetry of Insp Dark-Knight and newspaper articles, a picture of the discourses and perspectives behind the social construction of the lived world that informs the SAPS has been sketched, painted in, and framed. It is essential to remember that this representation is not a photograph – it is not a perfect reflection of exactly what is happening in the scene. Rather, through my lenses as the researcher, an impressionistic image has been formed that conveys merely one of many interpretations that can exist. In the final chapter, a summation of the findings is provided, significance and limitations of the study are addressed, and possibilities for future research are explored.

Chapter Ten

The Painting's Final Form: Conclusion



10

CHAPTER TEN

THE PAINTING'S FINAL FORM: CONCLUSION



It took some time before the public learned that to appreciate an Impressionist painting one has to step back a few yards, and enjoy the miracle of seeing these puzzling patches suddenly fall into one place and come to life before our eyes.

(Ernst Gombrich, 1909-2001)

Introduction

Workplace violence as a psychosocial event within many organisations is a cause of considerable international and national concern. In spite of a voluminous number of quantitative studies on the phenomenon, the compilation and publication of comprehensive lists of the characteristics of the violent offender, the many interventions directed towards prevention, and contemporary intercession proscribed by many organisational policies, workplace violence has displayed an astonishing ability to endure all attempts to eradicate it. It can be postulated on the basis of this research that workplace violence is deeply embedded within the social, relational and historical processes of the specific organisational culture. As such, workplace violence can be categorised as a much broader social problem, demanding social analysis and intervention at the level of relationships, cultural practices and institutionalised processes.

There can be no doubt that the South African Police Service has undergone a massive transformation since the advent of democracy, and that this has had a distinct influence on the members of the organisation. The period has been characterised by upheaval and insecurity, turbulence and confusion, which has had a destabilising effect on the organisation as a whole (Bruce, 2007). The restructuring process, in which the SAPS has been compelled to increase its delivery capacity to meet the needs of all South Africans, has led to many changes related to the skills, values and knowledge of police officers, with the emphasis now being placed on service orientation above the expression of violence in the performance of duties. Yet in spite of formalised changes in policy and procedure, police recruits entering the organisation are still exposed to subliminal and overt influences that regulate their function, guide their thought processes and govern their socialisation. These processes strongly discourage members from displays of independence or initiative, and shape the ways in which officers express frustration and dissatisfaction. An enduring dependency on the group for moral support, guidance and regulation is created and encouraged. The tightly-knit culture that forms has the result that officers come to think of themselves as an 'us': a single cohesive unit, which, although good for the mechanisms of support and emotional sustenance, leads to a mentality in which personal responsibility and complicity is conveniently denied in the face of discourses that lay blame for actions committed at the feet of another party.

The glorification of masculinity within the structure additionally leads to performance of feats deemed masculine, which comprise denial of softer emotions and feats of forceful action, resulting in the frequent commission of violent acts. Unsuccessful endeavours at control of violence committed towards the self and immediate others within the ranks have resulted in a fatalistic and powerless managerial stance towards the ever-increasing numbers of suicides and episodes of family and collegial violence.

Bearing this in mind, this chapter provides a summary of the findings of the research as they relate to and contribute to contemporary understandings, addresses the research's limitations and considers prospects for future research.

Research Findings

On a daily basis, officers struggle with the paradoxes that underlie their organisational lives: periods of danger contrasted with interludes of mundane inactivity; the expectation for them to be strong and imperturbable, yet at the same time able to air emotions for psychological well-being; the authorisation to act and the concurrent disapproval of action by a castigating public; the experience of high levels of stress that are denied by both officers and organisation; blurring of roles and boundaries; and so on. The intractable nature of these paradoxes, as well as the overwhelming amount of crime, lack of efficient support on the part of the organisation, and the nature of the justice system, which is perceived as ineffective in the prosecution of criminals, leads to disillusionment, demoralisation and has a negative effect on feelings of self-worth and potency. In order to minimise the effects of these paradoxes, officers tend to rely on specific discourses, with the concurrent justifications, excuses or apologies that sustain them. This research focussed on the forms, functions and ideological foundations of the discourses that informed the narratives of the participants, and the ethnographic or empathic nature of their utterances. Three principal categories were delineated, namely those in which the discourses and perspectives were of particular reference to the organisation, those relating to the concept of workplace violence, and those which inspired the participants' world view.

In the first category, discourses in which the *organisation* was directly implicated were most clearly represented within the texts, poetry and articles. These discourses allowed for impression management and negotiation of the self-image of the participants as they were bound by their positioning within highly specific socio-historical and cultural contexts. Within this category, discourses of organisational betrayal as a result of socio-political changes, discourses of strong integration and identification that inform a sub-culture of police solidarity and social cohesiveness, discourses of organisational negligence, and discourses of blame attributing negative police reactions to the organisation, were most strongly represented. In an attempt to justify their use of violence, participants found it helpful to locate the originator of their behaviour externally to themselves, thus absolving themselves of the blame that would otherwise be attributed. This external entity was most often deemed to be the organisation, whose actions or lack thereof were considered directly responsible for the

participants' later commissioning of deeds (whether related to workplace violence committed against oneself or others), or the participants' justification for subversion and manipulation of the system to their own benefit. These discourses have as their result a reliance on avoidance coping, in which methods such as cynicism, alcohol or substance abuse and blame of another party feature prominently.

In order to retain the sense of power and control demanded by the masculine culture of the police, officers displayed an external locus of control that was essential in the maintenance of the self-impression as not merely 'mortal', and therefore fallible or weak, men. An organisation that fails to provide basic necessities for its members to function is to blame for a justificatory dialogue that located the fault for failure in an outside agency rather than within the self, fostering and embracing discourses of organisational negligence, betrayal and organisational culpability in any maladaptive functioning displayed by the officer.

Directly related to the meta-narrative of external locus of control, which ascribed responsibility for violent behaviour to the action or non-action of the organisation, was the second category of discourses in which *workplace violence committed against others or the self* was directly ascribed to another's agency. Violence was portrayed as a consequence of either a previous exposure to trauma (comprising a supposed blunting of normal human emotions), or as the culpability of a system that forced the participant to the deed. Utilising this discourse, participants made use of the strategies of justification, denial, disclaimer, excuse or apology to present accounts for violent behaviour that could be perceived as tolerable and understandable given the surrounding circumstances. In this way, reprehensible deeds were reflected upon, and identities were re-negotiated in order to enhance the perceptions of the self or an audience. Discourses of absolution for violent behaviour thus relied on another's involvement, the need for retribution and justice, or the notion of innocence perverted by a stronger agency.

The third category of discourses related to the overarching *world view* and how participants conformed to the multifaceted constellations of meaning and significance that are handed down from one generation to another. Deeply embedded in historical, ideological and social traditions, participants expressed views that implied that deeds of an aggressive nature are expressions of masculinity committed against those who are somehow deserving of the violence in some way. Male violence was expressed as an outflow of masculinity; reinforcing overt and covert institutional, socio-historical and cultural practices thus venerated male dominance and, by implication, violence at a personal level. Discourses of masculinity which instituted men as dominating, controlling and physically more violent than women allowed for the substantiation, rationalisation and persistence of male violence in general, and additionally supported the gendered ideologies that permit male supremacy over not only women, but all ‘others’ deemed less worthy.

Implications of the Findings

One of the most fundamental implications of this study is the re-centring of the concept of workplace aggression and violence as a socially-constructed and embedded act, which has its origins in the institution, culture, ideology, history, and world view of members of the SAPS. This brings a social basis for the commissioning of violent acts within a work setting into sharp relief. Although the impact of individually-determined characteristics of the phenomenon cannot be ignored (such as the specific typology of a violent offender), in the bounds of this construction, violence can be seen as an expression of masculinity that is sustained and justified by the utilisation of an external locus of control. As such, the need to conform to strong cultural standards of masculinity within the context of the police can lead to a severely restricted coping repertoire that is unable to conceive of solutions to problems other than within a narrow range of behaviours that are mostly rooted in violence. This includes displays of violence towards the self, in the form of suicide and destructive coping mechanisms, and towards others in the form of work-related violence towards inanimate objects, members of the public, colleagues and family.

Firmly entrenched in the police culture, these self-sustaining discourses would necessitate a complete cultural overhaul if there is to be any ground made in the prevention of workplace violence within the SAPS. A clear vision of the future of the organisation, one which could be guided by the contribution of all of its members, as well as the community it serves, would allow all role-players to commit to and embrace a cohesive mandate and philosophy. This multi-level transformation would depend on a management team with an unyielding dedication to the values of the police, yet who would at the same time exhibit devotion to the ideals of mutual respect and diversity. The development process would rely on creative and innovative agents of change amongst the management team who would be able to see it through diligently, all the while ignoring the strong censure that would be sure to result from a culture that would resist change. An obligation to the transformation of the formal rules of policing on the part of the police agency itself would be essential to the success of such an intervention.

The process of eradicating the reliance on an external locus of control would ideally begin by empowering employees of the organisation through active participation in the decisions made by the organisation, while at the same time encouraging the officers to empower the citizens of the communities which they serve. Skills and abilities of employees could be developed through continual training, mentoring, coaching and rewarding performance that demonstrates initiative, thinking outside conventionally-established methods, and innovative application of procedure in order to encourage officers to take responsibility for their actions and promote a sense of pride and achievement when they are able to do so.

Prevention of workplace violence amongst members of the police would by necessity involve transformation of the practices that generate inequitable social conditions responsible for cultivating forms of violence, and the cultural practices that venerate and enforce gendered inequalities. Cultural practices that reify male dominance over females (or those deemed less worthy), which are at present abrogated by police officers on many levels, should be gradually exterminated through the use of interventions that raise the consciousness of equality of all individuals. Whilst it would be foolish to suggest a radical shift in the

'masculine' management of traumatic situations, which is a vital aspect of the effective functioning and coping of the officer, a tolerance and respect for the more feminine, 'weaker' emotions could be cultivated. Through exposure to situations in which these forms of interaction are more applicable, such as in the empathic reflections of victim's feelings, a greater esteem for a different emotional coping style could be inspired. Shifts in gender relations involving consciousness-raising exercises, mainstreaming of crucial critical masculinity and femininity studies and facilitating movements aimed at promoting equality of genders and respect for diversity would be some strategies that could be encouraged.

On a methodological note, it is hoped that a compatibility between the methods of discourse analysis and a more ethnographic or empathic approach has been demonstrated to be feasible. In a deviation from what is routinely seen as 'pure' discourse analysis, I have endeavoured not only to find an explanation for how people's life worlds, experiences and emotions are articulated in language, but also to *understand* and gain insight into those very life worlds and experiences. A position of objectivity is neither feasible nor desirable in research of this nature. It is my hope that future researchers who embrace the methodology of discourse analysis are open to considering a similar subjective stance on the part of the researcher towards promoting an ethnographic and empathic stance.

Limitations of the Study

The methodological approach of this study, especially with regard to the data collection and analysis phases (a factor possibly applicable to most qualitative studies that rely on the mining of texts for the interpretations and significations that can be thus gleaned), limits the research in terms of the comprehensiveness of the analysis that can be conducted on the vast amount of texts generated by the participants. Within a set of data so considerable in size, arrays of potential investigative foci need to be ignored in order to concentrate on other avenues of exploration, and as has been discussed at length in this study, the findings embody only one incomplete and perspectival analysis of the data. This subjective interpretation is reliant on my own particular frame of reference, which is socially determined and constructed itself.

Regardless of the exhaustive nature of the study, though, the transferability of the findings seems to reflect other findings in contemporary literature, especially regarding the relationship between violence and the performance of masculinity (cf. Bing, 2009; Stevens, 2008). Additionally, the internal consistency and underlying coherence of the findings is of such a nature as to imply a commonality that may be generalisable to other settings or police forces the world over.

Within the report, it was necessary to maintain a balance between collusion with the participants as a result of our shared history within the organisation (which tended to polarise us as participants against the organisation, reflecting a common discourse that was identified in the dialogues of the participants), and a need to remain critically distanced from the accounts of the participants in order to undertake the research process effectively. More rumination on this vital juxtaposition could conceivably have supplemented the already meticulous clarification of the methods that are involved when research of a reflexive variety is conducted from a social constructionist perspective.

Future Directions

This study has explored compelling avenues which would benefit from further consideration. In particular, the relationship between violence and an external locus of control, and the expression of masculinity in deeds of violence that are the result of historically and socially inherited factors, would profit from further investigation. Specifically, an exploration of the constructions of violent behaviours as they occur within the minds of the men accountable for the commission of violent deeds (such as the men who were responsible for the murder of their families, as reported on in the newspaper articles), would open new avenues for elucidating the complexities of meaning. Additionally, possible opportunities for social interventions that would prevent the commission of further such atrocities might be investigated. Further investigation into the compatibility of a less 'masculine' approach to the management of difficult tasks within the realm of the police, and the implications thereof, could also be considered.

Additionally, as briefly mentioned elsewhere, a notable absence in the texts is the discussion of race, even as it palpably haunts the discourse in its very nonappearance. An avenue for further exploration would involve a deeper look at the phenomenon, perhaps utilising a deconstructive or “Foucaultian” discourse to explore that sensitivity within the texts.

Conclusion

The study of workplace violence, which has traditionally been divorced from its social underpinnings, should be inextricably entwined with the elucidation of the social, cultural, ideological, political and historical strands which are of central significance in its origins, and ultimately its successful prevention and resolution. As the society from which violence stems, we are ultimately responsible, each one of us, for its maintenance and sustenance. The legacy we pass on to our children determines the views of the world those children will eventually embrace. In the most trivial, careless, or negative comment regarding genders, races, religions or creeds that we utter in front of our children, lie the seeds of future devastation. I freely confess to my part in it – after all, *“every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his picture”* (Henry Ward Beecher, 1887, p. 229). If violence begins with us, it should end with us too.

For good or ill, the final brushstroke has been added to the painting of workplace violence in the South African Police Service. The frame embellishes the painting, endowing it with boundaries and limitations; the lenses survey the scene; the canvas provides the texture which shows through the layers of paint. Every aspect of the process is to be seen in the final form. It is now up to the reader to judge. My rendition does not have to be universally liked or acclaimed. It just has to make *you* think.

[Selāh]³

³ *Selāh* - () a Hebrew word from the root word *calah* meaning “to hang”, and by implication, to measure or weigh. The Selah is there to signal a reader to measure carefully what has been said, reflect on it and contemplate its true meaning and implication (Warren, 2003).

POST-SCRIPT



It takes a long time for a man to look like his portrait.

(James McNeill Whistler, 1834-1903)

Many of the people who have been so kind as to read this tome of work have had only one question remaining: what happened to the participants in the end of the tale? As an addendum to this work, I would like to answer that question.

About two years after my interviews with the participants were complete, a strange twist of fate once again brought Insp Dark-Knight across my path. At that time I was the last psychologist in the South African Police Service, the others all having resigned long before, many with Post Traumatic Stress Disorders themselves due to the vicarious traumatising that occurs through the constant exposure to tales of horror, death and mayhem. As the last one standing, it fell to me to perform all manner of psychological services, and I was surprised, but pleased, when I saw that Insp Dark-Knight had been referred to me for career counselling. As a result of his weapons being removed from him for the aggressive incident involving a superior officer, he was unable to continue working in a functional capacity, and the management of the SAPS were at a loss as to where to place him. He had been unable to obtain a medical retirement on the grounds of his PTSD and Depression, and so needed to be utilised wherever he would most suitably fit.

I arranged to see him, wondering if the relatively close relationship we had built up in the course of the research project would have stood the test of time. As I met him in the

waiting room, I was pleased to see that he had lost some weight, and that his eyes had lost that haunted look that had so visibly shadowed them before. He greeted me with a slight smile, and a “Hoe gaan dit, Meisiekind?” (*How’s it going, Girlie?*) that made me realise our journey together through his past was still fresh in his memory.

Seated in my office, which was unchanged over the intervening two years (apart from perhaps one or two more paintings on the walls – I can’t resist a good addition to the collection), he filled me in on what had been happening.

He had been unable to obtain the medical retirement, he said, in spite of the strongly worded recommendations of several psychiatrists, a physician and a psychologist. As a result he was relegated to answering phones until his retirement unless he could find a more suitable placement, which is why he was seeing me. His present placement was made bearable by the support of a good Captain, who understood his past and made the odd allowances for his failure of temper with a particularly obdurate member of the public on the telephone. His relationship with his wife remained rocky, but they were committed to finding a solution, and had recently embarked on a series of family therapy sessions, a fact which thrilled Little Miss Maturity. I could imagine that she was overjoyed that she was able to see the smouldering vestiges of her powerful and devoted father being rekindled in the embers of his being, and that she rejoiced in her younger sister’s chance at acquiring a loving father-figure, even at this late stage in life.

As I had ardently hoped, Little Miss Maturity was not cast down, but rather buoyed and inspired by her journey through the hardships of life. At one stage, she had believed that she wanted to become a psychologist, the better to help those around her who were struggling with their own emotional issues. She had even registered for a degree in Psychology and completed one semester before realising that she simply could not manage the trauma of her own life sufficiently well, and could not be expected to deal with the suffering of other people too. As a result, she had enrolled for a Law degree, her fond father related, because it was somewhere she felt she could make a difference. She wanted to put criminals away – to

keep them from ever harming others again. Her view of the world had been forever tainted by her exposure to the realm of the police and the negative world of depravity and despair it struggled against. On a daily basis, she professed vehemently that she would never marry a policeman, Insp Dark-Knight mentioned wryly.

Insp Faithful was finally living his dream – he had opened a small shop that sold motorbikes, and whilst not earning a fortune, he made enough money to be comfortable, besides getting a chance to pander to his adrenalin-junkie side by test-driving the more exciting and dangerous machines. Sometimes, Insp Dark-Knight admitted, when the mood was on them, they both would climb onto their bikes and head off into the wild lands of the Western Cape like two irresponsible school children on a joy ride. He still had the feeling that he would like to throw his motorbike under the wheels of a truck at times, but those urges were less intense and infrequent now. More often, he said, he thought about his retirement, days on end when he would be free, when his life would regain its meaning.

“And what will you do then?” I asked. I made sure to write down his answer in my case notes so I would be certain to remember it later. He replied:

“As alles nie so was nie? Gaan visvang. Net op die see sit en visvang. Met my familie om my. Met my kinders te speel. Vriende om my te hê. Vriende wat vir jou tel. Ouens wat na jou toe kom en sê “Hey ek is lief vir jou” en gee jou n drukkie. Ek ken nie daai goed nie. Ek het dit geken. Maar ek hunker so sterk daarna. Miskien is al wat my...

(If everything was not like this? Go fishing. Just sit beside the sea and catch fish. With my family around me. Just to play with my children. Have friends around me. Friends that matter to me. Guys who come to you and say, ‘Hey, I love you,’ and give you a hug. I don’t know those things any more. I used to know them. But I yearn for them so fervently. Maybe that is all that keeps me from...)

He broke off the thought and looked away. Then he stared me directly in the eyes, possibly for the first time in all of our interactions.

“Net dat daai dae van maanskyn en rose miskien weer gaan kom.”

(Just that perhaps those days of moonshine and roses will come again.)

And ultimately, those few words were sufficient to grant me what I had ardently searched for in each painstaking brushstroke of my rendition of the topic of workplace aggression and violence:

Hope.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: REFERENCE LIST FOR ARTISTIC QUOTATIONS

The following table contains a list of the artistic quotations contained in this dissertation and their sources on the World Wide Web.

<u>Artist</u>	<u>Source of Quotation</u>
William Dobell	http://www.artquotes.net/
G.K. Chesterton	http://quote.robertgenn.com/auth_search.php?name=chesterton
Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres	http://drawsketch.about.com/cs/traveljournals/a/drawing_quotes.htm
Keith Reid	http://thinkexist.com/quotes/Keith_Reid/
Simone de Beauvoir	http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/world_view/
Wassily Kandinsky	http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/canvas/2.html
George Inness	http://quote.robertgenn.com/getquotes.php?catid=149
Camille Pissaro	http://quote.robertgenn.com/getquotes.php?catid=149
Salvador Dali	http://www.artquotes.net/masters/dali_quotes.htm
Colley Whisson	http://quote.robertgenn.com/getquotes.php?catid=149
Ernst Gombrich	http://quote.robertgenn.com/getquotes.php?catid=149
James McNeill Whistler	http://www.artquotes.net/

APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPT NOTATION

For the reader's ease of reference, the following table contains the notational conventions used to transform the spoken language of the participants into text that can be studied more closely. I have adhered to the system developed by Gail Jefferson (see Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, pp. ix-xvi).

<u>Notation</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
[talk] [overlap]	Square brackets between lines or bracketing two lines of talk indicate onset ([]) and end (]) of overlapping talk
End of line= =start of line	Equals signs indicate latching (no interval) between utterances
(.)	Untimed pause (just discernable: < .2 sec.)
(1.2)	Pause timed to nearest tenth of a second
Bu-	A dash shows a sharp cut-off of speech
<u>Under</u> ; pie	Underlining indicates emphasis
CAPITALS	Capital letters indicate talk that is noticeably louder than surrounding talk
°soft°	Degree signs indicate talk that is noticeably more quiet than surrounding talk
>fast< <slow>	“less than” and “greater than” signs indicate talk that is noticeably faster or slower than surrounding talk
Ho:me	A colon indicates an extension of the sound or syllable that it follows
↑word ↓word	Upwards and downwards pointing arrows indicate marked rising and falling shifts in intonation in the talk immediately following
.,?!	Punctuation marks are used to mark speech delivery rather than grammar. A period indicates a stopping fall in tone, a comma indicates continuing intonation, a question mark indicates a rising

<u>Notation</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
	inflection, an exclamation point indicates an animated or emphatic tone
Wghord	“gh” within a word indicates guttural pronunciation
Heh or hah	Indicates laughter
.hh	Audible inbreath
Hh	Audible outbreath
Wo(h)rd	An “h” in parentheses denotes laughter within words
Rilly	Modified spelling to suggest pronunciation
(word)	Transcriber’s guess at unclear material
()	Unclear speech or noise
{{coughs}}	Double parentheses enclose transcriber’s descriptions of non speech sounds or other features of the talk or scene, including body language and facial expressions
.....	Horizontal ellipses indicate talk omitted from the data segment
. . . .	Vertical ellipses indicate intervening turns omitted from the data segment
<i>[a local pub]</i>	Square brackets enclose contextual or explanatory information (in italics)
141	All lines are numbered
Repeated symbols, for example, :::::, and hhhh, indicate greater elongation, quiet, outbreaths and so on. Speakers are identified by pseudonym.	

APPENDIX C: DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

The following table contains a description of the photographs presented to me by the main participant, Insp Dark-Knight. I have tried to describe the photographs as unemotionally and circumspectly as possible, due to their extremely disturbing and graphic nature. Readers of a sensitive nature should not proceed any further. Translations of the Inspector's words appear in bracketed italics.

<u>Description of Photograph</u>	<u>Insp Dark-Knight's Explanation</u>
<p>Insp Dark-Knight sits on top of a CASSPIR, his legs widespread, his one foot on the bonnet of the CASSPIR, the other on the windshield. He is holding a rifle across his body. He is wearing a pair of shorts and his face is covered with a beard.</p>	<p>Hierso was ek in Koevoet - die hoe ek gelyk het daarso - ek is die een met die baard wat op die CASSPIR sit. Ja, hierdie is nie mooi fotos nie. Dit is twee vriende wat ek ... ek kannie hul name onthou nie.</p> <p><i>(Here I was in Koevoet – this is what I looked like there – I am the one with the beard that is sitting on the CASSPIR. Yes – these are not beautiful photos. These are two friends that I... I can't remember their names.)</i></p>
<p>Two policemen in civilian clothing are lying on a pavement next to a blue car. Both lie on their backs, the one man lies between the others legs. The one man has a gunshot wound in his chest, and the pavement is covered in blood. The other man has a gun holster on his hip. His white t-shirt is covered with blood.</p>	<p>Dit is twee polisiemanne van M. Die eenetjie het agter die ander een weggekrui. Dit is plekke wat ek was ...jy kan sien met die swart en wit fotos - ek het later begin kleur vat.</p> <p><i>(This is two policemen from M. The one had hidden away behind the other. These are places I had been... you can see with the black and white photos – I later began to take colour.)</i></p>

<u>Description of Photograph</u>	<u>Insp Dark-Knight's Explanation</u>
<p>A picture of a man lying on stones, his right arm has broken close to the shoulder, and is lying in an unnatural way behind his head, his ear resting on it. His face is completely obliterated, contusions cover his whole face, his left cheek is lacerated and his oral cavity is visible through his cheek. The whole face is covered in blood.</p>	<p>Insp Hierdie is n trein ongeluk Res Is this a man or a child? Insp Ja its a man. Maar dit lyk maar soos n kind. Die trein het hom getrap op die kop. <i>(Insp This is a train accident</i> Res <i>Is this a man or a child?</i> Insp <i>Yes it is a man. But it looks like a child. The train hit him in the head.)</i></p>
<p>A policeman in a police van, lying with his right elbow on the steering wheel, his back against the door. There is blood coming from his left eye and both nostrils, covering his coat. Both hands are in his pockets as if he is cold. He looks as though he is sleeping, apart from the blood.</p>	<p>So ek (.) ek kan onthou hy het altyd so n helmet gedra - so n crash helmet. Ek kannie sy naam onthou nie. Ja .hhh tipies polismanne - slaap in n polisie voertuig. Hy het nooit weer wakker geraak het nie. Hy het gaan sit en slaap - hy was moeg gewees, toe skiet die skollies vir hom van agteraf deur die kop terwyl hy slaap en soos hy slaap het so is hy dood. <i>(So I, I can remember that he always wore a helmet like this – like a crash helmet. I can't remember his name. Yes, typical policeman – sleeping in a police vehicle. He never woke up again. He went to sit and sleep – he was tired, then the skollies shot him through the head from behind while he slept and as he slept, so he died.)</i></p>

<u>Description of Photograph</u>	<u>Insp Dark-Knight's Explanation</u>
<p>A child is lying prone on the carpeted floor in between the foot of a bed and the cupboard. An old kitchen chair is standing over her feet. She is wearing red trousers and a red sweat shirt and the shirt is pulled up to expose the small of her back. Her head is resting on her left ear. Blood covers her face. Blood is clotted in her hair and on her chin. There are blood stains on the carpet under her face.</p>	<p>Dit was n <u>lelike</u> gesig hierdie. n Ou het sy kleintjies geslaan het - hulle doodgeslaan. <i>(This was an ugly sight. A guy beat his kiddies – beat them to death.)</i></p>
<p>A man is lying on his back with his head tilted, his chin over his left shoulder. He has a large gash in his forehead, blood streaming from it covering his face and hair. His right eye is closed, his left eye is half open. There is a tissue flap as a result of the trauma that is depressing his left eyebrow down towards his eye.</p>	<p>Hierdie is op - ek dink dit was in n squatterkamp gewees, waar hy dood geslaan is met n klip. <i>(This is - I think it was in a squatter camp, where he was beaten to death with a stone.)</i></p>
<p>Insp Dark-Knight faces away from the camera, his one leg extends from the top right hand corner of the frame until the middle of the picture. In between his legs is a man lying prone, with Insp Dark-Knight twisting the upper torso of the body to reveal the face of the man. The man has three water bottles attached to his waist. He is wearing a dirty camouflage army</p>	<p>En hierdie eene - dis die enigste een wat jy my sal sien - jy kan gelukkig nie my gesig sien nie waar ek staan by een van my "<u>kills</u>". Dit is in Ovamboland. <i>(And this one – this is the only one in which you can see me – you luckily can't see my face – where I am standing next to one of my kills. This is in Ovamboland.)</i></p>

<u>Description of Photograph</u>	<u>Insp Dark-Knight's Explanation</u>
uniform. The left leg of the trousers is rolled up to knee level. No injuries are visible on the man. Beside the man's left foot is an AK47, very rusted. An unidentified weapon lies in the bottom left hand corner.	
A minibus taxi is perpendicular to the road facing a cafe with a police officer holding a shot gun standing on the corner speaking to a civilian. The taxi has no windows in it, and is burning in front – flames engulf the vehicle's rear wheel and the door is open. It is at night, the street lights are on.	Dit is n taxi wat hulle net aan die <u>kant</u> getrek en met klippe gooi. Ons het bietjie laat daar aan gekom. <i>(This is a taxi that they just pulled over and threw stones at. We came on the scene a bit too late.)</i>
Two men lie in between shacks. The one lies on his back with his arms outstretched – it appears that he has been dragged towards the shacks because of the markings in the sand and the way in which his clothing has been pulled skew by the friction. His feet are between the shacks. The other man lies prone next to him on his face, facing in the opposite direction. His arms are stretched above his head. The other man's leg is over his arms. You cannot see how they died, but dark shadows underneath the bodies seem to	<p>Insp This is on C. - tussen die plakkerskampe deur</p> <p>Res And these people were shot by the police?</p> <p>Insp Ja <u>ons</u> het hulle geskiet..</p> <p>Res For what reason?</p> <p>Insp Hulle het ons gegooi met klippe. Dis hoekom ek sê dat ek kannie die regverdigheid vandag kan insien wat jy so n persoon skiet met bokhaal net omdat hy jou met n klip gooi nie.</p> <p><i>(Insp This is on C. Between the squatters camps</i></p> <p>Res <i>And these people were shot by the police?</i></p> <p>Insp <i>Yes, we shot them.</i></p>

<u>Description of Photograph</u>	<u>Insp Dark-Knight's Explanation</u>
indicate blood.	<p><i>Res For what reason?</i></p> <p><i>Insp They threw stones at us. That is why I say that I can't see the justice today where you can shoot a person with buckshot just because he threw a stone at you.)</i></p>
<p>Two CASSPIRs are in the foreground, the one closest is empty, but the second one is filled with police officers. In the centre of the picture is a uniformed man with a helmet with a visor on. He is carrying a weapon and is walking towards a group of people standing outside the shacks watching the CASSPIRs. On the left, a man and woman stand facing the camera, the man resting with his back on a fence, seeming very relaxed.</p>	<p>Hierdie is n geskiedkundige foto, wil ek amper sê. As ek reg onthou het – ek is nie seker nie. Viktoriaanse perd - ek weet nie of jy daarvan gehoor het nie? Dis waar hulle B. road ingery het en hulle op n klomp kinders geskiet het van n trok af. Dit was n verskriklike groot saak gewees. Dit was op die einde van daai pad gewees. Dit was van die mense gewees net voor daai geskietyery.</p> <p><i>(This is a historic photo, I want to say. If I remember correctly – I am not sure. Victorian horse – I don't know if you have heard of that? That is where they drove into B. road and shot at a group of children from the back of a truck. It was a terribly huge case. This was at the end of that road. It was taken of the people just before that shooting.)</i></p>
<p>A man is hanging from a rope, his neck is broken and inclined to the right hand side. His feet are touching the ground, there is a three-step ladder in front of him. His hair is grey, his mouth is hanging open, his eyes are closed.</p> <p>His tongue is black and protruding from his mouth. His face is swollen.</p>	<p>Hierdie ou het hom gehang - dit was in W. Gewees</p> <p><i>(This guy hanged himself – this was in W.)</i></p>

<u>Description of Photograph</u>	<u>Insp Dark-Knight's Explanation</u>
<p>There is a Black man lying on a slope in between shacks – he is lying on his side with his right arm over his head, the left arm is extended and being pulled by a man in uniform with a rifle in his right hand. The officer is crouching down to drag him, and the other officer is crouching down to grab hold of his belt.</p>	<p>Hierso het (.2) dit is wat ons gedoen het as ons klaar geskiet het - dan het ons hom na die bakkie toegesleep.</p> <p><i>(Here – this is what we did when we had finished shooting – then we dragged him towards the bakkie.)</i></p>
<p>Insp Dark-Knight and his wife sit at a table facing the camera. He has a white, open-necked short-sleeved shirt on, clean-shaven except for a trimmed moustache. His left hand is on the small of his wife's back. She is eating something, both hands resting on the table. He has a slight smile, she is staring at someone on the opposite side of the table, her face is towards Insp Dark-Knight.</p>	<p>En uh .hhh dis een van die fotos van Linda - sy lyk vandag nie so nie. Dis op Robben Eiland n paar jaar terug - dis toe ek <u>nog</u> kon lag.</p> <p><i>(And this is one of the photos of Linda – she doesn't look like this today. It was on Robben Island a few years ago – that was when I still could laugh.)</i></p>