In our own voices: Black women's narratives of conflict and post-conflict experiences

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Abstract

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The meaning of suffering and memory within psychology has for a long time been viewed mostly from a 'pathologizing' standpoint, which it has been argued, has multiple limitations. Viewed as pathology, people's suffering may become universalized thereby leaving out broader contextual aspects that have been shown to play a role in the subjective experience of various forms of suffering. The study investigated how Black women's private memories of the conflict/apartheid period within South Africa influence how they make sense of their newly found freedom. With 'empowerment', and 'equality' as the order of the day, it becomes crucial to acknowledge women's lived experiences and how they relate to the changes taking place in the democratized South Africa. The study further investigated how Black South African women use artistic forms such as embroideries to re-stitch their lives, create personal life stories, and make connections between the past and the present. The results of the study highlight how the women's narratives call to the importance of acknowledging gender, power, and racial aspects when talking about people's experiences. They point to the significance of re-visiting history in order to make sense of the present, with this they show how freedom should be understood within its historical context. The interweaving of their experiences highlight the collectiveness of suffering, and their narratives may be perceived as echoes of their individual experiences. The

embroideries they produced externalize their embodied experience, and allow for the weaving in of multiple life experiences. They offer space for the historical, the personal, the collective and the political. By creating personal embroideries, the women highlighted the inequalities they continuously have to contend with in their everyday lives and the need for social justice, stable families and education that will ensure a better future for their children. By revisiting their past and with the use of embroideries, the women could connect the various aspects of their lives thereby highlighting the political nature of their personal experiences and the role their past plays in how they define themselves in the present.

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Chapter 1

History and theoretical underpinnings

1.1 Allow me to take my time before I get over it

> When I look at myself in the mirror I can see the story of colonization running through the lines on my face. The dark spots on my cheeks are a constant reminder of the lengths I went to in trying to have a lighter skin. I nearly damaged my skin because I wanted to fit into a society that had predetermined rules and norms of what the definition of beauty is. My dark skin made me invisible and I wanted a way to make myself noticed and acknowledged, and for a while the cosmetic industry provided this illusion for me. Having a lighter skin meant more opportunities and doors opening up for me, so like many young women growing up during that time, skin lightening creams were the way to go! (*Personal conversation with my mother*)

For me it was never really about color or the language, it was simply a means to an end. I did what I had to do. My mother passed away when I was five years old, leaving me with two younger sisters, a three year and a one year old. My father worked on the farm where we lived and looking after three little girls was going to be tough. In the pursuit of a better paying job, he went to seek employment at the railway station and was hired to make train tracks and poles that hold them. This was in the early fifties; a few years after the Afrikaners came into power and began the ruthless Apartheid regime that was to change our lives forever. Because my father worked long hours, we were under the care of her mother who had nine more children of her own to take care of. One day my father went to work and never came back. To this day I still wonder whether my father is still alive or not. I am now in my sixties and I must have been around eight years old when he disappeared.

Things were tough at home and my grandmother tried her best to raise all of us, but it became quite clear that we would have to start looking for ways to help in the household. One of those ways was to leave school and go look for a job. While in school, one of the subjects we had to learn was Afrikaans. Come to think of it, everything was taught in Afrikaans except our vernacular. I am really grateful that I learnt how to speak Afrikaans as it was to open doors for me sooner than I thought.

I have worked as a domestic helper for as long as I can remember. I started working for white employers since my teenage years. Going to work was quite a journey as Black people lived in townships (separate areas far removed from the towns reserved for Blacks). The government had separated people according to their different ethnic groups and according to race. That meant Blacks were located in the townships and whites in the suburbs. I had to leave the house very early (around 4am, as getting to the suburbs was quite a journey) so that I could get to the Missus before she leaves for work. I had a small room outside the main house where I changed into my working clothes and kept all my personal belonging. I never questioned this arrangement as this was normal and acceptable during those times.

Cleaning the houses and looking after the children of white people, I learnt to survive and be independent at a very young age. Upon my arrival at missus's house in the morning, I would start by having coffee, after which I would start cleaning the house. When I needed to use the restroom I would leave the main house to go use the one in my outside room. I had learnt over time that this is how things worked. I grew up in an era when Black people's lives were controlled by the whites, even our movements were controlled. It was an era where a person could go to jail for walking in the streets after curfew which was imposed by the apartheid government. This oppression was so embodied in me that I just accepted it as the way things

were. For a long time I had been told not to touch white people's belongings, I always made sure not to tamper with things that were not mine.

We studied under the Bantu education system (schools tailored for Black people that offered inferior education and lacked resources needed for learning). The apartheid regime was set up in such a way that Black people received inferior services and denied access to opportunities that would enable us to be the best that they could be in life. Being forced to learn in Afrikaans was one of the ways in which the government intended to oppress people.

Even though I went to a Black school and received education that was designed for Black people, I was never truly aware of my Blackness and that it carried so much 'baggage'. I never understood what Afrikaans as a language stood for, both (Afrikaans as a language and Afrikaans as a culture) linguistically and culturally. I never understood that it was the tool used to oppress and enforce many laws that undermined the Black people in South Africa. I must admit though, the language did come in handy when I had to leave school and go look for a job as a domestic worker. For Black people, learning or rather being forced to speak Afrikaans was to the benefit of the white people as it made it easy for them to communicate with us. We were the cheap labor that made their lives easy, while we looked after their children, cleaned their houses and cooked for them, our husbands mowed their lawns, built roads for them in the blazing sun and lifted heavy objects while taking insults such as being called "bobbejane" (baboons).

1991 was a special year in that Nelson Mandela was released from prison. National politics were going through a critical turn, and the uncertainty and confusion led to riots that unfortunately took many people's lives, just on the verge of independence. 1994 came and for the first time every South African, regardless of gender, class or race was allowed to vote. It was a

happy day! I remember it as if it was yesterday, long queues of people going to vote for the first time, being allowed to have a say in who becomes their leader. For Black people this was history in the making. I went to the voting polls with so much happiness in my heart, for I lived to see this day, the day that my people would be free. That was the beginning of the future for many South Africans.

I feel bothered and disturbed by the untold stories, stories that carry with them the hurts and pains of the past. But then again, others choose not to share, perhaps it is easier to try and forget for the memory is too great a burden. The year 1994 saw the break of a new dawn. The day when we would re-gain that which was rightfully ours: our freedom! The freedom that had been snatched away forcefully from our forefathers. 1994 was history in the making indeed. Standing in the queue and getting ready to cast my vote and watching grandmothers and grandfathers casting their votes was a very emotional scene. That day we could say we lived to see this day, now we know why our children died, it was not all in vain.

That was the beginning of the process of healing. No one expected it to happen overnight. We were later declared a rainbow nation, a nation that is diverse like the colors of the rainbow existing in harmony. I felt that this reconciliation and new beginning should not be rushed; we need to take our time, to get used to smelling the fresh air of freedom. No one has the right to tell us to get over it already; … I will take my time before I 'get over it'. Our memories help us to move forward, they form part of our history. The shared memories release us from the chains of oppression and lead us to a liberation that we sought after. For some of us it is a journey and the successes along the way are a glimpse to the realization of our hopes and dreams. I remember 1960 (Sharpeville massacre) and 1976 (Soweto shooting) when many of my people were killed for resisting oppression. My children can now choose and be whatever they want to

be in life. Many South Africans gave up their lives and left their beloved families because they believed in human dignity and freedom for all. They form part of my history, part of my past and my present. I still experience a lot of discrimination because I am not educated, because I am a woman, but it feels good to know that I have a voice and that I can challenge whoever stands in my way. My daughter (me) has more opportunities than I had, and that makes me happy. The democracy is still young, and I hope that in this journey of re-defining ourselves as a nation, women will be more visible and acknowledged as equal citizens (conversation with my mother).

I decided to start with a personal narrative of my mother as a way to set the context for why I deem the work I am embarking on as crucial. The extensive telling of her story is meant to highlight the importance of memory… linking the past to the present and also show how 'polluted' with politics subjective experiences are. The narrative allowed me space to insert myself in how the 'ghosts' do not affect only the individual but interpersonal relationships as well. With this as a basis, I could re-visit the history of apartheid in South Africa and how it affects women specifically. Departing from this broad beginning, I could zoom in to how this may be linked to the notion of suffering as it is socially and personally experienced.

There are stories that many people who have experienced traumatic and oppressive past carry with them, stories that continue to remain untold. It is important to interrogate and re-visit experiences of the past, offer them space to be told and re-told in the journey to meaning making. Gordon (1997) points out in her book that we need to consider what she calls the "alternative diagnostics" (p.18) which will give us space to re-think master narratives and consider what has been excluded. It is therefore my aim in this dissertation to look at ways in which the private memories and lived experiences of women who lived through Apartheid in South Africa can be given space to be heard.

I approach this dissertation from a 'haunted' position pushed and compelled by the ghostly stories that seek to be told. I see re-visiting the past as crucial, as it helps in making sense of the present. I start first by offering a brief historical background with a specific focus on the apartheid laws, and women's positions and the role they played during the oppressive apartheid regime. During this period, many women experienced various forms of suffering, and for some the suffering still persists due to lack of access to alternatives. I also look at the complicated nature of empowerment and the role this plays in how women construct and re-define their experiences. I then offer the theoretical framework that informed my research.

1.2 The apartheid regime

> Derived from the Afrikaans word for "apartness," apartheid is a term that came into usage in the 1930s and signified the political policy under which the races in South Africa were subject to "separate development." For the purpose of implementing these policies, apartheid recognized four races: Bantu, or black African; Coloured, or mixed race; white, and Asian. Apartheid met with both international condemnation and spurred a resistance movement among black South Africans. Apartheid was defined as a crime in 2002 by the International Criminal Court; the United Nations had declared it a crime against humanity in 1973, though many nations still have not signed on to the convention.
>
> http://worldnews.about.com/od/ad/g/apartheid.htm
>
> As an ideology of superiority, the purpose of apartheid was to secure power, the dominant group Afrikaner values - white and Western - to prevail. To retain power, the dominant group discriminated against, humiliated, and violently oppressed less powerful groups.
>
> (Engelbrecht, 2006, p.71)

Apartheid was officially enacted in 1948 when the Afrikaners' National Party gained majority in the country's elections. What immediately followed were a series of laws that saw non-whites being extremely oppressed by the ruling party. White domination and racial segregation were enforced and this led to the institutionalization of racism. All South Africans were racially

classified and inter-racial marriages were not allowed. Some of the sectors that were affected were education, jobs (jobs reserved for whites), and place/land reservation. Black people's movements were restricted and the government established ten homelands, four of which were perceived as 'independent African States' within South Africa. Numerous Black people became restricted to these homelands and were required to produce passports to be able to enter South Africa. This meant millions of people became foreigners in their own land. Countless protests took place as people were resisting these oppressive structures, and this led to the arrests and imprisonment of thousands of protesters. Several of these people were tortured and some died in custody. For many, forceful removal and displacement of people meant being separated from families.

1.2.1 Sense of place and land ownership

> From 1960 to 1983, the apartheid government forcibly moved 3.5 million black South Africans in one of the largest mass removals of people in modern history. There were several political and economic reasons for these removals. First, during the 1950s and 1960s, large-scale removals of Africans, Indians, and Coloureds were carried out to implement the Group Areas Act, which mandated residential segregation throughout the country. More than 860,000 people were forced to move in order to divide and control racially-separate communities at a time of growing organized resistance to apartheid in urban areas; the removals also worked to the economic detriment of Indian shop owners. Sophiatown in Johannesburg (1955-63) and District Six in Cape Town (beginning in 1968) were among the vibrant multi-racial communities that were destroyed by government bulldozers when these areas were declared "white." Blacks were forcibly removed to distant segregated townships, sometimes 30 kilometers (19 miles) from places of employment in the central cities. In Cape Town, many informal settlements were destroyed. In one incident over four days in 1985, Africans resisted being moved from Crossroads to the new government-run Khayelitsha township farther away; 18 people were killed and 230 were injured.
>
> Second, African farm laborers made up the largest number of forcibly removed people, mainly pushed out of their jobs by mechanization of agriculture. While this process has happened in many other countries, in South Africa these rural residents were not permitted to move to towns to find new jobs. Instead, they

> were segregated into desperately poor and overcrowded rural areas where there usually were no job prospects.
>
> Third, removals were an essential tool of the apartheid government's Bantustan (or homeland) policy aimed at stripping all Africans of any political rights as well as their citizenship in South Africa. Hundreds of thousands of Africans were moved to resettlement camps in the bantustans with no services or jobs. The massive removals in the early 1960s to overcrowded, infertile places in the Eastern Cape such as Dimbaza, Ilinge, and Sada were condemned internationally. These were dumping grounds for Africans who were "superfluous to the labor market," as a 1967 government circular called them. Ultimately, these people were to become the responsibility of "independent" Bantustans so that the white regime would have no financial responsibility for the welfare of people there. Hundreds of thousands of other Africans were dispossessed of land and homes where they had lived for generations in what the government called "Black spots" in areas that the government had designated as part of "white" South Africa. Also, some entire townships were destroyed and their residents removed to just inside the borders of bantustans where they now faced long commutes to their jobs. By the 1980s, popular resistance to removals was widespread, and government plans to remove up to two million more people were never carried out. http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia.php?id=5

Apfelbaum's (2000) notion of displacement is helpful in helping us understand how being forcefully removed might affect people's sense of self. She argues that dislocation leads to people being cut off from accounts of their personal experiences. Many South Africans were de-grouped and this led to a possible sense of loss of community for most of them. Numerous people were 'forced' to be strangers in their own land through restriction of movement. In her work, Nagata (1997) makes the claim that uprooting of people affects sense of belonging as people are moved from the familiar to the unknown leading to re-establishment of relationships and loosing already established networks. In highlighting the importance of place, Fullilove (2004) asserts that there is power in the physical place that people live in as they develop attachment to it. She argues that it is not only about the physical space but memories that get created as people become rooted in a place. Forceful removal leads to various sense of loss, for example, loss of family, community, and one's roots.

People identify with the places within which they live, and being forced to move may lead to feelings of losing a part of the self. This is a notion further stressed by Segalo (2007, p.115) in her assertion that "Human beings always try to understand and regulate their immediate environments and thereby constructing a sense of identity towards these environments". When people move away from the familiar, whether this is intentional or happens forcefully, their sense of place/community may become lost. Candib (2002, p. 43) offers us an example of "an immigrant who comes to the new country hoping for a better life and leaves behind all the familiar values, language, and community. The new world is cold, hostile, and inhospitable. This dislocation represents a different kind of loss, the loss of the proud connection of place and community". In his extensive work on the complex nature of colonization, Fanon (1967, p.9) argues that for a colonized people, the most essential value, because it is the most meaningful, is first and foremost the land: the land, which must provide bread and, naturally, dignity. Forceful removal of people from their land, communities, or even families, strips them of their dignity, and forces them to establish new and sometimes complicated relationships in new and unfamiliar places. Many South Africans were forcefully removed from their familiar environments and placed in poverty stricken places that had no useful resources needed for survival.

In her work on history, memory and identity, Wildman (2004) highlights how exile may be perceived as a form of displacement. For many people who were fighting against the oppressive apartheid regime in South Africa, going into exile was a form of displacement as many had to leave their families and everything that was familiar to them. Most of these people were perceived as threats by the government and were therefore under constant surveillance, harassment and arrests. Many were not 'forced' to flee but circumstances they found themselves in led them to make the decision to relocate to other countries. For many, leaving South Africa

meant the possibility of never seeing their families again and starting a new life in a foreign land. With the 'end' of apartheid, people got the opportunity to go back home and be a part of the newly democratized country, however, coming back has its complications as things do not stay constant but change and evolve over time.

1.3 Black women during and after apartheid in South Africa

> It was like a real invasion when the women surged forward and ever upward towards the building (Union Building)…When I cast my eyes up to this pompous building, with its two domes the verandas of the buildings were covered with hundreds of pink faces…it was a spectacle that had never been seen since the formation of the Union- black women in the Amphitheater: a no-go area for an African even as gardener or sweeper…the crowd observed a thirty minute silence in protest…Following the silence the women burst into a taunting and revolutionary song…"Now that you have touched the women, you have struck a rock, and you will die"…women had done it! Women from the ghettos…from the farms, from the villages, young and old, had dared to invade the very citadel of oppression in order to express their indignation and detestation for apartheid laws.
>
> (Maggie Resha, 1991, pp.116-117)

1.3.1 Black women and the pass laws

With serious oppression that came with the apartheid regime many Black women lived in underdeveloped areas with no jobs. Many of these women had husbands who lived and worked far away from home. Many had to come up with ways to feed and clothe their children. Black women had 'no' rights and even though they were allowed to work (under very restrictive conditions) they could be dismissed at any time and with no pay. Gender inequality was very apparent during this period as women were underpaid regardless of what job they did. Most of the women left their households for long hours every day to go work in the white neighborhoods. Working in the white neighborhoods came with its own challenges as Black people's (especially Black women) movements were restricted and controlled by the government. Even though

women were restricted and had no freedom of movement, many resisted the oppression and got involved in organized marches and demonstrated against oppressive legal systems such as the pass laws that were imposed upon them:

> Pass laws were designed to control the movement of Africans under apartheid. These laws evolved from regulations imposed by the Dutch and British in the 18th and 19th-century slave economy of the Cape Colony. In the 19th century, new pass laws were enacted for the purpose of ensuring a reliable supply of cheap, docile African labor for the gold and diamond mines. In 1952, the government enacted an even more rigid law that required all African males over the age of 16 to carry a "reference book" (replacing the previous passbook) containing personal information and employment history.
>
> Although African men had been required to carry passes for many decades, only in the 1950s did the government impose pass laws on African women. African women were not allowed to live in towns unless they had permission to be employed there, and extending pass laws to them made it more difficult for women without jobs to take their children and join their husbands in town. Across the country, dozens of protests against pass laws for African women took place before the Federation of South African Women (formed in 1955) and the African National Congress Women's League organized a massive protest march in Pretoria.
>
> Africans often were compelled to violate the pass laws to find work to support their families, so harassment, fines, and arrests under the pass laws were a constant threat to many urban Africans. Protest against these humiliating laws fueled the anti-apartheid struggle - from the Defiance Campaign (1952-54), the massive women's protest in Pretoria (1956), to burning of passes at the police station in Sharpeville where 69 protesters were massacred (1960). In the 1970s and 1980s, many Africans found in violation of pass laws were stripped of citizenship and deported to poverty-stricken rural "homelands." By the time the increasingly expensive and ineffective pass laws were repealed in 1986, they had led to more than 17 million arrests.
> http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia.php?id=3.

As can be seen from the above excerpt, the pass laws were very oppressive and restrictive to South African people, more specifically women. Alcoff (1988, p.414) asserts that "under conditions of oppression and restrictions on freedom of movement, women, like other oppressed groups, have developed strengths and attributes that should be correctly credited, valued, and

promoted". Many women protested against these restrictive laws, often times at the risk of being harassed and arrested by the police.

While many had doors shut in their faces, and their movements constrained, they continued organizing and protesting against these laws that they perceived to be unfair. For many women, access to education was limited, however some of them went on to become nurses and teachers and they used these platforms to reach more women and organized marches against the pass laws amongst other things. With the advent of democracy (as can be seen from 1994 onwards), women's presence in the country's politics became more visible and a number of female ministers were appointed.

Women have and continue to play a crucial role in resisting everyday injustices that affect them and those around them. South African women were actively involved in fighting against the oppressive colonial and apartheid systems. While this may be the case, many of their stories and the role they played continue to be silenced by lack of acknowledgement of their contribution in many official records.

1994 came and offered a new beginning for many South Africans; the new dispensation offered the promise of a better life for many, specifically women. After the advent of democracy, the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) became very active and played a major role in making sure that the country's new constitution took into consideration gender issues and that government appointments included women. As a result of the ANCWL's involvement, the commission of gender equality was enacted and this was further declared (under chapter 9, section 187) in the constitution as well. Furthermore, after the democratic elections in 1994 a woman (Frene Ginwala) was elected as the speaker of the National Assembly.

With all these changes taking place in South Africa, the role that women played in fighting oppression is still minimally recognized. This lack of recognition is attributed to oppressive structures that many women continue to exist within (Frye, 1983; Butler, 1990). Gender equality policies are in place and a commission for gender equality exists in South Africa, however, many women continue to live under oppressive circumstances that render the equality more of an ideal.

1.3.2 Women and gender equality

> They endured extreme hardship, prolonged jail sentences, horrific violence to themselves and their families, and what seemed like endless physical and mental torture at the hands of a racist government. They put themselves in extreme danger by belonging to resistance groups and participating in resistance movements. These women stood side by side with the men and suffered the same atrocities, and for this their struggle deserves to be memorialized.
>
> (Gardiner, 2006, p.4)

The above excerpt highlights the severe nature of apartheid on Black women's lives and how their role in the fight against oppression continues to remain unacknowledged. Even though the apartheid regime was oppressive generally to all women, the oppression was more towards Black women. Many lost their children and husbands due to police brutality. Many watched helplessly as their loved ones were forcefully taken from them and never to be seen again. This is a notion argued by Crenshaw (1989) in her discussion of the issue of inequality and women's gender consciousness. She asserts that women of color are 'caught at the intersection', and that they do not struggle only because they are women, but also because they are Black. This notion is supported by Yuval-Davis' (1993, p.9) assertion that "among subordinated and minority women, there is a realization that to fight for their liberation as women is senseless as long as their collectivity as a whole is subordinated and oppressed". In her work on feminist jurisprudence, Mackinnon (1989) stresses that one of the ways in which women were silenced throughout the years was through being denied access to vote. By not being heard for a long time women were

silenced, the law as created by men (specifically white men) did not make provision for women's needs or rights.

In her extensive work on women's lives, Yuval-Davis (1991) argues that women are often doubly discriminated against and often treated as second class citizens. She critically looks at the meaning of citizenship that goes beyond formal identification document holders. One's citizenship determines access to resources and powers of a particular state. Often times as Yuval-Davis highlights in her paper, women and other ethnic minorities have limited access to such powers. This was the case for a long time for Black people and more specifically Black women during the apartheid era. After the advent of democracy, Black women were finally acknowledged as 'full citizens' of South Africa – however, inequality still looms as women's subjectivities continues to be ignored. Marshall (as cited in Yuval-Davis, 1991, p. 59) defines citizenship as "full membership in a community, which encompasses civil, political and social rights and responsibilities". Departing from this definition, Yuval-Davis problematizes the notion of 'community' as embedded in the definition and argues that it "assumes a given collectivity" which does not acknowledge continuing struggles and negotiations. She suggests that "collectivity should be constructed and not simply assumed" (p.59). She calls for a theory of citizenship that acknowledges everyday struggles of race, class and gender.

1.4 Problematizing empowerment

> Freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. All of us take this on board that the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme will not have been realized unless we see in visible practical terms that the conditions of women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene

> in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society.
> (President Nelson Mandela at the opening of parliament, 24 May 1994,)

As an 'answer' to the above plea from one of South Africa's former Presidents, many women have now been offered opportunities that they were denied in the past (e.g. more women are getting access to education, managerial positions, and many now have a say in their reproductive rights---legalization of abortion). Many empowerment programs geared specifically towards women have been put in place. Many of these programs have been initiated by private corporations, Nongovernmental organizations and the government itself. What seems to be the challenge is the decision making process. While these programs are 'for' the women, many are not part of the decision processes thereby leading to a continuous silencing of women as they are not offered space to voice out what they perceive to be important to them. Many accept this assistance coming their way because they are in need and struggling. As I point out elsewhere (Segalo, 2011) empowerment should be problematized and issues of power, class and 'history' should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, it is crucial to problematize the idea of 'empowerment' when women's advancement is embedded in stubborn gendered, classed and racial hierarchies that remain untroubled by the fall of apartheid (Segalo, 2011). Shulman Lorenz and Watkins (2004, p.22) assert that "no truly sustainable development can develop out of the repression of silenced knowings".

Manjula (2000) investigates the role that women (with a specific focus in India) play in development. I find his work quite compelling as it adopts a holistic view that highlights the gendered and sometimes classed nature of development programs and processes. He argues that even though there have been attempts by the Indian government to acknowledge the role played

by women in society (e.g. appointment of a commission for Self-Employed Women in 1987) and recognizing women's achievements in education and health, women in the workforce are still in the minority. Manjula (2000) further argues that even though Self-Help programs have been put in place, for example "The 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments have reserved one third of all elected positions to the local self-government institutions for women" (p.4), many still carry the dual burden of labor. Women's marginalization will continue if they alone are expected to carry and balance work and domestic chores, and with this in mind, Manjula calls for the redefinition of gender relations. If change is decided and implemented at governmental (macro) level only, then "the attempt to address the cultural and ideological issues related to women" (p. 5) cannot succeed. In this way, what Manjula calls "the spiral of silence" will persist as women's subjectivities continue to be ignored. Women's own experiences and expressions thereof have for a long time not been given space within South Africa as they were regarded and treated as second class citizens. While they have now 'regained' their citizenship, it is crucial to understand the interconnectedness of this citizenship to their empowerment and agency within their individual lives.

Gysman (2004. p.3) stresses that "while there is a growing awareness of women's plight coupled with efforts made by the government, women's situation has worsened". In her policy document on gender and empowerment (document prepared for the city of Port Elizabeth, South Africa), Gysman (2004) points to some of the issues that make empowerment a complex and gendered issue. She argues that when speaking about women's emancipation it is crucial that a number of issues be taken into consideration:

- *Poverty and gender*: Women suffer various forms of discrimination and subordination based on social, sexual and cultural beliefs and attitudes – all these make them poorer

than men. Women's low levels of education and training decrease their employment opportunities as a result the majority of them are locked in low paid jobs, reproductive work-related jobs such as domestic work or in low managerial positions. They are less likely to be in decision-making structures hence their voices remain silent.

- *Violence against women*: Equality and rights enshrined in our Constitution cannot be enjoyed fully by women due to fear of violence, that is, at their homes and in the public sphere. It is well known that one of the reasons women stay in abusive relationships is economic dependence on the abuser. One of the challenges facing both government and development organizations is to understand relevance of violence against women to their core business.

The above issues highlight the importance of taking women's experiences into consideration when attempting to put processes 'to help' women in place. Gysman (2004, p. 9) argues that "despite all the tools in place intended to promote women's empowerment and elimination of gender discrimination, women still bear the brunt".

In South Africa, while gender equality may be 'official', many women still exist in a state of disempowerment where gender divisions in many aspects of society still exist. Supporting this notion, McEwan (2003, p.756) asserts that "without spaces for the articulation of memory, black women's citizenship, in terms of social standing and belonging, continues to be compromised. The role of women's personal testimony in shaping the nation and citizenship is particularly important in a country such as South Africa, where the legacies of colonialism and apartheid have effectively silenced black women's voices". Differential power relations should be acknowledged if empowerment is to be realized. As Yuval-Davis (1991) eloquently puts it,

"…such a theory (of citizenship) should not automatically equate participation in the public domain with a higher degree of empowerment" (p.66).

Yuval-Davis (1993) urges us to step back and not be quick to accept the various ideological constructions of 'equal-opportunities', 'empowerment' and 'community – as all embracing' because by so doing we run the risk of being blindsided and possibly missing the continuous struggles that people face every day. While South Africa is perceived by many as a model of 'true democracy', it is crucial to take a closer look as we might notice the ghosts that are lurking in the shadows. Women are among those who face these dark forces that are not easily visible or noticeable under the mask of 'gender equality'. With the policies neatly in place, continuous struggles of poverty, violence, unemployment and dislocation that many women continue to face might be easily missed. These everyday struggles are what Harvey, (2012, p.529) calls "secondary violences". Official empowerment programs are put in place, however, those whom the programs are geared towards still do not have control or power in many of the decision making processes.

Yuval-Davis (1993, p.1) argues that "empowerment can be felt momentarily or can be transformative when it is linked to a permanent shift in the distribution of social power". She further suggests that empowerment needs to be problematized as it does not automatically assume 'having power' to make decisions or to people having access to resources that they were previously excluded from. Yuval-Davis (1993) further points to the problematic nature of most equal opportunities policies that claim progressiveness and reconciliation, without acknowledging the possible conflict of interests. This can be seen in the case of South Africa where gender equality was declared as a constitutional right without putting in place processes to deal with the patriarchal structures that continue to govern many of the Black women on an

everyday basis. What remains untold are the women's narratives of their personal experiences and understanding of their citizenship within the newly democratized South Africa. Many of their traumatic experiences and suffering remain unnoticed and do not form part of the master narratives of South African history and citizenship.

Women's stories remain in the private realm, lurking in the shadows that continually haunt many. Their experiences are often rendered invisible and remain unacknowledged. I seek in this dissertation to unravel the "counter stories" of Black South African women, stories that may challenge the master narratives that are so often taken for granted as representing the truth/what is. Fine sees "counter stories as a scholarly stage from which to introduce the powerful voices that challenge master narratives…" (2002, p. 19). Fine argues that the stories we tell individually and in focus groups are always shaped by and/or are told in relation to dominant discourses.

1.5 Suffering

1.5.1 Suffering as pathology

> Without witnesses who are willing to hear, and testimony about memories, people become trapped in silences about the past.
>
> (Shulman Lorenz, 2004).
>
> It is precisely the multiplicity of social, historical, and political-economic factors that need to be explored if one is to grasp how social contexts shape the subjective experience of suffering and one's somatic sense of body.
>
> (Quesada, 1998, p.57)

The meaning of suffering and memory within psychology has for a long time been viewed mostly from a 'pathologizing' standpoint, which it has been argued, has multiple limitations. Viewed as pathology, people's suffering may become universalized thereby leaving out broader

contextual (social, environmental, political, historical, economical, etc.) aspects that have been shown to play a role in the subjective experience of various forms of suffering. Psychology has for a long time been quick to diagnose victims of traumatic experiences from an individualistic perspective, almost always positioning the 'problem' within the person. Within psychology, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has become the way to operationalize suffering, and I worry this has occluded how suffering lives in a body, a family, a community; through cognitions, memory, and embodiments; in voice and in silence; over time, and in 'after shocks' (displacement, family disruption, intergenerational hauntings, physical and mental trauma). Looking at the problematic nature of diagnosis from a medical perspective, Candib (2002) argues that:

> The use of diagnostic labels and pills functions to locate the problem within the individual rather than within the family or society or strife which caused the suffering… In the case of multiple symptoms, medicine pathologizes the sufferer… Using psychiatric diagnosis moves us away from understanding pain as the normal human response to inflicted human suffering. Physical suffering cannot be subsumed within the category of PTSD or somatization. To do so is to deny the reality of the pain. When we do it cross-culturally, we are also assigning Western psychiatric categories to experiences of people from different cultures (P.47).

Highlighted in Candib's argument is the importance of acknowledging that suffering does not occur at an individual level only, and that it is a shared social experience. While a person might experience what may seem to be an isolated individual discomfort, when unpacking and looking at the 'root' of the problem, one may realize that a person's immediate or extended environment forms an integral part of what they are going through. Therefore, context is crucial when attempting to understand and make sense of people's lived experiences.

1.5.2 Suffering as decontextualized and dehistoricized

> Suffering does not just stop with the generation upon which it is inflicted. Thus we cannot just look into an individual's single life experiences of their parents and sometimes grandparents, and at times we need to consider the experience of an entire ethnic group or nation.
>
> (Candib, 2002, p. 45)

Human suffering has been studied and looked at mostly from a medical perspective, and this narrow/singular view has led to the removal of understanding it from historical, contextual, and gendered perspectives. Using the medical lens, Candib (2002) argues that "medicine usually interprets suffering in terms of pain, loss of function, dying, loss of hope, fear of future pain" (p.43). Suffering should be understood in its broad sense, as encompassing more than the physical pain, but one that also includes situated, social, embodied, and shared experience of painful/traumatic/hurtful physical and psychological pain. For Candib, "to suffer means to endure the pain across time. Suffering is not brief or momentary" (2002, p.44). While some psychological treatments may to some extent offer space to deal with these traumatic experiences, they often times do not allow for social suffering to be explored as part of memory. As further observed by Summerfield, "Medical models are limited because they do not embody a socialized view of mental health" (1995, p. 19). In his work, Summerfield (1995) highlights the importance of acknowledging how people choose to define and deal with their trauma. Furthermore, people rarely deal with their painful experiences in isolation, as suffering is a social experience that is usually embedded in culture. A theoretically and phenomenologically thick notion of social suffering has for a long time been the focus of research and discussion within the anthropology literature (Farmer, 1997; Kleinman, 1987, 1997; Scheper-Hughes, 1998). For many people, the meaning of torture, conflict, or oppression may be linked to how it affects the harmony of the family unit. Perceived in this way, this extensive work in anthropology offers us

a possible way to re-think how suffering may be understood, highlighting that suffering does not occur at the individual level only but the social as well. Because trauma often always occur at multiple levels, it therefore becomes crucial to acknowledge these interconnections.

1.5.3 Suffering is varied in meanings and coping strategies

It is important for people to be given space to 'voice' their layers of suffering, a platform to remember and rehearse, the voices and the silences, and be allowed expression of experiences in their own language so that they may re-story their experiences in hopes to move forward. Both people and our discipline of Psychology suffer from a notion of suffering that is 'shrunk' and without experience, diversity, complexity. People interpret their experiences in various ways depending on how they view the world. Furthermore, the way in which people view the world and deal with their traumatic experiences and pain is socially constructed and context dependent. In her discussion of the problematic nature of 'diagnosis' Leslie (2001, p.54) argues that "western notions of the universality of trauma, and the need for psychological treatment of this trauma, may not be appropriate in all settings". One could take away from this argument the idea that psychological healing should be understood from the perspective of those who have experienced the suffering.

1.5.4 Theorizing suffering

> Western thinkers have usually falsified our experience of suffering in trying to make sense of it. In a postmodern age, their accounts seem implausible. We need a way of making sense of suffering while admitting its horror.
>
> *(Stan Van Hooft, 1998, p.13)*

There are various ways in which suffering has been understood as I highlighted earlier, looking at it as an individualized experience in most of the work in psychology to its social nature as

expressed by disciplines like anthropology. It is crucial to challenge those in the field to think about the notion of suffering as it is experienced as a consequence of traumatic events and oppressive situations, and acknowledge the complex ways in which people respond to these. There are people who endure injustices in their lives on a daily basis, having their human rights constantly violated. While many of these people might have found a way to 'cope' with these injustices, that does not mean they do not experience and embody suffering.

Going back briefly in time and looking at the ancient conceptualization of suffering, Van Hooft (1998) argues that things in the world were always assumed to be in order and that suffering came as a result of violating the natural order of things. Viewed as a violation, it could be assumed that suffering has always been linked to personal responsibility and justice. According to the ancient Greek thinking as discussed by Van Hooft (1998), "the concept of justice acquired a content similar to that of destiny; it alluded to the cosmic order itself" (p.14). Closer to the natural order of things and destiny is religion, which has also been perceived by many as a way of transcending suffering; that one suffers only when he or she has committed a sin (Van Hooft, 1998). This way of looking at suffering places blame within the person, almost assuming that an individual has the power to avoid suffering. However, I would suggest that suffering is due to the disruption of that which is considered normative, entitled, deserved.

The Jewish philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas (as quoted in Van Hooft, 1998, p16) argues that "suffering is a unique possibility for overcoming the isolation that we all experience as atomistic individuals in a narcissistic society". Levinas further argues that it is in suffering that the "I" will have access to "the other", and this highlights the relational and therefore social nature of suffering. It is crucial however, to understand how meaning is given to suffering.

Morris (1997) argues that suffering is intricately linked to the notions of voice and silence. Most oppressed people are silenced by not being given the platform to voice or express their experiences. He further argues that "suffering is voiceless in the metaphorical sense that silence becomes a sign of something ultimately unknowable. It implies an experience not just disturbing or repugnant but inaccessible to understanding" p. 27. Suffering is further perceived by Van Hooft (1998, p. 13) as not referring "just to maladies, pains, and difficulties with which we can and should cope. It involves crises and threats that constitute a degradation or alienation of our being".

With this in mind, I would suggest that the social psychological relation of suffering and silence may be understood as an experience, which encompasses not only the physical but the psychological. It is an embodied experience that people carry within themselves and manifests itself in how people relate to one another. As Candib (2002, p. 47) notes, "suffering goes into the body, and comes out, translated, as pain, as symptoms. The symptoms are in the body- they have become embodied". According to Kleinman & Kleinman (1994), "social experience interrelates social suffering and subjective suffering not as different entities but as an interactive process. Furthermore, social experience is about transition, transformation, and change" (p. 712). The authors highlight the importance of not looking at suffering in a vacuum, that there needs to be an acknowledgement of both the internal and external factors that affect our experiences. This notion is further highlighted in Candib's (2002, p. 46) assertion that "the experience of suffering is tightly linked with the practice of oppression and that suffering is gendered, within families and within cultures". Candib further argues that many people struggle to deal with their suffering as they often fail to put their experiences into words, and for him this "silence condones the past" (p.45).

For those who experience suffering, there is usually a difficulty in expressing what they are going through, and this is made even more challenging if people find themselves existing within a system that does not allow them space to be able to express themselves. Traditionally throughout many conflicts in history, those who are silenced are usually women. Morris (1997, p.28) makes an assertion that "A loss of voice, further, proves to be almost built-in to the interpersonal structure within which suffering usually occurs". For people who experience prolonged suffering, conflict or oppression, learned helplessness and withdrawal may be a way to deal with the hurt/pain, especially when there is no safe space provided for them to express and share their experiences.

1.5.5 Gendering of suffering

> …history reflects the roles that men have played, women are often forgotten…If history is to be fulfilled, and women's contribution to the struggle acknowledged, the democracy we are building must not leave them aside on the margins.
>
> *Nozizwe Madlala (www.truth.org.za/special/women)*

The role played by gender in our quest of understanding people's experiences of suffering within post-conflict situations has not been the focus of much research, especially within psychology. Many women existed and many continue to exist within oppressive systems, and it is therefore crucial to acknowledge their social suffering as 'women' first and foremost. By talking about suffering in general and universalizing terms we run the risk of 're-colonizing' the women and their experiences, a notion that Macleod and Bhatia (2008) warn us against. When the gendered nature of suffering continues to be ignored, the oppressive patriarchal structures will continue to govern. According to Candib (2002, p.46), "these oppressive relations will replicate themselves in the next generation". Many women were and are still involved in social movements, and through their actions they are offered a space to share their experiences with collective others.

By sharing with other women, their experiences move from being individualized to shared collective experiences. It is crucial to pay attention to the fact that many continue to exist within patriarchal systems and therefore run the risk of continuous silence. This is also highlighted by Kiguwa (2006 p. 16) in her assertion that "the post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed an increased liberalisation of traditionally oppressive gender norms (for example, patriarchy) and their effects in the lives of many women". She further argues that for women to be able to change their personal circumstances and those of others in society, they have to acknowledge their ability to act and bring about change.

While it may be useful for women to have this acknowledgement, if safe enough space is not provided for them to work towards bringing about this change, then silence will continue and suffering persist. Many will continue to carry with them the private and hurtful memories of the past. Suffering continues to reverberate among many of these women as many continue to find themselves in abusive circumstances. Because many live with men who themselves have endured oppression and humiliation, they have to deal with being the 'objects' of frustration release. Often times women become the 'punching bags' that are readily available for men to release their anger on. It is often the women's responsibility to hold the families together, to care for the children and husbands, and to endure continuous suffering. Most carry many family secrets of violence and various forms of abuse. As can be seen in how commissions such as the TRC and others like it treat women's issues, it could be understood why many remain silent about what they go through. Furthermore, women's trauma may carry with it feelings of shame (for example, rape) which may lead to many not speaking about their suffering. This burden is carried silently by many, for speaking or resisting may lead to punishment. In this case, the silence becomes 'chosen' as women use it for self-protection. Silence keeps women from

knowing other women's experiences with discrimination, violence and harassment. "Silence buries a history of oppression and laminates the status quo, rendering those who dare to complain –especially women of color – suspect" (Fine, 2002, pp.13-14).

Imposed silence rendered many women invisible and excluded their experiences from being part of the master narratives. Many embody the pain, stigma and suffering, and carry these as individuals, families and as communities. When the master narratives continue to be that of 'let us forget about the past,' then the particular/individual remains silenced and continues to be 'haunted' by pain, trauma, shame, and continuous suffering.

Hutchison and Bleiker (2008) assert that it is crucial to acknowledge the role that emotions play when people have experienced trauma and the need to pay attention to how these emotions are dealt with. The authors argue that we need to acknowledge that trauma can be experienced in a myriad of ways. In their paper, Hutchison and Bleiker look at emotions at a collective level and their possible implications with regard to political reconciliation for example. For people to deal with and work through their emotions, a space needs to be created where they can explore their feelings and acknowledge them. This may assist in meaning making and possible healing. Hutchison and Bleiker further assert that "successful reconciliation requires opening up political spaces through which feelings of injustice can be worked through collaboratively" (p.386). For many South African women this is an ongoing process as spaces are gradually created for them to make meaning of their past hurts and seek possible healing and justice.

1.6 Official transcripts

There are various ways in which societies have tried to look for ways to remember, acknowledge and move forward after a national conflict. One of the ways can be seen through the Amnesty Commissions/Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. Popkin and Bhuta (1999, p. 100) argue that "most transitional regimes have enacted far reaching amnesties for those accused of human rights and humanitarian law violations, citing a need to move beyond the past, reconcile societal differences, and avoid the lengthy, divisive public trials that prosecutions would entail". In her paper, Scheper-Hughes (1998) asks the following questions: whose pain is privileged? And whose suffering is ignored? When thinking about amnesty commissions, it is crucial to think about how decisions are made with regard to whose voice is given privilege.

Shortly after its unbanning in 1990, the African National Congress (ANC) called upon the apartheid government to set up a "Commission of Inquiry or a Truth Commission into all violations of human rights since 1948" (Manjoo, 2004, p.9). After the negotiations and lengthy processes of looking into other countries in Europe and Latin America (e.g. Chile) that had gone through similar conflict situations, a decision to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was reached. The focus of this TRC however, was from a macro level, with the focus being on national healing and forgiveness.

Within the context of reconciliation, Sampson (1993) as cited in Opotow (2001, p.162) argues that "…parties with little power can be disadvantaged. Their sense of what happened may be silenced, they may not be heard on their own terms, and as a result, their interests, needs, and the outcomes they desire may have little influence on the reconciliation process even though they are nominally included in it."

Swartz and Drennan's (2000) argue that the TRC took place mainly at the governmental level, focusing on macro level issues, thereby leaving many of those at the micro level still wounded and having to continuously deal with past hurts. The macro level lens is viewed by Popkin and Bhuta (1999, p.100) as problematic as they note, "from the perspective of the victims, however, the argument that substantive or even symbolic redress for their suffering is precluded by the higher national goal of "peace" rings hollow".

De La Rey and Owens (1998) highlight that the TRC allowed for 'bodily trauma' experiences to be shared (focused on facts as they happened). The focus was on physical (e.g. they burned my child alive) rather than mental suffering (e.g. what did it mean for a mother to witness her child being burned alive). De La Rey and Owens further critique the therapeutic nature of these public testimonies by asserting that people carry reminders of their suffering in their bodies, both figuratively and literally.

The main intention of such a commission seems to be that of creating a 'national narrative' or 'official transcript', the one voice that represents all who suffered under the apartheid regime. One of the challenges of these narratives is the possible 'gendered nature' with which they were told, and it is with this in mind that I intend to collect some of the official transcripts and conduct a critical analysis of the way in which the narratives were told. Andrews (2007, P.35) makes the claim that "commissioners of the TRC were effectively more sensitized to stories of forgiveness, and in some cases may have created the very storyline which they wished to hear".

The TRC process led to the documentation and archiving of witness testimonies which serve as permanent reminders of what happened during apartheid. The numerous textual, visual,

and audio documents provide narratives of gross human violations that now form the official national memory of apartheid. These public narratives offer space for the expression of suffering. Another way in which the nation sought to publicly remember the sacrifices and role that people (more specifically women) played during the apartheid regime was through memorials. One such memorial is the women's memorial which is based at the government buildings. This public memorial also seeks to be a remembrance of the role played by women in the struggle for freedom.

1.7 Memorials

Figure 1: South African Women's Memorial

I made a phone call to the assistant to inform her that I have arrived at the Union Buildings. I signed in and went through what seemed like endless security checks. I was immediately informed that I am not allowed to take photos. After numerous security checkpoints, my identity document was taken and I was given a visitors' card. I sat in the waiting area while my host's

assistant made her way to come and get me. After she came we went though more security doors, and this time it involved fingerprint sensors to unlock doors (she did this for both of us, as my prints are not in their system). My host whom I shall call 'Peter' welcomed me with a cup of tea, and the first thing I said to him was that I have never seen so much security for entering a building (but then again it is the presidency so maybe it is to be expected, even though it is a little overboard). He told me that it had gotten worse with time, that there seemed to be more security added with every new president. What was going through my mind at this time was that there is no way any regular person can get easy access to these premises. It is inside this highly secured place that the women's memorial is housed! Peter and I took a walk to the memorial. We walked for a long time going down endless staircases and many secured doors. We finally arrived at the women's memorial, I took a moment to have a look at it and I had mixed feelings. The memorial is placed at what seemed like the back of the building, but it can be accessed from the front as well (which is how the women entered in 1956). My thoughts about what I observed were that of subtlety. I stood there wondering…what is the message being put across here… that women are modest? Humble? I was and continue to be troubled by the inaccessibility of this women's memorial. I was very aware as I stood there that had it not been for Peter whom I met through a mutual friend, I might have not had the opportunity to have access to the memorial. What of those who do not have acquaintances at the Union Buildings? Even though I was firmly warned upon entering the premises that I should not take photos, with the support of Peter, I took a few snapshots at the risk of getting into trouble with the police officials. This for me is a small way in which I can share this commemoration to South African women's bravery! (Personal visit to women's memorial, 9th Sept 2011)

1.7.1 Memorial work

The hidden away nature of the women's memorial reminds me of what Michelle Fine calls 'the presence of an absence' (2002). The existence of a memorial hidden away from the public eye with constant surveillance forever keeps the memorial 'absent' to the general public. While the memorial is physically present, it remains absent to those it is supposed to memorialize, the women of South Africa. The women's memorial serves as a reminder of women's protest in 1956, it aims to keep the memory alive over time, and its message is that of saying women's contribution should be acknowledged. Young (1992, p.294) argues that "time and memory are interdependent", that the relationship is not straight forward and linear, but moves back and forth constantly. The exclusive nature of the women's memorial renders women voiceless, and may be perceived as a perpetuation of the silencing of their contribution.

Memorial work is perceived to be complicated in nature, for example, what we choose to memorialize, how remembering takes place, and what emotions, and conversations becomes ignited is determined by those involved in the process of 'creating' a memorial. When taking the Holocaust memorials in Germany as an example, we see the complicated nature of meanings given to them, as Young (1992, p. 269) points out, "every monument, at every turn, is endlessly scrutinized, explicated, and debated". Unfortunately, most memorials and monuments to the struggle against apartheid focus on the resistance of men, with very few dedicated to women's contributions (Gardiner, 2006).

Today at the Union buildings in Pretoria, South Africa, there stands a monument commemorating women's resistance against the apartheid regime. This is a monument erected to remember specifically the day that over 20 000 women ascended up to the brown brick walls and

confronted their oppressors with their message saying enough is enough. The women's monument is meant to serve as an acknowledgement of women's contribution in the fight for freedom.

In her paper, Gardiner (2006) highlights the problematic nature of using monuments as a way to memorialize. This is a point also highlighted by Young (1992, p.273) in his assertion that "…rather than embodying memory, the monument displaces it altogether, supplanting a community's memory work with its own material form…As a result, the memorial operation remains self-contained and detached from our daily lives". Young (1992) further argues that memory is an embodied experience felt from the inside, and that if it is "exteriorized" it becomes somewhat detached. With this, Young suggests a move towards counter-monuments, monuments that do not conform to "single authority and single signatory" (p.279).

Gardiner (2006) critiques monuments as forms of memorializing and focuses on the South African women's Monument to make her point. She mentions that there is restricted access to the monument and that surveillance and heightened security makes it a challenge for the public to enter and view the monument. She asserts that "for this reason the voices of the women who fought in the struggle for liberation from apartheid are silenced through a lack of access to their monument" (p.13). Gardiner further problematizes the notion of having a monument existing in a particular location as limiting because it requires people to travel to be able to access it. In her paper presentation, Shulman Lorenz (2004) also points to the problematic nature of memorials by stating that "such structures create public grave markers that literalize history into dates or victories, but open no space for questioning their psychological and community traces in the present". With these complexities in mind, Gardiner calls for alternative ways of remembering. Monuments offer the illusion of closure, they are perceived as

a way to allow people to move on; however they cannot and should not be perceived as the final closure. Her work points to how silencing may continue to persist if the narratives remain told from a centralized/macro position. There continues to be limited access to narratives that tell women's role and participation in the struggle and this perpetuates discrimination and exclusion. According to Shulman Lorenz (2004, p.4), "we need to develop new forms of recollection, subjectivity, agency, and freedom; and if these spaces are surrounded by active and passive forgetting, part of the work will be creating ways to bring amnesia and forgetting out in the open".

Gardiner offers an example (Voices of Women's Project) of one of the alternative ways in which women's stories can be told and remembered. She describes Voices of Women's project as "a project that involves the creation of an archive of embroideries artworks and historical narratives that respond to the question: A day I will never forget" (p.14). Through the artwork that the women make, "a memorial to the lives of the women of South Africa is being created" (p.16). Gardiner further argues that "although it is not a traditional monument, each cloth created through the Voices of Women project brings women of the liberation struggle out of their silence and creates a memorial to the struggle". While this is a good way to offer the women a voice, the restriction to (one day they remember) may be limiting the women on what memory/experience to share. It almost 'forces' them to prioritize and decide which story is worth telling.

1.7.1 Tattoos as forms of memorializing

> Tattoos are a form of self-expression, a way to touch the depths of one's feelings and bring those feelings out for one's own observation or for the observation of others. Tattoos are a way of expressing thoughts, beliefs, triumphs and trials, and a way of memorializing a loved one, possibly to the extent of feeling control over

> death by immortalizing their memory forever on one's body to carry with one throughout one's life.
>
> (Johnson, 2007, p.59)
>
> Tattoos are steeped in stories that are in need of being told- stories communicated through the images themselves as well as the discussions they provoke between the tattooed and other people.
>
> (Gentry, & Alderman, 2007, p.196)

Tattoos have and continue to be used by many people as a way to memorialize significant occurrences in their lives. "Tattoos may not have the same physical or symbolic gravity as large, planned memorials or even small, spontaneous shrines, yet, it is important not to ignore or underestimate the "micro features of everyday life…because the small can serve as a marker for the large" (Fine and Hallet, 2003, p.12, as cited in Gentry, and Alderman, 2007). According to Johnson (2007), tattoos are a sign of a person's individualism, a form of self-expression.

In her extensive anthropological work, Bell (1999) draws our attention to the sometimes gendered way of public embodiment of stories through tattoos. Johnson (2007, p.49) argues that "A lot of women get tattoos to reclaim their bodies or to mark incidents in their lives". Tattoos and more specifically memorial ones seem to be quite popular as people use their bodies to communicate that which they cannot or choose to not express in words. While for some these tattoos are meant to be personal spaces that carry with them various memories (usually traumatic ones), the many parts of the body that are usually marked with these stories beg for an audience leading to these stories becoming public. Johnson (2007, p.54) perceives a tattoo as a "permanent way to remember, an expression of life or a means to assert ones independence or individuality". Tattoos offer a glimpse to a person's past; usually one that is difficult for an individual to talk about, it therefore represents that which cannot be thoroughly expressed in

words. They furthermore offer a space where people's memories of specific periods in their lives can be nested.

Many people use tattoos as a symbol of mourning and as a way to constantly remember. By visibly embodying their pain and suffering, they share with others; their loss that they feel should not be forgotten. They use tattoos to uncover stories and memories that they wish to make visible (Gentry, & Alderman, 2007). The significance of the tattoos is to memorialize and not forget. Marking their bodies they take what which may be perceived as invisible and make it visible. Writing about experiences of hurricane Katrina survivors, Gentry and Alderman (2007) argue that:

> The tattoos represent badges of pride and survival, as well as markers of the traumas that unfolded on the landscape and in people's lives. The loss of house and home, family and friends, and the struggles to help others are encoded upon their skin. They demonstrate pride in a city, their city, which has been critiqued and criticized in the media and by politicians (p.191).

In the sections above I have attempted to highlight the various forms of memorializing and the role each plays in keeping the memory alive. Tattoos as discussed above act as public, visible and embodied expressions of various experiences that people go through in their lives. By choosing to mark their bodies, people individually and sometimes collectively decide what to share. Monuments as forms of memorializing offer space for collective remembering, however, unlike tattoos; they are stationery in time and space and often conceptualized and decided upon at a national level. This is similar to the TRC which was also conceptualized at governmental level to offer space for remembering traumatic events of the past. The TRC focused on memorializing a specific narrative; that of gross human violations. I offered these forms of memorializing as a way to show various ways in which people remember and share these

memories. This serves as an invitation to psychology to re-think the way in which suffering is understood, theorized and expressed by those who 'live' with the trauma.

1.8 Silences

1.8.1 Silence as a strategy to survive: A protective shield

> …Pain, suffering, humiliation and joy do not necessarily only find their expression through verbal language, but a number of other representations such as song, dance and even via silence (Motsemme, 2004, p.916)
>
> "Women's recollections are often interested in the contexts of daily life in which they attempt to make and maintain their homes and relationships" (Motsemme, 2004, p.909).

In her study, Motsemme (2004) looked at women's articulation of their languages of 'pain and grief' through the language of silence. Motsemme (2004, p. 910) argues that "reinterpreting silence as another language through which women speak volumes, allows us to then explore other, perhaps hidden meanings regarding the struggle to live under apartheid". She further articulates that "when we reject dominant western oppositional hierarchies of silence and speech, and instead adopt frameworks where words, silence, dreams, gestures, tears all exist interdependently and within the same interpretive field, we find that the mute always speak" (p.910). Drawing from Motsemme's work it could be argued that when one looks at how people remember their violent past, there are usually limitations in what literal/direct verbal language can offer, and therefore silence should be acknowledged as another form of language. According to Motsemme (2004, p.915) "scholars have shown how narratives of extreme human rights violation leave many individuals with the inability to articulate their felt pain, loss and suffering. In these instances the words we have available become inadequate to the task of

conveying the systematic degradations and humiliations experienced, thus rendering victims, survivors and witnesses impotent". Looking at a similar issue through a different lens, Tapias (2006, p. 403) argues that "as people interact with others in their social milieu, emotions guide and prepare subjects for social action and enable an expression of agency, even if that agency initially entails not outwardly expressing emotions or taking action at all". This may be perceived as people choosing to be 'mute'; however this does not translate to voicelessness.

Verbal language has for a long time been perceived as the means of communication to the point that being unable to express oneself verbally was seen as problematic. Motsemme argues that "we valorize verbal language to such an extent that we regard it as the primary means through which a person enters into the social and intellectual life of the community, and ultimately into connection with themselves" (p915) and she further suggests that we need to problematize this notion and ask, "what happens when those who have been denied the occasion to tell their stories, and whose bodies and cultures have been systematically violated and dehumanized, discover that there are things that remain unspeakable? (p.915)"

1.8.2 Silence as resistance

During the apartheid era, many women became politicized even if not 'officially' so. By consciously going into the white suburbs with no passes, they exercised resistance to controlled/restricted movement. Most women were continuously harassed by the police in their own homes, "through acts of refusal to submit to the state's invasive harassment to reveal the whereabouts of sons and husbands, ordinary women were simultaneously voicing their awareness of their sociopolitical situations" (Motsemme, 2004, p.919). Choosing to be silent and keeping quiet was a way for many to actively resist harassment and forceful submission to

what the oppressive government wanted to do. Many reclaimed their power through silence. One of the issues to consider is the role that silence played in connecting communities as a way to make life 'continue as usual'. There seemed to have been an unspoken agreement to keep silent. Silences were not only individual but experienced and shared collectively. Silence served as a form of inclusion and exclusion, it was crucial for people to know who they could trust and therefore open up to. For example, it was believed that some people were police spies, therefore being careful about what and when to say something was deemed crucial. In this case, the silences were chosen and used as protection for the community and family members who might have gone into hiding to avoid arrest.

Sense of community was disrupted and diminished by the fear instilled in people by the Special Forces (the police). The police instilled this fear as a way to disintegrate communities and limit 'meetings' and 'organizing' among people. Families, neighborliness, communal living and sharing were disrupted—silence and suspicion escalated. Because the state entered into homes, spaces that women consider private and sacred, feelings of helplessness were experienced by many, leading them to retreat into "reflective silence" and "prayer" (Motsemme, 2004, p. 924). People's suffering occurred at a social level and was shared. By attempting to understand these silences, Motsemme (2004) argues that we will begin to get an understanding of that which has been "textually and politically repressed". By so doing, we will begin to get a glimpse of women's lived experiences.

1.8.3 The 'ghostly' silences

Many women are suffering from 'enforced' amnesia which may be personally or systematically imposed by the ruling structures. When encouraged messages are that of forgive and forget and

the promotion of equality without acknowledging women's everyday lived experiences, then amnesia kicks in. The challenge becomes the ghosts that continuously haunt these women. The 'knowings' that are endlessly silenced may remain mute, but are not necessarily voiceless/absent.

In their paper, Shulman Lorenz and Watkins (2001) speak of the 'Silenced Knowings' which they refer to as "understandings that we each carry that take refuge in silence, as it feels dangerous to speak them to ourselves and to others" (p.2). The knowings are silenced because revealing might lead to 'danger'; for example, experiences of many people who during apartheid had to live with the possibility of getting arrested by the police or being perceived as sell-outs by the community. Many people, more specifically women had to contend with information/secrets they carried and continue to carry. Shulman Lorenz and Watkins (2001) argue that these knowings are embodied and therefore cannot be evaded as often times there are reminders (e.g. a child conceived as a result of a woman being raped by police officials during apartheid).

Untold stories lead to silences being passed on from one generation to the next. Often times, parents craft 'official scripts' of what stories to share, but what about that which remain untold? In her extensive work on the Japanese internment, Nagata (1990) looks at how silences carried by the parents continue to 'haunt' the children as well. Nagata's work sought to look at different ways in which the internment affected the Japanese-American community residing in the United States. She conducted a survey with a national sample of 500 Sansei (third-generation Japanese-Americans) and further conducted 40 in-depth interviews in an attempt to "evaluate Sansei perceptions of community, injustice, the impact of the Japanese-American exclusion, and the topic of redress" (p.139). The results revealed that those with interned parents had a sense of uneasiness and feelings of insecurity about the United States. The Sansei felt that they could never fully "assimilate" as exclusion still exists. Secondly, those with interned

parents perceive internment as a form of injustice. Furthermore, Nagata (1990) argues that "the Sansei's sense of injustice has, in part; developed out of the silence that typically surrounds their parents' reactions to the camps" (p. 140). Nagata's work highlights the problematic nature of moral exclusion, and how this not only affects one generation but is passed down to other generations causing an intergenerational sense of suffering and injustice. Nagata introduces us to the complexities and political nature of exclusion. Her view of social suffering points to the problematic nature of being deemed powerless.

In her work on social psychology and the effects of the holocaust, Apfelbaum (2000) highlights the disconnect between the past and present and the problematic nature of silence. She argues that there needs to be a collective forum that allows people space to share and make sense of their traumatic experiences. In this way people feel validated and acknowledged. Apfelbaum (2000, P.1010) asserts that "more often, though, the memories are deeply buried and induce a sort of dislocation between the individual's private and public lives". This burial of the past may lead to continuous suffering and a somewhat forced disconnect between the past and the present.

Wars of memory are happening all over the world today, and the subject of how we honor, forget, or make use of the past is the subject of intense and expanding dialogue (Shulman Lorenz, 2004). When spaces for remembering are not offered, then the death of that which came before is rubber stamped. However, this does not lead to automatic amnesia, for ghosts continue to make occasional visits (Shulman Lorenz, 2004).

1.9 The 'unsayable'

> In order to move forward into my own life and everything that it means in the present and can mean in the future, I really feel I have to release the past from this prison of silence and let it come to whatever it may
>
> (Kevin R, taken from Liem 2003, p.17)

Many people who lived through colonization and other oppressive regimes often carry what Scott (1992) refers to as "hidden transcripts" which are secret histories or experiences that go unsaid. Inequalities and lack of power that persist within many societies lead to the silencing of some people's voices. With democracy and gender equality in numerous societies one would imagine that the scripts become public, however, many stories go unshared. For a long time, many people (more especially women) were denied these public transcripts. Many of them carried and still carry hidden transcripts, 'private and secret' histories that continue to go unheard. Lykes (1997, p. 727) argues that "…silence is often an adaptive, survival strategy. However, at the same time, it exacerbates people's feelings of isolation". There is a failure or absence of language that people can use to express their traumatic experiences, and without this language, silence persists. This is a notion highlighted by Hutchison and Bleiker (2008, p. 388) in their assertion that " one can say that it felt horrible, that the shock and pain were completely numbing, but the prevailing reaction of people to trauma is that the sense of loss and grief is so great that it cannot be expressed through language". This silence however, does not translate to loss of memory of the experienced trauma. De La Rey and Owens (1998) assert that people's memories and understanding of their experiences is usually 'mediated through language', which can sometimes not be enough.

In her book, *The Unsayable*, Rogers (2007) interrogates the notion of the unspeakable and looks at how trauma becomes/is carried through in the body- rendering spoken language

often insufficient in expressing deep rooted experiences and emotions. She argues that silence marks the body in a way that words or language may be insufficient to articulate the trauma that the individual may be going or went through. She offers multiple and creative ways that people can use to communicate that which they cannot easily talk about – the unsayable. According to Rogers, the invisible, unsayable trauma marks itself in the body, and one of the ways to express it is through "the symbolic form of art" (p. 14). I find Rogers' work quite instructive as I think about the journey I am embarking on in this dissertation. Many South African women witnessed and personally experienced atrocities that may be difficult for them to express in words. Many of them carry marks that serve as constant reminders that continually haunt them – traces of their lives during apartheid are continually carried in their bodies.

1.10 In search for counter-monuments

Women's voices have been marginalized, and even though 'equality' and 'emancipation' have been put in place, many continue to live with silences as spaces continue to be absent for their experiences to be acknowledged. With the present research I attempted to offer space for counter-monuments, where women move from the position of spectatorship to authors and creators of their own 'monuments'. Coming to terms with historical contexts within which they grew up and the meanings these carried offered the women a re-thinking and renewed meaning of their lived experiences. Making embroideries of their personal stories functions as 'counter-monuments' that carry permanent spaces and reminders of what they went through. Offering spaces to remember provided voice to the silenced histories that continued to haunt the women. Shulman Lorenz and Watkins, (2004, p.9) argue that we need to "come face to face with a

forgotten ‘Other’ within our own personalities that we have learned to disown. It would need our courage to be in relationship with all those disowned parts of ourselves connected to shame, humiliation, degradation, and sadness left over from both personal and a cultural past that we have never learned room”. It was my hope that with this study, the women would find a way to face their ‘forgotten Other’, be it their own personal experience, family secrets linked to the past, or memories they may have buried as they deemed them to be shameful or sad.

The central objective of the study was to investigate how women’s private memories of the conflict/apartheid period within South Africa influence how they make sense of their newly found freedom. With ‘empowerment’, ‘freedom of choice’ and ‘equality’ as the order of the day, it becomes crucial to acknowledge women’s lived experiences and how they relate to the changes taking place in the democratized South Africa. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate how Black South African women use artistic forms such as embroideries to re-stitch their lives, create personal life stories, and make connections between the past and the present. It was my hope that through this study, I would get some understanding of the meanings various women attach to having individual rights and freedom within a democratized country and how they negotiate public expectations of their roles as women.

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the content of the stories women seek to tell about their ‘day to day’ experiences under apartheid?
- How does the form of storytelling affect how and what gets said?
- How does context affect or shape the form of storytelling?

Chapter 2

2.1 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a master-narrative

I visited the South African History Archive (SAHA: an independent human rights archive dedicated to documenting and providing access to archival holdings that relate to past and contemporary struggles for justice in South Africa (http://www.saha.org.za/about_saha.htm). SAHA is based at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, where I was given access to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) archival material and many published articles, and online resources. I was presented with boxes full of witness and victim transcripts. I made copies and scanned transcripts that focused on statements given by women and about women. The TRC covered a wide spectrum of issues such as, gross human violations, health (e.g. the role of psychiatric institutions during apartheid), liberation movements and various roles they played, the security forces, amnesty hearings for perpetrators, general hearings for victims and witness of various abuses by the apartheid regime, and quality and service in prisons. Later on, a special request and concern led to special hearings for women.

After reading a number of reports and individual transcripts, I decided to do a critical analysis of the TRC as it took place and was written about in published articles, books and reports. In this way, I did not limit myself to exclusively looking at a number of transcripts but looked broadly at the commission, its purpose and how it was understood by those involved in it. I focused specifically on women's hearings, their personal experience with the system (being put in detention, prison or tortured) and also about the loss of their loved ones, specifically, sons and husbands. In her report on the first five weeks of the public hearings, Fiona Ross (2000) noted the following:

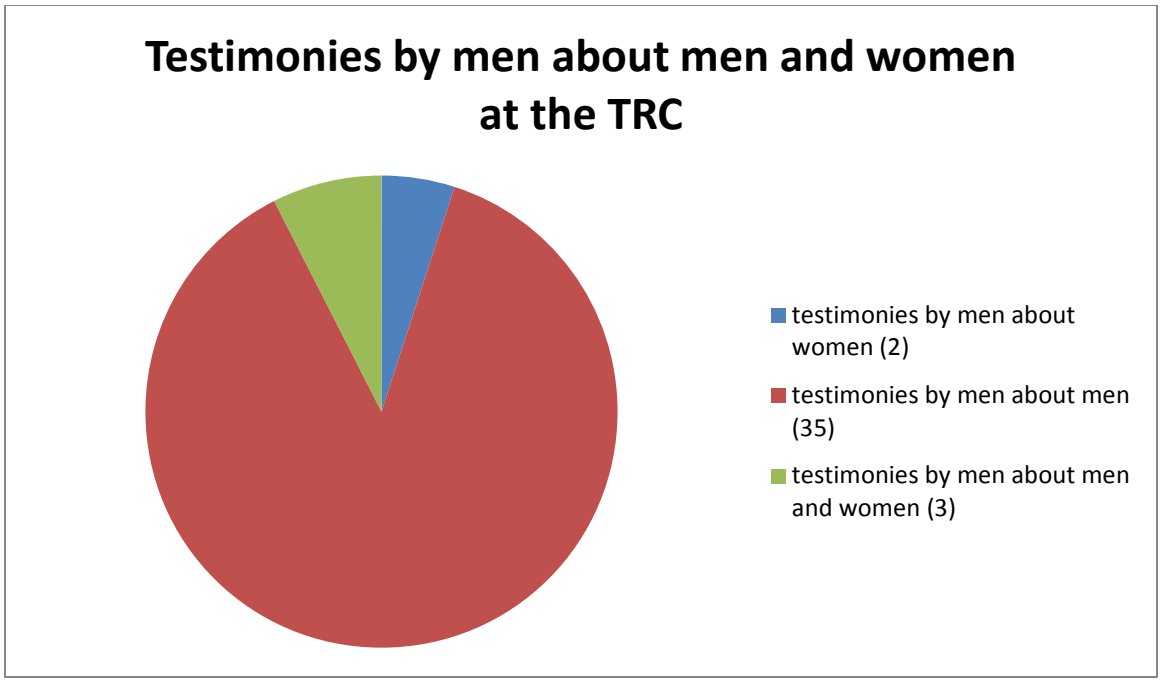


Chart1: Breakdown of testimonies by men about men and women (adapted from Fiona Ross' Table of gender breakdown)

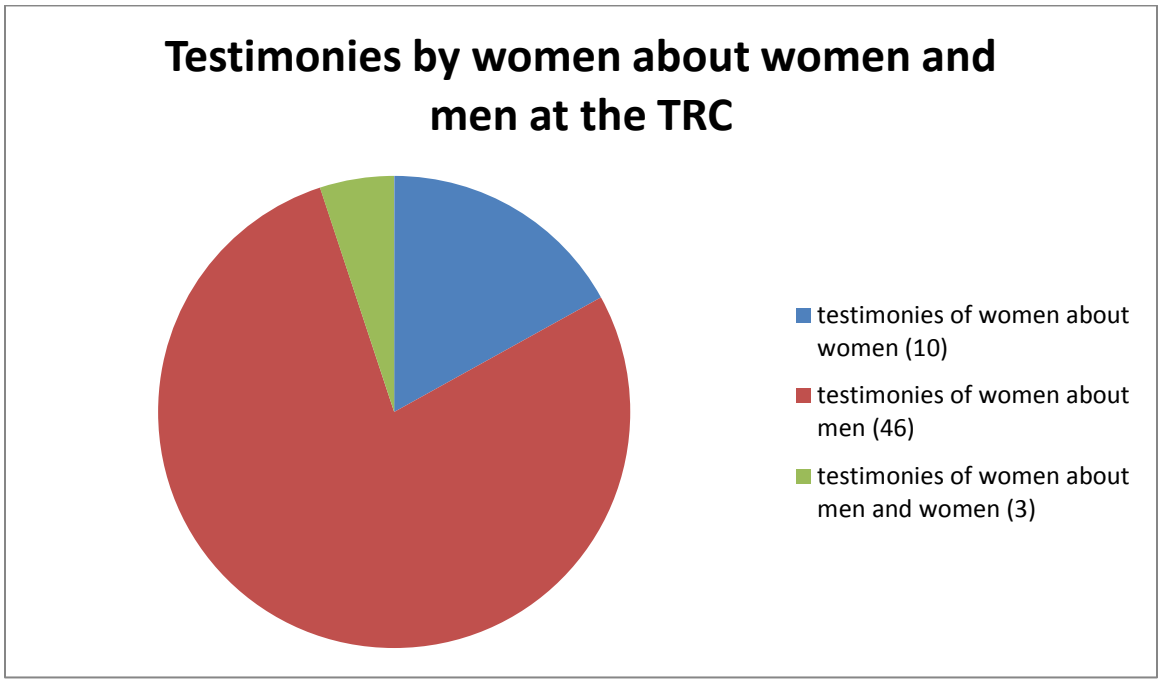


Chart2: Breakdown of testimonies by women about women and men (adapted from Fiona Ross' Table of gender breakdown)

As can be seen from the above charts, the narratives told at the TRC focused mainly on men's experiences. The testimonies told were mainly about men and the human violations they suffered as specified by the commission. Testimonies about women remain minimal, and this is an issue I intend to critically look at in this chapter.

2.1.1 Brief History

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established by an act of parliament with the task of investigating and exposing gross violations of human rights' that took place in South Africa under the apartheid regime, covering the period from March 1960 to May 10, 1994. The idea with the establishment of the TRC was to offer space for victims/witnesses to know the truth surrounding the deaths/disappearance of their loved ones and for the perpetrators to come forth and disclose the gross violations they were involved in and circumstances surrounding such acts. By offering space for truth telling it was hoped that many people can eventually find some peace knowing where and what happened to their loved ones. The aim was for memory to be given space, and according to Norval (1998, p.258) it was believed that the TRC will offer "an occasion for survivors to gain recognition of their plight in the full public view".

According to Posel (1999), "the Commission was to be an excavation of truth about gross human rights violations, both in respect of individual cases presented to the Commission and more generally, by way of establishing 'systematic' local and national patterns of gross human rights violations" (p.3). For its work to be managed smoothly, the Commission was provided a sizable budget, and a research department that had access to archival materials that were previously inaccessible to the public. The aim was that of achieving healing for people, at an

individual and collective level in a move towards nation building. As the country was going through a transition process, the setting up of the Commission was seen as a way/an attempt to ensure 'smooth' transitioning where justice and forgiveness can take place. The Commission aimed to bring forth the 'official' truth about the country's past, to strive towards objectivity even though there were varying perspectives about what happened. Its aim was to be impartial when recording events of the past. It had to offer platform for people's pain to be acknowledged and offer space for them to give their own account (space to remember/acknowledge their memories) and a possible closure and healing.

While the Commission covered and extensively looked into human violation issues, it by no means gave a complete picture or account of what happened. The aim was to demonstrate and thoroughly highlight the inequities of the past. This then means there were and still are many untold stories. In her critical analysis of the TRC report, Posel (1999) argues that "the historical exercise was primarily to narrate a moral truth about wrongdoing, conflict and injustice, and it was one which could be represented effectively by a relatively small number of carefully selected individual cases which exemplified collective truths". (p.8)

The TRC offered a space wherein the past could be interrogated. Based on the fact that the Commission had a deadline and specific time in history to focus on, its purpose could be perceived as that of opening space for re-visiting traumatic experiences of the past. It was a formalized structure that served to spark conversation about the importance of truth telling in the quest for nation building. The setting was formal and always pre-arranged:

> The camera lights shine down on a stage decked in white-draped tables and flowers. Palm trees line the front of the stage. It could be a wedding setting except for the national flags, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission banners and boxes of tissues centred on the table. A person, usually a woman, sits facing a

> panel of commissioners. Perhaps she is accompanied by a friend or a child or a husband. Sometimes she is alone. A community briefer comforts her when words choke her, and she weeps. She tells a story of loss and pain and suffering. The commissioners listen, nodding in sympathy. They ask questions. After ten or twenty minutes the woman steps down from the stage, her story told. It will enter the official records of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a set of data that contributes to the establishment of as a complete a picture as possible of the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights committed during the period from March 1, 1960 to the cut-off date (Ross, 1997, p.7).

The Commission was concerned with 'the incident', and according to Corry and Terre Blanche (2000, p.12) "it is this incident which the survivor is required to speak, which the audience has come to hear, and which will be turned into a sound bite for radio and television. This is the pristine moment of authentic, first-hand testimony around which the entire apparatus of the TRC revolves". In the ten to twenty minutes that people are offered to share their testimony, it is assumed that an elaborate and well articulated story will be told. A story that is given space to be told is one that fits the pre-determined criteria. The focus on the specific incident restricts what can and cannot be narrated before the commission.

2.1.2 Defining the commission

> The TRC was in the first place a legal instrument designed to facilitate the constitutional transformation of the South African State. Although the legal aspect of the Commission was particularly prominent in relation to the granting of amnesty to perpetrators (who were cross-examined to establish if their applications met certain strictly defined criteria) it also helped to establish the tenor of what could be said at victim hearings. "Statements" were for example taken from survivors, they were sworn in, and there was a degree of cross-examination (although not explicitly presented as such). Because the commission was legally tasked with uncovering the truth about gross human rights abuses in South Africa's past between march 1960 and December 1993, testimonies concerning "lesser" abuses (relating for example, to pass laws) or abuses committed before or after these dates were not heard… As an institution operating in the political, religious, legal and media spheres, the TRC was an instrument of the modern, technocratic state and therefore intelligible from within a global culture dominated by Europe and America, rather than from an 'indigenous' African culture.
>
> (Corry and Terre Blanche, 2000, p.9)

According to Manjoo (2004, p.12) the "TRC was legally established in 1995 as a quasi-judicial body which had as its principal objectives the promotion of national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding which transcends the conflicts and divisions of the past". One of the problematic issues of the commission was the fact that the staff composition consisted largely of whites and mostly men, and still it was perceived as 'representative' of the South African nation as a whole. This issue of what representation means is highlighted in Opotow's (2001, p. 162) assertion that "it is not enough to simply bring people into the process of creating joint meaning when meaning is constrained by a dominant position that defines 'what is' and what happened". This continuous positioning of whites and more specifically men in places of power highlights the patriarchal nature of the South African society, even after the advent of democracy.

It is critical to note that the TRC focused on major massacres and paid less attention to the habitual everyday abuses that many people, especially women experienced during the apartheid regime. Official records of women's oppression within the domestic sphere, where they lived, and where they worked is almost non-existent and this is highlighted in Ross' (1998) assertion that women were not offered safe enough spaces to express their personal experiences. Many women experienced oppression beyond official apartheid laws. One of the first things to take note of when looking at the TRC is the composition of the committees that made up the commission. The process was conceptualized mostly by men, almost assuming a gender neutral process by not focusing specifically on issues of gender. As Olckers (1996, p.61) (cited in Manjoo (2004)) points out "Women had not participated in their own voices in the period leading up to the drafting of the TRC bill, or in the drafting of the bill itself. Some would argue women's experiences had largely been defined out by the terms of the bill".

2.1.3 The TRC narratives

> some worry about the focus on the "exceptional", "extreme" and "gross" acts of human rights violation, which runs the risk of obscuring, or worse, of normalizing the ordinary, daily, routine acts of apartheid's structural violence: the legal, medical, economic, bureaucratic, and commercial violations of human rights that alienated millions of South Africans from their property, their homes, their families, their labor, their citizenship, and even their own bodies.

(Scheper-Hughes, 1998, p.127)

The telling or testifying of women at the TRC highlights how context determines the kinds of stories being told. The TRC was interested in 'extreme' and 'gross' violations. Due to the specific nature of the stories they were 'willing' to listen to, the everyday struggles were not given space as pointed out by Scheper-Hughes in the above quote. A point also noted by Stein (1998, TRC report) in his argument that "the abuses of apartheid went far beyond gross violations of human rights; apartheid penetrated into the day to day lives of all South Africans in an obvious and negative way". Abercrombie (1998, p.116) argues that "recollecting and commemorating the past always takes place in contingent contexts where power is at play. As a result alternative forms of social memory and alternative possibilities for construing the social are always in contention". The context within which history is recollected plays a crucial role in what aspects of the past becomes recollected.

The TRC was a formalized structure with commissioners representing authority and having power to control how the proceedings were handled. This is noted in Corry and Terre Blanche's (2000, p.8) argument that "survivor narratives did not arise spontaneously but were spoken into a space opened up by the constructions of truth and reconciliation that went into the making of the TRC… in addition to this, narratives should be read as having been conditioned by the institutional arrangements and practice of the TRC". Because of the strict nature of what was

deemed as gross human right violations, many narratives of people's (especially women) everyday lived experiences under apartheid remain untold and absent in the official records.

In one of the reports submitted to the TRC, Ricky Rotsch highlights the fact that women carried and continue to carry multiple struggles which then goes beyond the 'incident' that the commission was focusing on. He further argues that "many women carried the double burden of being victims or indirect victims of the past regime as well as victims of domestic violence. All of these layers of suffering would have long term effects for women if not acknowledged and attended to would resurface after many years". Even though some space was offered for women to come forward and share their experiences of suffering, many remained 'silent'. Those who came forward and testified usually spoke about their sons, brothers and husbands and rarely about their personal experiences as can be seen in the following narratives:

> I was not there when this happened. All I know is that my son and other exiles were inside a house at Maseru when the SANDF (South African National Defense Force) opened fire on them. They were showered with bullets in the darkness of the night…When he was killed my son was doing his final year of housemanship at Edendale in Pietermaritzburg… my request is that his remains be exhumed so that they may be reburied here in South Africa at Somerset East (Cynthia Ngciphe, Somerset East hearing).
>
> My son (name) was killed in prison in 1985. He was a scholar at the time and was 19 years old. He was an active member of the ANC and was active in the political structures in our area. He was part of a group that used to call for school boycotts and stay-aways. There was a prefabricated school building in the township which had been put in place. My son and other youths condemned this structure in the strongest possible terms and ended up setting it on fire. On the 8 March 1985 a group of policemen led by (sergeant's name) came to my house at about 5pm and arrested my son. He was charged with a certain group, with public violence and tried before the local magistrate, convicted and sentenced to serve five years imprisonment. I was visited at home by one of the Constable (name) who informed me that my son had been stabbed to death in prison…When my son's death was reported to me I was told that he had been stabbed but when we got hold of his body, I together with other family members scrutinized the body and did not find any stab wound. Because of my state of mind at the time I did not lodge a complaint. I was also not aware of the procedures to follow. I do not

> know whether or not a post mortem examination was conducted as I am not even in possession of a death certificate. (Luzeka Rosy Ndoni, Pearston hearing)

The two above narratives offer us a glimpse of some of the testimonies given at the TRC, highlighting women's focus on the 'other' and the required 'incident' perceived to be gruesome human rights violation. While the testimonies clearly point to how intricately linked the women's and their sons' personal stories are, their direct connection does not seem to be the focal point of the required narrative. The above women suffered being separated from their sons (due to exile and prison) and what resulted was news about the death of their children. From the story told by Luzeka, we can see that she was aware of her son's political activities, even though she does not directly bring herself and role into the story she is narrating. Luzeka's immediate stating of her absence when her son died; *I was not there when it happened*, points to how it was somewhat unreal to hear that her son was no more. Highlighted in her story is attention to detail, which shows her awareness of her son's involvement in various political events as they were happening, for example, ten years later (TRC hearings took place in 1995), she still remembers the names of the officers she came across during her son's arrest and subsequent death. She also remembers the exact date of her son's arrest. She had multiple confrontations with the law, as they entered her private space, her home. This may be seen where they came to arrest her son, and later to bring the news of his death. She saw potential in her son, which it might be assumed she felt was stripped away; *he was a scholar at the time and was 19 years old*. The stripping away of potential can be seen in Cynthia's narrative as well as she mentions that her son *was doing his final year of housemanship*. For these women, the death of their sons meant being robbed of a possible successful future. While these women do not position themselves explicitly in the narratives, their direct connection may be seen in how they narrate and what they choose to include in their telling.

In the paper presented at a workshop on gender and the TRC, Jessie Duarte (1996) argues that "women who lost their sons or daughters for example, at the time when they were just beginning to become economically active, have something to say to us as a society about having reared a child to a particular point and then that child is taken away from them without an explanation". In this way, women may be perceived as 'indirect victims' of the apartheid era who suffered loss of their loved ones. While many women may not explicitly question how things happened, they were filled with suspicion, for example, Luzeka's checking of her son's body for stab wounds was a clear indication of her lack of trust for the system. The absence of a stab wound added to the (un)reality of his death. Often times, the son, brother or husband was the breadwinner or potential breadwinner that the family depended on for economic survival. Having this person taken away often meant economic, social and sometimes medical hardships for the family, this may be seen in Luzeka's narrative towards the end when she briefly brings her experience into the story she is telling:

> My health has deteriorated since then and has not normalized since with the result that I have to see a doctor regularly on a monthly basis. I contracted hypertension. My doctor is (doctor' name). Physically I am not quite well and this has had a psychological effect on me. (Luzeka Rosy Ndoni, Pearston hearing)

Luzeka is linking her health deterioration with the death of her son. Losing her child had physical, psychological and possible economic implications. She felt it crucial to bring in her health status as she possibly felt it could not be divorced from the loss of her son. She situates herself in this narrative that mainly focuses on how and when her son died. She offers us a glimpse of how her life has been even though she does not go into detail. Luzeka's story offers us an example of what (Kleinman, 1987; Summerfield, 1995; Farmer, 1997; Leslie, 2001) point to in their discussion of the problematic nature of diagnosis. For Luzeka, contracting hypertension is linked to the death of her son. She offers us a socialized view of her medical

condition. This is in line with Van Hooft's (1998, p.13) understanding of suffering (as discussed in the previous chapter) as being more than physical pain, but something that "involves crises and threats that constitute a degradation or alienation of our being". Duarte's (1996) report highlights the cultural implications of losing a son or a husband. In many African societies, including South Africa, having a husband adds to a woman's prestige and affords her respect from her community; therefore losing a husband may affect her standing within the community. This is an example of the multiple ways in which people suffer, a point that the TRC did not take into consideration. The way in which a woman lost her child or husband will also determine the easiness and willingness for sharing of her story. The complex relationships that the women find themselves in, with their children and the law, complicate how meaning can be made from these experiences of loss. While the women may have been physically 'absent' when their children were brutally murdered, their presence can be felt as they became victims who had to bury their children without having had the chance to say goodbye to them. Many of these women suffer constant grief as they never received answers as to why their children/loved ones had to die.

At this point, an argument could be made that some of the women may have felt that they had not been given a 'safe' enough platform to have their experiences heard and acknowledged by the commission; thereby influencing the stories they chose to share. Drawing from Latin American contexts of Testimonio, Leslie (2001, p. 55) asserts that "through the process of giving testimony, women have the opportunity to challenge entrenched power structures and to rebuild the moral and social order for themselves and for their communities. However, as Abercrombie (1998) points out, this becomes challenging when people are not offered space to challenge these powers. It was noted by many that the presence of male commissioners might be a deterrent for many women to freely share their personal and sometimes 'shameful' experiences, and this led to

a request to have special hearings for women. The request was approved in August 1996, and a number of hearings focusing specifically on women's issues were held. Many women still did not get the opportunity to appear before the commission to share their experiences, furthermore because of the public nature of the hearings (being audio and video recorded) without 'proper' rapport being established first, many women remained silent.

2.1.4 Special hearings for women

A number of workshops focusing on how women were represented in the TRC were conducted. It was concluded from the information gathered from these workshops that there is a need for increasing women's participation in the Commission. After discussing and hypothesizing about possible reasons for lack of women involvement, a recommendation was made to the Commission on the need for special women-only hearings. It was also suggested that a gender analysis be included and should form part of the final TRC report. With these suggestions, "the TRC called a workshop which included representatives of women's organizations and the media to discuss ways of bringing more women into the process" (Goldblatt, 1997, p.11). It was later agreed that special hearings will be held. The special hearings:

> created the space for women to speak about sexual and biological matters that might have otherwise been difficult to discuss in a forum that included men. Because of the narrow way in which rights violations had been highlighted in the TRC hearings, detention without trial on its own, i.e.: without other physical torture, had not been seen as sufficiently serious to be dealt with by the TRC. The hearing gave women an opportunity to speak about themselves and their experiences which they may not otherwise have had. The hearings also attracted media attention and thus created some public awareness about the gendered nature of Apartheid violence (Goldblatt, 1997, p.11).

According to Goldblatt and Meintjes (1996) using a gendered lens to look at South Africa's past may help us to better understand how differently people were affected by the oppressive apartheid regime. For many women who had the opportunity to testify/give evidence

at the TRC, the focus was on the experiences of people in their lives (sons, husbands, brothers, daughters) hence the need for a specific hearing focusing on women as direct victims. Special hearings aimed to highlight gender power relations as felt and practiced during torture and detainment of prisoners. While women have begun to be perceived and treated as equal citizens, many still continue to exist within oppressive circumstances and their stories go unheard. The special women's hearing was deemed crucial as it was going to give platform and space to stories that would otherwise continue to go unheard. Many women were imprisoned, were put in detention and served time in jail because of their involvement or assumed participation in political activities. In her submission to the TRC, Dr. Meintjies (1997, p.5) asserts:

> that there is a systematic undermining of women's sense of their self, of their sexuality in order to undermine their sense of political commitment, their sense of belonging to a community and when women left detention, went out of detention they experienced a great deal of silent pain which they were not able to express and very often they also experienced a kind of secondary victimization.

Women suffered in multiple ways, from the apartheid laws and the patriarchal system within which they lived and continue to live. Many could not seek employment independently in urban areas, they were prevented from owning land/housing, and many spent long periods of time without seeing their husbands as their movements were restricted by the government. Women should be acknowledged as primary and not only secondary victims who only suffered loss of loved ones. Their direct pain should be given space. One of the main focuses of the special hearings was on experiences of women in prisons. Many endured continuous torture (sexual violations, withholding medical care, physical assault, rape, to name but a few). This torture can be seen in some of the women's narratives at the special hearings:

> <u>Miss Marakalala, July 1997:</u> Whilst interrogating me they changed from one policeman to the other and I would have to answer questions standing, I was not allowed to sit down. At that time I was pregnant. As they could not get anything

> out of me during the interrogation they said they would make me tell the truth and they told me to take off my jacket, I did as I was told. At that time they started assaulting me, I became lame from the waist downwards as if I had pins and needles in my body and I lost my balance and fell and messed myself…After a few days I asked to consult a doctor and they told me I would not be allowed to consult a doctor but I persisted and they told me a doctor would come, however the story kept on like that, the doctor would come…the one day I felt weak, I lost strength and late afternoon I started vomiting. I still asked to see a doctor but I was told the doctor would not come. On the third day I collapsed, and that was the time I was actually having a miscarriage and I was taken to Johannesburg hospital where they found that I did have a miscarriage and my baby was in a tube.
>
> Mrs. Narkedien, July 1997: They always had a woman present when they were torturing me and they asked her if she would like to leave because they were going to intensify the treatment. All these days I was wearing the same clothing, just a dress and I was also menstruating at that time which I told them so I couldn't stand so long and I was bleeding a lot. They made me lie on the floor and do all kinds of physical exercises lifting my body with my hands, what they call press-ups then reducing the fingers until I had to pick myself up with just two fingers. By then I couldn't because my body was tired, it was sore and I had to drop it and lift it up and I was hurting my knees every time I dropped it. While I was down they would kick me and tramp on me.

The above narratives give us an indication of the torture that many women who were imprisoned during apartheid went through. Both women point to how their bodies were physically attacked; Miss Marakalala states, *I became lame from the waist downwards as if I had pins and needles in my body and I lost my balance and fell and messed myself,* and Mrs. Narkedien, *They made me lie on the floor and do all kinds of physical exercises lifting my body with my hands*. The two women's bodies were attacked and assaulted as a way to torture them and force them to talk/give information. They had to endure continual harassment in the hands of the police. They were denied medical attention even though their lives were at risk. This may be perceived as an exercise of power by the police where they felt they had the women's lives in the hands. For many women, the torture and suffering was embarrassing as they attacked their very womanhood, as can be seen in Mrs. Narkedien's narrative, *I was menstruating at that time which I told them so I couldn't stand so long as I was bleeding a lot*. Her plea went unheard as they

continued to make her do physical exercises. Miss Marakalala lost her child because she was denied medical attention; *I still asked to see a doctor but was told that the doctor would not come… On the third day I collapsed, and that was the time I was actually having a miscarriage.*

The above narratives highlight the sensitive nature of what many women went through in police custody. For some of the women, to narrate such personal and often embarrassing stories before the TRC was impossible, hence they focused on secondary narratives (those of their sons, husbands, brothers and daughters). The special hearings offered the women somewhat of a safe space for them to share the embodied suffering that they silently carried for many years. The special hearings served as a platform that offered support and dialogue for women who might have believed that they were alone in their suffering. This served as a sign for many that their stories were important and that they mattered. What remains a challenge is that there had to be workshops conducted to highlight the importance of acknowledging women's suffering. It is almost as if there always has to be a reminder that women's voices matter. These workshops were held to reflect on the TRC processes, check what worked, and highlights challenges and shortcomings if there were any. One of the issues that came up and was echoed by many was the absence of women's personal suffering as a result of apartheid. It was in these workshops that a realization of lack of safe spaces for women to share their traumatic experiences was highlighted. A decision was then made that special hearings would be held. It is crucial to acknowledge that women always communicate, even through their silence, the silence that is often imposed, but sometimes chosen. Women special hearings offered space for breaking the silence.

Many women were tortured in prisons as a way to bring shame and make them feel guilty, by for example, police officers accusing them of being irresponsible wives and mothers who get arrested and leave their families unattended. By trying to make women feel guilty, it

might be argued that the male police officers were passing on judgment to the women and sending a message that they belong at home 'in the private' sphere and not in the public sphere involved in political activities. By constantly being threatened about the children they left alone at home, women were made to feel as if they were irresponsible. Furthermore, being imprisoned meant they were at the risk of being raped at any given time. Some of these experiences that women went through may not be perceived by the TRC as 'gross human violations' (which the TRC defines as: torture or extreme ill treatment, murder or its attempt and kidnapping or "disappearance" between March 1 1960 and May 11 1994) however, they were serious enough and were carried and continue to be embodied by many women who suffered this emotional, physical, and psychological torture. Not offering space to this embodied suffering renders women invisible and with no voice.

2.1.5 Speaking through silences

> I discovered the silences expressed by women telling their stories of loss and pain during the 1980s, were part of a deeply evocative language articulating women's embodied courage and consciousness of their precarious positions as mothers, wives and sisters of often absent men.
> (www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr_no24/memories_in_silence.pdf)

When we do not 'listen' to the silences we run the risk of missing out on the narratives of how people survived, and the various strategies they used for their survival. Many people had to find means to cope with the world they found themselves in. As articulated by Quesada (1998, p.51), "the stories of those who have endured and survived war, either directly or indirectly, are important because they illustrate how history and ideology, and social structures and geopolitics, collide to shape lived experiences". For many women who had sons, husbands, and brothers in exile, 'the underground', or prison, the constant fear of receiving news of their death was a continuous possibility/fear that they had to contend with.

2.2 In search of the alternative

> Post-apartheid South Africa is a country which is dedicated to creating a new national narrative, one which attempts to acknowledge the abuses of apartheid and, in so doing, to move beyond them… the TRC was created as a means for assisting South Africans to move from a position of rupture and trauma to one of rejuvenation, at the level of both the individual and the nation. (Andrews, 2007, p. 35)

As I have pointed above, the commission usually consists of formal settings, they represent the state and have specific intended outcome. There is somewhat a predetermination of what stories get told. The place/set-up of where the interviews take place are court-like settings, televised and are public which may lead to numerous restrictions in terms of what people can say. Often times there are police officers in uniform at the hearings (representing authority and power) and there is almost always a translator (which may 'alter' the original narrative). There is an 'official' language used at the proceedings. The setting of the commission offer space for performance, it could be viewed as a style of interviewing which is intended to elicit a particular type of information. In his report on the psychiatric aspects of the TRC, Stein (1998) asserts that "the relationship between the testifying victim and his or her listeners is itself crucial. Conversely, having to talk about the trauma to an unempathetic audience may result in secondary traumatization. The occasional attempts by the TRC to bring together perpetrators and victims "to seek reconciliation" may well be an overly optimistic strategy".

People who suffered various horrible atrocities such as the holocaust, apartheid and genocide do not only seek to be recognized but desire to be heard and offered compassion. Oliver (2004, p. 79) argues that "if recognition is conceived as being conferred on others by the dominant group, then it merely repeats the dynamic of hierarchies, privilege, and domination". Corry and Terre Blanche (2000) argue that "although statement-takers were trained to be

sensitive and sympathetic, the practice of recording statements on behalf of a state institution on a pre-designed format inevitably mimics the well-established practice of "statement-taking" which is the domain of the policeman, and silences the kinds of associations that may occur in a more informal or communal story-telling environment" (p.10). Popkin and Bhuta's (1999) assertion that "victims whose injuries are not acknowledged and whose dignity is not fully restored are unlikely to be reintegrated into society" is instructive in helping us understand the role that being silenced plays in people's redefinition of themselves after a long period of conflict.

By allowing space for people to express their feelings, we might get a deeper sense of the meanings attached to the loss and the possible implications thereof. As Lykes (1997, p. 727) points out, "the self-silencing within the population complements and reinforces the government's "official story", making it nearly impossible to recognize what is happening". As many people, more specifically women continue to suffer in silence, the 'illusion' that the past is forgotten and healing has taken place will continue to be the official story being told. Corry and Terre Blanche (2000) point to the importance of language as a way to express oneself, they argue that while "survivors were encouraged to give testimony in their first language with simultaneous translation to other languages, transcripts were made of the English translations only. Many of the finer nuances of what was said were no doubt thus lost in the English transcripts, a factor that should be taken into account in any reading of the transcripts". It is important to acknowledge the complexities involved in translating peoples' stories from one language to another. As pointed out by Ramirez-Esparza and Pennebaker (2006, p. 216), 'the task of creating a perfect translation seems to be insurmountable'. This notion is further supported by Lykes (1999) who argues that translation is more than just understanding words in

one language and rendering them in another. It involves complex understandings of how words are situated within and among social relations in a particular material context.

Several scholars have shown how narrations of extreme human rights violations leave many with an inability to speak about their felt pain and loss. Language fails us as it becomes inadequate to the task of conveying the experience of systematic degradations and humiliations. (www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr_no24/memories_in_silence.pdf). Language is the singular tool used to understand social phenomena and psychological inquiries. However, we need to acknowledge the limitations of the spoken and that there is more beyond language. We therefore need to constantly seek other forms of expression. The TRC relied on the spoken, verbal narratives of people's experiences not leaving room for other forms of telling.

2.3 Structured narratives of the TRC

In this chapter I highlighted the aim and role of the TRC. The structured nature in which narratives were told might have led to other people 'polishing' their stories to fit in the prescribed way in which the 'stage' was set up. One of the issues I aimed to point to was the gendered way in which the commission was set up, and how it took numerous inquiries for a separate women hearing to be put in place. The focus on a specific incident in history or in a person's life (gross human violation) might have somewhat limited the free flow of people's narrative. People had to tell their stories in a structured way, sitting in a formal setting that may have been intimidating to many. These are some of the issue that have been discussed elsewhere where the TRC was criticized for some of the ways in which it conducted the proceedings. The context of the TRC might have influenced the way in which the narratives were told, including the content of the

stories being shared. Because the ‘script’ said gross human violations, the witnesses/victims might have felt compelled to tell a story that fits the prescribed criteria, thereby putting aside the experiences that they might have otherwise shared.

Chapter 3

3.1 Embroidery as narrative

In the previous two chapters I highlighted the complex nature of how context plays a role in what stories people *choose* to tell. In this chapter I discuss how embroidery can enable people to tell their stories, and share their embodied experiences. I look at embroidery as narrative. Embroideries allow women to document their stories, pains, voices, struggles, subjectivities and dreams as they perceive them.

Ten women who are members of a community embroidery project in Gauteng South Africa were selected using a convenience sample and requested to make embroideries depicting their personal experiences of growing up during apartheid South Africa. There are a number of embroidery community projects in South Africa, and I decided to use this one as my sample due to easy access to the location, and personal contact and relationship already established with the project facilitators. I sought out women between the ages of forty five to seventy five years old as they were born and grew up during the apartheid period. The inclusion criteria: only women who have been part of the project for at least two years were included in the study because it was my belief that these women would have had sufficient embroidery skills that they will be able to use in creating their personal life stories. Below is their brief biographical data:

Name (Pseudonym)	**Age**	**Highest standard (grade) passed**	**Marital status**	**No. of years in project**
Lebo	55	Standard 5 (grade 7)	Married	3
Noluvuyo	60	Standard 10 (grade 12)	Widow	5

Nosipho	59	Standard 4 (grade 6)	Single	6
Zinzi	69	Standard 6 (grade 8)	Widow	3
Noluntu	58	Standard 5 (grade 7)	Married	4
Tselane	53	Standard 4 (grade 6)	Single	4
Thando	55	Standard 5 (grade 7)	Married	6
Nthati	54	Standard 8 (grade 10)	Married	9
Mmaneo	64	Standard 8 (grade 10)	Married	4
Keneilwe	52	Standard 10 (grade 12)	Widow	4

Table 1: Participants' brief biographical data

The questions I asked the women were: Could you tell me about your experiences of growing up in South Africa? What were some of the things you did to survive during the apartheid period? Could you tell me about your schooling experiences? How have things changed since the country's independence, and what are your thoughts about the future of the country and generations to come? These were used to guide the women prior to them working on their individual embroideries and only served as guidelines because I wanted the women to have the freedom to share what they deemed important and worth sharing about their experiences.

Ten pieces of materials were cut and put aside. After consultation with the ladies, they suggested that they will sketch/write their stories on pieces of paper before sketching on the actual material. This process took two weeks, and in the meantime I provided the women with various colored threads that they will each use for their embroideries. Throughout this process

the women sought direction from me and kept asking what type of stories would I like to hear. I did not want to lead them but at the same time wanted to be as clear as possible about the intention of my research project. They took three months to complete their embroideries, this allowed for working at own pace, and time. The time allowed them to reflect, remember and work in their own safe and comfortable spaces. They opened up their lives and allowed themselves to be vulnerable and expressed their emotions with me.

What follows are the results of the women's embroideries and their reflections on the artwork and experiences of growing up during apartheid. I provide here all the individual embroideries the women made and their responses to my broad question: Could you please talk me through your embroidery? In asking them about their embroideries, I spoke to the women one on one, after which another day was set where we had a group session which served as a reflection process for them. This was a way to allow space for the women to collectively speak about the journey of making the embroideries. In this reflection session the women spoke broadly about journeying back in to their past and how that links to the issues they are facing in the present. While they generally acknowledged the positive change that has taken place in the country, e.g. being able to own houses, and getting access to education, they were also quick to mention that many of the struggles are still continuing. I shall re-visit the women's reflections in-depth in the last chapter.

The women's responses were both in isiZulu and Sesotho and with their permission these were audio recorded. The recording was then transcribed and translated into English. It is crucial to note the complexities of translation as noted elsewhere. It is therefore my hope that the embroidered and spoken narratives combined will offer us a rich understanding of the women's lived experiences.

The women were interested to know who is going to read and have access to their stories. While at first they felt it might be difficult to re-visit their past which they describe as having been hard and painful, they were pleased that I was interested in their lives. In the number of meetings we had while they were busy with their embroideries, they shared how being part of this project was enabling them to open up to their children about their experiences of growing up under apartheid. They stressed the importance of not forgetting history and where we come from.

The results highlight the threads that bind and show connections between the women' stories. The results further demonstrate the importance of acknowledging the interconnections between the individual women's narratives, and how their experiences cannot be separated from those of their families and communities. Their narratives show how suffering is experienced at a social level.

This chapter provides the narratives as women describe them. I offer each narrative in its entirety as a way to give dignity to the women's experiences. Even though all the women's narratives offer a holistic and combination of various experiences of pain, disruption, damage, and various forms of surveillance, I have attempted here to put these narratives into three categorized sub-themes. In the next chapter I will offer the meta-themes that cut across all the women's narratives.

3.2 Disruption of family integration

While family may be perceived as private and personal, the women's narratives show how much of an illusion this perception is. Even though in their narratives all the women place themselves

within their individual family structures, Lebo, Noluvuyo, and Tselane use their families as central to their lived experiences. They interrogate and highlight the interconnectedness of domestic life and politics. They offer narratives of disintegration of families and how this flows and enters other aspects of life within and outside the home.

3.2.1 Lebo's narrative

It's that we....Ok My parents were... They were staying at Twatwa here... They were staying at the old location. Then in the..... They were divorced in.....and we stayed ...stayed with them and it became clear that they were not in good terms anymore. There are the children. They got divorced heh.... (a sigh) dad and mom. You see this is a heart, it is painful. They got divorced with my dad. Here is my father there. Can you see him? Ya, my dad is going this way, and my mom is

going that way. We were still at school in 1963. Ya We were still at school , and .....it became evident that now things were not moving forward properly, *The divorce of parents is not plea....sant* not so? I do not know whether parents know that by divorcing… of course they do quarrel, you know parents, there is this when you are a parent, people must understand that when you are a parent, they are quarrelling, *if they decide to divorce children are thrown into disarray*. You maybe can continue and do this or that but there are these people who are exposed to trouble. Mmm... So now you know Satan blinds that thought and you do not to see that there are people that I am going to get into trouble. Of course all over Puleng, where you get divorced children get into trouble. So even to us life was never plea...sant. Can you see that? Before you settle down your mother gets married to someone else not so? And your father gets another wife. This side you are not accepted, when you go that side you..... can you see such things, (are not accepted) even there. That kind of life is not pleasant. *And it was at that time, if you go this side if you whe....n, yesteryear when you went to visit this side, you must have a permit*. At night you were arrested. Just as you see what is written here. If you move from this end, and you by the way oh.....here is etwatwa not so, there is Daveyton not so. If you leave Daveyton because you are visiting here, on that very night you would be arrested. *No matter how old you are they will arrest you because they want the permit which allows you to sleep over, even if you were with your relative.*

The previous government was like that. Even during the day when you are walking, you were arrested if you were walking and did not carry your pass. *You must carry you ID here*, the one that was too long. Do you still remember it? You do not know it, your generation does not know the long one. Ok we were living that kind of life. A person's life is painful . I don't want to lie. A person's life is painful! Parents divorcing! My mother was divorced from my father. These are my 2 siblings boys and girls here. This is my eldest sister, I come after her. This is the eldest one I come after her etc etc. These are my siblings. So we went to school but we could not..... we did not attend properly. *We had wished to pursue education especially me*, let me talk about myself. I had really wished that I should get education, because education is something that is important in a person's life. It was discovered that that was not happening. And at that time, it was the time when there was no such thing as saying that you do not have School fees. And to us they said "we want Uniform". Why are you dressed like this? Eish It was not plea....sant Puleng. You know when you talk about this it.....it .....brings back painful things, really. You are bringing back painful.....they were painful, they were not plea.....sant. Hai it was not plea.....sant sisi, It was not pleasant, you know I can talk today , I can talk now. You know what, you did not know where else you can go to . As a child you did not know what to do. You see

that kind of life, where you do not know what you can do. You do not know what you have to do. It is not pleasant. I thank God because there was one thing that I was asking in my heart; that God should help me not to end up becoming a useless street person. This is what I want you to help me with. Yes it was difficult but I should not.... it cost me not to enjoy schooling. They do not understand you see, they cannot call you and help you, I am sure nowadays they do it. Yesteryear they would never call you and sit down with you. And ask you where you were having problems. You see? What is your problem? No there was no such thing, instead you were beaten up, being beaten because you do not have uniform. Where will I get uniform money? Heh! where will I get it? I do not have it, Must you be beaten? And live for that, that you are being beaten up or punished. I do not know. Er my class teacher was very corrupt. That person was very corrupt. He was still young. Corrupt in an extreme manner. He punished me. I could not go out for the break. I was supposed to stand on one foot like so. Until one whole hour, you do no to go and play, you do not buy tuck, in the scorching sun and like so...., until the other school children return from break. He would say, until you, until you, until you come with it. Until you find uniform. Where will I look for it? Heh! Where will I look for it? So corrupt! that teacher. Yoh.. so corrupt, corrupt Puleng. He would say..... . He would just out of the blue say... Ya, he was still young and I saw that his problem was that, he was still you.....ng. He had affairs with school children, even today there is still that problem. He would say, Ya! I want the girls to undress I want to examine them to find out whether they have dirt (on their bodies). Iyo! he would order us to undress in front of boys. He would say that boys are not to go out. And you would find the boys laughing. And it seemed he knew especially for me , it was as if I had to undress on the day, as if he could see or I do not know whether boys can see, if I a...m, am having my monthly menstrual period. So yesteryear there were no sanitary pads we did not have that. Yo! you would undress until you had only your panty on. You can see here mos..., it is bulging. And you have put on 2 panties. Boys would laugh and say this one, even on the streets, yes this one has 2 panties on. As if they do not know why 2 panties are worn. They would laugh. They were so entertained and we were then beaten up if your body had dirt, if it was not there, “go and sit down”. You see, so this thing was very hurtful to me, and I even told my mother at home. I said to her mama there was a problem at school. Our class teacher does this and that....and she (expressed shock) by saying Hhawu. She approached the Principal. A meeting was called. They sat him down and he was reprimanded. And after that he hated me so much Puleng! That is why you see other children keeping quiet and do not want to talk sometimes. My class teacher hated me so much. During the June examinations when I had written, he took my Afrikaans answer paper and tore it to pieces and

said that I failed, I did not sit for that examination. But sir, I wrote and you were there. I was there. He said not at all. You are being beaten because you failed. He beat me with a pipe here at the back, with a hose pipe. He hated me, he treated me badly. This end I have nothing, can you see that? At home you do not know what you are going to say. *My mother shame is working all by herself. She is responsible for us. This is a step father Puleng!* He is not involved at all. I also told you, not so (off the record), that he even killed one of my siblings. He is not involved at all. And from this end I need school requirements. This end you are beaten up when you are at school. Can you see that life was not pleasant? You do not know whether to go this end. It is not pleasant. If you go to this end it is not pleasant. So I finally decided to leave school. It is not helpful, hai ....what am I benefitting? Hmm. At school I am beaten up, at home there is nothing that they can help me with, my parents… my father is staying with his wife, he has no problem. It cost me to look for a job and work.

This is where I started looking for a job. Let me start looking and yesteryear, it was strict. You were not supposed to work whilst young. And there were hostels, it was not allow.....ed, allowed that people from the township could go and seek accommodation and stay there. They took people from outside, from Natal. You could not even go and rent. Can you see, to go and look for yourself and say let me go and re.....nt and live my own life maybe, you see, there is no one who could accept you. They would say no you are still young this and that. Can you see that kind of life? You have to persevere there under those circumstances. So we lived..... lived that kind of life, and my sister left school. The other children remained, to me it was children of my step father. *Yes my mother was divorced from my father with the 3 of us and she bore these, she bore more children.* They did not have that much of a problem. So then we were forced both of us, that noh we realised that no, I got a baby and was forced to go and stay with the in-laws. I went to live with the father of my child liking it or not. Can you see that life? Liking it or not, because it was not pleasant. So a chi.....ld, what will be the end of these children? Can you see? It is like that! You know others end up killing children, others abandon children. It is situations that are almost like these. And the person asks herself what she would do. And especially yesteryear, it was not times like these, where you can go anywhere, and people listen to you. The child was not known, as a child, no one would listen to you. Can you see that? There is no do....or in which you would enter, and people hear your voice. So I was forced to go and stay with the father of my chi..... .....father of my child. I am married now, but even then it was not pleasant Puleng. It was never pleasant sisi. You know what, to go and live with a boy who knows your background; he does not treat you well, he does anything even telling you that he does not beg you, you can go if you like. Can you see that? And you when you are sitting down thinking,

holding your baby this side and where are you going to go? You simply have to stay there. Can you see? Eyi it is painful sisi, I don't like it. I always tell my children and say eish! I pray to God that he helps you to get education, and be independent. Being independent nowadays its not like yesteryear. Some girls can be independent even though there is no one. You can be independent if you are a woman. Your independence does not depend on the father of your child or you do not become independent because you do have a boyfriend, or you do not become independent because you need to get married. You become independent all by yourself, because you are working. Yesteryear all these things were not there. So you must be independent. Live a right life, run away from evil. Because we come from it, and I always encourage them by saying ..... the question of divorce is very painful. For us it cost .....if I share with them, shame their hearts become painful. They become resentful. You know grandfather was corrupt. And I say you know what, forgive so and so, your mother, mommy also was not right. What did she say, noh even granny was not right. You see the children do.....no....do not understand this journey. I say to them, I pray to God that He helps you, not to do that thing, stay with your children. If you do not get married relax there.

We are still continuing we are trying although we did not get that chance of getting education. We are trying here, we are in this project. Things like that. You try what can you do? Life does not end here, that you were abandoned and now you must not do anything? Even you, who did not get education, there is something that you can do. Hmm … there is something that you can do, that you can sit down and do, not so? We need each other on earth. You are educated but you also need a person who is not educated. You cannot live with only educated people. The one who did not get educated has something that she can share with you and help you. Maybe even these things that we are talking about are helping you Puleng. You are still young not so, if you get married you learn Hmmm, that, can you see, ...My life is supposed to be like this. Can you see, Ok ...if your boyfriend makes you angry, you feel you need not beg him you simply part ways, and the children, the children what happens now. And they want daddy they want mommy. You can see that life after divorce is so painful. They want mommy they want daddy. They want mommy. If they are with mommy hey we miss daddy. They want mommy, if daddy comes we want mommy. And the new man does not allow that. Can you see that these children are having such a painful life? That is why we have programmes called Khumbul'ekhaya (television programme reuniting estranged/long lost family members). So much, even adults cry. We cry! It was never pleasant sisi! But we learnt from that experience, that we must not make those mistakes that we came across.....that we saw. And you must do well before your children, they must see from you. Can you see such things? They must not say that I saw my father I saw him abusing my mother. If we talk today

his heart becomes painful and he cries. He used to chase my mom at 12 mid night in the streets. It's my father he would say, "go away. I do not love you" Pack and go. And you would find us running behind mommy, as children. My mom would go to the Police Station….when she reaches the Police Station they would not open her case. They would say my father came and said, No I love this woman. I did not do anything to her. No the Police officers would say No, forget it lady, you are playing go back home. Can you see my mom was traumatised ? Can you see here,I have a scar here. There is a small scar that I have here. I am sure both my mom and dad have forgotten it. I have a small scar here. We were standing and my dad was that small distance away. We were standing next to mommy. My mom was carrying my other brother at the back. And I was standing near the side. And my sister is standing here. We are looking. They are shouting at each other they are fighting, uyabazi abantwana (you know children!). We were just standing. Daddy was hitting my mother with a vase. An old glass ...vase.. He was trying to hit my mother. I am sure my mother did this (ducked), and he hit me here. Ey my mother cried so much. He did not care. *Do you see who gets hurt, its children, yes things like that. It's not them that get hurt.* Them never, noh! The other one can get a man maybe live happily and forget, the other person can get a woman. But the people who get hurt are those who come from them. It shows that the bad thing that you do you must be careful that you do not hurt people behind. But from all this we thank God. Here we are still alive. He is good. But we are still learning there Puleng. We learnt, we learnt so many things sisi. We learnt a lot. Life is not pleasant.

We suffered a lot Puleng. Too much, Too much, Too much. We suffered too much. It brings back..... I even laugh, when my children are talking about granny with my grandchildren. My daughter it reopens sores do you see. Eh.....eh, something if you keep on digging, it reopens, it touches saying, if it were.... were, not for so and so, it would not be like this. Eyi you know something bad, ayi as if I do not like. But now I must not because it must m....make me strong not so, It builds (remembering), but you know what, it brings back sores, But ah...It was something that had to pass, I am sure it was time. Do you understand when I say, it is building me up, and it is teaching me to tell the next person he....he.... Life is still continuing, no..... not that life has ceased because of....., maybe when even another woman wants to get divorced with her husband .....I can encourage her that, there... there... there is still life. You must also not lose hope because Ok here you are abandoned. .....Maybe do not make a mistake, a mistake made by my parents, Because my parents d...id (*Excuse)* they rejected us. The step-father did not treat us well and my mother did not do anything even when he killed my brother. I said to you one day he tried to rape me (when we were conceptualizing making of embroideries), when I tried to tell them it was decided that, its me who

need to be chased away. If you are a parent you must not do such a thing. Believe what you are being told by the child. And I was not a child at that time. I had had a baby at that time. You see I will not tell lies. Can you see? So that family really broke my heart for not sending me to school. You see other children, you find out that other children, they end up on the streets and become nobodies. It is from such things. It was not pleasant, because the opportunity is still there, God being so good, we thank that He is still great here we are still alive and continuing with life. We also forgive and ask God to help us, so that when you are looking at those people, you are not reminded of that situation. Can you see such things? And say you see it is like this because of them but they are old shame, we met this week end. They were celebrating the wedding of my sister, one from our step mother, Ayi shame they are old now. Mmm... it is nice to do well Puleng, cos you can know that even tomorrow when they are talking about you, because when we are talking bad things about you, you feel that it is painful, it is bad when we talk about things that happened. We are thankful that it passed, it was painful but it passed life of yesteryear. You know if at school maybe they had right people, those who did not take you and throw you outside, at least, see that you have a need and sit you down and ask you to tell them what was bothering you. Because when we grew up you could not talk about family matters, to other people but at school they had a right. Is it not true that social workers or counselors can counsel you? They will sit down with you and ask you and say my child what is happening we want to help you. You see or maybe the child is afraid that they will tell their parents, maybe they will come and scold or chase them away just like my parents, they were like that. Can you see such things? So things like that were not there. It cost that you go and get married, without being ready for marriage. It is not pleasant in that marriage, which you enter into unprepared. Can you see such things? Even the spouse you cannot blame him. He was not ready. Can you see? He still wants to be free, he is still a boy. You have come to complicate his life now, Eh but you continue. But it helped because maybe he might have neglected his children. Now I have 6 children. I have 6 children, one passed away I am left with 5. I am staying with my children. No matter what I stayed with them, even now we are together. They are grown up now 4 boys and a girl. You see? So it is nice, they are at home with their parents. There is nothing like, mommy got divorced, can you see such a thing you keep on pointing out. We are together. There is peace now. It is not like that... we are all grow up. We will bring up our children; bring them up in that... manner we bring them up properly. It must be them that desert their family but keep on knowing that they have a home. There is nothing so painful like parents who chase away a child, Puleng if you chase a child away from home where do you want her to go. Number 1 you were unable to control her who will control her Hmm ...Ok let us say you are

> chasing away a girl child of about 16-18 years of age where do you want her to go. It means you are throwing her to go and..... Hm...You must guide the child and keep her at home, and it must be her decision to go, you see, because of her naughtiness..... But you at home should always welcome her. She must stay right here at home, not you to chase her away. Our step father could not stand the sight of us sisi. If you touch a cup he had used, he took it and broke it, its his. He would break it, the way he despised us. He would eat nice food and we did no.....t have any. Its only him who ate nice food, he made it for himself. He does not have children of our age, so he had to eat nicely and we do not eat nice food. If you say you need something it was said this was not your father, this is not your home. May I have some soap so that I can wash clothes mah. May I have some soap..... Ey go and ask your father. Hmm. It was never pleasant sisi but we thank God. After painful situations what is good will prevail. And something that did not teach...did not make you feel good makes you strong, so that you become strong and be firm and do not do similar things. You see?

Lebo (55) starts by inviting us into her family life, and immediately points to the complex nature of being a child of divorced parents. While she talks about her personal experience, she depersonalizes it thereby showing how the experience is not unique to her. The lack of freedom of movement as she describes: *when you went to visit this side, you must have a permit. At night you were arrested;* further complicated having to spend time with divorced parents living in different parts of town. By bringing in the issue of the permit, Lebo shows how her private family issues could not be separated from the public sphere of being constantly policed. She offers us a glimpse of the constant surveillance under which she lived while growing up.

Lebo used her embroidery as a point of reference, a trigger to memories and experiences she went through. For Lebo, the divorce of her parents was 'the root' of the challenges she was to encounter later in her life. Revisiting childhood memories seemed to have been difficult for Lebo as she persistently refers to it as painful. For her, childhood was a period of 'not knowing' and not getting assistance and guidance from the school left her feeling somewhat hopeless, even

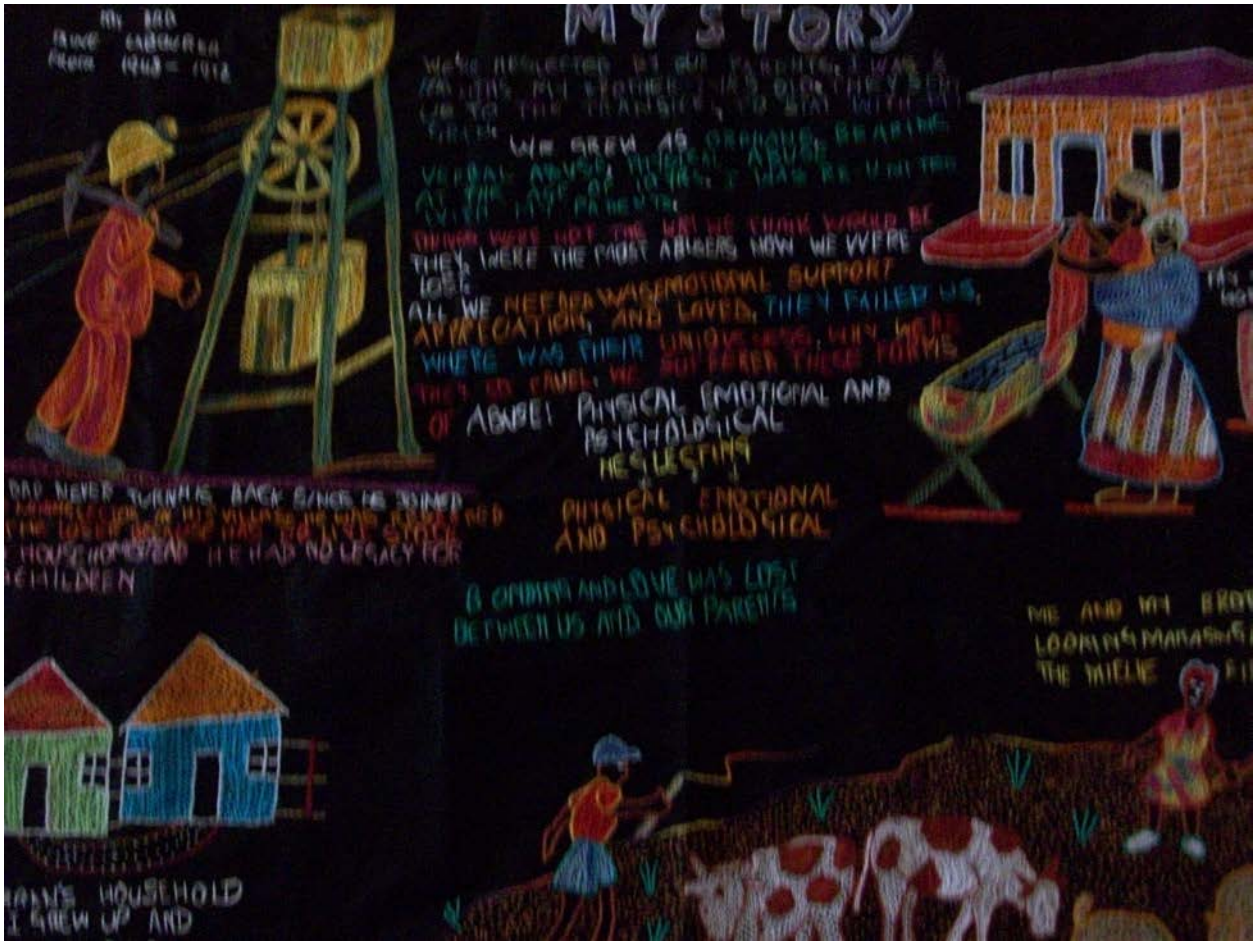
though she stresses the importance of trusting in God for making it through challenging times. Religion appears to have played and continues to play a crucial role in helping Lebo get through challenges she faces in her life. Her narrative centers around family and how she perceives it as the foundation of a person's life, at home, and in school. She perceives the disintegration of the family as caused by for example; divorce, as the basis of a difficult life for an individual. Looking back and coming to the present, Lebo perceives things as having improved due to the country being democratic. For her, people and specifically women had limited choices in the past, and in the present there are more opportunities available and everyone can be independent. Getting married at a young age was an escape Lebo felt she needed to have a stable life, even though she highlights the complexities of giving oneself to someone when they might not be ready to settle down. Being in this marriage she felt stuck and with no options.

Lebo blames external forces for her painful experiences. For her, the personal is intertwined with the political. She highlights how divorce opens up space for children to lose direction in life. A stable family with mother and father offers stability. Family dynamics are further complicated by parents getting married to other people and starting new families that children have to try and fit into. This disintegration of the family may lead to feelings of rejection, *they rejected us*. For her, the family is the foundation that determines the future. Lebo expresses pain caused by the apartheid system and family situation. She stresses that while remembering may re-open sores and is often painful, it also builds and sharing teaches the next person. She had hopes of getting educated; however with constant riots and unrest; she was unable to complete her schooling. Lebo brings in the issue of gender and how girls and boys were not treated equally at school, whereby girls were checked, punished and humiliated. She personalizes her experiences by using "you" but also shifts the focus to herself and uses "I". She

also uses “we” to highlight collective and shared struggles. She points to how in the past children were voiceless, as they would not be given space and opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings. By comparing the past to the present, Lebo shows how women now have space to stand on their own.

In her embroidery, Lebo puts the family on the foreground thereby highlighting how critical it is to her personal story. The placard with “my family” written on it is on the ground showing that the family has disintegrated. She uses arrows to show her parents going in different directions. Lebo represents her mother’s heart as outside of her, torn and falling to the ground with tears streaming down her face. In this way, her mother’s pain is externalized as she seems to be walking away from her children. Lebo and her siblings are left ‘in the middle’ of the divorce. She put the word PERMIT at the top center of her embroidery. The permit represented the police, the government, and the law that governed what happened in the townships, and further determined where people could and could not go. Lebo weaved it into her narrative to show how it cannot be separated from how families functioned. Her narrative highlights the complexities of family dynamics and how children are affected.

3.2.2 Noluvuyo's narrative



So, this is my story, *my father, left from the Eastern Cape, and went to the mines, and then he fetched my mother.* My mother had the first born already neh, a boy, and gave birth to me in Boksburg. So, because of the fact that *children were not allowed in the houses, houses of white people,* we had to live at the back yard of the white person, you cannot stay with children. My mother had the problem that, they did not have a house at the mine, although there were married quarters at the mine. *My father had to work for 5 years before qualifying for accommodation.* So that cost my mother to conceive me whilst living at the backyards. When I was 8 months old we had to go to my grandmother in the Eastern Cape. This is my mother, here at the backyard of the white person, she is carrying the white person's baby at her back. She is doing washing. Here is my father; he is going to work in the mine. I grew up there (pointing), with my brother; we grew up herding cattle at my grandmother's place and sheep. I was a shepherd, and my brother was herding cattle. Staying here with my grandmother, *we did not get the love, as we needed like that from ....from a mother and father.* My uncle was not

there, he was in Cape Town working. When he came back from Cape Town he discovered that his family had disintegrated. He did not have a family anymore; his wife had left him and took the children with her. Then we were supposed to live painfully from verbal abuse from my uncle who kept saying my father was useless, things like that. My father was living in the mines, he does not build a home, we were eating their food there, were being brought up by them. *He was treating us horribly. My uncle used to beat us, until my granny decided that no, she had to summon my mother to fetch us*. I was 10 years old at that time and my brother was 14. My mother and father had by that time gotten accommodation at the mine. They did not show love to us as our parents, instead they were abusing us more than my uncle. *You know what, my mother preferred going out in the morning, to go to her white employer to look after the white person's children.* We were like objects not knowing what, really what wrong with us, what had gone wrong, because these people are our parents. It seemed as if it was better where we came from. We grew up with that in mind. Mind you, this end we were abused verbally, physically, you know there was, that thing of harbouring pain inside. Emotionally you are not happy, it is not nice. Still you are getting it from your parents. And, from our parents we had believed that, they would appreciate us and give us love. You know what, that emotional support for when we were crying, to say you were living with hardship, but those things were not there anymore. So my impression was that we did not bond with them, they did not have love for us because I left them when I was 8 months, and returned when I was 10 years old. So there was no love there, because now there was a younger sibling. So now I also wanted my mother but my mother dismissed me because she was holding this baby.

This is my story. I understood that noh...apartheid harmed me by depriving me of my mother and my father. Even at the time of their death, you know, *I did not feel that deep grief of eish! I have lost my parents.* I just said Ah , they are gone so what. Because when I analyse the things that they were doing, the way they were treating us, they were the same as those. Now I had those questions that really who are my parents, actually? Even after they had passed away the pain that my mother has left me, my father has died was not there. I just felt Ag, it was over, it was over, I will just fend for myself, and we were just fending for ourselves. It means that is how my story ends. We went to school, I.....dropped out where, now it is Grade 10 now, at that time it was Form II neh. Yes I went to school, and continued schooling now through ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training). And…eh because I have accomplished many things like, this.....I mean HIV/AIDS, I came across these things that are so… just like this story of mine, like children who are traumatised by HIV, HIV orphans, do you see something like that. So, I have spent time with these children guiding them, you know

nurturing them like a parent. There are many in the community, those left and lost their re....latives because of HIV. It infects the child and I am affected, as a parent, so now I remain behind with orphans. These orphans ask what .....where is my mother? Where is my mother? So now I must deal with that, what happened from the beginning until now. Your mother fell ill and went to hospital ...she went to the hospital, and; there is a clever way of telling the child about death; that your mother has gone to Jesus. It becomes easy to convince the child that her mother has gone to Jesus. You see she will understand when she is older that Oh she died.

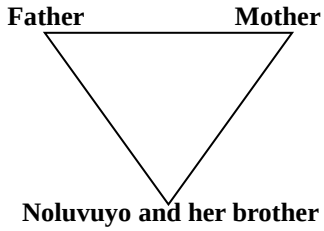
There was that ....hhea... (sigh)...., what I have written has made me, that even for my children, now I can be free to...., *I tell them because I was always keeping secrets*. You see now, it says I must tell them how I grew up, they must not see me like this. If I say that I do not like something like this, I really do not like. It's because, not that, maybe, one of them even said noh mama, because you have been abused, you want us also to be....., he says now I must move from the experience... of abuse from my parents, else I do it to them. I do not abuse, I guide them that life is like this. Eeh, I would not have lived, if maybe I did not go through this abuse. Others have passed away, not that maybe it was abuse, like others that I know, who did not experience the life of abuse, they were treated well, but most of them have passed away. They did not grow up to our age. I think about those I grew up with, like so and so has also died at a young age. Here we were still young growing up, here we were excited by what we are riding, (driven in beautiful cars) maybe going to groove (clubbing) in such and such a place and remain there clubbing, but I used to get nervous, and go back, and stay behind. So now for my children, I tell them that it is not helpful to say I was abused, and I must not abuse you. I am not abusing you, I talk to you, I experienced this problem, but it became better because I saw the way that will make me to go forward, the way that I am bringing you up. Ya! no that I abuse no, because I do not beat anybody, what I do is to tell the person.

Just like here my father was being ridiculed so much there, you can see. And obviously my father, what was happening to him suited him. The derogatory names that he was a looser because he has no home, he is staying in Johannesburg. *A person who is staying in Johannesburg must not neglect his original home, because his extended family is there.* And more especially we black people have clans, you see. So my father left his whole clan, and became another person here. Then came this name calling that my father was a looser, further is that my uncle, (eldest brother of my father) lived there (in the rural area). His sons came here to look for jobs. When they wanted to get married, they did not want to marry women from the rural areas, they wanted to marry women from here. They must go down (rural area) and get married there. Now the family

> was upset with my father because he used to conduct marriage negotiations for them (sons) They would say, “Uncle (i.e, my father), I saw a girl that I want to marry, here is the money please negotiate lobola for me" Now the older brother says those derogatory words. And so my father fell into that trap of being called a looser, because he does not have a home. And now that thing also made it unpleasant even to us as his children, ye.....s, because now we discriminate against one another. One is pulling this direction and the other one the opposite direction. The old ways of doing things is no more, in the past it used to be a large united extended family, you see. Family homes were close to one another, married sons living close to one another. Now everyone is minding his own business, and the other one is going that way, no one knows where he is. We are now unable to support each other when there is death in the family because maybe there is no money to travel or something like that. And further you think twice, and remember that you once had an argument. Maybe it will not be pleasant to meet there, because his children (cousins) dislike you. They do not accept you because you are someone like this. Your father did this to me, their grandfather did that, you understand things like that, so now we did not gel as a family and children.

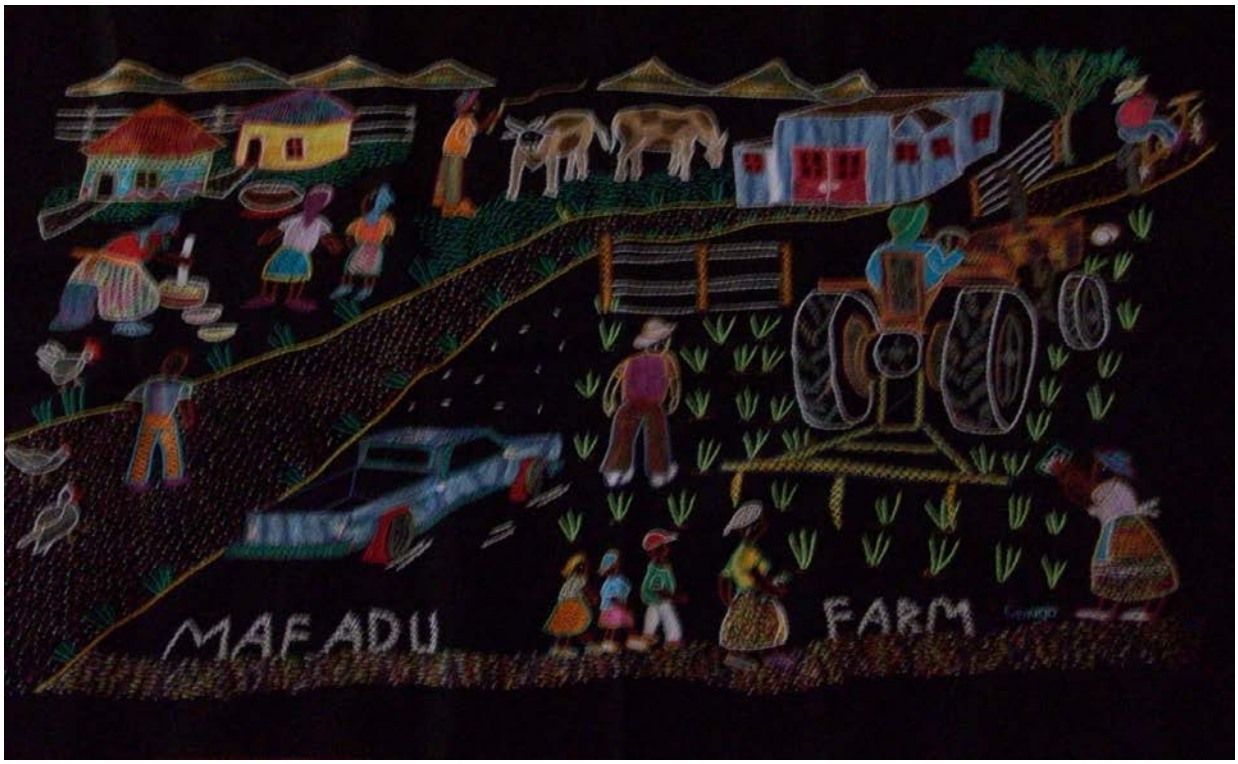
The theme of family disintegration continues in Noluvuyo’s (60) narrative as well. Her narrative centers on the issue of her parents being absent when she was a child, and having to be raised by her grandmother in the rural areas. She felt neglected and later became resentful as she believed to have been robbed of motherly love. Her reference to her mother looking after white people’s children highlights the longing of needing to be looked after by her mother. Noluvuyo blames the oppressive apartheid system for making her parents work far away from home. Because of restricted access to accommodation, she and her brother had to be sent to the rural areas. Having to live and work far away from home means neglecting one’s family and re-defining cultural values and norms, for example, Noluvuyo’s father was resented by his family as he could no longer follow required traditional procedures for things like weddings and funerals. The inability to be actively involved in family rituals meant losing connections and ties with the people that one is related to.

In her embroidery, Noluvuyo creates an imaginary triangle that represents her mother, father, brother, and herself.



In this representation one can see the distance and separation between the family members. It is in the empty spaces in between that Noluvuyo felt lack of love, abuse and neglect. She points to how she and her brother had to help with chores in the rural areas while their parents were in the city. Her mother carrying a baby on her back might be perceived as showing love and care for children of her employers while hers are far away from her. Her mother and father are facing each other and appear to be close to each other, even though they are each at their respective place of work at a distance from one another. Her father had to work for at least five years in the mines before he could be allowed to have his own accommodation, which meant her parents could only visit each other but not live together for five years. The laws were set up in a way that affected the harmony of the family. Making this embroidery has enabled her to share her childhood experiences with her children: *I tell them because I was always keeping secrets*. She now feels *free* to share.

3.2.3 Tselane's narrative



Ok, I will start here. It means eh...., my greatest problem was the problem you see, its.....*apartheid it traumatised us too much the.....the passes.* So here it is my mother, it's me, my sister, my brother, grandfather, and the cattle of the white person. This one, at the end is my father. Eh... it means here, we were living in the farm. My mother after getting married, we went and lived with my grandfather, not so; and as we were living in the farm, we were not enjoying it at all, because *my mother and my father, at the time of apartheid, the white person never allowed them to…. to live with their children*. If you were staying in the farm, you were all supposed to work there in the farm. No one must work in town. So my father did not want to work in the far.....farm, and we were supposed to hide, *the white person should never see us*. Can you see that? This white person, look, my father decided that he was going to leave us and went to town. Can you see him going out through..... ….he is just going away. We are left behind with my grandfather. And if this white person comes to the farm, here, every time the white person comes to the farm we all had to run away. He must not see us can you see that? *And my mother was traumatised because she has children, and there is no where ….where she can go to*. And then do you see here. Here the white person is sending GG, it was called GG during the period when we grew up. GG came to

search the house. They call the…. the municipality, I do not know how, to come and search the farm, to see who was there. Now it happened that....he found my mother. She was not supposed to be in that farm and she was hiding behind the door. This white person was searching the house. There is no room he…. he did not enter. And when he comes like this, on the road, and you run away the field is too wide even if you hide, but because he can see you, if you hide yourself, you could not run away. So he gave her notice and said, she must pack and go away from this farm. Can you see? *And my mother did not have anywhere to go. We were also there.. her three children. Where will she go to?* And here, she must pack and go. It is us....here. We are leaving, she is carrying her pass. Can you see? We are going to Thema in Springs.

And at Thema there, she....is going there to look for a place to stay. And…… and when she arrived there at Thema she had no place to stay. She is hiding. So she has been chased away from the farm, and she cannot go back to that white person, because you need a permit, for going to town. *This white person will not give her a place to stay.* We went to stay at Thema. When we arrived at Thema she went to look for a house. *She does not have a permit for obtaining accommodation.* Can you see that? So here she is carrying the red stamp. They stamped it and told her to go back where she came from. So where will she go with children? Can you see this pass it has a red stamp, you are not allowed in Springs. She is expected to go back where she came from, and to which home will she return to, and we are also growing up. When we grew up, we grew up in this manner.....this painful manner. *We sometimes lived with relatives*. And you are traumatized. Can you see that? So. The question of passes really hurt us big time, in our lives. Today things are better, now because you can go about as you please. Back then if you were from Springs, you were confined to *Springs*. You could not go out. Can you see? And we are growing up now. As we grow up we do not have a place to stay. If we go out to apply for passes where are we going to get them, especially me as the eldest? And that time I could not walk on the streets, I would be arrested. Even where I am staying, I am not staying nicely. *There were people called Besonia. They would wake you up, to count how many people are in the house?* Can you see that that life was painful? And the thing that was happening was that, …..we ……my father was going this way and my mother going that way, can you see that it was painful? *Because at the end the family is not built properly.* And if this father leaves, he cannot ……where he is staying separated from his family, he will do something else, not so? Can you see how painful it is? So this traumatised us too much, this thing…. the white person does not want us; we do not have a place to stay, and we left, my mother packed and went to Pretoria. *In Pretoria she looked for a place to stay and never got it until she passed away in '76.* She never had her own house. Because when she came to

Pretoria, they also told her other things in Hammanskraal. Can you see? Now she left with that painful heart. Children do not have a place to stay, we do not have passes, we do not have..... Can you see we..... *where do we belong? We are in between and if you leave your child in that problem she will stay with that problem.* Who will solve it because the only right person is the mother? This is the thing that traumatised us too much, that we did not have a place to stay, and my mother being traumatised until she departed from planet earth. She never had peace in her life time. Can you see that?

This is the thing that was painful, that, and living in the farms, having to look out for the white person. If you see the car you must run away. Go into the house. You hide you dare not go and play until he leaves then you go out, and his place is the fields. People are working. Now what can you do? At the end you leave and go and stay elsewhere. *Even that white person he sent policemen and we were arrested. They said PASS -we do not have it, PERMIT - we do not have it, so they put us in a van,* took us to eh...Springs to lock us in. We spent a night there and they ended up selling us to another white person the following day. They said go and work until they come from home to fetch you. They will pay for you so that you are released. *Yes you were sold to a white person, if you were arrested in those years or you were paid 10c right. They buy you there and pay for you and they pay you or give you a shilling or 05c that was right those times*. Do you see how hard life was? And this white person will make you work like her servant. She would make you work until night time just to exploit, “use" you. Can you see that? That thing was so painful.

Can you see that life was not pleasant at all? We went to school ....I went to school in Thema. Even there I dropped out in between because there was no way of going to school. Can you see that? How were you going to study? *And another thing, for education you need encouragement and have people and a suitable place for you to learn*. Now today you are staying here, the following day you are staying there. How are you going to study? Do you see the problem that we came across? The problem of apartheid is huge. I was looking upon the parent, that's why I put my mother here, because she was the one who was more traumatised; because children are hers and in future they were supposed to have a place to sleep. Where will she sleep with her children? My father left and went to leave at Thema. He was shifting from address to address. I do not know where he was staying. Can you see that? He stayed there and came to us when he felt like. Life continued like that. *That kind of life destroys the family*. At the end you see presently that people we…..re liv....living such a painful life. Black people could not stay with children, they were unable to stay with their children, and this destroyed the whole family. Because when my father lives there....do you think

that he would live all by himself? Maybe he was staying with a woman there just to get a place to stay. Ay it was not pleasant. And my grandfather was herding cattle, looking after the while person's cattle, so that he can have a place to stay.

Now what is most painful is the pass. You see the pass traumatised us, because you could not get work. If you work without a pass you will find that the white person will pay you a very meager wage. This is be...be...because you do not have a pass where will you report them? You would be arrested, if you reported her. They would say you do not have a permit to stay there, where is the pass that states that you live here. You are just .....working just to ... No it was painful. Now if you go to the office at Thema they would say what do you wa....nt? Go back where you come from. Where are you going to return to, you see that you are traumatised. Life is difficult. *Apartheid damaged us.* So it is important now because this generation does not know if you talk about apartheid what you are talking about. They do not know what we call freedom. It is known only to those who were there. They say children must not be disciplined, that we must not do anything to them, parents must leave them alone. They do not know where their parents come from with this... *You see with us when you talk about freedom we know what you are talking about*. Look freedom to them is to do bad things. Can you see that? So we know it, where it traumatized us, about where to stay and where to live. When you are asleep, when you are grown up, sleeping in your in-law's family, if there is a knock at night you wake and sit up, because you are going to be arrested. What do you want here? You are not supposed to be there, and they go in…., they go in at any time. They are looking for those people who are there illegally. Yah… that was the difficult part to us. No it is not pleasant to live a difficult life, and live with children. Looking for a place to stay with a heavy heart, and not get anything, until you depart from this earth with a heavy heart saying eish! I really struggled on earth. *Apartheid damaged us through passes! Hai! it hurt us. Hai! it separated families, it never built them.* It really hurt us, so this is my grandfather.....it is us. My grandfather is tending the white person's cattle. That one who is going outside is not concerned about farms, he is not concerned that he has children at least they must grow, he is also leaving. And going to ask for the pass from this white man, asking him to write a letter to get a pass, he will not, because you are not working for him. Because you were supposed to get the permit from that white person, to say may I have a pass he wi.....ll does not know where you come from.

So in my heart I told myself that I don't want my children to struggle. They did not go too far in their schooling, but a home, they must have. All the things that are needed when living in this world, they must have. You say we...they can go back in history. This thing of traumatisation, you can see my father also after the death

> of my mother, he did not look for accommodation until he died. He came and lived with me. *It seems this ties your mind, this apartheid*. It seems as if it tells you that you must....what can I say, problems are obvious....you were created to endure hardships. That is what people say, black people say that all the time, where is it not like that? Can you see that? Eh this is the li…fe it is not pleasant and this generation must be encouraged that they do well. Because you got freedom use it well. Do not use it in evil ways because it comes from afar with us. We did....there was no enjoyment. In the evening when the lights of a car fall on you, you are all afraid, all are seated down. You say my God here they come, and everybody even if it was just a visitor you cannot see. You are used to living a difficult life ...you are used to living a type of life that is difficult. They would take you and arrest you, having not done anything. They take you from home relaxing and lock you up. After that they sell you to Afrikaners in the farm. Yes 10c, when you are leaving they say take this 10c. You will see what you do with it. No punishment was heavy!

As a child Tselane (53) and her family had to live in hiding, with uncertainty all the time. Sharing a household with her grandparents gave no sense of permanency as they constantly had to be on the lookout. Her mother had to take care of the children by herself as her father disappeared into the city. Living in the farm meant lack of privacy and peace as the owner could just appear and begin to search people's houses and threaten them. Tselane's mother looked for alternatives to survive, and for her leaving the farm was a step towards a possible better life.

Tselane's narrative points to how problematic the issue of the permit was—the permit enabled people to secure employment and accommodation. It was however not easy to obtain the permits; securing and staying in town had to be approved by one's white employer 'owner' of the farm, and this approval was often not attained. The system was set up in such a way that black people's movement was always controlled. The fear of being arrested at any time delayed Tselane from obtaining a pass.

She brings in the issue of family and how hers was disintegrated due to her father leaving them to fend for themselves. She focuses on her mother's pain of trying to create a home for her children but failing as she is refused accommodation. Her mother died trying: *now she left with that painful heart*. Lack of a stable place they could call home meant no sense of belonging for Tselane: *Where do we belong? We are in between*. She continued to carry her mother's burden, *if you leave your child in that problem, she will stay in that problem.* She continues to be troubled by the fact that her mother never had peace as she was persistently trying to build a home for her children but 'failed'.

Tselane invites us to her experience with the law. Because she was fearful of walking the streets without a pass, she thought staying at the house would provide safety, however, as her narrative reveals; the police entered houses as well. Being unable to produce a pass or permit led to immediate arrest and sometimes being sold as 'slaves' to white people. Like many black people who grew up during apartheid, Tselane never completed her schooling. She sees apartheid as a source of the problem because it led to the instability within schools. She constantly goes back to referring to her mother's suffering. Her narrative draws a lot on the struggle she felt her mother went through. Her father's absence was painful for her as she felt it was destroying her sense of what family is.

Apartheid damaged us! With this statement Tselane does not single herself out, but highlights how others were also affected by apartheid. She expresses how it affected schooling, where people could work, and where they could live. For her freedom has dual meaning: freedom for those who endured oppression and those who were born into it. This she sees as affecting how children are reared as well. She perceives democracy as misunderstood where

children mistake discipline for abuse. She feels that freedom should be embraced but not misused as many suffered for its attainment.

In her embroidery, Tselane focuses on her childhood years in the farm. She does this to show the complexities of living 'illegally' on a white man's farm. She, her siblings, mother and father had to be in constant hiding as they did not want the farmer to know that they were living in his property. She places her father on a bicycle at the top corner of her embroidery, depicting him as leaving, almost exiting the embroidery/scene. Her father resisted being a laborer in the farm. Everyone in the embroidery seems to be busy with one task or another; they had to 'earn' their right to live on the farm.

3.3 Under constant surveillance and in hiding

Fear of being arrested, harassment by the police officials and lack of freedom of movement seem to be the themes that echo and weave together Thando, Nosipho, Zinzi, Nthati, and Mmaneo's narratives. Their narratives offer detailed descriptions of having to always be on the lookout. The constant gaze limited what they could do and where they could go. This can be seen in their embroideries and the descriptions thereof.

3.3.1 Thando's narrative

Here we are in the farms. I am from the farms actually. When I got back from the farms I found that things were really bad. Yes. Now I came here to Gauteng. We hired a taxi with my father and came here. This is the taxi that we came in. These are the offices where we arrived. When we got to the office we met with a policeman. *The policeman wanted a reference. That means a pass so that he can see my father is from Gauteng.* They found that I am not from Gauteng. Because of that he told us we did not qualify to be in Gauteng, we had better go back. *They threw us in the back of a police van*. When we got off we found many other people, we had now met with many others and we were going back home now, they had put stamps saying "back home" on our passes. We went back to the farm until we were included in the ID so that we could enter Gauteng. I arrived here in Gauteng in about 1987. That was when I qualified to live in Benoni. *We had gotten tired of the whites looking for us.... we could not attend school ... we had to carry contracts*. I lost my mother when I was still very young. I think I was about 11 years old. We were brought up by my father, and this made us to go and get a contract in the farms and the kitchens in order to help our father. My father had his own contract also, and we had our own in place of our mother. Then we thought it was better to go to Gauteng because we would find a new life, but then we did not qualify. We then came back. The situation was now right, because when we arrived here we rented a house. I rented a place with Sindane, I cannot remember their surname. I found the place from Sindane, then we got a place here

> in ... Twatwa, and then we came here to erect our shack in Twatwa. We also rented the place here in Twatwa. When we arrived there was a toyi toyi (protests) again, then we got a place in Maphuphong, now we got our own residences. *In 1990 it was when we were fighting for our stands, so that we could also own homes that belonged to us*, like we have them now. It became easier for me to find a job. Because I went to work in Springs in the kitchens, etcetera. I left because of my children. I was their mother; there is no other girl at home. It is just boys. That is what made me leave work, until I discovered this project and progress. Things have changed a lot. Because now I can do anything I want to do. *And I can buy a stand for my children so that if they are married they can leave my home*. Now my eldest child has already left home. He owns his own place. It is now nice to be alone again. There are no more problems. I was very grateful to be writing this story. I was grateful that my children will be able to see how I grew up. I laid the cloth down to show them.... that this is the cloth I used to carry my first born on my back. That is me and the child and the father there. You were not yet born that time. You were not here yet. I am very glad to have worked with you Puleng, I wish we can go on working together.

Thando (55) lost her mother at a young age, and this meant having to 'grow up fast' and taking the responsibility of helping out in the household. In her attempt to go to Gauteng in search for employment, she was turned back as she did not have the required reference papers. People were confined to their 'homes' and could only move freely to other parts of the country if they had passes that allowed traveling and settling in other towns. It was only after 1990 that Thando and other people were allowed to rent and own stands.

Thando's embroidery highlights the high visibility of the police and the constant surveillance they lived under. She shows how women were arrested with babies on their backs, how when arriving in the cities they had to 'announce' themselves and produce permits that show permission and right to be in the city. Thando points to the constant movement of people coming into the city, and others being chased out. A taxi full of luggage represents people's hope for a better life---the journey to town meant hope for many. However, the police van facing the

opposite direction shatters hopes for some as they got arrested and often sent back to rural areas where options are limited.

3.3.2 Nosipho's narrative

My life in the e…..'86. The way I was treated badly was too much. I came to Gauteng, from Natal, to look for work. It was the apartheid period in the 8.....6. I went to the kitchens (white neighbourhoods), to look for work whilst I was still walking marketing myself, there came a van, something that I will never forget in my life. There came a van from behind, it passed swift...ly until it came to a stop further dow....n. After stopping a white and a black policeperson walked towards me. They came to me. They did not even greet me. *They said "PASS" I was confused in my....mind by what was happening; because I did not know that a female ....is arrested having done nothing. They said "PASS" and I showed them*

my pass. They found that this pass is from Natal. They said "INSIDE go into the van". I went into the ca.....van, still confused in my mind about what was happening. They took me to the depot, in the office. When I came to the office, they said I must produce the pass. I took out the pass they opened it and when they saw that it was for a per....son who came from Natal, that was me....they took a st....and stamped it. *The stamp was saying go back to Natal, they said within 7 days.* You must not be around in 7 days time. No I came back. I …….went to Daveyton here in Gauteng where I was staying……, where I was staying, and went there. I reported this story and that I am going back; I did not find a job. My pass has been stamped. They said that if they found me because I have 7 days…….., if they found me whilst still here they were going to lock me up. *My mother organised some money for me to travel back to Natal where I was born.* My life, I will never forget it, the way I was traumatised. I then returned home where there are no jobs. My mother raised us under very trying conditions. Our father passed away. She was a person who was fond of toiling the soil. She was a person who ploughed the fields, and again, when the mielies were ripe, when it is ripe she picked it, carried it and sold it, so that we can have something to eat. My father was a person who kept cattle. His work was to tend his cattle, there were also chickens at home, yes, there was livestock, and chickens were there at home. *It was necessary for me to go back to Natal during the period of apartheid.* I saw that my life will not, rema.....in, I grew up in this manner, I must assist my parent. *After some time during this period they were fighting for peaceful co existence and for freedom. I reapplied for my pass,* and came back here, here ....Gauteng, when I came to seek for employment. Today we are having a good life, there is peaceful coexistence and we are not being a.....rrested, I am working very well now, we are not being arrested. I went to school; I did not do very well at school because at home we were not enjoying a good life, you know in the rural areas people struggle a lot. I only learnt to be able to recognise my name. That is not true education, it's just that I know the roads and that you cross here, and it is dangerous there. My progress never grew because my parents did not have means, to take care of my schooling. What has changed a lot in my life is that there is no apartheid now. Eh...you walk about as you will, you do not walk carrying fear, because during that period you walked about very scared because even though you were walking about, your heart was not right, because you knew very well that should a police van appear, you will definitely be arrested. Your pass, it showed that you are from Natal; we do not want a person from Natal here in Gauteng.

I was brought here (pointing), this is the police station, yes they brought, brought me to the police station Depot. After they have stam.....ped your pass, then you come out of the …….office.....a ...a police person said "go back where you come

> from". Go back to Natal. What I can say is that, in actual fact, *apartheid has not ended properly. It is still there, it has not ended properly*. Because when you are looking for work, even when you have found it, you can see that yes you have found it yes, in reality we are not co existing peacefully, when we.....have been fighting apartheid. You find even though ...you found a job, you are not paid in a manner that is equal to the amount of effort you have put when you are working, you work hard, you work but.....… still you are crying because those cents that you earn do not match the amount of effort put into your work, the work that you were given. Step by step it will come right. It calls for perseverance, and going forward, until after some time it becomes right. In the rural areas there is no opportunity to have money because there is no work. In rural areas there are no factories.

Nosipho (59) recalls her encounter with the law and memories of being arrested because she was where she was no supposed to be. For Nosipho living in the rural areas meant having less access to a better life, education and employment that could have led to her standing on her own two feet. Even though her family had cattle and poultry, and he mother an 'agriculturist', she felt that apartheid limited her success and that of her family. Nosipho was in constant fear of being arrested and this limited her movement. She feels that even though apartheid has officially ended, its legacy still endures as people are still not treated equally, and the rewards for one's work does not equal the effort put into the work done.

Nosipho's embroidery offers us an explicit representation of her perception of the country as divided/split, a place with clear borders. The rigid weaved-in line that separates Natal and Town highlights the notion of inclusion and exclusion. The passes and permits that were constantly required by the police was a constant reminder of their 'shaky' citizenship. In this embroidery Nosipho offers us and points to the complicated nature of what home is. By pointing her towards the direction of Natal, the police officer in this embroidery is giving her the message that the Town is not her home, and therefore she does not belong there.

3.3.3 Zinzi's narrative

Here I am at home, we are a family. *My father was not working and only my mother was working.* It is in the years 1951 to 1961. That was the time when I was still attending school. And then in 1976 there was Black Power! *During Black Power white people were killing blacks.* We were battling; *we could not travel without being asked for passes*. The second thing is that this is when I was attending school, only my mother was working. Right "good shot", this is Black Power, you see! And then from Benoni to Union Building, that was the time when our mothers were fighting against passes, and threw them at Union Building, Pretoria. Right. I was still attending school at Berlina White Bull School, in Berlina. I went to school there. Here I was standing at the school fence. Here it was the time when I was not attending school for a while. I [*inaudible*] was saying mama please give me money to go and look for a job also. My mother was going to work. Mama had stopped a taxi; you can see it, good shot. Then a policeman appeared – and a prison warder, I then ran away, and when I ran away I came and

stopped here. *When I stopped another policeman appeared, stopped me and asked for an ID, I gave him the ID.* I was watching as the boers were killing people. They were chasing them around. They were shooting at them here. I wanted to go home, and then I stopped here because I got scared when I saw people lying down dead, even school children. You see! I stopped and kept looking and wondering whether I could go forward or not because I was afraid of them. Here I was out of school and working. I did not finish school; I would be lying to you. *There was no one helping my mother with money at home*. My mother earned only R30. *My father was not working*. You see! Now here, you see I was pleading with my mother to give me some money so that I could go and look for a job and try to help her, and that was when the policeman appeared, I tried to run away and he said "stop", so I gave him my ID. Yah, but I was no longer at school, I was looking for a job. *That time the boers were giving us a hard time.* I did find a job through a friend, a girl that I went to school with. She found me a job in a restaurant. I used to peel potatoes to make chips. I earned very little money, almost nothing. Sometimes it would be 25 (cents), sometimes it would be 20 (cents). I use to take the left over chips in a plastic bag and take them home. When I got home, they would only have pap with nothing to eat it with. My father was not working, only my mother worked. It was very hard at that time I still remember. I did not have shoes at all. My tekkies were given to me by an Indian child of the people I worked for in my first job. When I started working, I went to the kitchens where a white woman here is saying to me "hier so, hier so" (here, here), I was now working for white people. *I was not allowed to wash my dish in the kitchen but only at the tap outside. My mug was a can, from a condensed milk container, they cut off the top and took out the milk and then gave it to me to use.* When I knocked off I would go home, when I came back on Monday to work I would find a dog playing with my plate or mug. When I asked the white woman why the dogs were playing with my plate, she would say dogs are just like you. I used to work very hard; they did not have a washing machine. They had something they called good boy. I had to take off dog hair from the couches, until I suffered from a long illness and went to Dr Malan. Hah! I worked for a long time there my child. I worked until I retired but the money was too little I will not lie to you. Even if you got to..... I worked for 26 years. They have grown up children that were born while I was still working there, Petro and Piet. If they can see me now you will hear them say, "Hier is Magogo" (here is granny).

We did not strike my child. There was no strike. It is because some children came running and jumped the fence, so the police did not ask any questions when they came in. *They did not even ask before shooting, and when the police came at night while you were sleeping they would kick in the door and ask for the boys.* Our last born was shot with that thing up there where that thing [*inaudible*] starts. They

did not ask anything. They just pulled him out with his T-shirt like this. When they reached the gate we just heard baaah! My father said what is that? Then we went out ... and Bafana was lying down. Even our neighbors can tell you. Just after leaving the house they shot him at the gate. *This bothered me very much that they shot my brother just here at our gate.* They just looked for boys. They said they were the ones that started the fighting. They said it started in Thembisa. They said it started in Thembisa. The boy from the house opposite our house escaped because he looked like a girl, he had his hair plated, and he looked like a girl. Then he mixed up with the big girls, and they said "here it is only girls". There was no way you could hear or ask what they were saying. We used to run hard. That time Mandela was still in jail. We only got rest in 1994 when Mandela got out of jail. It was only then that we got some peace. You see it was not possible to go back to school. It is now time to help the parents. They have changed a lot, really! They have. When Mandela came out of jail we only came to know then that.... the whole thing about IDs had disappeared. The second thing is that we were many at home and they [*inaudible*] would come knocking at our door asking for the pommet. *Even when I went to look for work, my mother was still paying for a pommet for me. They said we were lodgers.* We paid rent. My mother had to go to their offices to pay for pommets every month. That happened until we ran off to work in the kitchens.

It would have been better if they had made us slaves. Do you know what time we knocked off in the kitchens? Hey! Even over weekends we knocked off at 9pm. On Friday, you just had to know that it was 8 or 9pm that you would be knocking off. They would invite visitors, and they had taught me to cook. I had to cook everything with my head scarf on, because I am not supposed to shed off my hair. My head scarf was supposed to be tied, not just wear it loose. After the visitors had left she would say "bring that ... bread pan". You see those old type enamel plates; we used to eat off of them. Just wonder if you would eat that food. My butter, there was a margarine with a picture of a standing bird, it was salty. We used to eat the bread with it. Do you hear me? I was not supposed to touch the coffee or sugar. They used to give it to me. Whether it is enough or not it is the same. I would only get food if I collected leftovers when washing the dishes. Maybe, if some of them did not eat much. I would them put it in my bowl, and hide it beneath the sink. When I went out I would face forward so that they do not see me. I would be hiding the food with my overall, and then I would eat in my room. Another thing is about leave, I never went on leave. I do not even know where money for it went. You would go on leave and come back without any payment for that time. If anyone can say they were paid their leave money they would be lying.

> Yooh! we could not even go to church. *They were looking for boys, but now the girls had joined the struggle also. And they no longer cared between boys or girls. We hid under the priests' legs, and they did not care but continued beating up people.* They took some and took them in the gumbagumbas. It was the big police vans , sometimes the police or the "presoneas" would be there, in the mellow yellows, we even started a song saying "nantsi imellow yellow mama, uze ungakhali mama" (here comes the mellow yellow, don't cry mother). They started a song about the mellow yellow. My child when it came you had to clean your door step. Actually we started to clean from the door step whether it is raining or not. Do you hear me? If you finish before 3pm the wife would arrive at 5, before 3 I must have pots on the stove and then look for dust spots because when she came she would use her finger to check if there was any dust there, and if she finds it she would swear at me for the rest of the day. *We also had to take out bed pans. I have never had to take out my own mother's bed pan in my whole life, when she went to her grave, I has still not done it yet.*
>
> I have to thank you for consoling us "you wiped the tears off our faces", you washed off the tears. You are second to Mandela; I would say you are his assistant just like that man who is his deputy. Because when you did this you made us remember that time when the boers treated us badly. They treated us really bad my child. We could not go to their hospitals. And even at the bus stop we could not sit with them, and also at the waiting rooms. At the waiting room for the train, we used to sit as "blacks" and "whites". They made a cross on the black person to show that a black person is not wanted there. Today we thank Mandela for having gone to Robben Island for 27 years. We thank him. All those things have ended now. Even at the hospitals you are admitted to the same wards. We mix with them everywhere. Even in the taxis they ride with us. That is why I say Mr. Mandela is our savior. We can now see ourselves as people. Thank you my child. You have opened us up, we and our grandchildren also, we will tell them that this is what happened, and how it happened. Because we were still asleep. Now you have taken us out of Egypt, and showed us where the light is.

In her narrative, Zinzi (69) jumps constantly from one memory/experience to another. She highlights the constant fear they had to live under as the police instilled fear in their lives. Having her brother brutally shot was an example of the oppressive nature of the apartheid regime they lived under. For Zinzi, growing up during this period was tough as even their schooling was affected by the political riots. Witnessing people being shot was a regular occurrence that she

experienced while growing up. The police entered their houses, their private spaces became public as they could just kick the doors and search whenever they wanted. Zinzi and others in her family were lodgers in their own home and had to pay for *pommets* (the right to live in their property) every month. The sight of a police car meant they had to immediately go into hiding, instead of safety, security and protection; the police represented fear and death.

Dropping out of school meant Zinzi had to look for employment. She offers us the racial discrimination that she encountered and how she was treated as less than human by her white employers. The detailed way in which she narrates her experience shows how affected she was by it: *My mug was a can, from a condensed milk container, they cut off the top and took out the milk and then gave it to me to use. When I knocked off I would go home, when I came back on Monday to work I would find a dog playing with my plate or mug.*

Zinzi's embroidery is an invitation into the complex nature of having grown up in the 40s, 50s, and 60s. She takes us on a journey of oppression, resistance, and survival. She tells her story in a way that shows the interconnectedness of her experiences. She places some of the significant protests that happened in South Africa at the center of her narrative (1976 Black Power…student protests) and (1956 women's march).

3.3.4 Nthati's narrative

Ok, this story of mine is from when I was still here at home. We are in the rural areas, coming to the townships. *We come to the cities to look for jobs.* I am looking for a job. And they ask us for the dom passes. *The police persecuted us and asked for the dom pass*. They went everywhere looking for the dom passes. And if you did not have one they arrested you and locked you in the van, even when you had done nothing wrong. That was the life we lived. If you were travelling, maybe from here in Daveyton and going to White Ville, you are not allowed to go there. You must have one that side. I did not have one. Even if had a family on that side, you would find it difficult to cross. This photo is from my mother's family. My mother is married here. Here home is on the other side.... of the river. On Sundays I travelled fearfully, travelling by running. They would ask you for the dom pass. It was not nice. When you went to the kitchens to beg for food they gave it to you in condensed milk container tins. And when you looked for a job on the other side they asked for the dom-pass, and if you don't have it you are not allowed to be on that side. I am in Polokwane and I want to go to

town, the town is in Pietersburg, and I am from my village in Ha matlala. And they want us to go back home to Ha matlala because I do not belong in Pietersburg. But it is one place. It is just like Twatwa and Benoni. *We went there because it was our local town, but they still arrested us there in our town. They lock you up still with the baby on your back. You will go and sleep there with the baby*. One day they arrested us as a group walking around looking for work. We were walking without IDs. Our IDs were supposed to have a stamp from the chief. We were under a chief; the chiefs were still responsible for these things, and other things. *You therefore had to have a stamp saying that you are looking for a job in the city*. And that stamp had days set, sometimes you would not have renewed it. And your ID for that month then does not have a stamp. They arrested us and took us in the van, in that yellow hippo truck. We had to sleep there until our people came to look for us. I remember one day when my aunt had to come and release me. We were standing there. You know we all know each other in the villages. They went to report that I had been arrested. Some people had passes but they were simply just arrested and thrown in the van. So, some people went home to report that I and some other people have been arrested and taken to the cells, but we did not spend the night there. We sat there until our people came to release us. *We had not stolen anything, we did absolutely nothing. It was just because the ID was supposed to have a stamp at all times*. Ah, here it was worse. If you came to Johannesburg you had to have a relative living there. You could only visit. They told you that when you were in Johannesburg – and visiting someone here in Johannesburg, and the owners of the house were away at work – I had to lock myself inside the whole day, because if they came looking for the documents and not find them I would be in trouble. Remember I would be visiting and not yet have the documents allowing me to remain in Johannesburg so that I could have the right to stay in Johannesburg. You had to remain locked up in the house, if you had to go to the toilet you had to run quickly and come back to lock yourself in the house. You could not even go to the shops in town. *If you tried to go to town you would certainly be arrested.*

Back in Pietersburg, the day we were arrested they did not treat us badly because we were a group. We were not charged. You see things like that were not serious offences. You had to remain there where they brought you but they are also cells, and over there it is the toilets. They just throw you in there and lock you up. But there is no case, you did not do anything wrong. It is just because you did not have the dompass they wanted. In about 1980 – my child was born in 1979 – around 1980 there was a Congress and TC march, you see. At that time I was about 17 or 18 years of age. *There were 2 groups. Some wanted the old rule, and others wanted a new government, this one we have today*. It started as a minor thing, and ended up a big thing. People were killed, people's houses were burned.

We ran away. My father said I must run away with the children to another place at my grandmother's because these things were happening. That one was really serious. *When I arrived here it was during that time when children were being shot. That time they really killed the children*! I remember one time when there was a funeral for children that were killed. When they came back they were running all over the place, and there were shots being fired at them. Every week there were funerals. It was school children and children that no longer attend school. It was not just school children. That time I was a new bride. When people went out to protest I would stay behind with the children. I would look through the window, because I already knew what was going to happen. *Every day there were funerals.* When they came back running, and jumping over fences ... it must be that one has been shot. Therefore the following weekend they will be burying someone, etcetera. Yah! It was bad. It was only after Mandela was released that it became quieter. *I see that things have changed a lot because we can find jobs now*. We used to do these things but never got a cent for it. And also, they also meet the students half way, especially with food. Some get food because they go to bed with nothing to eat at their homes. Some of them will only reach matric, because not all of us will succeed to go further. And luckily the government will meet them half way to further their studies. Then the student can pay the balance. *Unlike me, I had also wanted to go to school. I wanted to become a teacher, but I could not.* Because at home we are many children and my father could only teach us for a number of years each. I still remember how I liked Math's. I could manage it. I passed Math's at school. So, I have failed.

Anyway I think.... I thank you for opening my thinking, and then maybe you refresh people's minds. I thank you for using something we had not thought about. Yah, it is remembering, and there are still others I did not write. When I was working, I was only still remembering some of them. This small piece was for the little story I wrote. You see! It is just making parts of a long story here. But otherwise you have made our minds to think back and remember what happened in the past. *We still remember. Yes, we still remember. We still remember how it was*. But we became strong as we are still alive today. That means you must accept everything. We are still independent. We never said to them these people treated us like this or that. We still love them even now. We did not like them during that time.

Nthati's (54) narrative connects to show the thread that links the women's experiences. The police instilled fear in people by arresting and throwing them in jail without formal charges.

Police officials exercised their power through arresting people and entering their private spaces. Nthati and others in her community put themselves in harm's way by intentionally going into the city without required documents. This for them was a form of resistance against the system that determined their movement.

My father said I must run away with the children: the sense of insecurity and not knowing kept people on edge and constantly thinking of ways to keep themselves safe. Nthati points to how often she had to witness, hear about, and attend funerals of children. Her repeated mention of children suffering shows how affected she must have been by it.

Even in their private spaces, people could be requested to show their passes. Nthati's embroidery shows how the law officials never acknowledged and respected boundaries. Number of people in the households and their right to be there was frequently checked. Parents had to make sure that they had permits for their children. This way people's movement (e.g. people visiting each other) was risky as they had no way of knowing where the police might appear from. Having grown up during apartheid was a painful experience for Nthati, and she compares that to the way things are in the present.

3.3.5 Mmaneo's narrative

We were staying with my grandmother in Natal, and my grandfather passed away. My uncles then said we must go to our mother, so our mother picked us up from Natal. We went to where my mother was working as a domestic worker here (points). So when we reached that place, that lady there, my mother's madam, she said, no, *we don't want blacks to come and stay with us*, so we had to move to Etwatwa, to go and get a place there, because my mother was a domestic worker staying there. So she had to move, and look for a place for us. So we went to Etwatwa and stayed there. It was in 1957. So as we were staying in Etwatwa, in 1967…'68, I had a child. I had to look for work, so I went to Boksburg and looked for work. *I was arrested in Boksburg, because you were not supposed to be in Boksburg. You must have a permit to be there, so I was arrested.* They took my ID, and put me in a van. I went to Boksburg police station. They had to call my mama to come and fetch me, because somebody must come and release you. That is my story; you were not supposed to be in Boksburg when you are from Benoni. If you are in Benoni, you work in Benoni, you get a permit to go to Boksburg. Even in Brakpan, you couldn't go to Brakpan and work there, as you are staying in Benoni. Wherever you go, if it's not your area, you must have a permit. So I didn't have a permit, because I know there were factories there, and then it was

easy for me to get work. So when I went there, to Boksburg in 1968 I was arrested. I came back to Benoni and looked for work in Benoni. It's where I got work, from Benoni. Yes. It was difficult, because I was staying with my cousin, and she was from Natal. During the day, there were some policemen, looking for people who haven't got the IDs. So they will knock, and when you say, come in, they will come and say, let's see your ID. You show them your ID. The person who hasn't got ID, will then be arrested. Or you give them R10, and then they will leave you. What happened, I said to my cousin, no, let me take a permit and write your name on the permit, and then let's go to Home Affairs and see if you can't get ID. *We went to Home Affairs and applied for ID. She got the ID. They were so stupid, because I wrote that name there. They couldn't ask me, who wrote the name there?* But because there was some spaces for the girls, one side boys, one side…the permit, it's got my mother's name, my father's name. In the bottom, there is space for boys and girls. The children, yes. So I wrote her name there, Thulile, and then we went to Home Affairs, *we applied for ID, even now, she got married with my surname*. We all grew up together in Natal. When we came to Johannesburg, she also moved to her mother's place. Her mother was working at Kensington, so she couldn't get a house. After she got the ID, from this side, she said, no, I want to go and look for a place in Johannesburg. I said to her, let's go to Naledi, because they were building houses that side. We went to Town Council of Naledi, and we said, we want a house. You know, she got a house. That house has got her name. They were so stupid somewhere, and they were so clever somewhere, because we went there, she is from Benoni with the ID, but we got the house there. She's got a house in Naledi. And the mother moved from the…from Kensington, to go and stay in that house, after we try our luck, it's… if you are from Natal, they find you on the street, they arrest you, and they stamp your ID that you've got it from somewhere, because you couldn't use your same name, you've got no house or somebody you know this side, you'll ask somebody, like my cousin, the other one, she's not using her surname, because she came to Johannesburg looking for work. She got somebody and said…that person said, no, let me write your name, as I did to my cousin, and then they are not… *Some of the people, in Benoni, or in the whole of South Africa, they are not using their original surnames, because it was very difficult for somebody who's from the rural area to come and get the permit, so the one who came before you, he is going to give you his surname, and then the address, and that is when you will get the ID.* After getting that ID, you qualify to be there. I went…I went to Wena's Shoe Store, and then somebody said no, there's better money at Handler. I went back to Boksburg again, and then it was easy that time, because now they couldn't…they didn't ask for the permits and all that, so it was changed from nowhere.

It was 1971. So I went there, and worked there. From there, I said, no, man, let me go to Clover. Clover, has got better… You see, you go for the better money. I went to Clover, and worked there as a clerk, filing clerk, and so I retired in 1990 at Clover. It was Hazeldene and later changed to Clover. The riots started in 1967, when there were some riots. Otherwise there was nothing else. Actually, in Benoni, it's quiet. Benoni, people of Benoni are very quiet. If they say the rent, is going up, you will be caught by yourself if you resist. Nobody is going to help you in Benoni. If the bus fare goes up, you'll say, no, I'm not taking this bus, because it's expensive. I will walk. You will walk for a few days, and then the next day, you come back to the bus again. If they say there is going to be electricity, nobody fights in Benoni. Like now, we can't get some taxis to…from Daveyton to here, you must go to Daveyton mall, and then you'll get a taxi to here. During the day, you can't get a taxi here. You must walk to Caltex, because they say no taxis must pick up people here. See, Benoni's are quiet. It's not like Soweto, when they say, we boycott this, we boycott, like, they boycott the electricity. We didn't boycott. If they said the rent, is going up, it goes up. We pay. That's Benoni life. There was no Apartheid in Benoni. It was in Boks…Brakpan and Boksburg. So people of Benoni, I don't know, how we are. There was no Apartheid. In the shop, we used to go to any shop and buy whatever you want. But in Brakpan, there were shops that you cannot go in, as a black person. *In Boksburg, there were shops that you cannot go in as a Black person.* In Witbank, when you go to that place, you must have a permit. In Benoni, we had a good mayor, Nelstadt, because it was the only…the only township that had electricity. In the other townships, they were using candles, but Benoni…Daveyton has got…Benoni and Daveyton and Etwatwa, White River, we've got tarred roads, electricity, water, and sewerage. It was a beautiful township, so that's why in Benoni, there was Apartheid, but not like the other townships. Benoni and Springs was the best...

The colours I've used, I've used the bright colours, because it must tell the story. You must see the story. It must [unclear] to you, actually, and say why are you doing this, house so big? This (white) lady was staying in a big house. There were some small houses next to her. It's like a flat here, where she was staying, so *I used the bright colour so that you can see the differences between houses, and differences between people*. Even the colour of this police van, it's a yellow colour, because they used the bright colours, yellow and blue. When you see that yellow and blue, you know, this is a police car. You must run. You don't have to wait, because once you wait, you will be arrested and put in the van. *What I didn't like about Apartheid, it kills us somewhere, because if it wasn't this Apartheid, we could have gone far*. Now, Apartheid is gone, this new South Africa, is killing our children now. It's doing it because there's some shebeens in the townships, there's

some drugs selling about…our people are selling drugs to our children. Our people are abusing the children. *They…there's…now there's Apartheid. Now there's Apartheid, because nobody is saying anything to anybody.* Everything must be done the way they want to, not knowing that they are killing our children. Before, when we…when I was growing up, when we came to Etwatwa, my mother was staying at…in town, so she moved with us to Etwatwa, where we stayed. She said, no, man, what I'm earning here, is little. Let me go and do something. She went to buy liquor. I remember that day. She was also arrested, because you couldn't go to the bottle store and buy liquor, as you are black. When you buy liquor, it seems as if there were people standing outside and watching who is going in, and who is going out. We heard a message that she was arrested. My father had to go there, and go and pay the fine, and they will take that beer. It wasn't even a beer; it was a straight…a brandy, bottle of brandy. She was arrested for that. When you make umqombothi (home brewed traditional beer), like they used to make umqombothi, the other one, with yeast, we had to dig a hole in the yard, and put that thing underground. And put a tyre on top, and put some little bit of soil on top, so that when the police came in, they shouldn't get that beer, because you will be arrested for selling beer. It was terrible during Apartheid. When we moved from Benoni to Daveyton, because we were lodging there in Benoni, we were paying rent, it was somebody's house, so they say, no, everybody must apply for a house. My mama applied for a house, so we got a house here in Daveyton. We moved in 1957 and came to Daveyton. When my uncle came from Soweto to Daveyton, you know, it's about from here to [points]. It's far, you know, I don't know how many kilometres to Daveyton police station. My mother will say, no, let me go and report to the police that my brother is here. I said, why are you reporting that? She said, no, the neighbours will see, and they will go and report that I've got a visitor. I said to my mum, you are not going there. You are not going to report this thing, because nobody is going to go to the police station and report somebody's…people are busy. It's weekend. They are busy with their own thing. *You know who cancelled that thing? It's me, at my mother's place. Even the other people, they say, now, why should we go?* Because I'm staying in Escort, and the police station, is at the entrance of Daveyton. I must go and report. How did…how did they know, because that person came with a train, and took a taxi to my place? How did they know that I've got a visitor? It's when the people of Daveyton stopped to report to the police that they have got a visitor. There were spies... They would report other people. So the people, they just, that thing just disappeared. Nobody went to the… Even the…we used to call them amabisenia because they were not really policemen, they were working under the police, they just disappeared. They took them back to police station and said, okay, we are going to make you reserves. From reserve they were… What

> they call it? Register…what? If you want to work…if you work there, at the place, they register you. Yes, to be one of them, so that you can get a salary. Yes, they took them in, now. They closed that office, now, so those people became part of the South African Police. But they were reserved there, from reserve they became full policemen.

Mmaneo's (64) narrative centres on notions of home, suspicion, and the legal system. For her, apartheid can be applied broadly to issues of oppression but also of not caring for each other. When telling her story she moves back and forth between the past and the present thereby showing how time periods cannot be looked at and understood in isolation. She starts by inviting us into her family dynamics where she was 'forced' out of her grandmother's house by her uncle. Her siblings are 'present' in her narrative even though she does refer to them directly.

Mmaneo introduces the issue of race as it relates to where people are allowed to live. Her mother was allowed to live in the white neighbourhood only because she was working there, and upon the arrival of her children she had to move to the township. The complex nature of gaining access to living space was further complicated by the permit system. Mmaneo's narrative highlights the thorny nature of township life, from access to resources and community members mistrusting each other. She also brings in the flawed legal system within which they lived, and this she illustrates with an example, *What happened, I said to my cousin, no, let me take a permit and write your name on the permit, and then let's go to Home Affairs and see if you can't get ID. We went to Home Affairs and applied for ID. She got the ID.* Here Mmaneo highlights one of the flaws and also the corrupt way in which some of the officials operated.

In connecting the past to the present, Mmaneo compares some of the challenges she and others face in the present with what was happening in the past. For her, the involvement of

children in drugs and alcohol is a form of apartheid. This apartheid she perceives as an entrapment that halts children's academic success. This issue of alcohol she also links to her mother's operating of a shebeen as an alternative to being a domestic worker. Her mother's business was however under constant threat due to the apartheid system that did not allow people to sell alcohol without a licence. The constant raid by the police made it difficult for her mother and other shebeen owners to operate freely.

Mmaneo's embroidery is very personal in nature as she spreads her various life experiences in different spaces of her artwork. She highlights the struggles she came across, those of being chased away by her mother's employer and getting arrested by the police. The theme that seems to be central in her embroidery is that of being on the move, in search for stability. The embroidery is populated with female figures, with the policeman being the only male figure that is quite visible, and he represents authority, the system and power as can be seen in how he is pushing the woman into the back of the police van.

3.4 Resistance

Highlighted in their narratives, Noluntu and Keneilwe point to the various ways in which community members and school children took to the streets to fight for freedom. Their narratives show how many lives were lost in the struggle for liberation. Their embroideries are an invitation into their lives as they experienced and lived it during apartheid. Described in their narratives is how resisting was always risking one's life and the lives those of those around you.

3.4.1 Noluntu's narrative

Oh something that made me feel bad, at Daveyton in 1984 Eh there was....eh… *"wake up if you are asleep", so... it meant they were fighting, waking people up.* Eh…. they woke people up, so it was fighting. PAC, it was PAC and ANC, they were fighting. So now, PAC was fighting, wanting the name..., that ANC was calling …... They must not .....must no agree that the Afrikaner must meet with them, and then ANC wanted to meet with the Afrikaner eh.... So now they were fighting over that. *We could not sleep at night. You had to wake up, wake up.* It was very painful, because many people got hurt there, there was shooting the Afrikaners were shooting with tear gas, people were....children were outside all the time, Eh... Mmm.....*we were not able to sleep, there was no peace and Afrikaner soldiers were chasing children, police were chasing children*, eh and also pol....police if they are chasing children (points to the embroidery) some children there, died, *it was very painful, during that period of apartheid, that is why I detested, life with the Afrikaners so much, because it was life that did not treat.....treat us well.* We had difficulty in life that we were undergoing, and it

turned into us fighting amongst ourselves because of them. These are soldiers not so, at Daveyton, Eh….its at Dungeni Mongi here, so, these are police or they a....re soldiers there, people were burning tires, they were burning tires. That we did not want because....we did not want; they did not want police to go near, they were burning tires, and then teargas all that is here... *I was there toytoying eh, It was really painful, you know*. At that time,....children especially were the ones, who were being arrested, older people were not arrested most of the time, because I was a bit older, I was not arrested. *People who were mostly arrested here were children, children were being arrested, and even the death of children, its children who were dying.* And us when on our way from town, we were being forcibly told to get out of our taxis, they told us to get off, get off, when you are still looking for.....your grocery which is lost. Getting off from taxis and being told that we are going to a funeral. They liked to tell us to go to the cemeteries, and we had to go to the graveyards. Offloading al....l of you from that taxi. Even that taxi was directed to go to the graveyard. Hmm... it was like that, if that ….. that was a taxi that you were in. You knew very well that if you see a group of children standing; know that that taxi will be redirected. It was worse with buses, it was.....extremely painful. In fact it was because, people who were there were young children, and those children, we as adults were supposed to obey. Hmm it was a painful life do you know eh... We were living a very painful life.

You know I remember one day, they entered the taxi. Certain young adults got in; young adults well dressed in suits. They were carrying papers, carrying briefcases; if you look at them you would think that they are pastors, and they were not pastors. You know when they came, they tore all newspapers, they tore every Sowetan in the taxi...., all copies of the Sowetan, they tore. If you assess what they wanted it seemed as if they wanted the Citizen and the Star only. That is one of the papers that they did not want to see, they would pull it, and tear it to pieces. When they got out, they said, we do not know why you children, and you who do not have grade 12 are not going to school, why are you toytoying, because we want those, by right we want people with grade 12. *It was painful man you know. It was painful, really painful you know at that period*. We were living a very painful life, you know because you could not allow your child to go out to the street. In the streets, *you would dare not go into the streets and allow children go and play, in the streets because if you go out to the streets, the next person would think that you are a spy*. You are going to report them, and the next one feels you are going to report them. You had to remain at home, stay there at home, all of you. There was no mutual trust. Or you wake up in the morning and are told that it was a stayaway. If you were supposed to go, in that stayaway you dare not go to work all of you neh. And other people are poor you see that, they are poor, you do not want to, you want to get some food, they will injure you. If they find you

on the way, they will cut your ear, your ear does not listen, it does not listen. You end up without an ear. The life that we were living was life that was painful in Daveyton, you know it was painful. We found that we were fighting amongst ourselves, but if the Afrikaner finds you as well, and the police if they find you, and soldiers if they find you, know that you are a dead person. They do not select according to political affiliation because they do not know what was happening in your case. It meant truly speaking we are 3 groups. This end you are scared of policemen, this end you are scared of a human being. Can you see this thing? Mmm it ended when Mandela came in. Mmm....when, during the period at the beginning when Mad...Mandela came out of prison there was peace. Things began to change, Eh began to change. If you look properly, they changed in the place of passes. You see with passes, they began to change sisi.... If you look now whether during that time, that period, what was more important was work, work opportunities were in abundance, but now when you look, you look, you can see that, there is no work nowadays, But yes many things if you look carefully there are changes, even though not all has changed but there are areas where there is change, if you look carefully freedom has arrived, eh because we are now able, *even maybe if we go to a hospital, by the way, during that period when you arrive at a hospital we black people should use a side entrance, even doctors, even to doctors, you could not simply go in, to see a doctor, you would use the side for black people there was also a side for white people.* So, those sides you were supposed as a black person to know them. Black people were not given the same treatment and prescription. *If they gave you medication, your medicine, and the white person's medicine was not the same.* You were going to return several times eh, they were those that you were told were special, these are not available, they are for Boss and Madam, they are special. Because for yours you knew very well that you will keep on coming back, go and come back, you will keep on coming back, Hmm…. Our life was like that. Even in hospitals it was like that, in shops, in shops, it was like that. *Even in shops you were not going to enter where the white person enters. Yes they would tell you to go to the other side where only black people enter. Here it's only the white person.* And you black person, even at work you knew very well that you were a real slave, because when you arrive you have to carry your pass. You do not travel without carrying your pass. That was painful. *You will carry the pass, when you arrive some other time you would be arrested with that pass, because the pass must have a special for that pass*. There was a stamp with which they stamped passes, called special. That special was needed. If you do not have it, noh it means you are not a person from that area, where they found you. Otherwise you are not working or you cannot work there, they were like that. *Having to recall these things has helped me, but it did not feel good. It helped me, you see?* I recalled past experiences and they were

> making me feel pain. They made me feel pain, those things, so that is why it did not feel pleasant, when I was writing this; it was not something pleasant, looking back. *You know when you are writing things like these, you go back memory lane, your memories change, you go back in thoughts. And there are many relatives that died then. Eyi! when you were recalling and reminding yourself things like these yo! By the way so and so died during that time.* Oh my God, especially here at Dungeni Mongi a woman was cleaning windows and they just shot her there, They shot her cleaning windows. You see those are painful memories. Mmm.....but I feel as if, it is helpful to go there and remind yourself. No it is helpful to go forward, Because what is past brings memories all the time to go back. Now as we see and also are saying if you focus on the past there was a lot of trauma. But, it is better, better, many things, many when you assess them they are much better.

For Noluntu (58), the battle was for everyone and all were expected to get involved. People had to *wake up* and fight for freedom. This was a *very painful* period to live in. She points to how children were caught up in the middle of the riots leading to the death of many of them. Some ended in police custody which meant disturbance of their schooling. All these experiences Noluntu perceives to be painful: *It was painful man you know. It was painful, really painful you know at that period. We were living a very painful life*. She highlights the complexities of having multiple political parties in the townships fighting for the same cause as the tactics and strategies used usually differed. She gives an example of the ANC (African National Congress) wanting to negotiate with the Afrikaners and the PAC (Pan African Congress) refusing to negotiate. She points to how these disagreements usually led to in-fighting. This was something welcomed by the apartheid regime as they supported black people fighting among themselves. For Noluntu, this was a period of uncertainty where *life was painful* with people having *no mutual trust*. For her, change for the better started to happen when Mandela was released from prison.

Noluntu's embroidery depicts the unrest that was constantly taking place during apartheid. She highlights community members representing various political movements marching. The community is under police surveillance, but the people do not seem to be deterred. There is continuous movement, which might appear to be chaotic with tires being burnt. This is an example of people fighting back, resisting, and attempting to have their voices heard.

3.4.2 Keneilwe's narrative

It was June 16 and I was at school, at Ladies College. *During the time of the riots, we were fighting for freedom from Bantu education.* We did not want Bantu education. They wanted us to study Math's in Afrikaans, Physics in Afrikaans,

Geography in Afrikaans and it was difficult. And the sisters who taught us came from Belgium. They were not educated. They learnt the subjects at night and then in the morning they just came and gave us the answers, for subjects such as Math's. It was hard because after school we have to sit with those that understood Math's. They would be the ones who assisted us. But even though things were like that the results of All Ladies were good… *So, in June it was when the riots started, we know what June 16 is all about*. Students went out of the classrooms, they broke property, and did anything they wanted.... *and were running all over the place, and here the soldiers came out shooting at the children. They shot some dead, and some were critically wounded.* We experienced there how a person that has been shot is like, because we would go there and look. Sometimes it would be a colleague of yours. *You can imagine seeing your colleague lying in a pool of blood, covered with blood*. That time he/she is dead. Some would be lucky, and we carried them to school. There was a hospital, and then they would get treatment. *Wherever there was a school there was June 16*. Because Afrikaans was not used in Soweto schools only, *Bantu education was not only in Soweto, it was there in each and every school, everywhere in the country, it was the same thing.* So, here they were burning tires, and jumping fences, you can imagine. After this day we left the following day. Because at that time the soldiers were shooting just anyone and we therefore had to escape, we went our different ways. We went past stands until we reached the river. When we reached the river we noticed that the soldiers were following us. They threw tear gas. If you inhale teargas you collapse. Luckily we got to the river and covered ourselves in water. We spent the whole night in the river; we slept there until the following morning when we went back to school. The principal then called us and told us to go home. "We will inform you when to come back". We stayed at home for June, July, August and September. Only in early September did we go back to school. The school was now renovated because everything had been damaged and things thrown around. But when we went back to school things went back to their normal order, we went into our classes and things were ok. *But we saw what June 16 was like… At the age of 17, when I thought I was going to school to study, there would be these other children influenced by politics which we knew nothing about.* And when they came to share it with us we found out that it is real. You see, the boers were oppressing us. So we said let us also start and do something for our children to understand that we know something. That is why I wrote about political stories in order for our children to see that our mothers also know about June 16, they were the ones that brought about the changes… There must be one book. So, white people know Afrikaans but we do not know Afrikaans. We learn it in class. We do not speak it at home. *So they just took their language and brought it to our classrooms.*

I went to the ANC and became a member, but after only after completing school. I did not want to be too involved in politics while I was still studying. But we still went to the rallies, there were rallies organized at Peter Mokaba stadium, we just looked in, and listened to what they were doing but did not want to be involved too deeply in them. But After finishing matric we then said no, let us join the ANC, let us join the Youth League and be able to know deeper what they are doing. What is it that they are fighting for? You see! So, because we were still too young we still went home not understanding what they want.

During that era my granny worked for the boers. When we went to their place, they did not want us to go inside. We were only allowed to go where she stayed. Sometimes they made us work. And what did we work for – just the accommodation during the holidays. So as we grew up we saw that this is not the kind of life that we must live. Our parents lived it but it is not for us. We have to stand up on our feet. So, when we arrived there – we did not know what the boss was discussing with her when they were in the main house – so one day while we were there, just unexpectedly the white woman called my granny and my granny answered "yes missus I am coming". So, after my granny came back from working we asked her, what did you say granny? She said "yes I am coming missus". What is missus really? She said it is her missus, I work for her. And I asked her what about you? Are you not missus because you are married? Doesn't missus mean Mrs? My granny laughed. Aren't you missus the whole time you are living with grandpa, or you are just having a 'vat en sit' with grandpa? She laughed. As time went on she told us how life is. *We only lived knowing that we have to call them Mrs. and Baas, and nonakie and klein baas. 'Kleibaas' is their son and 'nonakie' is the daughter.* So, when we went into town we would also see places where it is written "Whites" and Non-whites". So, as we kept seeing these things we began to change. The "Whites" and "Non-whites" issue had to stop; we all go in the same place. I remember when we were at school in Malegale. When we came back from school, we were studying commercial subjects there: economics, accounting and business economics, you see! When we can out we went into town. When we arrived in town we went into one shop, it was a butchery; we wanted some meat to go and braai. After we finished choosing our meat they said there is the line for black people, the line for whites is there. That was where a fight broke out. I have R50 and the white person has R50. My money is not short; it is same and equal money. So, why should I stand in a line for black people when my money is the same as the white person's? They chased us out. We did not pay; we did not even take the meat.

Things have changed now, that is why if you go and ask her what is your name she will tell you I am Colleen, and a white male whose name is Piet, you just call

> him Piet. It was challenging and also tough. We were tough enough to face the consequences and we therefore ended up winning and Mandela was released.

Keneilwe's (52) narrative is that of resistance. She chose one major event in her life as the center of her experience of growing up during apartheid South Africa. She talks about being freed from Bantu education (the inferior education designed for black people) and her resistance towards it. She depersonalizes the context by constantly referring to "we" instead of "I" thereby showing how the experience was not unique to her. Keneilwe paints a picture of what happened on June 16, inviting the reader by stating that *we all know June 16,* and she offers explicit details of what happened.

She saw Afrikaans being enforced on them as problematic. She perceived being involved in politics as a way to fight against oppression. Her continued reference to Afrikaans as a language enforced on them points to how serious they intended to resist it. Keneilwe shares her experience of being oppressed and her role in challenging it.

Keneilwe chooses to focus on the politicization of school learners, taking a moment in history as her point of reference. In her embroidery, she shows a broken fence which highlights the determination of leaving the school grounds to put their point across. The burning tires are positioned in a way that shows them as representing a barrier between the learners and the police. The learners do not appear to be deterred by the police holding guns. Keneilwe invites and informs us of what the learners were protesting against, this is presented in the placards that the learners are holding and some lying on the ground. The school yard appears to be deserted as school officials do not appear to be present in the embroidery. She put the date on top of the embroidery as possibly a way to highlight its importance.

3.5 Conclusion

The women's narratives as presented in the present chapter show how the psychological cannot be divorced from the political. Political conflicts that these women went through influenced their lives at a personal and a collective level. The above narratives offer us a glimpse of how interwoven people's experiences are. The women were echoing each other in the telling of their personal experiences thereby showing how the suffering they endured affected them at both an individual and a social level. Their embroideries beg for a politicization of the psychological effects of conflict on people's lives.

Exclamations (for example, Eish! Hai! Yo! Hhawu! Eyi!) are used continuously throughout the women's narratives and they function as a way in which they express their feelings. The use of various exclamations highlighted their felt emotions when they travelled back into time to face the ghosts that haunt them. The aftershocks often lead to loss of words where exclamations take the place of elaborate expressions. Their embroideries somewhat filled in those gaps that could not be narrated in words. I shall discuss in detail the complexities of language as a medium in which people express themselves in chapter 5.

It is important to think about how memory is socially experienced. Does everything that happen at the collective level also happen at the individual level? One of the central issues articulated by the women's narratives is the importance of the relationship between the individual and the collective when thinking about remembering and recovering from a traumatic past. The focus has for a long time been on individual suffering (especially within psychology), the women's narratives in the present research point to the collective trauma and oppression as told individually in an effort to highlight suffering as a social experience. People suffered as a

nation through subjugation, and oppressive government structures, but also at an individual (which is always in connection with or in relation to) level where they lost family members, were personally wounded, sexually assaulted, or had their personal properties taken from them, and on the level of local communities that were fractured. This chapter therefore highlights the importance of interrogating and acknowledging people's experiences as they remember and express them.

Chapter 4

Discussion

4.1 We still remember

In January of this year (2012) I went on a weekend away with my mother and two nephews aged 7 and 9. The resort we visited had multiple swimming pools and my nephews were very excited and wanted to swim in all of them. We were one of the very few Black families at the resort, and this made us feel visible. In more than one occasion my nephews were the only Black bodies in the pool, and I noticed that my mother was rather uneasy about that fact. She was extra vigilant wanting to make sure that she can see them at all times. I asked her why she looked so worried and she told me she was concerned about their safety as they cannot swim properly yet. Upon our return home I overheard my mother telling her sister about our trip. She said "Iyo! There were so many white people there and these kids did not want to listen when I told them not to go near the pool, they just wanted to swim. I sat there scared to death, all the while thinking oh my goodness I hope these people do not drown my children". The reason for her uneasiness had suddenly changed. I wondered why she did not give me that reason, could it be because she thought I would not understand. To my mother, white people represented danger and a possibility to harm. Could this be a sign of the aftershock of her apartheid experiences? This is consistent with the experiences of the women in my research where they argue that even though they now have freedom, their understanding and definition of it is complicated. For them it is freedom from the chains of apartheid that limited so many things in their lives. While they may

now enjoy this freedom, the ghosts of apartheid sometimes make themselves visible and make occasional visits.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, the country has been going through a process of redefining itself and renewing its understanding of what freedom is. There has been a process of change, and redefinition, and through these processes there have been a lot of promises made to people as many are seeking and looking for a better life. While many were involved in the struggle for freedom, a large amount of people are still yet to attain the freedom that they fought for. There have been many policies put in place as a way to put forth the process of reconciliation and one of the ways in which this was done was through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, as I have already highlighted, there were complexities that went with this process where many people did not get the space to be able to have their voices heard and because of that many are still battling with the suffering that they went through. Many seek spaces and places that will enable them to deal with their hurtful past. What I sought to do with my study was to offer a platform that enabled reflection, remembering and telling of narratives and sharing of experiences and at the same time highlighting some of the challenges that many went through and how that translates into the way things are in the present.

South Africa continues to go through the process of restructuring and women remain central to this as they continue to suffer and are deprived of basic rights under a patriarchal society. Within the context of reconciliation, Sampson (1993) as cited in Opotow (2001, p.162) argues that "…parties with little power can be disadvantaged. Their sense of what happened may be silenced, they may not be heard on their own terms, and as a result, their interests, needs, and the outcomes they desire may have little influence on the reconciliation process even though they are nominally included in it." This argument is consistent with my findings where women

reflect on their past and the suffering they went through, but also highlighting how they carried this hurt in their bodies as they could not think of ways to share.

We need to constantly remember large social systems, and at the time same challenge common ways of knowing. In their embroideries, the women highlight how the personal is connected to the social and the political. In each individual narrative, we get a glimpse of how the social structures function. The women's narratives interrogate and challenge the system's selective historical amnesia where women's contribution continues to be absent and ignored in the master narratives. Their narratives call to the importance of acknowledging gender, power, and racial aspects when talking about people's experiences. They point to the significance of re-visiting history in order to make sense of the present, with this they show how freedom should be understood within its historical context. The interweaving of their experiences highlight the collectiveness of suffering, and their narratives may be perceived as echoes of their individual experiences. What the women offer with their embroideries are counter-narratives of lived experiences of apartheid.

In the previous chapter I offered the women's narratives in their entirety as a way of providing stories they shared in their fullness. I limited my interpretations and analysis as I believed in their telling the women made meaning and provided their own understanding of their lived experiences. The embroideries allowed the women to re-envision the ghosts of their painful past. While re-envisioning and remembering was a daunting task for most of them, they saw it as a necessary pain that allowed them to get a renewed understanding of their lived experiences. The embroideries and reflection thereof allowed them to make public the transcripts that have been hidden for years, transcripts of oppression and resistance.

Revisiting painful memories was difficult but offered the women a sense of healing. The sharing of their life experiences through embroideries offered voice to the 'unsayable'. Furthermore, sharing through embroideries gave the women a safe environment and working in their own pace allowed space to sit with uncomfortable feelings and memories. The women offered representations of their lives in a way that made sense to them. They confronted the 'ghosts' of their past, that which could not be or was too difficult to be said in spoken language was expressed through embroidery. Expressing their embodied forms of suffering through the art form of embroidery is consistent with Rogers' (2009) call for alternative ways of telling and sharing of traumatic experiences. The women used embroidery as an added layer of communication, an alternative form of expression. This is a point also noted by De la Rey and Owens (1998) in their assertion that understanding people's experiences through language only as a medium of expression can sometimes not be enough.

4.2 Embroidery as counter-monument

The women in the present study used the embroideries to share their lived experiences of growing up in apartheid South Africa. Their embroideries served as personal monuments that represent their pain, loss, survival and continuous resistance. Coming to terms with the historical context within which they grew up and the meanings these carried is offering the women a re-thinking and renewed meaning of their lived experiences. The embroideries function as 'counter-monuments' that carry permanent spaces and reminders of what they went through. The embroideries further act as the post-apartheid memorializing of their suffering, helping them to remember the hidden pain. The official women's monument that was commissioned and put in place by the government while aimed at serving as an acknowledgment of women's contribution,

its hidden away location continues to render the women's suffering and contribution to the liberation struggle invisible. The monument's inaccessibility and exclusive nature continues to silence women's role in the fight for freedom. Embroidery as an artistic form, has offered them space to 'talk-back' and place themselves in relation to the larger collective narratives. With their embroideries, the women have created monuments that can 'travel', and be shared in a way that has no boundaries. Their embroideries represent their lived experiences and offer space for multiple interpretations and understanding, and in this way adding an extra element to what for example, official monuments represent. The embroideries externalize the embodied experience of the women, and allow for the weaving in of multiple life experiences. They offer space for the historical, the personal, collective and the political. Embroidery encapsulates different forms of narrative (visual and embodied form), allowing various individual stories to be told while highlighting connections.

4.3 Political oppression bleeding into the home

Control and restriction of people's movement by the apartheid government led to many people living away from their families. It led to what many of the women in the study refer to as the *disintegration of the family*. One of the things that complicated things during apartheid was that women were not allowed to own property; they had to depend on their husbands or grown male children to obtain houses/accommodation. This however, was not possible for some as they were widowed, divorced or separated from their husbands. Many women were struggling and raising children on their own. As can be seen in the women's narratives, having homes in the cities was always a slippery thing as people were lodgers in what they perceived as private spaces they called 'home'. Parents were required to pay monthly rent, and obtain permits for each of their

children. This was a way in which the government controlled households. This 'forced' entry into people's private lives functioned as a form of oppression that determined and restricted people's sharing of a household. The women's narratives highlight the illusion of separation between the public and the private where the assumption is that of politics occurring only outside of the home. Making an assertion that politics and domestic life are separate is a dangerous and fatal illusion. Having family members being shot by the police inside the yard, seeing one's father or mother being dragged into a police van was a political move directly affecting the functioning of a family and community.

Many people had to contend with missing out on important family rituals and seeing their children growing up due to settling in the cities in the quest for a better life. The apartheid system was set up in such a way that visiting one's family was risking losing a job. Tough choices that people were 'forced' to make often led to hurts and disappointment for family members. Living far away from one's family turns a person into a 'stranger' (as a person loses a sense of who he or she is).

The women's narratives highlight the role played by women during apartheid. Women never had privacy as the police were constantly entering their private spaces. They had to look after children, and many got arrested with these children on their backs. Most witnessed children being shot by the police. As children growing up, the women point to how they watched as their mothers struggled to create homes for them, supporting them alone as their fathers were often absent. Oppression bled into every sphere of their lives, for example, the home, through school walls, into taxis, in the streets, and at the graveyard where lost lives were buried. Black people were not entitled to privacy or private spaces as their every move was under surveillance. They had to constantly be on the lookout. They continually struggled with constrained mobility where

a mere walk in the streets could lead to possible arrest. This constant fear led to many choosing to confine themselves in their own homes which they considered to be sacred spaces. These spaces however consisted of gendered and more intimate oppression which may be perceived as the politics of the home. This can be seen in Lebo's narrative of her parents' divorce. Women continue to struggle with various types of abuses within their homes and communities. As I have already argued earlier, when policies are made on behalf of women without their input being sought, continuous dependency and silent suffering will persist.

While many had to contend with all these challenges, their push and urge to survive was never deterred as they continuously sought alternatives. One of the strategies that the women used for survival was trust and belief in God. Other family members and relatives were also called upon for support, for example, the use of each other's last names for the purpose of acquiring passes which were crucial for securing employment and housing. This 'permanent' change of one's name puts into question and problematizes the notion of identity as linked to one's name. People had to always be in the possession of a pass and permit as these determined employment and unemployment, and the right to call a place 'home'. Apartheid led to people 'changing' who they are in the quest for citizenship and a better life. In her research, Yuval-Davis (1993) urges us to critique the notion of citizenship and its meaning. She argues that being considered as a citizen should go hand in hand with having access to resources and power that goes beyond official documents. The women's narratives support Yuval-Davis' assertion; their stories highlight the complex nature in which being a citizen entails. Further pointed in their stories are the extra burdens they continually have to endure because they are women.

4.4 An educational matter

> Education serves as a great equalizer in that it arms every person with the tools to grasp the laws that govern society and nature, thereby enabling them to harness suck knowledge for their own benefit. The aggregate effect of empowering individuals in society is that ultimately societal conditions change.
>
> (Kgalema Motlanthe, South African deputy president)

For many years, a vast number of Black people were denied an opportunity to acquire education which limited what they could achieve or become in life. Education has been defined as one of the fundamental human rights, however many continue to struggle to get access to it. During apartheid South Africa, the education system was set up in such a way that rendered unequal access to education with Black people being offered inferior education under the Bantu education system. This system ensured limited resources to the majority of Black people in the country. The education system has however, gone through tremendous transformation where race among other things is not formally used as a marker of inclusion and exclusion. Most institutions of higher learning have gone through the process of merging as a way to correct past imbalances.

In their embroideries, the women demonstrate the education struggles they went through while growing up, and the difficulty of completing their schooling. The schools are 'present' and represented in most of their embroideries with one of the women having her whole embroidery consisting of a school building and students protesting. This focus on schooling and the challenges connected to it highlight the importance of education in the women's lives. From their biographical data, it can be noted that the majority of the women in this study never completed high school. These challenges limited and continue to limit what these women could and can become. They highlighted some of their hopes and aspirations that could not be realized due to lack of education/qualifications. The importance of obtaining educational qualifications was a constant theme which stresses the women's perceptions of it. This lack of access to education

cannot be divorced from the country's politics during apartheid and its effects in the present. While there have been improvements in the education system, there are challenges that many still face, for example, not being able to acquire university qualifications due to financial constraints, and struggling to find employment after graduation. These challenges are a marker of apartheid's enduring legacy, the sign of a continuous battle that is still being fought. There seems to be a continuous seeking of getting out of poverty, a search for an exit. For the women in the present research, providing a home and education for their children is a step towards independence and freedom, however, as highlighted in their narratives, they still face challenges in their homes and in the job market.

The low level of education as noted by the women leads to low paying jobs and continuous subordination as pointed out also in Gysman's (2004) assertion of the gendered nature of empowerment. These educational challenges render women silent as very few find themselves in managerial positions. It is crucial therefore to acknowledge the role that history and politics play in the status of women in the present. The challenges that many went through during apartheid has in many ways resulted in the struggles that most still face in the present. The women in the study noted how they would have liked to be educated so they could achieve more in life, and acknowledged how without education one's options become limited. While they perceive the country's democracy as a step towards the right direction, they are also quick to point out challenges they continue to face in their everyday lives.

4.5 Transcripts of resistance

> When we arrived in town we went into one shop, it was a butchery; we wanted some meat to go and braai. After we finished choosing our meat they said there is

> the line for black people, the line for whites is there. That was where a fight broke out. I have R50 and the white person has R50. My money is not short; it is same and equal money. So, why should I stand in a line for black people when my money is the same as the white person's? They chased us out. We did not pay; we did not even take the meat (excerpt from Keneilwe's narrative).

In the above excerpt, Keneilwe shares an incident where she refused and resisted discrimination because of the color of her skin. Black South Africans lived under an oppressive system that denied them access to numerous resources that were necessary for comfortable living. Many were separated from their loved ones in search for a better life. The system entered homes and caused children to grow up without their parents. This oppression led to many children abandoning school to join the fight for liberation. The women's narratives point to the creative ways in which people organized themselves to fight the system. While their narratives highlight the pain and trauma they had to endure –watching children being shot by the police -- being unable to visit close family and relatives – and constant intimidation and arrest, they also tell stories of survival against all odd. With their narratives, the women show the way in which resistance and refusal to give up helped them to survive.

While it was boys who were visibly active in the protests, women were also there. 1956 (the year in which over 20 000 women marched to the government buildings in Pretoria) as described in Zinzi's narrative was a marker of women coming forward to have their voices heard. Many took to the streets and made their way to parliament in Pretoria to say enough is enough--- the killing of their sons and husbands had to stop and harassment by the police demanding passes also had to end. Zinzi further expresses in her narrative that while initially only men were targeted, with time police started beating and arresting indiscriminately as they believed both men and women were active in the struggle.

4.5.1 Toyi-toying: Protests

Protests or toyi-toyis as commonly known in South Africa are ways in which people express their discomfort with the system they find themselves under. Protests were very popular and common during apartheid. In the seventies to mid nineteen eighties numerous Black people took to the streets in the fight against apartheid. One of the notable marches was in June 1976 when thousands of students took to the street in the fight against Bantu education and Afrikaans as an enforced medium of instruction. In her narrative Keneilwe asserts that *we all know June 16* as the day that many lost their lives while fighting the inferior education system enforced on them. The protests were also highlighted in Noluntu's narrative where she describes what was called *wake up if you are asleep*. This she describes as a campaign where Black political parties (specifically the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress) took to the streets to fight against the Afrikaner rule. In her description of what was happening, Noluntu points to the challenges that accompanied these protests where people were somewhat forced to take to the streets and join the protests. Because there was more than one political party active in these protests, many people had to choose sides which led to fights among people as there were disagreements with regard to the approach to be taken in fighting the government. Another added complication was the suspicion that spread within the communities where many people were suspected of being police spies. This led to mistrust among people as it was difficult to tell who was a spy and who was not. People avoided the streets and being part of small groups for the fear of being suspected as spies. These suspicions and mistrusts led to silences where people chose to keep quiet about what they know and do not know. These silenced knowings are what Shulman and Lorenz (2001, p.2) point to in their paper, that "we each take refuge in silence when it feels dangerous to speak to ourselves or others". This is the silence that served as a form

of resistance for many South African as many of them refused to answer questions often posed to them by the police. Silence was used as a reclaiming of power, as highlighted by Motsemme (2004, p.919) that "through acts of refusal to submit to the state's invasive harassment to reveal the whereabouts of sons and husbands, ordinary women were simultaneously voicing their awareness of their sociopolitical situations."

The *Black Power* (Black people reclaiming their power) as described in Zinzi's narrative was another form of resistance which took place in the nineteen eighties. This is a period where many lost their lives, and lives of loved ones. The killings knew no borders as the police entered homes, churches and schools. There were mass funerals every weekend, and often times people were forced to attend as a sign of solidarity. Revisiting these memories offered the women the space to redefine the meaning they give to these hurtful events. The importance of revisiting history/the past is a notion highlighted by Apfelbaum (2000) in her argument of connecting the past and the present and giving voice to the silenced. Narrating their stories through talking and making embroideries offered the women validation and a sense that their personal experiences are being acknowledged.

4.6 Re-visiting Suffering

In the present chapter I sought to highlight some of the major themes that arose from the research. The results show how the personal is always political. Apartheid rules and policies always bled into people's homes rendering that which they perceived to be private as nothing but a false impression. The challenges of dislocation that many had to continually contend with led to the disintegration of families, often times leaving women with the sole responsibility of taking

care of children while men disappeared into the cities in the quest for employment. The separation of family members led to the break in the rootedness of people's cultures and caused loss of connection among loved ones. Confronting ghosts of their painful past through embroidery making, 'forced' the women to notice connections between their personal lives and the country's politics, and also a chance to grapple with their suffering. The women's embroideries assisted in highlighting the multiple narratives that they all carry, narratives of trauma, silence, gender, and the role played by history in the present. With these they also point to how suffering is not experienced only at an individual but at the family, community and societal level in general. Very visible in the women's narratives is how they use suffering as a descriptor of their childhoods, family relations, their school experiences, and life in their communities. In this way they show how suffering was widespread in the different spheres of their lives and not something experienced alone. The threads in their stories show the connections of the personal, social, economic, cultural, political, and how these together feed into their experienced trauma of the past.

The identified themes assist us in rethinking about how suffering is expressed, highlighting the multiple ways in which it may be experienced. Public remembrances such as the TRC process and national monuments only offer limited space for remembering and rarely allow for everyday lived experiences and struggle to be acknowledged. It is crucial to look at ways in which suffering is given space and expressed. I attempted here to highlight various ways in which suffering can be looked at and understood, and also pose a challenge to our discipline to acknowledge the varied ways in which suffering manifest itself and expressed. These are crucial issues we need to keep in mind in our theorizing and in methodologies that we use in an attempt to make sense of how people express their painful lived experiences. The everyday "unmarked

forms of suffering" (Harvey, 2012, p.523) should also be acknowledged and taken seriously as affecting people's sense of peace and justice. Psychology should step outside of its comfort zone so that as a discipline it can acknowledge the multi-layers of suffering. This might help in acknowledging the varied ways in which suffering affected people during apartheid for example. Acknowledging and memorializing people's lived trauma can assist us in our quest for restoration and meaning making.

Chapter 5

Ways of telling and language

5.1 Introduction

Upon completing data collection, I sat with the recordings and listened to the women's narratives (as recorded in isiZulu and Sesotho). I started thinking about the process to follow and what will inevitably fall in the cracks:

From collection to the transcription of the data the women's voices can still be heard loudly. As soon as the translation process starts the loudness becomes softer as another voice comes in –the translator's voice. At this stage the women's voices become softer as their words become transported to a place that makes their authoring secondary. Translation is an integral part of most of our research processes. It continues to be taken for granted and is hardly interrogated. In the present chapter I seek to highlight the importance of taking translation seriously.

It has been argued by a number of scholars (Snell-Hornby, 1988; Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Gentzler, 1993; Venuti, 1992, 1995, 1998; and White, 1996) that translation is more than just understanding words in one language and rendering them in another. Because often times in our work we use English, the meaning sometimes gets lost when translated from another language. While translation may sometimes be perceived as a form of empowerment that brings to the greater public experiences that would otherwise remain in the private, it should also be

acknowledged that the shift in voice through this process is often a form of silencing. As Lykes points out, "the linguistic particularity…is neither acknowledged nor performed in the texts (2010, p.243)". In our translation and interpretation of participants' voices, we "voice over and speak over" (Lykes, 2010, p.247) and give meaning to their words. It is therefore crucial to acknowledge the complexities involved in translating peoples' stories from one language to another. Language is one of the main tools used to understand social phenomena and psychological inquiries. However, we need to acknowledge the limitations and complexities of the spoken, particularly when multiple languages are involved. According to Wallmach (2000):

> Translation is generally seen as a series of either/or decisions, of choices between the alterity of the source text and the identity required for the translation to be considered acceptable in the target culture although of course, other options do exist, such as non-translation (p.4).

As researchers we tell stories and the telling comprises choosing and deciding what stories to tell. We carry some level of power as we play a crucial role in how the text will be represented. We are continually involved in what Sun (2011, p.172) calls "a translation practice of a colonizing nature". Through translation, we insert and position ourselves within the participants' view of the world and the meaning they give to it. Participants' agency becomes limited as their words become transformed or changed into another language that most of them do not understand. This form of alienation limits cross-checking which is always required by the ethical committees in our various institutions. In this case translation may be perceived as a form of violence that creates 'othering'. With regard to ethics, Sun (2011, p. 168) argues that "it is not just a simple question of ethical evaluation but a complex and uncharted business of cultural or political uprooting that renders the translated text potentially vulnerable to unwanted foreign influence". The foreign influence may be seen within disciplines like psychology where for a

long time ‘perceived objectivity’, ignoring lived/personal experiences, trivializing and pathologizing has been the norm.

5.2 Politics of language and translation

> Language is not a by-the-way-issue…Neither is it a side issue in any communication. Language is not simply a tool that is transparent and through which feelings and ideas and truths pass unchanged. Language changes reality; it constructs what counts as effective or failed communications, what is true, what we see and fail to see, our identities, the universe itself. Language shapes us and our world (Krog, Mpolweni, and Ratele, 2009, p.31)

> Translation is both reproduction and sometimes production in its own right (Sun, 2011, p. 163)

It is crucial to acknowledge the nuances and utterances that get lost when translations are made. These types of ‘mistakes’ are what Krog, Mpolweni and Ratele (2009, p.45) call “cultural untransferables”, which are “those cultural codes and references that do not survive the interpretation process”. Complexities that accompany translating people’ stories from one language to another need to be acknowledged. As pointed out by Ramirez-Esparza and Pennebaker (2006, p. 216), “the task of creating a perfect translation seems to be insurmountable”. Sitting and listening to the women narrating their stories, I could sense the pain in how they talked and this was transferred to me as well as they invited and included me in the telling, for example, in her narration Lebo expressed the challenges (and briefly made me part of her story) that she had with the identity documents they were forced to carry to avoid arrest:

> If you leave Daveyton because you are visiting here, on that very night you would be arrested. No matter how old you are they will arrest you because they want the permit which allows you to sleep over, even if you were with your relative. The previous government was like that. Even during the day when you are walking,

> you were arrested if you were walking and did not carry your pass. You must carry you ID here, the one that was too long. *Do you still remember it? You do not know it, your generation does not know the long one.* Ok we were living that kind of life. A person's life is painful. I don't want to lie. A person's life is painful!

Echoing this assertion of the complexity of translation, Tymoczko (2000, p. 23) argues that "translations are inevitably partial; meaning in a text is overdetermined, and the information in and meaning of a source text is therefore always more extensive than a translation can convey". This notion is further highlighted by Lykes, Mateo, Anay, Caba, Ruiz and Williams (1999) who argue that translation is more than just understanding words in one language and rendering them in another. It involves complex understandings of how words are situated within and among social relations in a particular material context. Having some context and background of the speaker might offer some insight and understanding that may assist with the translation. Some knowledge or familiarity with the person's culture might also assist with understanding the cultural nuances that are always embedded in the languages that people use/speak. Gyasi (1999, p.85) contends that "the translator, in addition to his or her linguistic competence, must possess certain extralinguistic abilities that will help him or her in analyzing and interpreting the context of the African literary text". Gyasi is quick to also point that a challenge is that most translators use western translation theories which may risk not taking context into consideration when translating.

"To translate from an African language is no easy task, as many of the words and expressions have both a literal and figurative meaning that are simultaneously present" (Krog, et. al. p.74). When translating, we transition between cultures and in the process meaning is constantly constructed. This is a point also noted by Gyasi (1999, p. 78) in his argument that "from a word, a group of words, a sentence and even a name in any African language, one can

glean the social norms, attitudes and values of a people". It is therefore critical to be conscious of what gets lost and make attempts to stay as close as possible to the original so as to avoid loss of meaning. This includes silences and metaphors so often used in various contexts and cultures to communicate. We need to constantly seek for ways to account for these in our translation processes. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that power is always at play during this constant movement between dimensions. Translation is multidimensional, it moves beyond language to culture, to embedded meanings that are layered in what is being said. To be able to translate from one language to another there needs to be some level of insider knowledge that may assist in moving to nuanced meanings of spoken words. It is important to acknowledge that words are not neutral; they are embedded in culture, history and individual contexts that they are uttered in. In his discussion of research on violence and translations discourse, Sun (2011, p.162), argues that "culturally significant attributes such as phrases, scenes, metaphors and modes of expression are potential sources of tensions and conflicts to disrupt, derail or subvert the common practice of cultural (re)production". Cultural integrity of languages needs to be taken into consideration when translating.

The failure to acknowledge the cultural integrity renders translation as a form of colonizing, that is, taking language/information and using it in a way that will not be beneficial to the source. There is a level of transformation that takes place when importation happens between languages. The transformational power of translation can lead to re-writing and reproducing of texts. Tymoczko (2000, p. 25) is of the opinion that "translation intersects in demonstrable ways with efforts to change power structures". While this may be the case, an ongoing struggle within the academia where English continues to be the preferred language complicates the notion of power structures that tend to exclude and sometimes marginalize.

Language as a crucial part of who we are is violated by the process of translation---for one to get an audience; words/texts need to be translated. Language creates a form of inclusion and exclusion, and in our research the participants are often excluded to what were initially their stories/narratives. Through translation the participants' words are carefully handled and shift through dimensions. Drawing briefly from the original (Sesotho) excerpt of one of the participants:

> Ka letsatsi leo ba ile ba re tshwara re le sehlopha re tsamaya re batla mosebetsi. Re ne re tsamaya re sa tshwara ditokomane tsa boitsebiso. Ditokomane tsa rona tsa boitsebiso di ne di tshwanela hore di be di shapilwe setempe sa ko kgosing. Ha re hola re ne re le tlasa kgosi, ho ne ho sa ntse ho na le puso tsa dikgosi, dintho tse jwalo. Jwale o tshwanetse hore o be le setempe sa hore o nyaka mmereko mo toropong. Jwale setempe seo sena le matsatsi, mme ka nako e nngwe ha o a se ntjhafatsa ebe tokomane ya hao ya boitsebiso ya kgwedi eo ha e a shapiwa ka setempe. Ke ha ba re tshwara ba re kenya ka hara koloi, ko *hipponyana* ee ya teng e tshehla. Ra robala hona moo hore ba habo rona ba tle ba re batle. Ka tsatsi le leng ke a hopola ke tlo ntshuwa ke mmangwane wa ka. Re ne re eme hona moo. Hakere re a tsebana ko mahae. Ba tla bolela hore ... ba mo tshwere. Leha ba ne ba na le tsona, ba bang ha ba na le taba feela ba ba nka ba ba lahlele ka moo hara koloi. Ebe ba bang ba tla bolela ba re bo... ba ba tshwere ba ba isitse ko ntlwana tshwana, empa ha re a ka ra robala ho fihlela letsatsi le hlahlamang. Ra dula hona moo ho fihlela ba tlo re ntsha. Empa ha re a utswa, ha re a etsa letho. Ke hobane feela ditokomane tsa rona tsa boitsebiso di tshwanetse hore di dule di ntse di shapilwe setempe (excerpt from Nthati's narrative).

Written in Sesotho, Nthati's words remain hidden, marginalized and can only be 'heard', have meaning, and receive an audience through the process of translation. As a midwife of her 'hidden' words and experiences, I hold the power to transport her words through translation. It is through this transportation that her narrative can be understood and have meaning to the academic audience that many of us have to account to. I offer this excerpt from Nthati's narrative to highlight the integrity and importance of the language she shared her story in. This integrity however, moves from the forefront to the background as her words become transported to a place where the audience can 'hear' them.

As pointed out by Gyasi (1999, p. 75) "…a people's social, political, and cultural institutions are reflected in their language" and translating or expressing these aspects in a language other than one's own strips off the meaning intended. Text (as used in various languages) should be rooted in culture and history, and its forceful uprooting should be taken as a form of cross-cultural communication violence (Sun, 2011). Another crucial point to note is the political agenda embedded within the translation process. Within the South African context, Black South Africans fought for a long time against the imposition of the colonizer's language which led to immense bloodshed. These historical implications should be acknowledged when translations are carried out.

With his concept of 'foreignization', Venuti (1995) stresses the importance of having aspects of the original language in the translated text thereby avoiding total loss of meaning. This non-translation of certain words and phrases can be perceived as 'metaphors of resistance', a way of refusing to lose meaning in the mutilating and violent act of translation. Non-translation allows foreignness of the text to remain intact. In my research the women continually referred to me as *Ausi/Sisi* (literally translated as sister) and I chose not to translate the term as doing so would be stripping it of its multilayered meaning. In Sesotho and IsiZulu the term is commonly used as a form of endearment, respect, and a signifier of closeness and affection. The women in my study also used numerous exclamations (*Iyo! Hayi! Heh! Eish! Eyi! Yo*!) that expressed their felt pain, anger, sadness, disbelief, and a sense of helplessness. Including these exclamations as they are within the translated text, was an effort to have the women's voices stay present and audible. By not translating these exclamations, and other idioms and metaphors, I was resisting what Venuti (1995) calls 'domestication' (translation of idiomatic expressions) and attempting to lessen the violence caused by translation.

5.3 Translation as violence

In his work on South African contemporary art, Richards (2008, p.267), contends that "translation can be considered a form of violence that occurs as we try to coordinate and correlate one language to another in a volatile public sphere". This point is also highlighted in Sun's (2011) assertion that violence is unavoidable and sometimes desirable as it assists with translation challenges. Sun (2011) goes on to stress that violence should not always be perceived negatively as sometimes what it aims to do is positively motivated. Because with translation there is power imbalance at play, there is bound to be some form of violence taking place. Dealing with theoretical text and translating from one language to another may lead to issues of untranslatability (Sun, 2011). The challenges with untranslatability are usually found when direct or literal translations are made, and with this Sun suggests what he refers to as "gentle violence…form of violent translation used primarily to facilitate cross-cultural communication in dealing with the otherwise linguistically or culturally untranslatable" (2011, p.160). With cultures that use metaphors and multiple meanings for same words, getting lost in translation can easily happen. Sun (2011) goes on to argue that untranslatability can lead to what may be perceived as unintelligibility.

The issue of unintelligibility is expressed in Krog. et.al.'s (2009) discussion of one witness' (Mrs. Konile) testimony at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They argue that her testimony was rendered unintelligible because of a possible process of getting lost in translation. The literal translation of her testimony without acknowledging the nuances/metaphors (what Krog. et.al. call "slippages in translation" (2009, p. 52)) commonly used in her native (isiXhosa) language led to her narrative being perceived as incoherent and non-logical at times. The incoherence and often contradictory telling of traumatic experiences is

further discussed by Lykes (2010). In her work on stories of trauma among Mayan Ixil women, Lykes argues that in the silences and what might appear as 'unintelligible' voices, therein lies the trauma. The stories of trauma are filled with holes, contradictions, the forgotten and constant revisions. These 'in-between' spaces are what may be perceived as slippages when translations take place.

It is crucial to think about who the text is meant for as this determines how it will be presented. Sun (2011, p.160) asserts that "the need to render a text intelligible to the target reader decides that some deviation in translation is common". The target reader/listener (e.g. TRC commissioners as highlighted in chapter 2) expects a particular narrative that 'has' to be in line with their intended agenda. One writes with the target reader in mind and this determines how translation will be done, this form of translation is what Venuti (1995, p.61) refers to as "the ethnocentric violence of domestication". Multiple complications and issues are involved when it comes to translating, these have to be acknowledged and extra attention needs to be given. Translation is violent in that it can lead to manipulative re-writing of the original text by "leaving little or no space for negotiation, but instead substitute, replace, repossess, and transform in spite of the claim that it serves to reproduce instead of producing someone else's meaning" (Sun, 2011, p.160). Some form of violence is present in every process of translation because through the process there is a certain level of meaning that gets lost. With the untranslatable meaning gets lost if translated literally---underlying meanings and cultural nuances need to be taken into account. Translation experiments with rewording in an attempt to make sense of the text and this in itself is a form of violence. According to Sun (2011, p.161), "any reworking invariably changes the original meaning, no matter how slightly, and does violence to the idiomatic way of expression of the source language." The translator has the power to play with the context and

style of the text, to re-write the original text. That which cannot be translated, the untranslatable is often given new meaning (Sun, 2011).

5.4 Stories told in truth commissions: Lost in translation?

> The task of the Truth Commission's Human Rights Violation Committee dictated the form of victim narratives. The beginning of a testimony usually consisted of some biographical detail, leading to the middle part about the circumstances and content of the violation. After clarifications, the desire and/or needs of the victim would be established, upon which the commissioner who was chairing that specific evidence, would conclude the interaction (Krog, Mpolweni, and Ratele, 2009, p.85)

The truth commission in South Africa allowed a re-editing of history where official reports could be challenged, re-looked and re-translated. The commission acted as a platform where people could engage and narrate 'their side of the story'. People were afforded an opportunity to give testimony in languages they felt comfortable with and there were simultaneous interpretations taking place during the proceedings. Interpreting requires careful listening and meaning making of what the speaker is saying. Krog, et.al. (2009, p.49) argue that "the complexity of the work of an interpreter should not be underestimated because he or she has to restructure what the speaker says in a way that carries meaning to the audience…since it is never possible to recall everything that a speaker has said a loss of information during interpreting in always inevitable". For truth commissions, the testimonies have to be transcribed and translated which may add another layer of misrepresentation or getting lost in translation. In many instances the courts are interested in the telling, and the giving of a clear, coherent testimony, minimal space if any is given for the expression of affect. The challenges of telling a coherent story when recalling traumatic events is discussed by Herman (1998, p. 145) who

argues that “no intervention that takes power away from the survivor can possibly foster her recovery no matter how much it appears to be in her immediate best interest”. She asserts that seemingly incoherent and contradictory story should be acknowledged as the way in which the individual makes meaning of his/her experience. The translation process often seeks coherence and meaning making, however, as Lykes (2010) points out, it should be acknowledged that people’s lived experiences are filled with incoherence, especially trauma filled and human rights violated lives.

Within truth commissions, translators and interpreters’ having an ability to separate themselves and their feelings from what the witness is saying is perceived as a form of professionalism. This is what Venuti perceives as the invisibility of the translator (1995). In their book, Krog. et.al. (2009) dedicate a chapter focusing on interpreters. They stress the crucial role that interpreters play in processes such as truth commissions. Drawing from two of the TRC interpreters’ experiences:

> There were times when somebody told a really horrible story and the listeners would hang on your lips and it was really gory stuff. They would look at you, you try to remain calm, to disassociate, because the parents, when they start crying and they look at you because it is you that they hear, you try to ignore them, because if you see they cry, you also want to cry, so you do something else and try not to look at anybody, because you cannot break down every five minutes because we all have to get through this (Abubakr Peterson).
>
> It was also at times difficult to contain your anger. People would come and very calmly relate how they blew a person up, how they dissected the person, and you have to look down or close your eyes so that you don’t see them and get annoyed with anger in your voice. They described it as if it were a picnic and your voice must portray that, but actually you want to say ‘It is a person you are talking about’ (Kethiwe Marais).

As can be seen from the above excerpts, interpreters play a crucial and often complex role of re-telling the story as it is from one language to another. While they are supposedly 'invisible' and 'anonymous', the above examples highlight the extent to which interpreters are involved. For that brief period, the story being told may become internalized, as can be seen in Khethiwe's struggle with containing her anger during the interpretation process.

Krog, et.al. (2009) looked at the role of translation within the South African TRC by revisiting the testimony of Mrs. Konile. The authors argue that the translators are often treated as if they are invisible and anonymous. Their 'voices' and influence these might have on the original testimonies are assumed to be absent. Re-visiting the testimony of Mrs. Konile allowed Krog, et.al. (2009) space to highlight the role played by culture, a person's background, and metaphors in language. Their book brings to the fore the danger of getting lost in translation. By re-visiting the official commission transcripts and re-interviewing Mrs. Konile; Krog, et.al. (2009) succeeded in showing the degree of violence translation can cause when careful consideration is not given to the process.

Consistent with challenges of translators being perceived as invisible, Hosu (2012 forthcoming) looks at adoption discourses and cultural trauma with specific focus on Korean birthmothers and their adopted children. She argues that the television shows focusing on transnational adoption in South Korea disrupts the official transcript of "normative family ideology and fractures the premise of national allegiance" (2012 forthcoming, p.5). She at the same time challenges the lens with which the media (specifically the television show she was working with) views and renders this narrative of adoption. She is of the opinion that the "uniform narrative adoption" (p.5) used by the media needs to be problematized. Hosu (2012 forthcoming) further highlights that these televised stories of adoption reconcile South Korea

with its past and that these stories are not only individual but collective with national implications. As a translator on the television show, Hosu "mimicked the host's soothing voice"(p.12) so as to pass on the message as it is even though in a different language. Hosu offers her reflection on the translation process and her role as a translator. She highlights the complexities of inserting herself/views in the process as her role was "already assigned for her" (2012 forthcoming, p.28) thereby rendering her invisible.

In her book, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Early Irish Literature in English Translation,* Tymoczko (1999) tackles the notion of translation as it connects and relates to political engagement. She uses Ireland's fight for independence from the British rule to highlight the relation between translation and politics. She shows how translating and re-writing their historical texts, the Irish reclaimed and took ownership of their history. Looking at translation as a political engagement offers space for a historical perspective that allows a view of the translation process beyond the text, to one that offers space for resistance, activism, reclaiming of independence and seeking to be decolonized. Truth commissions and more specifically the South African commission sought to use witnesses' statements and their translations thereof as ways of offering space for re-writing and reclaiming of power and sense of self.

5.5 The visual (art) as language

As I have highlighted above, language and the translation thereof is a complex process that seeks continuous interrogation. In my attempt to look at ways in which women can tell their stories in a 'language' that allows multiple interpretation and one that offers space for their embodied experiences, I shifted my focus to the arts and adopted embroidery as a form of

narrative/storytelling. With embroideries as a form of narrative and art, the women performed and presented their various life experiences visually. Embroidery and the arts in general offer another layer in how stories can be told. This form of expression offered the women in my study the space to tell their stories in a colorful, artistic way that allowed personal interpretation and at the same time lend itself open to other/multiple interpretations. Using visual images such as embroideries to tell stories "enables women who survived horrific assaults against material, social and cultural bodies to reclaim them and reconstitute discontinuous subjectivities, and reposition themselves…" (Lykes, 2010, p. 251). The layer added to the interpretation of visual images is that it allows cross-checking/back and forth with the women, something translation from isiZulu and Sesotho to English does not allow. With the translation of their words, the women literally 'get lost in translation'. Their voices/experiences become violated by the translated process.

According to Lykes, et.al (1999, p.217), as cited in Segalo (2011, p. 230) "the power of the visual image is unlike other forms of communication as it is universally comprehensible and accessible, and can be used to facilitate discussion, document experience, and facilitate critical analysis of social reality and problem solving". Segalo (2011, p. 230) argues that "the use of the visual image is a useful tool that can be used to tell people's stories of oppression, liberation and survival. Visual images can be used purposefully to mediate reality in a 'performative' way, and furthermore, they allow for collective emotional response".

The visual lends itself to multiple/varying interpretations. According to Luttrell and Chalfen (2010, p. 197) the visual offer people an opportunity "to express themselves, what they know and how they wish to be seen". While their work is specifically focusing on photographs as visual images, their arguments could be useful in the analysis and interrogation of visual

images within research in general. When looking at the meaning of voice in visual images, it is important to acknowledge the co-construction of voice. Luttrell and Chalfen (2010) raise issues pertaining to complexities of images, the types of images presented, and whether images are meant to illustrate or complement the text produced within the research process. They further highlight the ethical implications with regard to circulation of images. This is a crucial issue that needs to be discussed and negotiated with the participants. These negotiated terrains should be acknowledged in our analysis and theorizing. In my study, a collaborative decision was made---the women have ownership of their embroideries, with the willingness to have their artwork exhibited as a way of sharing their expression of history and personal experiences.

5.6 Conclusion

Translation is a complex and multilayered process that requires constant interrogation. It forms a crucial part of most of our research. Embedded in it are issues of power, politics, culture, love, care, solidarity, and history. These are crucial issues that affect and determine how people make sense of their lived experiences. Translation is a political engagement that should be acknowledged as such; a notion that can be perceived within formal structures such as truth commissions. By offering space and reflections on the process of how texts are transformed from one language to another, we move a step closer to acknowledging the dignity with which people's languages should be treated.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

When democracy was enacted in South Africa in 1994, one of the main issues on the agenda was women's rights; policies were made and a commission of gender equality was established. As in South Africa, women are still in the majority of the vulnerable populations throughout the world who continue to be oppressed. They suffer in the patriarchal institutions within which they exist, through for example, continuous sexual assaults. As highlighted by results of the present study, we cannot begin to speak of democracy while still existing in a patriarchal 'gender-bias' society that has class and economic power as its rulers. Because women continue to exist at the margins, access to power and individual rights remain an imaginary distant reality that many can only hope for. With globalization as the key word, many women's voices remain at the borders struggling to find their way into the global game. They continue to be *spoken for* and *represented*. It then becomes difficult to imagine a change on the horizon.

The theorizing of gendered, raced and classed suffering continues to be minimal within psychology. Studies of suffering need to be situated in history, context and lives; and on how much we can learn when a gendered lens is provided as one of the units of analysis. With this in mind, the present chapter will focus on the following areas: minimal presence of women in the new structures of South Africa, absence of attention to silence/voice/suffering in psychology, and the false splitting of silence/voice, public vs. private, and the individual vs. collective in our field. I will start off by looking at the notion of trauma as a way of offering an overview of the complexities/multidimensionality of suffering, and setting the context for how it links to silence,

gender and the individual vs. collective struggles. Later on in the chapter I will offer a brief reflection on the methodological issues pertaining to the present study. Finally, I will share my personal reflections, reflections of the participants, and ideas for possible future research.

6.1 Trauma

The individualizing and biologizing of pain/trauma and the refusal to look at resistance/silence/violence has contributed to the exclusion of people's social experiences of suffering in our understanding of post-conflict resolutions. As highlighted in the present study, for many people, the meanings of torture, conflict, or oppression are linked to how they affect the harmony of the family unit. Because trauma often always occurs at multiple levels, it therefore becomes crucial to acknowledge these interconnections.

The focus on cognition and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder has kept us from hearing/knowing the relentless pain shooting through bodies, and relations over time and generations; feeds the fantasy of 'cure' rather than contending with pain and suffering as a deep and collective experience of everyday life. Suffering should be understood in its broad sense, as encompassing more than the physical pain, but one that also includes situated, social, embodied, and shared experience of painful/traumatic/hurtful physical and psychological pain. As revealed in the results of the present study, personal pain/trauma is not experienced only at an individual level but spreads to the family and the community in general. The women's narratives highlight the complexities of remembering, the pain of digging into the past and of facing ghosts that are always lurking in the shadows.

The present study highlights the interconnectedness of women's experiences and remnants of the past traumas in their lives today. While they were dispossessed of their basic human rights (Fine and Ruglis, 2009) by the oppressive regime they lived under, their resilience and quest for survival helped them to deal with the traumas they experienced. The results of the study offer us an example of the meaning of suffering caused by colonial oppression and how this may lead to embodied pain and politicized lives. Here I attempted to trouble the illusion of women's lives as being separate from politics by showing how their traumatic past is intimately affected by political influences. Their remembering is filled with threads that connect their pain to multiple causes. The women's narratives tie their traumatic past to political influences thereby highlighting the interconnectedness.

At this point I would like to revisit Candib (2000), Liem (2003) and Apfelbaum (2009) whose work extensively interrogates the notions of memory, suffering, and the importance of acknowledging history. Candib (2000) stresses the importance of acknowledging that an individual's suffering is almost always linked to their families and their cultures as well. Liem (2003) takes the notion of suffering further by placing it within the discipline of psychology and highlights the psychosocial implications of having to continuously remember the conflict experiences, and the constant presence of what he refers to as private memory due to trauma. Liem (2003, p.2) argues that remembering is an important part of healing as "recovering memories of the past can contribute not only to understanding the lasting psychological impacts of intense social and political conflict but also to exploring prospects for personal and social reconciliation". The issue of taking the past seriously is highlighted by Apfelbaum (2009) who argues that "…even when historical knowledge is available through official accounts, it often remains disembodied and can never be fully integrated with one's own history. It is the memory

of our past that serves as a driving force and structuring factor in the construction of our identities". With this in mind, it is critical to acknowledge that it is our debt to understand embodied pain and use methods that will allow us to hear and at the same time offer safe space for people to remember.

People's experiences of the unspoken, the hidden, and the painful have to be considered. This is a notion stressed by Rogers (2007) in her assertion that we need to look for ways to offer space for traumatic experiences that are difficult to express in words. Often times when trying to understand people's various experiences, the fact that these experiences are embodied goes unnoticed/not discussed. People carry their memories and suffering within their bodies, and therefore it becomes difficult to separate these experiences or try to understand them in isolation. For possible healing to take place, it is crucial to acknowledge the various ways in which suffering may be manifested.

6.2 Silence

The reliving of the past in everyday life may function as a constant reminder of an individual's past traumatic experiences. Lack of power and inequalities that continue to exist within South Africa naturalize the silencing of some people's voices. With democracy and gender equality policies one would imagine that multiple voices will be given space, however, many stories go unshared. For a long time, many people (more especially women) were denied these spaces or provided only extremely scripted formats for naming injustice (as can be seen in the TRC commission). Formal spaces such as those provided by such commissions require a grammar of suffering that betrays affect, content and space for reflection. While policies have been put in

place to protect the women and their individual rights, for many these are still yet to be applicable/translated into their everyday lives. The women in the present study have had to live with silenced traumatic experiences of their past. As I argued in the first chapter, by remaining silent (whether by choice or not) their experiences became privatized. In chapter three, their narratives highlight how they have been longing/seeking space to share their 'silenced knowings' and personal lived experiences with their families and face 'ghosts' of their past. The pain shooting through the women's bodies and released through the making of their embroideries, may be perceived as a sign that more spaces are needed for their voices to be heard.

Offering space to silenced voices might lead to a promotion of "greater self-understanding and even healing" (Liem, 2003, p.16). Supporting this notion, Leslie (2001, p. 55) suggests that there is a "need to approach healing in post-conflict environments in culturally sensitive ways, and in ways that build on communities' own capacities". For this to be achieved, we need to adopt methods that are aligned with where the hurt lives, echoes, penetrates and festers. Truth commissions have the potential to allow space for acknowledging hurts of the past and a possible way towards psychological healing. However, because of how they are generally structured to reproduce the powerful or advance political motives, this outcome is rarely the case because of the silences that lurk within and the focus on many individual voices towards a national project bypassing the individual as survivor and local communities. Silence is internalized when people are not offered a space to express their social and personal suffering and pain. This in turn becomes a form of self-oppression which creates barriers to dealing with the memories and moving on through the healing process.

Lykes (1997, p. 727) argues that "…silence is often an adaptive, survival strategy. However, at the same time, it exacerbates people's feelings of isolation". There is a failure or

absence of language that people can use to express their traumatic experiences, and without this language, silence persists. This silence however, does not translate to loss of memory of the experienced trauma. De La Rey and Owens (1998) assert that people's memories and understanding of their experiences is usually 'mediated through language'. However, as I have highlighted in the previous chapter, language has its limitations and complexities. By being offered a space to voice their experiences, women in the present study took a chance/risk to put forward their take on what the past meant for them both as individuals and as a collective.

6.3 Gender

By being denied access to resources and freedom of movement, many women were morally excluded by apartheid. As Yuval-Davis (1991) argues, women are doubly discriminated against as they have to deal with being treated as second class citizens. The results of the present study reveal that although both Black men and women suffered under apartheid, women suffered gendered oppression where among other things; they were not allowed to own property in their own names. Since the advent of democracy women can now own property and are allowed to vote thereby rendering them full citizens. However, this democratic freedom does not necessarily lend itself to automatic access to power and resources that they were excluded from before. With this challenge in mind, I am in agreement with Yuval-Davis (1991) in her call for a theory of citizenship that acknowledges everyday struggles of race, class and gender.

Acknowledging the everyday struggles that people have to continuously contend with may offer some space to make sense of these intersecting issues and possible understanding of how meaning is made. Opotow (2001) suggests that narratives of the past may not be easy to be

recollected, however for reconciliation to take place; these narratives should be allowed space in the present. As highlighted in the women's narratives, women were oppressed and suffered in many ways. Many struggled to keep their families together while at the same time being constantly harassed by the police. They struggled in their private spaces in the hands of abusive husbands and extended families, and in public spaces in the hands of the government officials and white employers. There is now somewhat of a shift in gender dynamics as more women are getting access to education and securing jobs that were previously dominated by men. However, for sustainable progress to take place, women's silenced knowings should be acknowledged and offered space as failure to do so might hinder many of them to realize their potential. This is consistent with Yuval-Davis' (1991, p.66) assertion that "participation in the public domain does not equate higher degree of empowerment". By taking seriously and paying attention to gender as a unit of analysis in our theorizing, we might move a step closer to an understanding of the dynamics and complexities of gender politics in our everyday lives.

6.4 Apartheid is not over!

Often described as crime against humanity, apartheid was a system that led to forced separation of people according to race among other things. The system brought about implementation of unequal education systems, and strict control of people's movements. The narratives of the women in the present study offer us a glimpse of how they lived under apartheid and their everyday embodiment of it. While the system is officially over, many of them continue to embody and have scars both literally and figuratively that constantly remind them of where they

have been. The system snatched away and shattered their dreams and made it difficult for them to pursue what they hoped for.

Apartheid has been extended and re-defined by the women in my study. For them it refers to any form of exclusion and suffering, for example, unequal pay for the same job and children being involved in drugs are a form of apartheid. What the women allude to as well is how the present cannot be divorced from the past as they continue to be glued together and heavily influenced by apartheid. According to the women, apartheid destroyed people and damaged their minds, leading to the suffering that continues to persist in the present. I am in agreement with the women's extension of the meaning of apartheid and further stress that while the official apartheid regime has been abolished, its legacy continues to endure. I would furthermore like to argue that it should be re-defined and taken as a framework of understanding the ongoing struggles and suffering that many people continue to face.

6.5 Methodological issues

Conducting research offers us an opportunity to get some understanding of our social world, and also a platform to critique the injustices, oppression, and inequalities. It provides a space to explore and look for alternatives as we strive for a 'just world'. It is important to think about the reasons that lead researchers to conduct the kind of research that they do, and to acknowledge their position as scholars representing academia, and more specifically the universities that they are a part of. I have multiple locations and represent multiple systems which influence how I may be perceived by my participants when conducting research. The research participants often see researchers as people who have the potential to bring about positive change into their lives

(more specifically the marginalized communities, e.g. women). Because of this 'trust', they *allow* researchers to speak for them. It is crucial to constantly be aware of self (the researcher), other (researched), context (where the study is being conducted) and the process (how is it taking place… what is going on?) and lastly, assumptions researchers are making and theories that are being brought in. Researchers should acknowledge their indebtedness and accountability to their participants. Because of the 'power' that researchers carry when entering other people's worlds, it is crucial to always look for ways to make a positive change/impact in the lives of those they encounter in their research endeavours. The methods and approaches they use can play a role in this regard.

I chose to conduct my study using a narrative approach as I believed it would allow me to get an understanding of the women's sense of selves as they understood it through the telling of their life stories. Using Josselson's (2004) hermeneutics of restoration (which assumes that the participant is the expert on his or her own experience and is able and willing to share meanings with the researcher, p.5) and hermeneutics of demystification (which suggests that experience is assumed not to be transparent to itself: surface appearances mask depth realities; a told story conceals an untold one, p.13) as my backdrop allowed me to make connections between the participants' individual experiences and how these are influenced by or could not be divorced from the master narratives within which they exist. From the women's narratives and the interpretations thereof, I could draw and offer 'demystification' and problematizing of issues that may otherwise be taken for granted. The study attempted to demystify the idea that the personal can be divorced from the political. With their narratives the women highlighted how the governmental policies that assumes equality and freedom for all do not take into consideration and give space for the suffering and lived experiences of women.

Using embroideries was one of the ways in which the women were enabled to use a skill they already had to 'break the silence'. By creating personal embroideries, the women highlighted the inequalities they continuously have to contend with in their everyday lives and the need for social justice, stable families and education that will ensure a better future for their children. By revisiting their past and with the use of embroideries, the women could connect the various aspects of their lives thereby highlighting the political nature of their personal experiences and the role that history plays in how they define themselves. People's experiences are intricately linked to the economic, social, cultural and political context within which they live and through embroideries the women succeeded in making these connections to their individual and collective suffering. With this in mind, I would like to offer my reflections of going through the process of conducting research and writing this dissertation. I will also offer the women's reflections on being part of this study as it relates to how they perceive their lives in the present.

6.6 Reflections

6.6.1 Personal reflections

I remember it like it was yesterday; there I was in my Grade 1 class at the time in South Africa when there were riots everywhere in the country. Someone ran into our class breathless and shouted "the police are coming". The next minute we were scattered everywhere, jumping fences as the police were already at the school gate. I was five years old and I jumped a very high fence that on a normal day I would not be able to. That became a regular occurrence in our township schools. The police were always on the lookout for trouble makers, for people who were 'against' the government. I can almost see it… a group of five, six, and seven year olds

trying to overthrow the government! My memories of the Apartheid South Africa are through the eyes of a child, I remember seeing buildings being burnt, people constantly running in the streets coughing and struggling to breathe because of the tear gas that the police dumped everywhere. We were under constant surveillance, even at the church on Sundays there were police cars at the gate during the church service.

Listening to and reading the women's narratives I could not help but find myself implicated and included in their stories. Their pain echoed and sounded so familiar and they took me back into my own childhood, their experiences are intertwined with mine, I could not separate myself from their telling. While I tried to remove my own emotions for the sake of my research, I remember one of the women saying, *do not cry child, it happened a long time ago*, needless to say I was not aware of the tears that were running down my face as she told me of her pain.

With my map book in hand, I made my way to go meet my prospective participants, all excited and nervous at the same time as I did not know what to expect. I easily found my way to the community center where the women get together every week to do their embroidery work. It was still early in the morning of September 12th in 2011. I found the women having their morning coffee and breakfast and I was warmly welcomed with a cup of coffee. As I waited for them to finish their breakfast, I listened in as they discussed the soccer match that took place over the weekend. There was so much passion as they discussed who won and who lost and how it happened.

I was formally introduced by the coordinator of the women's project and was given an opportunity to address the women so I could tell them about my research project. After a brief

explanation, the women started firing questions towards my direction; they wanted clarity, and more details about my research. I was impressed by the enthusiasm which seemed to be in the room. I informed them about my selection criteria and they understood. Ten of the oldest women who have been with the project for at least two years were identified, and we had a discussion about moving forward with the research. Each woman received a piece of material and threads, and we agreed to meet after two weeks where each one will bring a sketch of what they intend to make the embroidery about so that we could further discuss it.

The women took 3 months to complete the embroideries (I made biweekly visits where they could all be in the same room to share and reflect on their progress). The making of embroideries was done at their own pace and time. This allowed them to reflect, remember, and feel in their own safe and comfortable spaces. The women opened up their lives and allowed themselves to be vulnerable and expressed their emotions with me. In the individual and collective sessions I had with them, they perceived me as their daughter who was interested in what they had to share. In the conversations I had with them I often felt overwhelmed by emotions, trying to imagine what it must have been like for them to grow up at the time in history that they did. They expressed to me the importance of telling these stories as people need to know. While I somehow expected to be affected by what they might share with me, nothing could have prepared me for what I heard. Their sincerity and pain was flowing on the embroideries they made. The pain was so intense that I could feel it through the texture of their artwork.

After completion of my data collection I went to a methods conference to present some of my work- I felt that this would assist me as I think about analysis and writing up. The reaction/response that the embroideries elicited were amazing, by just looking at them, some of

the people who attended my presentation started crying. This to me was a sign of the power of the visual; the pain was embroidered all over. Understanding and expressing embodied pain is complex and we need to constantly seek for ways to allow space for it to be shared.

6.6.2 Reflections on my visit to the South African History Archives

My first visit to the archives in Johannesburg was a great experience (even though I was overwhelmed by all the data I was presented with). The South African History Archives (SAHA) staff members were more than helpful. Upon my arrival (after making prior arrangements and setting an appointment) files with my name on them were waiting for me and all I had to do was dig in! As could be expected, there were hundreds of papers/reports/video footage focusing on and written about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) proceedings. All I did on the first day was to sort out the data according to what I deemed relevant for my research. I realized however that I needed to read through many of the papers that were in front of me to be able to extract that which spoke to what I aimed to achieve in my study. A week later I was back at SAHA to collect more data, and on this day I scanned numerous witness and victim transcripts, and what followed was sorting and going through the transcripts in detail. Going through these statements, I could not help but feel myself being transported back to my teenage years when I watched the proceedings on television. I now received a renewed meaning and understanding of what the process was about. Imagining and trying to visualize what it must have been like to share such intricate details of losing loved ones, I saw the importance of telling and archiving. This secondary data analysis was for me an essential platform that highlighted the importance of counter-narratives. While the commission provided a space for people's testimonies to be told in their own voices and languages they felt comfortable with, the narratives had to follow a pre-determined script that would fit into the expected master narrative. Analyzing these transcripts

confirmed the need for narratives that would counter the scripts pre-determined by government. The TRC was the beginning, it opened up space for more stories to be told, and how crucial it is for the narratives to be heard. There are numerous stories that remain untold, what is crucial however, is that we keep telling, hearing, listening and acknowledging. In this way narratives will continue to be told and re-told. The history that forms part of who we are should continue to form part of our everyday dialogues and find its space in our theorizing.

6.6.3 Women's reflections

When reflecting on being part of my research project, the women stressed the hard work and journey that still lie ahead. Positive changes are still yet to be seen, as people are still poor with many being unable to afford the basic human need like food. Food prices go up every month, and people's earnings are not. The unemployment rate is high, and those who suffer are the youth as they obtain educational qualifications only to struggle finding jobs. With unemployment basic needs are hard to maintain (e.g. putting food on the table), and with hungry stomachs people struggle to focus on other things. The women expressed anger as they were hoping for a better life. While they acknowledge that oppression due to the color of their skin has decreased, they argue that the remnants of apartheid can still be felt and seen. Racial imbalance is still rampant, and for the women in my study this means: *where you come from, determines what you get access to*. They stressed that many people who fought in the struggle for freedom are not getting the recognition they deserve, most do not benefit for their efforts.

The women mentioned that while on the surface the schools are now admitting everyone irrespective of race, in reality separation still exists within many schools. While people are allowed to study wherever they want, many are restricted and limited by financial constraints.

For these women apartheid may be over in papers and policies, however, on the ground people are still struggling. When people seek employment race still counts, often times people do the same job but the rewards are not the same. They highlighted that education is still an issue that needs attention. Touching briefly of the status of education in township schools, the women expressed how children are sent to school to study only to find teachers that are not passionate about teaching. Many are given homework without being taught about the subject matter. Because many children are taken care of by their grandparents due to various reasons, they struggle with their homework and this in turn affects their learning.

Another crucial point raised during reflection was the health issue. The women acknowledge that they now have access to private hospitals; however, many do not go as they cannot afford to pay for the treatment. There are public hospitals in many townships but most lack resources needed to assist patients. The women argue that they are still waiting for change and a better life. Reflecting back on apartheid is to go back to the beginning/causes of challenges in their lives. They perceive the struggles they went through as the cause of their minds being stuck. They expressed their hurt on the lawlessness they see around them. One of the problems is the people's mentality of entitlement, *this is the new South Africa we do what we want*! The women concluded by saying that maybe it is time for women to re-convene and make their way to parliament just like their aunts, mothers, and grandmothers did in 1956.

6.7 Limitations and future research

While with this study I attempted/intended to offer often silenced voices of women space to reflect and share their lived experiences, looking at these against those of men might have

offered a fuller overview of Black people growing up during apartheid. Only ten women were recruited for this study and while the results offer us a broad understanding of their lives and how apartheid affected women in various ways, their narratives cannot necessarily be generalized to other women. Although participation was also limited to women with embroidery skills, their insights about the nature of suffering and its connection to social policies and people's efforts to make sense of their suffering in ways that counter to medical or psychological discourses could be said to be a generalizable process. Furthermore, only women who were born and grew up during apartheid were enrolled for this research. While the women's narratives offered us a window into the past, future research can look at the younger generation (as this might offer an inter-generational view of the democratized South Africa) and their understanding of what apartheid is/was. Because trauma and suffering in general are issues that are not easy to share/express, future studies can explore various ways in which people can share the 'unsayable'.

In *The Unsayable* (2007) Rogers suggests that we consider and adapt creative ways in our attempt to assist people to express their trauma. The study highlighted the women's resilience, sense of agency and provided a fuller understanding of the nature of suffering.. By being in control and using personal artistic expression, they taught and offered us a renewed understanding of how conflict and oppressive structures affect lives, a point also made by Luttrell (2010) in her assertion that "visual research and analysis is dynamic, relational, and offers space for individual subjectivities and exercise of multiple voices". We need to acknowledge the challenges of the spoken language as already highlighted in the previous chapters, and seek ways and methodologies that can create safe spaces for creativity, various ways of self-expression and ones that acknowledge and treat participants with dignity.

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