THE PRODUCTION OF ORDINARINESS IN THE

ACCOUNTS OF PERPETRATORS OF

GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the construction of ordinariness in the accounts of perpetrators of gross human rights violations, who commit their actions in the context of a system. A review of the literature that conceived of perpetrators in this way was undertaken. This was done whilst exploring the social constructionist paradigm, which formed the theoretical backbone to the study. Discourse analysis was the methodology adopted for the two analyses that were undertaken in the thesis. The first was the analysis of the literature review, which was undertaken in order to see how ordinariness was constructed in the literature. The second analysis was that of the transcript of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Amnesty hearing of the applicant Daniel Petrus Siebert, into the death of Steve Biko.

The analyses indicate that there is much similiarity in the ways in which ordinariness is constructed in the local context, and the ways in which it is constructed in the literature. Ordinariness in the context of gross human rights violations is produced through constructions of the perpetrator and the system within which the acts were committed, as passive and active respectively. The construction of the system as the epitome of the evil that is perpetrated enables the humanity or ordinariness of the perpetrator to be kept intact. Ordinariness in the South African context, is based on racist constructions of good whiteness, and bad blackness. Further, in the local political context, the TRC provides the conditions of possibility for the production of ordinariness, and ensures that perpetrators and others who benefited during the apartheid regime, continue to do so, as issues of accountability and responsibility are not adequately addressed.

DECLARATION

I, Nasreen A. Omar, declare that this dissertation is my own original work. All sources of reference have been acknowledged.

This dissertation has not been submitted by me for a degree at this, or any other, university.

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CONTENTS

Chapter Five: Results, conclusion and recommendations   **120**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It was suggested to me that I consider this thesis a "thought experiment". It certainly seemed that it was, especially during the early stages when the direction and goal of the research were unclear, and there were many interesting questions with few answers, in an area of research relatively uncharted. The seeds for this project were planted years ago, when as an under-graduate student of English, I was introduced to the writing and life of Steve Biko. His work created a huge impression, and resulted in a lasting interest. Years later in choosing a research topic, I combined my interest in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa, with that of Steve Biko in choosing a subject matter and topic, and so began my journey.

The change from the apartheid regime to a democracy in South Africa, and the formation of the TRC, presented a wealth of research opportunities. How would we as a nation deal with the past? And, how would those who had committed heinous deeds in the upholding of the apartheid state, account for themselves and their actions? These questions led me to obtaining the transcripts of the amnesty hearings into the death in detention of Steve Biko, where five applicants applied for amnesty. Upon reading and reading the transcripts, I was strongly confronted with the way in which the perpetrators attempted to construct themselves as "ordinary men". Time and time again, the transcripts revealed that they felt little responsibility for their actions. Instead, they indicated that those who gave the orders were responsible, and that they were only "ordinary men" who were simply following orders.

The sequence of the chapters represents more or less, the path that I followed in undertaking this thesis. In reading the transcripts, and noting the ways that the perpetrators accounted for their actions, I reviewed the literature on perpetrators of gross human rights violations and how they were conceived as ordinary. I looked at when the link between ordinariness and the perpetration of gross human rights violations first occurred, and why perpetrators were seen as ordinary. This literature is reviewed in chapter two. Much of the literature that is examined in chapter two is not from the South African context. Therefore, there is an examination of the comparability of the international literature to the South African situation.

This thesis attempts to add to the small but growing literature/research into the area of perpetrators of gross human rights violations relating to the South African context.

Following a quite uncritical examination of this literature, I then questioned this conception of perpetrators as "ordinary men", armed with a knowledge of social constructionist theory. Chapter three therefore explores the theoretical foundation of the study. This section examines the social constructionist framework, as well as the social constructionist account of the self, or selfhood. This is examined in order to ground the deconstruction of the "ordinary man", which is based on a particular notion of the self. This is followed by a re-reading, or deconstruction of the literature reviewed in chapter two. Here, there is an exploration of how ordinariness is constructed in relation to perpetrators of gross human rights violations. The concept of "ordinariness" may be constructed in a number of different ways. In chapter three, I examine how "ordinariness" becomes compatible with perpetrating gross human rights violations.

In chapter four, I explore the methodology that was used in the thesis as a whole, as well as the methodology of the two analyses that were undertaken (i.e. the analysis of the literature review, and the analysis of the transcript). There is also mention of how and why the account of one of the five perpetrators was chosen as the main focus of study. This is followed by the analysis of the transcript, i.e. the TRC amnesty hearing of Daniel Petrus Siebert into the death of Steve Biko. The analysis deals with the ways in which ordinariness is constructed by Siebert in the text. It draws these together, using the analytic tools outlined by, amongst others, Positioning Theory as proposed by Harré and van Langenhove (1999), and Parker (1992). Chapter five contains the results, conclusion and recommendations. The latter chapter also sees an examination of a critique of the thesis.

Before moving on to chapter two, it is important to provide some introduction to a few key components that are of significance to the thesis. Firstly, I will provide a summary of the life of Steve Biko, and the philosophy that he espoused. Thereafter, there will be a brief look at the inquest that followed his death in 1978. Lastly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is discussed, detailing the events that resulted in its formation, as well as the work that it undertook.

1.2 STEPHEN BANTU BIKO

On December 18th 1946, Stephen Bantu Biko was born in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The youngest of three children, he was born into a family of ordinary means; his father was a government-employed clerk, and his mother a domestic worker (Juckes, 1995).

In Biko's family, education was seen as an important foundation upon which to build and better one's life. Juckes (1995) states that although there is little information about his early years, the evidence suggests that his political awareness began during his latter school years, and flourished only after he entered university in 1966. In that year he entered the black section of the University of Natal, Durban, to pursue a career in medicine, and initially performed quite well. (Woods, 1978). Although Biko desired to complete his education, his experiences of the increased tightening of the security legislation led him in another direction. He initially belonged to the National Union of Students of South Africa (NUSAS), but his experiences with the organization led him to reject the notion of multi-racial cooperation as a means to an integrated society. Specifically, he felt that the non-racial principles of the organization were a farce because decisions were ultimately taken by white liberals in the organization.

In 1968, therefore, he formed the South African Students' Organization (SASO), and was its first president. He traveled around the country where he visited black campuses putting forward the philosophy of black consciousness (BC) (Bernstein, 1978). 'Black' was defined as all people classified as 'non-white' according to the apartheid system, and therefore included 'Africans' as well as 'coloureds' and 'Indians'. Upon completing his third year of university he was expelled for his political activities, and was harassed and put under constant surveillance by the security police. However, that same year he formed the Black Peoples' Convention which was an umbrella body for groups sharing BC ideology (Bernstein, 1978).

BC finds its origins in the ideas and activities which emerged in the early 1970's in South Africa, in order to unite black people against apartheid. The BC movement descended from the banned organizations of 1960, the African National Congress (ANC), and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) (Bernstein, 1978). One of the primary aims of BC was for blacks to conquer

their feelings of inferiority which was a product of centuries of colonialization and apartheid, and inculcate black pride (Dell, 1996). It represented more than an attitude; it represented a way of life, with the basic tenet that black people should reject all value systems which sought to make them foreigners in their own country, and reduce their dignity (Bernstein, 1978). It also involved an awareness of the political and economic power that black people wielded in the country. The BC movement maintained that it was not a political movement seeking revolutionary change, but a social movement which concerned itself with psychological emancipation (Biko, 1978). Juckes (1995) states that although the BC leaders did not seek to change society directly, they were aware that through raising consciousness, they were starting a revolutionary process. Of special emphasis was that liberation from psychological oppression was the first step to liberation (Dell, 1996). Biko's (1978) words sum up how he conceived the problems faced by black people:

> I think basically Black Consciousness refers itself to the black man and to his situation, and I think the black man is subjected to two forces in this country. He is first of all oppressed by an external world through institutionalized machinery, through laws that restrict him from doing certain things, through heavy work conditions, through poor pay, ...and secondly, and this we regard as the most important, the black man in himself has developed a certain state of alienation, he rejects himself, precisely because he attaches the meaning white to all that is good... (p. 100).

Biko worked for the Black Community Programmes (BCP) in Durban in 1972, and in the same year, one of the BCP's projects, the Black Review, which analyzed political trends, was banned. In February of 1973, Biko, along with other officials of SASO and BPC, were served with banning orders (Bernstein, 1978; Biko, 1978). Banning orders served as a means of severely restricting the activities and lives of those upon whom they were served. Biko therefore, was banned from all the organizations in which he had been involved, and was restricted to King William's Town for the next five years. He was also as a result of the banning order prohibited from being at any meeting, the latter being defined as when the banned person talks to two people together (Bernstein, 1978; Woods, 1980). According to Bernstein (1978), the restrictions placed on Biko only increased his determination to work amongst his people. In 1975 he formed the Zimele Trust Fund to help political prisoners and their families, and the Ginsberg Educational Trust for assisting black students.

In 1975, Biko was arrested and held for 137 days without trial, when the government became even stricter on 'black militants' and took many into detention. In 1976, even though Biko could not attend the BPC congress, he was elected Honorary President of the organization.

4

Bernstein (1978) states that even with all the restrictions placed upon him, he was politically active, and his prestige remained high amongst young activists. She further states that after the Soweto riots in 1976, the leaders of Soweto demanded that the government negotiate with the country's future black leaders – Nelson Mandela (head of the ANC), Robert Sobukwe (head of the PAC), and Steve Biko.

Following his earlier detention, Biko was arrested and detained on numerous occasions. According to Meredith (1999), over a three year period, he was arrested and detained twenty-nine times. The reasons behind the arrests and detentions included the alleged breaching of his banning orders as well as obstructing the course of justice in persuading witnesses in a political trial to change their evidence. In August of 1976, following numerous anti-apartheid demonstrations resulting from the Soweto massacres, Biko was held in solitary confinement for 101 days (Bernstein, 1978). His banning orders prevented him from publishing any statement or account of his detention. Further arrests followed in March and July of 1977. Ultimately, for all his arrests and detentions, Biko was never convicted of any crime while he was alive, and was never arrested for inciting violence, nor accused of it (Meredith, 1999; Pauw, 1991). Bernstein (1978) states that it was only after the death of Biko that the police put forward these allegations.

Finally, on the 18th of August of 1977 Biko was arrested again, together with a fellow activist, Peter Jones, (Meredith, 1999; Pogrund, 2000). They were stopped at a roadblock outside Grahamstown and taken into custody. On Tuesday, 13th September 1977, South Africans were told that Steve Biko had died whilst in detention.

1.3 THE INQUEST

The next day, Jimmy Kruger, the minister of justice, stated that Biko had died from a hunger strike (Pogrund, 2000; Woods, 1980). The post-mortem however, revealed that Biko had sustained brain damage (Pogrund, 2000). An inquest into the death of Biko began on the 14th of November 1977, and was held at the Old Synagogue in Pretoria, famous for being the venue of the Treason Trial in the 1950's where 156 people were acquitted, and where Winnie Mandela and 21 other activists were acquitted and immediately redetained (Bizos, 1998). According to Bizos (1998), the five police officers who were involved in Biko's interrogation during the day, stuck to

their story that a scuffle ensued after Biko had 'gone berserk' upon being confronted with damning evidence against him. The scuffle resulted in Biko 'bumping his head', and this was probably where he sustained his injury. The five police officers were Major Snyman, Captain Siebert, Warrant Officer Marx, Warrant Officer Beneke, and Sergeant Niewoudt.

In addition to their testimony the police officers provided the 'evidence' that they held against Biko, and the prosecution pointed out that all of it was dated after Biko's death. The police officers also alleged that Biko had 'confessed' to drafting a pamphlet which called for arson and murder upon those who did not heed his appeal to commemorate the exiled, jailed and dead. Moreover, they alleged that Biko's 'confession' was achieved without the use of any physical force by any security force members. Colonel Goosen, who was the head of the unit at the time, was also questioned, and he confirmed the story of the other officers. However, according to Bizos (1998), the stories of the officers contained many inconsistencies, in addition to not being able to account for the injuries that Biko sustained, which were documented following the post-mortem. In addition, the two doctors who had certified that Biko was not injured while still in the police cells in Port Elizabeth, Dr. Tucker and Dr. Lang, were also questioned. Their testimony revealed that they were of the opinion that Biko had been injured, but they failed to disagree with the security police who stated that Biko was feigning illness, and was not to be sent to hospital (Bizos, 1998; Pogrund, 2000). Ultimately, the prosecuting attorney, was able to show that the doctors ethical standards were subordinated to the interests of the security police (Asmal, Asmal & Roberts, 1996).

Although the prosecuting attorneys felt that they had provided ample proof that crimes had been committed, including culpable homicide or manslaughter, perjury, and attempts to defeat the ends of justice, the magistrate did not concur with this, and his judgement indicated otherwise (Bizos, 1998). He stated that the cause or likely cause of death was a head injury which caused extensive brain damage, and which was probably sustained on the morning of the 7th of September 1977, when Biko was involved in a scuffle with security branch members. The magistrate found that the evidence did not prove that Biko's death was brought about by any act or omission, involving any offence on the part of any person (Bizos, 1998; Pauw, 1991).

Biko's mother, his wife and his sons, sued the government for wrongful injury on the part of the police, and neglect on the part of the doctors concerned (Bizos, 1998). The case was eventually settled, and Biko's family, who were battling somewhat financially, expressed the wish that the money be donated to a community project, because it was blood money, and would not bring Biko back (Bizos, 1998). The security establishment which had robbed South Africa of a great leader, walked away untouched by the law for their involvement in Biko's death.

The next chapter of this story, forms the context of this thesis – i.e. when the five police officers who were involved in the interrogation of Steve Biko, applied to the TRC Amnesty Committee for amnesty for the death of Steve Biko.

1.4 THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

Steve Biko was amongst thousands of others who died during the apartheid regime, as a result of the political conflict in the country. Some, like Biko, died at the hands of the security police, and their deaths went unpunished by the apartheid state. Others died without their families ever knowing how or why they were killed. The change in dispensation from an apartheid government to a government of national unity in South Africa, provided the opportunity to deal with this violent and painful past.

According to van Zyl (1997), the negotiated settlement between the liberation movements and the former government meant that neither side could claim victory. Prosecution of those who had enforced the apartheid regime was therefore not an option as it would have jeopardized a lasting and peaceful settlement (Asmal et al, 1996; van Zyl, 1997; TRC Final Report (TRC FR) 1998, vol. 1 ch. 1). It would also have been difficult to accomplish because so much evidence relied on the accounts of the perpetrators, and much evidence had been destroyed (Tutu, 1999). While some countries such as Germany and Rwanda, used prosecution to deal with former human rights violators, since 1980 the concept of a truth commission gained prominence as a mechanism for elucidating history and addressing past human rights violations (Hamber and Kibble, 1999; Rosenberg, 1999). In South Africa, what was needed was a way of dealing with the past which would neither conceal the many gross human rights violations that had occurred, nor threaten to destroy South Africa's new democracy (van Zyl, 1997; TRC FR, 1998, vol. 1, ch. 1). The TRC

was such an initiative. The overarching task assigned to the Commission by Parliament was the promotion of national unity and reconciliation (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 1, ch. 5). Amongst its many aims were the following, which are modified from the TRC FR (1998):

- To seek the truth, record it and make it known to the public, involving the establishment of as complete a picture as possible of the gross violations of human rights which were committed from March 1960 (which was when the ANC and PAC were banned, and the Sharpville massacre occurred), to April 1994 (which was when Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first president of the new South Africa) (cf. Asmal *et al*, 1996; Jeffrey, 1999; Tutu, 1999)
- To facilitate the granting of amnesty to those who made full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to acts of gross human rights violations associated with a political objective
- To establish and make known the fate or whereabouts of deceased victims, and to restore the civil dignity of victims by giving them an opportunity to relate the accounts of the violations of which they were victims/ which they suffered

The question of amnesty proved a challenging issue, and provided a major source of conflict in public debate (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 1, ch. 5). According to the latter report, the decision to grant amnesty was part of the negotiated political settlement in the government of national unity. Some saw a contradiction between the work of the Human Rights Violations Committee, which devoted itself to acknowledging the painful experiences of victims of gross human rights violations, and the work of the Amnesty Committee, which freed many perpetrators of the same violations from prosecution on the basis of full disclosure (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 1, ch. 5).

It is necessary in the context of this thesis, to examine how and why amnesty would be granted, since the subject matter of the thesis is that of an amnesty hearing of the TRC. While the TRC acknowledged that the granting of amnesty was a difficult, sensitive, and agonizing issue, it represented a balancing act between the need for justice to victims, and the need for reconciliation for the future of the country (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 1, ch. 5). A blanket amnesty for undisclosed deeds was rejected (Asmal *et al*, 1996; Tutu, 1999; TRC FR, 1998, vol. 1. Ch. 4). According to the TRC FR (1998, vol. 1, ch. 5), the interim Constitution postamble stipulated that, "In order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction, amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts and

offences with political objectives and committed in the course of conflicts of the past (par. 53, p. 8). Amnesty would be granted on the following conditions according to the TRC FR (1998, vol. 1, ch. 5) – the applicant was to apply for amnesty for each offence committed and applications had to be made within the time frame laid down in legislation. Amnesty would only be granted upon full disclosure of crimes, and amnesty hearings would take place in public, save for special circumstances. Amnesty would be granted on the basis of a set of objective criteria, and the nature and context of the offences had to be declared. Where amnesty applications were unsuccessful or not made at all, the way was then open for the prosecuting authority to decide upon whether there were sufficient grounds for criminal prosecution.

The TRC has already published its Final Report, although the work of its Amnesty Committee is at present continuing. In the concluding chapter of the thesis, there is a brief examination of what this particular case, and thesis, indicates about the TRC and its work. I examine briefly, some criticisms of the TRC, and explore the outcome of the amnesty appeal by the perpetrators who applied for amnesty with regards to the death of Steve Biko.

A final point of this chapter involves the definitions of a few terms which are used quite extensively in the thesis. These definitions are quoted from the TRC FR (1998). The first term, "gross violations of human rights" refers to the "killing, abduction, torture or severe ill-treatment, and the attempt, conspiracy, incitement, instigation, command or procurement to commit such acts" (vol. 1, ch. 2, p. 29). The term "perpetrator" is defined as "all persons found by the Commission to have committed gross violations of human rights" (vol. 1, ch. 4, p. 59). Further, in order to qualify for amnesty, it was necessary for the act/s for which the individual applied for amnesty to be associated with a political objective. In defining the term "perpetrator", the TRC FR (1998, vol. 1, ch. 4) acknowledges that this definition does not discriminate between the number and kinds of acts committed, as well as the reasons or context of these acts. In the context of this thesis the use of the word "perpetrator", in addition to the definition noted above, refers to individuals who committed gross human rights violations, *and* formed part of a system, such as the state police or security force during the apartheid regime. It is differentiated from individuals who may commit violent acts against others in an individual capacity, where they are not acting on behalf of a state or any other organization.

CHAPTER TWO: THE BANALITY OF EVIL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, there is a review of the literature on the "ordinariness" of perpetrators of gross human rights violations. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first two sections, falling under the heading "The banality of evil", developed out of the thesis that the "ordinariness" of perpetrators hinges upon the relationship of the "ordinary man"* and the system within which he works. The first part explores the "ordinariness" of perpetrators from an individualistic perspective, and the second looks at the role that the system plays in molding the "ordinary man" into a perpetrator of gross human rights violations.

It needs to be mentioned that the majority of the literature on the "ordinariness" of perpetrators is that which arose out of studies and reports of the holocaust in Germany. There is a wealth of information and research on the Nazi holocaust, especially when compared to other similar events in history. For example, the genocide of the Armenians in Turkey, or that of the Tutsis in Rwanda, have been documented and researched, but to a much lesser degree. The gross human rights violations perpetrated by the apartheid state in South Africa, has been brought to the fore especially by the TRC. However, the TRC is a relatively recent historical event, and reports and commentaries on the psychology of perpetrators are only beginning to emerge. It may be noted that much of the literature reviewed on the Nazi holocaust appeared decades after the actual perpetration of the holocaust. The third section in this chapter explores the relevance and comparability of the literature reviewed from the German holocaust to the South African perspective.

2.2 THE BANALITY OF EVIL

Linking ordinariness to evil has its roots in the Nuremberg trials, where the Nuremberg defendants put on trial, were subjected to psychiatric and psychological testing. As will be shown, the finding that most of the Nuremberg defendants were "normal", was not really well received or highlighted

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* Masculine pronouns will be used throughout the thesis in reference to perpetrators, as in the majority of cases, perpetrators are men.

by the media. It was only when Hannah Arendt reported on the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi war criminal, where she coined the phrase "the banality of evil" that there was much debate and criticism regarding linking ordinariness to the perpetration of gross human rights violations. Arendt reported on the trial for the newspaper "The New Yorker", and later compiled what she observed into a book, sub-titled "A Report on the Banality of Evil".

2.2.1 The Individual

The emphasis in this section will be to view perpetrators of gross human rights violations as "multi-dimensional and rounded individuals" (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 5, ch. 7). There are, and have been, numerous ways of understanding these kinds of perpetrators (e.g. as intrinsically evil). This is one way of conceptualizing them and draws on research from the Nazi holocaust and more recent sources. This conceptualization sees them as "ordinary men", who, in the context of a hierarchical system/bureaucracy are capable of committing horrendous acts.

Adolf Eichmann was a Nazi SS Officer who was kidnapped in Argentina and brought to trial in Jerusalem in 1960 for crimes against the Jewish people during the holocaust. For Arendt, unlike most other commentators or journalists reporting on Eichmann's trial, it was important to "[listen] to him as he appeared to her in the courtroom: as a person who was conveying the meaning of his experiences to others by speaking about himself" (Bergen, 1998, p. xii,). She speaks of him as a "man of flesh and blood with an individual history" (Arendt, 1994, p. 285). Arendt found that the person she had come to listen to, was not a "monster" at all, but an "ordinary man", who, under more favourable circumstances, might never have appeared before any criminal court. Arendt understood Eichmann as an "ordinary man" whose capacity for evil was brought about by the bureaucratic system that was the Nazi movement. She conceptualized the evil acts that he perpetrated as hinging on the relationship between his "ordinariness" and his being part of a hierarchical system.

Her ideas were not well received. Her book became the centre of controversy, the object of an organized campaign, and she was treated with considerable scorn and calumny (Arendt, 1994; Milgram, 1974). She was accused of de-emphasizing the murder of the Jews by trying to "understand" Eichmann, and that by associating the genocide of the Jews with other murderous

events in history, she was looking to formulate causes that could only amount to mitigation of the guilt of the Nazis (Bergen, 1998, p. xi). Nonetheless, her unique conceptualization marked a starting point in highlighting the linking of "ordinariness"/"banality" with evil, with specific relation to crimes that are committed within the context of a bureaucratic system. (She found that of all the commentators/journalists reporting on the Eichmann trial, only two other journalists reached "astonishingly similar conclusions to [her] own" (Arendt, 1994, p. 281). Over time however, her hypothesis has gained more credibility. This is the focus of this chapter.

2.2.1.1 Psychiatric/Psychological Normality

One of the strongest arguments for the "ordinariness" of perpetrators, is that many or most of them, were either found to fall within psychiatric/psychological norms of normality, or it is inferred that they would fall within these norms. Research suggested that perpetrators were not "abnormal", and a relatively small percentage showed signs of psychological pathology.

The book by Zimmler, Harrower, Ritzler and Archer (1995) explores the psychological investigation of some of the Nazi war criminals. In the case of Adolf Eichmann, he had been portrayed as a depraved killer responsible for the deaths of millions. However, psychological tests conducted on him, showed that the protocol did not fit. There was no sign of any psychopathology, and the profile indicated quite the opposite. It reflected an ordinary and rather untroubled person (Zimmler *et al*, 1995). Other psychological test data that is reviewed by these authors is that of the Nazi criminals tried at Nuremberg. They were all assessed and the results showed a similar pattern. There was little evidence of sadism or viciousness, or any psychological abnormality. Upon reviewing these results, the authors question whether the rank-and-file officers who undertook the actual killings (for those in the higher echelons never participated in the actual killings), showed any signs of psychological abnormality. However, they found that "many ordinary people became involved in atrocities who did not demonstrate any particular inclination toward violence" (p. 117). On the whole, the results of both groups indicated these were not disturbed, highly abnormal individuals (Zimmler *et al*, 1995).

Early on in her book, Arendt (1994) states that half a dozen psychiatrists had certified Eichmann as a "normal" man. According to Arendt, had he been a perverted or sadistic person, or one obsessed with "the insatiable urge to kill" (1994, p. 26) as the prosecuting attorney attested at

12

the time in one of the local newspapers, he would have belonged in an insane asylum. Similarly, Du Preez (1994) states that genocide and other forms of political violence cannot be explained in terms of psychological abnormality because "it has never been necessary to empty the lunatic asylums in order to recruit people for pogroms or genocides or holy wars" (p. 90).

Kren and Rappoport (1980) found that there were few SS (Schutzstafel, the security echelon of the Nazi regime) men who fit the criteria for psychological abnormality, and that rather, the majority would have easily passed a psychiatric test of normality. The authors also highlight that this observation "fits the general trend of testimony by survivors indicating that in most of the camps, there was usually one, or at most a few, SS men known for their intense outbursts of sadistic cruelty" (1980, p. 70). The consensus was that most perpetrators were "normal people". A similar point is put forward by Foster (1987), in his work on detention and torture in the South African context. In exploring the psychology of torturers, Foster (1987) states that it is a widely held hypothesis that torturers must be grossly disturbed personalities. However, the evidence suggests that this is not the case: "the relative proportion of such abnormal personalities is not likely to be very substantial" and evidence indicates that "torturers are not particularly abnormal. They are far more likely to be quite ordinary people in an extraordinary, abnormal situation" (Foster, 1987, p. 167).

In the TRC FR (1998, vol. 5, ch. 7), the authors state that the bulk of international literature on atrocities and perpetrators shows that the violence was not perpetrated by severely abnormal people, and that testimonies submitted to the TRC also suggest that psychological abnormality was not a primary cause of atrocities – "Instead, most commentators have emphasized the ordinary, rather unexceptional character of perpetrators, typified in Hanna Arendt's celebrated phrase, 'the banality of evil', or in Browning's term 'ordinary men'" (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 5, ch. 7, p. 285). Meredith (1999) looks at the killing record of the famed apartheid assassin, Eugene de Kock. De Kock was involved in at least seventy killings between 1983 and 1993. Meredith (1999) states that contrary to what people assumed, tests that de Kock underwent showed no signs of a psychopathic personality.

Further support for the "normality" of perpetrators comes from a study conducted by Milgram that was published in 1974. In trying to come to terms with the evil acts perpetrated

during the Nazi holocaust, he questioned how it was possible for people who were as civilized as any people in the world to act so cruelly (Landau, 1998). He devised an experiment to investigate the response of ordinary people to immoral orders. A subject came into his laboratory and, in the context of participating in a learning experiment, was asked to give increasingly severe electric shocks to another subject (who, unknown to the former, was a confederate and did not actually receive the shocks). Milgram (1974) contended that the random choice of subjects meant that most, if not all, participants would probably fall into a "normal" group in the psychiatric sense. The first group that he studied were drawn from a Yale undergraduate sample, and a further group from every stratum of the New Haven community in the United States. Also, when the experiment was repeated in other parts of the world such as Italy, South Africa and Australia, the results were the same (Milgram, 1974).

Before conducting the experiment, Milgram (1974) asked a number of groups of people, including psychologists, psychiatrists, and lay people, how they thought people would behave in this particular scenario. They predicted that "virtually all subjects will refuse to obey the experimenter; only a pathological fringe, not exceeding one or two percent" would proceed to the end of the shockboard (Milgram, 1974, p. 31). The results however, completely contradicted this:

> Despite the fact that many subjects experience stress, and protest to the experimenter, a substantial portion continue to the last shock on the generator... [they] obeyed the experimenter no matter how vehement the pleading of the person being shocked, no matter how painful the shocks seemed to be, and no matter how much the victim pleaded to be let out (Milgram, 1974, p. 5).

One of the conclusions that Milgram (1974) came to was that inhumanity was a matter of social relationships. Milgram (1974) proved his hypothesis that cruelty is not committed by cruel individuals, but by ordinary men and women trying to acquit themselves of their ordinary duties (Bauman, 1989).

Bauman (1989) quotes an experiment conducted by Zimbardo, Banks & Haney (1973) which adds further weight to Milgram's study. Zimbardo *et al* (1973) also used so-called "normal" individuals (these were carefully selected college age males who had been randomly selected and carefully screened against any sign of abnormality). They were divided into two groups, that of prisoners and prison guards. Both sides were given symbolic trappings of their

position such as the right clothing and uniforms (Bauman, 1989). Impersonality was the rule and petty regulations were encouraged to humiliate the prisoners. The group was thereafter left to their own devices. The results far surpassed the experimenters' expectations. The "prison guards" enforced severely humiliating and submissive behaviour onto the "prisoners". A cyclical pattern developed, where the more submissive the prisoners became, the more this seemed to encourage the guards to display and enforce their superiority:

> The guards forced the prisoners to chant filthy songs, to defecate in buckets which they did not allow them to empty, to clean toilets with bare hands; the more they did it, they more they acted as if they were convinced of the non-human nature of the prisoners, and the less they felt constrained in inventing and administering measures of an ever-more appalling degree of inhumanity (Bauman, 1989, p. 167).

The "sudden transmogrification" (Bauman, 1989, p. 167) of "normal" young men into such "monsters" proved truly horrifying. The experiment was initially planned for a fortnight, but was stopped after one week due to the fear that the prisoners might suffer irreparable damage to body and mind. Some observers who were baffled by the results, suggested that perhaps there was, in most people, if not all of us, a "little SS man waiting to come out"; yet another observer, Amitai Etzioni, suggested that the 'latent Eichmann' hidden in ordinary men" had been discovered (Bauman, 1989, p. 167).

The literature reviewed suggests unequivocally that the majority of perpetrators would easily have passed, or did pass, psychiatric tests of normality, and could not be considered abnormal or pathological.

2.2.1.2 Normal societal values/norms

The literature on the "ordinariness" of perpetrators suggests that the average perpetrator was "normal" insofar as he had a "normal"/healthy outlook towards his family and friends. Further, he held desirable societal values and morals. For example, Arendt (1994) states that with Eichmann, it was clearly not a case of legal, let alone moral insanity. One psychiatrist who interviewed and conducted psychiatric tests on Eichmann, claimed that Eichmann's whole outlook, which included his attitude towards his wife and children, mother and father, brothers, sisters and friends, was "not only normal, but most desirable" (Arendt, 1994, p. 25-6).

15

Arendt (1994) states that Eichmann had always been a law-abiding citizen. She also brings to light the paradox of "normality" in Eichmann's case when she argues that the prosecution and the judges understood Eichmann's sometimes inconsistent stories as an indication that he was a liar. They assumed that Eichmann, like all "normal people" must have been aware of the criminal nature of his acts. Eichmann was normal, states Arendt, insofar as he was no exception within the Third Reich, where only "exceptions" could be expected to react normally (1994, p. 26-7). "The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were not perverted or sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal" (Arendt, 1994, p. 276). As Bergen puts it, one gets the uneasy feeling "that to be loyal to some experience of the real is to live perhaps in a world where, because everyone is mad, nobody is" (1998, p. 34).

Further evidence of Eichmann's "normality" is provided by others who interacted with him. Before dealing with the extermination of the Jews, Eichmann had been involved in the expulsion of Jews from Germany. In order to achieve this he negotiated with various Jewish groups, including emissaries from Palestine, the German Zionists and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The emissaries had come to enlist help for the illegal immigration of Jews into Palestine and both the Gestapo and the SS were helpful. It was here that they negotiated with Eichmann in Vienna and their reports were that he was "polite" and "not the shouting type" (Arendt, 1994, p. 60-61). Further, they stated that he even provided farms and facilities for them so that they were able to set up vocational training camps for prospective immigrants.

Eichmann had also organized a special train and Nazi escorts to escort Jews headed for Zionist training farms in Yugoslavia, to see them safely across the border. At another time he expelled a group of nuns from a convent to provide a training farm for young Jews. Arendt quotes the historians the Kimches (1954) who stated that one of the most paradoxical aspects of the entire Nazi regime is that the man who went down in history as one of the arch murderers of Jewish people (i.e. Eichmann), started of as an active worker in the rescue of Jews from Europe.

Other sources of support for this hypothesis include Bauman's (1989) book "Modernity and the Holocaust" where he looks at what sociology as a discipline can teach us about the holocaust and vice versa. Bauman (1989) argues that the perpetrators of the holocaust could have been any individuals in any society. With specific reference to Eichmann, Bauman (1989, p. 19)

16

states that "it is common knowledge ...that initial attempts to interpret the holocaust as an outrage committed by born criminals, sadists, ...or otherwise morally defective individuals failed to find any confirmation in the facts of the case", and that "their refutation by historical research is today all but final". The holocaust perpetrators were in "no way evil, they behaved much like all of us... [t]hey had wives they loved, children they cosseted, friends they helped and comforted in case of distress" (Bauman, 1989, p. 151). It seems unthinkable says Bauman, that these same people shot, gassed, or presided over the shooting and gassing of hundreds of thousands of people including women and children. Bauman asks, "How could people like you and me do it" (1989, p. 151)? He pinpoints the fears that we all have, by stating that what frightens us about the holocaust is not that this could be done *to* us, but the idea that *we* could do it (1989, p. 151).

Other authors more recently have pointed to the "normality" of perpetrators of gross human rights violations. Volume 5 chapter 7 in the TRC FR (1998) deals with "Causes, Motives and Perspectives of Perpetrators". The authors quote the National Party submission to the TRC dated the 21st of August 1996 which states that "the majority of those who served in the security forces during the conflict were honorable, dedicated and professional... men and women" (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 5, ch. 7, p. 281).

Desmond Tutu was the chairperson of the TRC in South Africa. In his book "No future without forgiveness" (1999) he explores some of his experiences of his job as chair of the TRC. Based on his experiences with the perpetrators that he encountered, he states that each and every individual has the capacity for evil provided the right circumstances and influences. He adds that it is impossible to predict whether if we were subjected to the same influences, we would not turn out as the perpetrators did. He states later on in his book that "those guilty of those abuses were quite ordinary folk...they are to all intents and purposes normal people like you and me" (1999, p. 110).

Goldhagen (1996) argues similiarly that the Germans in the police battalions were "by their prior institutional affiliation, their social background, and, with some minor differences, even by their degree of ideological preparation, ordinary members of German society" (p. 277). Botwinick (1996) also states that it is inaccurate to conceive the perpetrators of the Nazi holocaust as "savage animals outside the parameters of society", and that rather research has

shown that "evil comes in as great a variety of packaging as does the rest of humanity" (p. 72). This view is supported by a number of authors who suggest that perpetrators come from all walks of life, irrespective of class, profession, status or intellect (cf. Bauman, 1989; Friedlander, 1995; Hilberg, 1991; Milgram, 1974).

2.2.1.3 Ideological Inclinations

While some authors have showed that perpetrators did not hold fanatical beliefs, others have indicated that perpetrators conceived their actions as those which were undertaken in the pursuit of a higher ideal. In Eichmann's case, Arendt is clear that "there was no insane hatred of Jews or fanatical anti-Semitism or indoctrination of any kind" (1994, p. 26). Rather, he stated "private reasons" for not being a Jew hater. Eichmann's stepmother had Jewish relations, and Eichmann helped his family when they needed him, as was the case of one such couple whom he helped to emigrate to Switzerland. Although he had close friends who were anti-Semites, he stated that he had no hatred for Jews, nor did he harbour any ill-feeling towards his victims.

According to Bauman (1989), contrary to what one may expect, ideologically over-zealous individuals were actually barred/discharged from units that were close to the scene of actual killings. The people who perpetrated the killings were not fanatics. Bauman states that "the SS counted on organizational routine, not on individual zeal" (1989, p. 20). In addition, it is clear that the nature of the Nazi movement precluded any special training or selection of personnel:

> The German perpetrator was not a special kind of German. Any member of the Order Police could be a guard at a ghetto or on a train. Every lawyer in the Reich Security Main Office was presumed to be suitable for leadership in the mobile killing units (Hilberg, 1983, in Bauman, 1989; p. 21).

Bauman is clear that what was needed was not fanatics but objective people who could follow orders.

By contrast, Staub (1989), suggests that perpetrators frequently cite their intention as being to "create a better world", and therefore "suffer" their actions in order to achieve this higher good. The actions that they may be willing to overlook may include destroying the lives of others, but the perpetrators justify this by seeing them as necessary to achieve the higher ideal. The

Armenian genocide in Turkey was based on the idea that it served the noble cause of wiping out the Armenians, who were seen as constituting a barrier to the Ottoman Empire's progress in civilization for centuries (Staub, 1989). Staub (1989) also points to this factor in the Cambodian genocide where perpetrators (some of whom were children) even killed their parents, because they believed that this would serve the higher ideals of the group, although it is clear that other factors also played a part in these actions. Staub (1989) also quotes from the autobiography of Rudolph Hess, the commandant of Auschwitz, who wrote it while waiting to be hanged. He stated that he believed killing millions of Jews was a service to his country (Staub, 1989).

Goldhagen (1996) states that the genocide in Germany would not have been possible had it not been for the antisemitic beliefs about Jews. He states that it is this that is the reason why so many "ordinary" Germans were willing to kill and brutalize Jews. He states that these ideas were pervasive throughout Germany, and had been for decades, and induced the Germans to kill.

On the whole, the evidence suggests that perpetrators are ordinary in the sense that they espouse nationalistic ideologies.

2.2.1.4 A case in point

Another source of information regarding the normality of perpetrators is illustrated in a chapter of the book "A path to genocide: Essays on launching the final solution" by Christopher Browning (1992). The chapter is entitled "One day in Jozefow: Initiation to mass murder". It is based entirely on the judicial records that resulted from two investigations of Reserve Police Battalion 101 which operated during the holocaust, and was responsible for "ghetto-clearing" i.e. killing of all Jews in a particular ghetto (in certain instances all the able-bodied males were removed from the ghetto group and transported to labour camps, which left women and children, as well as the sick and elderly men who were to be killed). Based on the judicial records of the investigation, Browning (1992) constructs a narrative of "One day in Jozefow", with his aim being, to understand or explain what happened when so-called "ordinary" men were first asked to kill hundreds of people, mostly at point blank range.

Browning (1992) examines various aspects of the Reserve Police Battalion 101. Although he does not give the exact size of the battalion, he does states that in the judicial inquiry, no less than 210 members of this battalion were interrogated (Browning, 1992). He looks at the makeup of the battalion beginning with the commander, then the rank and file, and lastly the men that made up the remainder of the battalion (i.e. the foot soldiers). He shows that the battalion was made up of men from different socio-economic backgrounds, and their ages ranged from 27 to 53 years. Many were older, married, family men. There was a wide variety in terms of professions in the group: included were skilled labourers, dock workers, seamen, machine operators, and waiters. The number of independent artisans was small; there were about ten middle-class professionals, including two druggists and one teacher.

A large number of the group that Browning studied had known political standards and moral norms other than those of the Nazis. "Most came from Hamburg, which was one of the least Nazified cities in Germany, and the majority came from a social class that in its political nature had been anti-Nazi" (Browning, 1992). As Browning aptly illustrates:

> [t]hese men would not seem to have been a very promising group from which to recruit mass murderers of the holocaust. Yet this unit was to be extraordinarily active both in clearing ghettos and in massacring Jews outright during the blitzkrieg against Polish Jewry (1992, p. 173).

Browning then goes on to describe the first ghetto-clearing operation that this group undertook, which occurred in the Polish town of Jozefow. What made this first experience of theirs unique was that they were actually given a choice as to whether they wanted to back out of the killing. The Jews were first rounded up in the market place – those too frail or sick to walk there, as well as infants and anybody offering resistance or attempting to run away or hide were to be shot on the spot (Browning, 1992). While most of the battalion were willing to shoot the elderly and sick, they shied away from shooting infants for the most part, despite their orders. The rest were taken to nearby woods and shot on the spot, usually at point blank range.

At different stages in the "extermination" process, the men were sometimes given the option of not carrying out this task. Some did take up the offer, and were assigned other duties. Some were scoffed at for shirking their duties. Others began intentionally shooting past their victims, and were then excused and given other tasks to carry out. Browning (1992) discovered

that for the most part, those men who did not partake in the executions were left alone, and not included in further killings, and that the consequences of their non-participation in the killings was not grave. However, the majority of the battalion followed their superiors' orders and massacred 1500 Jews in Jozefow that day.

In trying to understand why they did so, and why did not take the option of not being involved in the killing, Browning (1992) states that theories of special selection, indoctrination and ideological motivation do not satisfy the criteria here. These men were not carefully selected for their "suitability" to mass murder. Also, they were no murderers whom Browning calls "desk murderers", who simply give the orders for people to be killed and are far removed from the actual killing scene. Rather, these men were confronted with the reality of their actions in the starkest way (Browning, 1992). Browning found that most felt that they had had little choice:

> Faced with the testimony of others, they did not contest that [the major] had made the offer but repeatedly claimed that they had not heard that part of his speech or could not remember it. A few who had admitted that they had been given the choice and yet failed to opt out were quite blunt. One said that he did not want to be considered a coward by his comrades. Another – more aware of what truly required courage – said quite simply: "I was cowardly"... Many were helpless to explain the situation in which they had found themselves in 1942 (Browning, 1992, p. 181).

Interestingly, of those who had opted not to participate in the killing, some reflected the view that because they were not career policeman, and had jobs to fall back on at home, it was no consequence to them if their jobs as policemen did not prosper.

2.2.2 The System

As has been stated already, the perpetrators that are the focus of this thesis are those who operated within the context of a system, often a bureaucratic system. Having explored the perpetrators from an individualistic point of view, it is necessary to examine the other half of the equation, i.e., the role and mechanisms of the system in molding such perpetrators. The different concepts under discussion here are not common to all perpetrators of gross human rights violations. Different perpetrators may show inclinations towards some or most of those presented. The issue of the role of the system in the perpetration of gross human rights violations, is quite significant. Authors have pointed out that had it not been for the system in which they worked,

the perpetrators may have never committed such heinous acts, and that it was the system which provided the context for the perpetration of gross human rights violations.

2.2.2.1 Obedience & Duty

A significant component of systems which perpetrate violence, is the hierarchical division of labour. The individuals in the system have to follow the orders of their superior to maintain the smooth functioning of the unit. This ensures the obedience of members, as if the individual is seen as not carrying out his job, it could lead to his dismissal. It is not surprising therefore that perpetrators have shown themselves to be obedient, devoted, sacrificing, and dutiful individuals. In their eyes, actions are judged according to how they fulfill their job criteria, although this may not necessarily be an explicit decision-making process. The issue of performing one's duty is very often used as a justification by many perpetrators who are asked to justify their inhumane actions.

The previous section that dealt with the "normality" of perpetrators illustrated how so-called "ordinary" people were able to commit the most heinous acts because they were ordered to do so. Although there are many other issues at stake as to why this occurs, the shocking nature of the simple act of obedience to orders of superiors, even, and especially when, these are contrary to societal norms of not killing or harming others, comes through with stark reality (Milgram, 1974). The significance of this aspect is reflected in the fact that in those instances where a choice was to be made in selecting individuals to participate in killings and such related acts, individuals who were considered obedient and dutiful, were chosen over those who showed fanatical beliefs (Arendt, 1994; Staub, 1989).

The SS was the organization that was most responsible for the Nazi genocide. "The SS men were the direct perpetrators, …[and] were self-selected or selected by the authorities and trained for obedience, violence and brutality" (Staub, 1989, p. 128). The over-riding criterion for selection was obedience to duty. Those who showed fanatical or sadistic tendencies were weeded out (Arendt, 1994). There was clearly a preference for those who would follow orders in a disciplined and organized fashion, and discipline and loyalty were fostered and encouraged (Hilberg, 1985). Bauman (1989, p. 90) states that "[t]horough, comprehensive, exhaustive murder required the replacement of the mob with a bureaucracy, the replacement of shared rage with

22

obedience to authority... the requisite bureaucracy... would govern the actions of its members not by arousing passions but by organizing routines". Staub (1989) expresses the view that the tragedy of the holocaust is that loyalty and obedience were exalted over individual moral responsibility.

Eichmann had, at a number of different stages, expressed his abhorrence for violence. When he first heard of the Final Solution, he was shocked at the violent nature of it, yet he was willing to put aside his own feelings, and be an obedient servant to his Fuhrer. Arendt quotes Eichmann saying that his, and the obedience of others like him, was like the "obedience of corpses" (p. 135). He even goes so far as to say that his obedience was "abused" by his superiors, further illustrating the passive role that he saw himself in (Arendt, 1994, p. 175).

The experiments of Milgram (1974) and Zimbardo *et al* (1973) illustrate how "ordinary" people become obedient, even if there is limited authority. Milgram (1974) referred to it as entering an "agentic mode", where the individual relinquishes individual responsibility and acts as an agent of authority. He also states that the inhumane policies of the Nazi holocaust may have originated in the mind of a single person, but could only have been carried out on a massive scale if a very large number of people obeyed orders.

In the 'case in point', presented at the end of section one, which deals with Browning's (1992) narrative account of "One day in Jozefow", one sees how the men of Police Battalion 101 obeyed their orders and killed 1500 Jews. This, even though they were "ordinary men", who had probably never been confronted with killing before (most were civilians who had not entered the army or the SS), and who were confronted in the most immediate and gruesome way, with the actual brutality and horror of their actions. Most of the men followed the orders of their superior/s, even though at different stages in the killing they had the opportunity and were given the choice to be assigned to different duties. This is further supported by Mommsen (1991) who states that, in relation to the pogroms that were carried out on the Jews, the Storm Troopers, when criticized for their brutal actions, justified their behaviour with the need to obey orders.

Research on SS men found that they had strong authoritarian principles, more so than regular German soldiers (Staub, 1989). Similarly, when examining the Armenian genocide by the

Turks that occurred in 1916, Staub (1989) found that there was deep respect for authority, and that the officers gained support because of the unquestioning military obedience of their troops. Staub (1989) also likens the psychology of perpetrators to torturers in the context of political warfare. Staub's (1989) view is that when torture is not part of the broad societal process, obedience to authority becomes more important. He quotes the example of the military coup in Argentina, where military personnel who engaged in torture did not need special training in obedience. The military training itself, which stressed and valued obedience highly, was sufficient to produce torturers.

According to Fein (1979) the norm of obedience to authority and doing one's duty inexorably leads to following orders, unless there is a collective definition as the authority being illegitimate. In the case of the German holocaust, the legitimacy of the government was accepted by the majority of the population, and there were few voices of protest. This made it therefore easy/easier to obey orders that superiors gave, even if they contradicted the moral values of individual perpetrators. Fein (1979) further states that Milgram's (1974) experiment is an apt illustration of how the norm of obedience leads individuals to inflict harm on others, when role models defying the experimenter were lacking. Therefore the issue of obedience is tied to, amongst other variables, that of a lack of oppositional or resistant voices.

The system which perpetrators show loyalty to, ensures this loyalty by promoting and enforcing obedience. Milgram (1974) states that the "person who, with inner conviction, loathes stealing, killing, and assault may find himself performing these acts with relative ease when commanded by authority" (p. xi).

2.2.2.2 Free-floating responsibility

The bureaucratic nature of many systems that are involved in the perpetration of gross human rights violations result in a "free-floating" responsibility. Bauman (1989) states that bureaucratic systems, through their functional division of labour, substitute technical for moral responsibility. The individuals in the system each have their tasks to accomplish, and the ultimate goal becomes one of performing one's task well. Moral standards become irrelevant for the success of the bureaucratic operation. The instinct of workmanship focuses on the performing

well the job at hand. In the bureaucracy, this is achieved through a distancing from the ultimate outcome of the operation, and morality then boils down to the commandment to be a good, efficient and diligent worker (Bauman, 1989). It therefore becomes difficult to pin down who is responsible for what in the bureaucratic system, and one can say that responsibility is free-floating (Bauman, 1989).

Eichmann's case is an apt example here. Arendt (1994) discusses one of the important debates at the trial, which centred around what Eichmann was actually responsible for. He had never killed anyone during the entire period of his career – what he had done was transport people to their deaths. Moreover, he had no choice regarding who was placed on the list of deportees or who would be selected for death or labour camps. The former was the responsibility of the Jewish councils who drew up the lists of the deportees, and the latter was the decision of the SS doctors who received the deportees. Eichmann, therefore, had no authority over who would die and who would live (Arendt, 1994). As she states, "The question was whether Eichmann had lied when he said: 'I never killed a Jew, or for that matter, I never killed a non-Jew... I never gave an order to kill a Jew, nor an order to kill a non-Jew'" (1994, p. 215). She sums up the issue quite well when she states that the prosecution, unable to understand a mass murderer who had never killed, were constantly trying to prove individual murder.

Staub (1989) points out that responsibility can be subverted through the assumption that leaders assume the ultimate responsibility of acts. He states that Himmler told the SS that he and the Fuhrer would assume all the responsibility for their actions. In Argentina, superior officers signed release forms to relinquish the responsibility of the direct perpetrators of kidnappings. These actions propagate and reinforce the idea that the individual perpetrator is not responsible for his actions.

The agentic mode that Milgram (1974) described referred to the idea that it is not what subjects do, but whom they are doing it for that counts. The experiments by Milgram (1974) reveal the notion of shifting responsibility in its purest form (Bauman, 1989). In the agentic mode, the individual relies on the definition of the situation that is provided by the authority figure. All members of an organization become convinced that their individual actions are the responsibility

of another, and responsibility becomes free-floating. Bauman concludes that "the organization as a whole is an instrument to obliterate responsibility" (1989, p. 163).

2.2.2.3 Zeal in conducting duties

Bauman (1989) expresses the view that the use of violence is at its most effective when its means are subjected to solely "instrumental-rational" criteria, which serves to remove or dissociate it from moral evaluations. Perpetrators then become concerned with how well they conduct their duties, where doing their duties well is rated highly. By and large, people who work in systems where there is a functional division of labour, want to excel at their particular task; they want to do their work well. Contrary to what one may expect, therefore, some perpetrators were not only dedicated and loyal, but they performed their often horrific actions with pride and with the utmost of zeal. In the TRC FR (1998, vol. 1, ch. 7) the authors note that violent actions were undertaken with pride. They quote a former senior security force member Major Craig Williamson who stated that the successes of certain forces in conducting their operations produced praise, pride and relief from pressure. The authors state:

> Even a self-confessed torturer such as Captain Jeffrey Benzien admitted to pride in his work when cross-examined by Mr. Tony Yengeni (ANC) whom he had tortured... saying, in respect of a particular torture method, that "I applied it well and with caution" (p. 263).

People such as Eugene de Kock, were praised, promoted, and received awards for their violent activities. These amongst other factors often resulted in pride in being able to do one's job well.

In Eichmann's case, his own initial reaction of horror to the Final Solution, was partly dispelled when he saw how other members of the Civil Service reacted to being told of it. Instead of reacting with shock and horror, they expressed opinions and offered suggestions and concrete propositions (Arendt, 1994)! Further, he saw that these same men "were vying and fighting with each other for the honour of taking the lead in these ...matters" (Arendt, 1994, p. 114). This is yet another reflection of how perpetrators were eager and willing to get to the task at hand. Arendt (1994) further states that "the most potent factor in the soothing of his own conscience was the simple fact that he could see no one, no one at all, who was actually against the Final

Solution" (p. 116), and further that "his conscience was further set at rest when he saw the zeal and eagerness with which "good society" everywhere reacted as he did" (p. 126).

Eichmann himself is described by Arendt (1994) as one who did his work with a zeal far beyond the call of duty. At another stage in her book Arendt (1994) states that the different organs of the SS were "in fierce competition with one another ... [with] their ambition ... to kill as many Jews as possible... [t]his competitive spirit ... inspired in each man a great loyalty to his own outfit" (p. 71). A Nazi at Nuremberg, who "worked" at Belzec reported his superior as saying that "we should bury bronze tablets saying that it was we, we who had the courage to carry out this gigantic task" (Staub, 1989, p. 84). Whereas one might imagine that perpetrators abhorred the tasks and duties that they felt they were obligated to undertake, perhaps the numbing of their emotions and the distancing that occurred between perpetrator and victim, enabled them to experience pride in relation to their often horrendous acts.

2.2.2.4 Loss of individuality

Another of the features of perpetrators which may be seen as a result of their obedience and striving to fulfill their duties, is a loss of individualism. Bergen (1998) points out that twentieth century mass movements involved their members to the complete loss of individual claims and ambition, and were successful in permanently extinguishing individual identity. Although one can agree with his claim of the extinguishing of the individual identity, it is questionable whether the people in the system lose their sense of ambition. This may be realized perhaps, in different terms, where the drive to succeed at one's job, and to be promoted and exonerated, becomes the real driving force behind the individual's actions.

Bergen (1998) further shows that being an SS officer was not merely a job but was something that became part of the officer's identity for life. His understanding of the concept of identity and individualism, centres on the fact, that in Eichmann's case, being an SS officer with all that that entailed behaviourally and psychologically – had been his identity, and it had succeeded in extinguishing the identity that made him unique as a person, and his ability to think for himself. Eichmann's identity was anchored to his role as an SS officer. Bergen (1998) points out that when he spoke on the stand in Jerusalem, it was as if no time at all had passed between

the fifteen years that he had transported millions of Jews to their deaths. He further states that what Arendt (1994) finds so disturbing about the Nazi regime is that by destroying "the political", it serves to erode individuality, and the very idea of the individual.

Kuper (1981) argues that when mass killings take place in the context of a system, there is usually a dehumanization of the "other". This serves to make the atrocities that are committed, as those against a collective, and is thereby a denial of individuality. The victims are cast in an instrumental role, and are denied human individuality and significance. Perpetrators and victims both, respond to each other in terms of their group identities, and in doing so, their individual identities become insignificant. Perpetrators become instruments in the system who are able to simply conduct their duties, without becoming emotionally involved. Bergen (1998) observes that total conformism destroys the very capacity for experience.

In the TRC FR (1998, vol. 5, ch. 7), the authors examine the issue of obedience, and how this results in a loss of individualism. They quote from the testimony of a Mr. John Deegan who describes the strict conditions under which he was trained, and how he, and those he was trained with, learnt that if any one member committed an offense, the whole platoon was punished. The result of this as he puts it, was that "individualism was out" (TRC FR, 1998, vol 5, ch. 7, p. 287). What he refers to here is the loss of a sense of his being a unique individual with his own responsibilities and experiences. Rather he became part of a collective, which served to erode his individual identity.

2.2.2.5 Language as a mechanism of the system

That language is simply a transparent, value-free medium of communication, has long been refuted. Language and ideology are inextricably linked – language *does* things. It constructs people as objects, as superior or inferior; language enables people to dehumanize others. It allows people to create an-other group as different, as the "other"; it enables the promotion of an "us" and "them" value system, which consequentially perpetuates, supports and justifies inhumane and cruel actions against a group of people.

Dehumanizing victims is done by removing them from one's "moral universe", so that the usual rules of morality do not apply to them. Staub (1989) quotes Duster (1971) who states that "[t]he most general condition for guilt-free massacre is the denial of humanity to the victim. You call the victim names like 'gooks', 'dinks', 'niggers', 'pinkos' and 'japs'" (p. 61). In the case of the Cambodian genocide for example, there were deep class divisions. The aristocracy showed its devaluation for the 'commoners' by referring to them with words such as 'dog', 'detestable' and 'stinking brute' (Bauman, 1989, p. 196).

Language enables people to devalue others, and the more that the "other" is devalued, the easier it is to inflict harm upon them. Staub (1989) points out that in those countries where anti-Semitism was strong, the Nazis were able to kill more Jews, whereas in those areas where the Jews were treated less as objects of social differentiation, the government was less likely to hand over the Jewish population to the Nazis. Further, the Jews were made to be the scapegoats of whatever was wrong in Germany at the time. Therefore the ideal of the Nazi government was to "purify the nation" (Bergen, 1998, p. 18), in other words, to rid the nation of dirt, impurity and germ; all of which Jewishness came to embody (Hilberg, 1985). The change in rhetoric from that of the 'Jewish question' to the conjunction of 'Jews and lice' that was coined, provided yet another step to the ultimate goal of 'disinfecting' Germany of the Jews through the use of 'disinfecting chemicals' (Bauman, 1989; Hilberg, 1985). Kuper (1981) refers to this when he says that hostile stereotypes are projected onto the victims. This was why Hitler, and the National Socialism that he espoused, was not seen as the source of terror, but as the salvation from terror (Bergen, 1998). "Purifying the nation" necessitated killing *all* the Jews.

As Bauman points out "To eradicate a 'race' it is essential to kill the children" (1989, p.90). This is only possible if the 'race' or group as such are removed from the perpetrators' (and the bystanders') moral universe, and language and rhetoric are integral to this process. Bauman, in illustrating the extent to which the dehumanizing process was successful in the Holocaust, quotes Peter Marsh who stated that "[s]tanding by the fence of Auschwitz, looking at these emaciated skeletons with shrunken skin and hollowed eyes – who could believe that these were really people" (1989, p. 102)? This point is reinforced by Goldhagen (1996) who quotes a member of a police battalion who, in responding to the question of how he and his comrades conceived the Jews, stated that "[t]he category of human being was not applicable" (p. 280).

A similar ideology developed in South Africa. Racism as an ideological doctrine, "provided the central grounds for the systematic exclusion, segregation and denigration of the black majority" (TRC FR, vol. 5, ch. 7, p. 282). For the ruling whites, blacks were produced as the "other", and essentially different, and this was used to justify policies which promulgated separate development. Blacks were believed to be slower and intellectually inferior, and therefore only suited to certain kinds of jobs. It therefore became easier to mistreat black people because they were considered inferior or subhuman. In addition, other seemingly less significant words used to describe blacks in South Africa, such as 'the masses', only serve to convey a sense of the inhumanity, insignificance and expendability of individual people. One such impact of this ideology on the actions of perpetrators is pointed out by the authors of the TRC FR (1998, vol. 5, ch. 7) who state that, in torture situations black people were more brutalized than white people.

The use of euphemistic language is another way in which it becomes easier to perpetrate gross human rights violations. This applies to perpetrators of killings, and more so to "desk murderers" (Browning, 1992) for whom it becomes easier to deny the reality of their actions if these are couched in non-violent or scientific terms. Therefore they were able to destroy thousand of people by sitting at their desks, where they composed memoranda, drew up blueprints and talked on the telephone (Browning, 1992). Arendt, for example, states that the SS used language which was meant to reflect "objectivity" – "talking about concentration camps in terms of "administration" and about extermination camps in terms of "economy"", was typical of the SS mentality (1994, p. 69). At the trial, Eichmann's lawyer created a stir when he referred to killing as a "medical matter" (Arendt, 1994, p. 69). In Argentina, the use of euphemistic language mean that a torture chamber was called an "intensive therapy room"; those to be killed were referred to as "transferees" or said to have "gotten [their] ticket" (Staub, 1989, p. 227). Pauw (1991) points to the euphemistic language used by the security establishment of the apartheid regime. He states that words such as "eliminate" and "annihilate" indicated that an individual was to be killed.

Bauman (1989) refers to this as "dehumanizing the objects of bureaucratic operation…[and] express[ing] these objects in purely technical, ethically neutral terms" (p. 102). He states that when humans are reduced to quality-free measurements, they lose their distinctiveness, and this language safeguards its referents from ethical evaluation – "In fact, this

language is unfit for normative-moral statements" (1989, p. 103).

2.2.2.6 Distancing the victim and perpetrator through technology

When each person in the system is responsible for one part of the total action, it is difficult to see how that particular action is responsible for gross injustices. During the early days of the holocaust, killings were done usually at point-blank range. Even though attempts were made to increase the distance between the killer and the victim, those in power realized that the starkness of the act made it almost impossible to overlook the connection between the pulling of the trigger, and the death of the victim. These methods were therefore considered "primitive and inefficient" (Bauman, 1989, p. 26). Other killing methods were therefore sought which would not only facilitate the killings on a more rapid basis, but would "optically [and thereby psychologically] separate the killers from their victims" (Bauman, 1989, p. 26). Himmler, when confronted with the complaints and terrible psychological damage to his men of killing women and children, ordered the scientists and doctors to find killing methods that would be "more humane" for his executioners. (Browning, 1992, 1998; Hilberg, 1985). The search successfully came up with mobile gas vans, and gas chambers, where the killer was reduced to a "sanitation officer" whose job was to off-load a sack of "disinfecting chemicals" through the roof of a building, essentially a gas chamber, which he was not asked to visit (Bauman, p. 26). Bauman refers to these actions and their resultant effects as "moral sleeping pills" which are a skilled utilization of the bureaucracy and the technology, that produce a "natural invisibility of casual connections in a complex system of interaction" (1989, p. 26).

Bauman (1989) further highlights the latter issue, when he examines the study conducted by Milgram (1974). He states that the most striking among Milgram's findings is the inverse ratio of readiness to cruelty and proximity to the victim. He points out that it is difficult to harm a person that we touch. It is very easy to be cruel to a person we neither see or hear. Milgram (1974) concluded that in modern society others stand between each of us and the final destructive act to which we contribute (Bauman, 1989). It is easier to cause suffering when there is an rational organization of action. Milgram (1974) also illustrated that when the person being shocked in the experiments was made separate from the subject, the subject and the experimenter were joined closer together, and the victim became isolated, and, objectified. Therefore, he

concluded that the effect of physical and psychical distance is further enhanced by the collective nature of damaging action.

2.2.2.7 Steps along a continuum of destruction

Milgram's (1974) experiment also helps to illustrate the difficulties involved in removing one's self from a situation such as that which he concocted for his experiment. Bauman (1989) discuses this concept which he terms the "sucking power" (p. 157) of the system, by saying that once an individual is part of a system, the initial stages or actions may seem harmless. Sequential actions, however, make the individual bound to their actions, and opting out becomes increasingly difficult. The key to the whole process, is that initial steps require little moral torments and are easily taken, but once taken, they have already bound the individual to their actions. Staub (1989) points out that even seemingly small actions such as using a required greeting such as "Heil Hitler", can make further destructive actions possible. This is especially significant in light of the fact that there is no clearly delineated line of morality. Rather, the sequential actions that suck the person into the system, bring with them a gradual "continuum of destruction". Milgram (1974) stated that sequential actions are among the main binding factors to the situation. In the case of Milgram's (1974) experiment, by the time subjects are ready to start the experiment, they have already bound themselves in such a way to make refusal to comply difficult – the have already agreed to participate and taken money. The first few shocks are minor ones, and relatively harmless. Each shock is progressively more powerful, but only slightly more so than the last one. Therefore, the subject is not really aware of when s/he crossed a line. Bauman quotes Sabini and Silver who state that "It is easy to see that there must be a line, it is not so easy to see where that line ought to be" (1989, p. 158). Bauman states that the trap is that when one decides to remove one's self from the experiment, the difficulty is that by not administering the next shock, which is only slightly greater than the previous one, there is some realization that the previous one was also not acceptable. He states that the trap is a paradox, "one cannot get clean without blackening oneself" (1989, p. 158).

Browning (1992) refers to this same issue when he states that the commitment of the perpetrators of the holocaust meant that each action flowed from the last; each came naturally from the previous conception of the Jewish question, such that there was no "sudden crisis of

conscience, no traumatic agonizing, no consciousness of crossing an abyss" (p. 143). He states that for the Nazi bureaucrats, there were incremental steps to mass murder, not a quantum leap, because they had already committed themselves to a political movement, to a career, and to a task. Their entanglement was such that they were too implicated by their prior actions to extricate themselves.

2.2.3 Conclusion

The main focus of this chapter has been an examination of the "banality of evil", where it was explored from an individual and system perspective. The perpetration of gross human rights violations is conceived of as being a product of the individual "ordinary" perpetrator, and the system which employs various mechanisms in order to, amongst other things, bind the individual into a continuum of destruction, and shift, or make free-floating, the responsibility for acts committed. In the next, and last section of this chapter, there is an exploration of the South African historical context which surrounded the committing of gross human rights violations by those employed by the apartheid state. This is compared to the literature explored already in this section, in order to assess the comparability of the literature reviewed to the South African situation.

2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

The majority of the literature reviewed in this chapter is that which has emerged out of the Nazi holocaust. Amongst others, there have been references to the Rwandan genocide and the Turkish genocide of the Armenians, as well as the South African situation. In this section however, because the literature is skewed towards the Nazi holocaust, I will engage in a comparison between the political situation in Germany prior to, and during World War II, and the political situation in South Africa prior to the downfall of apartheid. The comparison of the literature is undertaken to assess the applicability of research on German perpetrators to that of perpetrators in the South African context. As this is a massive undertaking, this section provides merely a skeletal picture. While it is easier to place a time frame on the German situation that is relevant here, to do the same for the South African context is more difficult, because although

apartheid was brought into legislation in 1948, other legislation and racist practices in South Africa began a long time ago.

2.3.1 Similiarities in political context

Bloom (1998) compares the situation in Nazi Germany to that of apartheid South Africa. The following paragraph sums up his comparison. He states that South Africa and Germany shared:

> collective attitudes, a self-justifying ideology and similar racist policies and practices. The 1935 racist Nuremberg laws and the legal framework of apartheid have much in common. For example, both deprived groups of basic civil and human rights and effectively excluded them from citizenship, reducing them to mere subjects; both prohibited friendships, marriage or sexual relationships between groups; both reserved education and training, jobs and professions to specific groups; and both determined where groups could live and restricted their rights to meet or worship together. And just as the Nazis were obsessed with the problem of who was a Jew, so were apartheid officials obsessed with the multiple problems of which 'group' individuals of uncertain 'racial' identity should belong to. Not surprisingly from the early 1930's (and even in the late 1990's) many 'white' political, social and religious leaders were actively pro-Nazi ... Apart from the Nazi attempts to annihilate groups, there is little to distinguish the two racist practices and ideologies (p. 189).

Asmal *et al* (1996) argue similiarly that there is a direct parallel between the apartheid policies and those imposed upon the German Jews by the Nazis between 1933 and the early stages of the war. The Nazi policies deprived the Jews of civil and legal protections and rights, and excluded them from virtually all spheres of social, economic and cultural life (Botwinick, 1996). Later, broad attempts were made to physically remove them from Germany. In 1935 the Nuremberg laws deprived the Jews of citizenship, and converted their status to that of "subjects". Asmal *et al* (1996) state that they were excluded from public office, the civil service, journalism, radio, and other spheres of public life. There was a formal ban in 1938 that excluded the Jews from law, medicine and business in general. The result of such legislation and practices meant that in 1936 half the German Jews were without livelihood. Comparably, the unemployment levels of the predominantly Aryan population during the period 1933-37, fell from six million to one million.

According to Asmal *et al* (1996) there was a similar disparity in the employment levels between black and white South Africans, and other areas of social life. Legislation in South Africa prevented 'blacks' from, amongst other things, choosing where they wished to live, intermarrying

those of other 'races', entering particular areas of public and social life, and receiving an education from particular institutions (Asmal *et al*, 1996). However, where the discrimination of the Jews in Nazi Germany was more-or-less restricted to the 1930's and 1940's, racism in South Africa was introduced in 1652 (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 1, ch. 1). According to the TRC FR (1998, vol. 1, ch. 1) racism was part of South African society since 1652, but it was only in the twentieth century that racist practices were intensified, refined, and legislated upon.

Legislation in this sense involved amongst numerous others, the implementation of detention without trial, which had a central place in the system of state security (Foster, 1987). It was this legislation which permitted the detention without trial of Steve Biko, and it was in detention that Biko died. Such legislation came in the face of organized black resistance to apartheid, and was amongst numerous measures of state repression in the face of militant black resistance (Foster, 1987).

2.3.2 Perpetrators & the system to which they belonged

In order to maintain apartheid, the government used a variety of 'legal' and illegal methods. The 'legal' methods included legislation, such as that mentioned above. In addition, the state employed a security force which was responsible for maintaining 'law and order' in the country. Those who were employed by the security forces were paid employees who volunteered to be a part of the security establishment. This differed slightly from the situation in Nazi Germany. Although there were many SS men who joined the SS voluntarily, there were certain forces which were recruited, such as the police battalions referred to in the work of Browning (1992, 1998) and Goldhagen (1996).

The bureaucratic system that was in place in Germany was much more visible and clearly defined, with a clearly defined leader in Hitler. The South African situation was different because there was no one Fuhrer: there were different heads of state during the apartheid regime. Although evidence suggested that the security system and government in South Africa were clearly bureaucratic, submissions to the TRC seemed to belie this structuring. Specifically, leaders of the country such as President F W de Klerk, and his predecessor, President P W Botha, in responding to the large number of gross human rights violations committed by the security police,

denied having ever ordered such activities, and denied having any knowledge of such activities. Evidence heard at the TRC however, contradicts their statements. Security force members repeatedly indicated that there was a chain of command, and that superiors not only knew of the activities that were undertaken by these officers, but that these were done on the orders of superiors. Other differences between Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa include the way that the oppressed were dealt with. In Nazi Germany, the goal was to make Germany *Judenfrein*. In order to achieve this goal, measures were first employed to evacuate the Jews from Germany. Later, extermination of the Jews was seen as the Final Solution in order to achieve this goal. In South Africa, black labour was an essential component of the commercial life of the country, and questions of how to deal with the blacks, were therefore influenced by this factor. Homelands were therefore established, and 'group areas' in order to segregate society along racial lines, and to keep the best areas for whites. However, although a 'genocide' did not occur in South Africa, many who opposed the apartheid state, of which the majority were black, were killed. Those killed included children, as in the 1976 June 16th massacre in Soweto, as well as thousands of other men and women.

In Nazi Germany, the Jews initially co-operated with the Germans in the evacuation of their people (Arendt, 1994). However, when extermination began, the Jews could offer little resistance, because they had not been expecting such measures, and had little time to mobilize themselves. In South Africa, resistance to apartheid took various forms. From 1960 onwards, the increased tightening of security, as reflected in the increased use of legislation amongst other methods, is only one indication of the strength of the mounting resistance to apartheid. This resistance intensified in the 1980's even with the increasing legislation. Covert and illegal methods were employed by the apartheid state because it could not deal with the force of black resistance (Liebenberg, 1994).

Based on these comparisons between the contexts of the two countries, it is possible to argue that the perpetrators who upheld the apartheid state, worked in relatively similar circumstances to those of the German perpetrators of the holocaust. There is sufficient similiarity in circumstances and context to warrant a comparison, and to allow for the applicability of the research on the Nazi perpetrators to their counterparts in apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORY &
DECONSTRUCTING THE "ORDINARY MAN"

As stated in chapter one, the process of reviewing the literature on the "ordinary man" was done while simultaneously exploring and investigating the theoretical foundations of a social constructionist approach. In reviewing the literature, and with the transcripts in hand, I had a choice regarding how the thesis would progress. Would the thesis serve as a link between the literature and the local context with particular local nuances, or would it strike a critical stance on the way that "ordinariness" was being constructed in both the literature and the transcript? I chose the latter option, specifically in order to elucidate the political effects or implications of this way of constructing perpetrators in South Africa (discussed under section 3.2.1).

3.1 THEORY

But why this approach? What is social constructionism and what makes it valuable, engaging and useful in the context of this thesis? In the section on theory, I explore the tenets of social constructionism, as well as the social constructionist account of the self, or how the self is produced in language.

3.1.1. Introduction to social constructionism

The focus of psychology has traditionally been the study of the individual. Traditional or mainstream psychology holds that human behaviour may be explained or understood by examining the intrapsychic domain of the individual, because it is thought that this domain is the key to understanding the individual (Rose, 1996; Shotter, 1993b). A good example of this is the study of attitudes. Attitudes, one of the oldest theoretical concepts in psychology, are conceptualized as views that people hold about different phenomena, which reside in the mind, and can be studied independently through the use of attitudinal tests/scales (Billig, 1996; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Further, there is the inference that by studying a particular attitude, one can predict or explain behaviour related to that attitude (Potter, 1996).

This may not seem strange, in light of the fact that in today's times we see ourselves as *individuals*, with dreams, desires, feelings, and emotions (Gergen, 1999). The idea of being individuals connotes notions of rights, freedoms and choices (Rose, 1996). How else can we see ourselves, but as individuals? The notion of the 'individual' is only one way in which the self may be conceptualized, is historically and culturally specific, and serves particular ideological purposes (Rose, 1993; Sampson, 1989). It is significant to explore this notion for the thesis, as the "ordinary man" construction rests on the notion of the "individual".

3.1.2 Overview of social constructionism

Over the last fifteen years or so, a new wave of approaches has emerged, with a radically different emphasis from that of traditional psychology. Included among these approaches are 'discourse analysis', 'critical psychology', 'deconstruction' and 'post-structuralism'. The common ground to all these approaches is what is referred to as 'social constructionism', which according to Burr (1995), is a theoretical orientation that underpins these new orientations, and which offers critical alternatives to mainstream conceptualizations. The approach is not specific to psychology, and has informed a variety of other disciplines such as literary criticism, anthropology, sociology, and political and cultural studies. There are different types of approaches that reside under the umbrella of social constructionism, and there are differences between them as well as similiarities. Burr (1995, p. 2) states that "what links them together is a kind of 'family resemblance'". Social constructionism stems from the notion that our worlds are constructed, and that the process of their manufacture (or construction), often remain obscure (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). It therefore devotes itself to the ways in which what is taken to be objective knowledge is generated, transformed and suppressed, by exploring and exposing the rhetorical and literary devices through which meaning is achieved and rendered compelling (Gergen, 1997). It may be useful then to explore a few key theoretical features of a social constructionist approach, which are adapted from Gergen (1985):

3.1.2.1 A critical view of knowledge

This critical stance challenges the view that conventional knowledge is based upon an objective, unbiased observation of the world (Potter, 1996; Shotter, 1993a), and therefore stands

in opposition to positivism and empiricism in the social sciences (Durrheim, 1997; McKenna and Kessler, 1985). Social constructionism asks us to suspend the belief that commonly accepted words and categories receive their warrant through observation, and invites one to question the 'objective' basis of conventional knowledge (Gergen, 1985; Potter, 1996). It proposes that there is no single, knowable reality (Gergen, 1997). The words and categories that are used to refer to things are arbitrary categories and not necessarily real divisions, but those that we, as humans, have imposed (Shweder and Miller, 1985). For example during the holocaust in Germany, the persecution of the Jews was conceived as the only *solution* to the *Jewish problem*, and a *necessary* means to keep Germany pure from Jewish contamination (Goldhagen, 1997). Subsequent to the end of World War II, the actions of the Germans were conceived as a crime against humanity. The actions of the Germans were placed in an entirely different and new light, which highlights the view that knowledge and definitions of reality evolve and change over time. Social constructionist investigations have illustrated that the 'objective' criteria for identifying behaviours, events or entities, are either highly circumscribed by culture, history or social context, or altogether nonexistent (Gergen, 1985).

3.1.2.2 Knowledge is historically and culturally situated, and is sustained by social processes

Following from the first point, one can see that different ways of understanding the world are products of historically situated interchanges among people (Gergen, 1985). The above example regarding the way in which the Final Solution of the Jews was conceived of by the Germans, and how this shifted after World War II, reflects the historical and cultural basis of knowledge. This applies to discourses that permeate many other aspects of our lives. Ultimately, human activity is often understood in ways that sustain particular social, moral, political and economic institutions for particular ideological purposes (Gergen, 1985).

The social constructionist stance is that knowledge of the world does not come from the natural world but is constructed between people. "It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated" (Burr, 1995, p. 4). It is for this reason that language is of such importance. In social interaction, shared versions of knowledge are constructed. The notion of "truth" therefore, is not the product of a

rigorous and objective observation of the world, but represents the interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other, where certain versions of reality gain more credibility than others, and are taken as the "truth" (Rose, 1993). It is dependent upon the vicissitudes of social processes such as communication, negotiation, conflict and rhetoric (Gergen, 1985). Potter (1996) argues that there is no neat separation between the tropes of fiction and fact, and that the resources for building plausible fictions are the same resources that are used to build credible 'facts'. He further states that this raises interesting questions about the relationship between these literary representations and practices in realms such as the courtroom, where the focus is the uncovering of the "truth".

Similiarly, research has shown that when entities (such as the self and emotion) are put under social constructionist investigation, they cease to function as facts, and the way that they are realigned according to changing social circumstances, shows their embeddedness in history and culture (Gergen, 1997). Shotter (1993b, p. 20) states that there is a shift from exploring what goes on in the heads of individuals, to an interest in the (largely social) nature of their surroundings, to a questioning of the 'construction' of our experiences of the world "which find their 'warrants' in locally constituted situations and circumstances".

3.1.2.3 The construction of knowledge impacts upon the possibilities of social action

Our knowledge of the world impacts upon the actions that we can or cannot take. Gergen (1985) states that the ways in which the world is constructed is of critical significance in social life, as it is integrally connected to a host of other activities that people engage in. For example, in apartheid South Africa, people were classified according to certain racial categories. This classification impacted upon the rights of the people of the country and the actions that they were allowed to take. So-called 'white' people were accorded the rights of citizens, and allowed to vote. So-called 'non-white' or 'black' people, were not allowed to vote, and their inferior status was further expressed through their having to carry the 'dompas' or face criminal prosecution. The classification system, in this case apartheid, which was based on racist constructions of difference and inferiority, had real consequences in the lives of the people of the country. In this way, constructions of the world allow and permit certain actions, and exclude others.

3.1.2.4 Further differences between social constructionism and mainstream psychology

It is apparent that social constructionism differs quite radically from traditional or mainstream psychology in a number of respects. It is anti-essentialist. According to this view, the social world is a product of social processes, and this means that there are no 'essences' inside people that make them what they are. This is in contrast to psychoanalysis for example, which is based on a pre-given universal content of biological instincts of the individual (Billig, 1999). Social constructionism is also anti-realist and maintains that all forms of knowledge are historically and culturally relative (Edwards and Potter, 1992). There is therefore no single "truth" that can be discovered (Durrheim, 1997). As Burr (1995) points out, the search for "truth" has been at the foundation of social science from the start, and social constructionism therefore heralds a radically different model of what it means to do social science. According to the social constructionist view, the theories of mainstream psychology are also culturally and historically specific and cannot be taken as once-and-for-all descriptions of human nature.

One of the most important differences between social constructionism and traditional psychology is the way that language is conceptualized. Language in most psychological approaches is considered a value-free medium of communication, and is taken for granted as a referential-representational system or code of meaningful signs (Potter, 1996; Shotter, 1993a; Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Gergen and Semin (1990) state that cognitive paradigms, which dominate psychology at present, hold that the role of language represents a secondary or derivative process, in that it conveys knowledge but does not constitute knowledge itself. One of the central arguments of constructionist metatheory is that language is not mimetic, in that it fails to function as a transparent, independent map or picture of the world (Burman, 1991; Gergen, 1997). Language is a pre-condition for thought, and this contrasts to mainstream psychological approaches which maintain that thought precedes language (Billig, 1996). The studying of language and everyday interactions is emphasized, because when people talk, the world gets constructed. Language has a constructive and performative role (Gergen, 1997; Wetherell and Potter, 1988). This shift in the way that language is conceptualized, and therefore how social interaction is seen, diverts the focus of understanding behaviour from the intrapsychic to the social domain. The social realm, where the social world is constructed, is therefore the focus.

41

3.1.3 Merits of doing social constructionist research

A key focus of social constructionism is on discourse and discourse analysis (which is the analytic method used in this thesis). According to Parker (1992, p. 5) a discourse can be defined as "a system of statements which constructs an object". Parker further states that discourse research "strikes a critical distance from language" (1992, p. 3). This is because discourse not only describes the social world, but categorizes it, and serves to bring different phenomena into sight (Parker, 1992). Discourses are found in textual material, i.e. "we find discourses at work in texts", where a text refers to "delimited tissues of meaning reproduced in any form that can be given an interpretive gloss" (Parker 1992, p. 6). Examples of text therefore include any aspect of the world that has been given meaning, such as speech, the written word, which includes books and newspaper articles, and visual images such as advertisements, art and architecture.

Discourse analysis has as its aim, the deconstruction of discourses, which is achieved through analyzing textual material. According to Burr (1995), deconstruction refers to attempts to take apart texts to see how they are constructed in ways which present particular images of people and their actions. While there are different strands of deconstruction, the process usually involves an examination of the text in particular ways. One method of deconstruction is to reveal the 'hidden' or repressed contradictions in a text, and to illustrate how a text draws the reader in to accepting the assumptions that lie therein. Another form invites the researcher to analyze the linguistic devices that make accounts justifiable (e.g. Billig, 1990). Yet another form which Burr (1995) terms the 'analysis of discourses', involves analyzing textual material in order to examine prevailing discourses, e.g., of "ordinariness", and to bring to the fore the identity and power implications that lie therein. This latter type of discourse analysis, which I adopt in this thesis, is in line with Parker's (1992) view that discourses produce and reproduce power relations, and have ideological effects.

Discourse analysis, and social constructionism, are often political activities due to their emphasis on how power and ideology are played out in discourse. There is an emphasis on deconstructing discourses which sanction oppression, and an examination of how particular discourses sustain particular narratives in order to justify the past and the present (Parker, 1992). These oppressive discourses serve the interests of the powerful, and silence others. For example,

Stygall (1994) examines a court case where an American logging company sought a restraining order to prevent a group of Haida Indians from interfering with their logging operation, on a particular island that was the ancestral home of the tribe. When appearing in court, the Haida Indians represented themselves even though there were attempts to convince them otherwise. Stygall (1994) notes that for the Indians, translating their claims into legal language would make them unrecognizable as Haida practice. As it happened, they used their own methods of conflict resolution to present their case, which included amongst other things, donning particular forms of tribal dress, explanations of their totems, and using oral poetry and song. This stemmed from their belief in resolving land disputes through negotiation, participation and consent, rather than adjudication (Stygall, 1994). However, Stygall (1994) states that their language was not relevant in the context of the courtroom, and this example serves as an illustration of the way in which legal discourse sustains its power by silencing any voice that does not adhere to its specific demands. The power of the legal discourse and legal institutions is maintained and supported through rendering invalid or inadmissible any conflicting or contrasting practice.

Gergen (1997) points out that various constructionist scholars have demonstrated the ways in which existing psychological accounts (and the practices which they sustain) lend themselves to different forms of social control, whether these be governmental control, destroying democratic foundations, or sustaining the patriarchal order. In this vein, de la Rey (1997) argues that historically, psychology maintained and supported the apartheid system of oppression in South Africa. During the apartheid era, the criteria for evaluating research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council was based on whether the findings supported apartheid politics (de la Rey, 1997). Gergen (1997) argues that a psychology that merely contributes to the status quo has little to offer, and becomes an 'elfin voice' in a mighty chorus. Rather, constructionist scholarship is keen to participate in a profession that augments culture's resources to expand and enrich psychology's potential in order to play a more vital role in society.

Whereas Gergen (1997) refers to oppressive psychological practices, Rose (1996) argues that the profession of psychology, by fostering and legitimizing particular definitions of individuals and society, produces particular kinds of subjects. The productive power of psychological knowledge (in producing self-governing subjects, for example) is intrinsically linked to the broad issue of governance in liberal societies, and has particular moral and political consequences (Rose,

1996). Rose (1996) proposes therefore that we need to investigate the ways in which psychology, is infused into particular practices and institutions in society, which limits the ways in which the individual can act and experience himself. The merits of adopting a social constructionist approach, are that it allows for and is suited to such kinds of inquiry.

One of social constructionism's strengths is its reflexivity. Reflexivity has multiple meanings in constructionist writing, and the reference here is to the more widely used meaning. According to Potter and Wetherell (1987), it refers to the idea that the critical stance that social constructionism proposes with regards to realism, it also proposes with regards to itself, i.e. social constructionism itself is not exempt from deconstruction and critique. Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 182) state that one should acknowledge that "one's own language is constructing a version of the world". This means that there is more honesty in recognizing that one's own work is not immune from the social psychological processes being studied (Burman, 1991; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Ultimately, reflexivity has to do with aiding accountability, and highlighting questions of power relations (Burman, 1991).

One way in which this is achieved, and this is encouraged in social constructionist work, is by making explicit one's own social, political and moral standpoint which serves to ground the research, instead of claiming neutrality. Because there are multiple realities that exist in the world, the researcher does not have the responsibility of depicting an objective reality. Rather, s/he is encouraged to display an awareness of her/his own view, and acknowledge the role that it plays in the way in which the research is conducted and reported. For as Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 182) state, "talk has the property of being both *about* actions, and at the same time *part of* those things".

3.1.4 A critical look at social constructionism

Criticisms leveled at the social constructionist approach fall into two main categories. The first has to do with the issue of relativism, and the second, primarily with that of reflexivity.

According to Burr (1995), the basic theoretical foundations upon which the approach rests are relativism and the constructed nature of reality. In undermining "truth" claims, and asserting

that there are only competing discourses, all discourses, or "readings" of a particular text, are rendered equally valid (Burman, 1990, 1991). Therefore the relativism of the approach makes the notion of asserting that a particular group is oppressed, particularly difficult (Burman, 1990). A researcher cannot claim to reveal a "truth" that lies within the text, and must acknowledge that his/her research findings are open to other, equally valid readings (Burr, 1995). According to Parker and Burman (1993), the problem of the status of the researcher's interpretation of a text, has not been resolved.

Similarly, Abrams and Hogg (1990) argue that Parker's (1992) list of features for identifying discourses, contains an implicit assumption that discourse analysts are qualified to identify and help marginalized groups. This leaves the decision regarding which groups need to be given "voice", or empowered, upon the discourse analyst. While Burr (1995) argues that most of those to whom social constructionism appeals to, are those that hold broadly left-wing or liberal views, there seems to be no reason why social constructionism could not equally serve right-wing interests.

The role of the speaker in the writings of some social constructionists is undermined. The focus on the way in which pieces of text are seen as of interest only because they hold "clues" to the discourses that are operating through them, neglects the active role of the speaker in constructing his/her world. Abrams and Hogg (1990) also argue that Parker's (1992) stating that "discourses are realized in texts" ignores the interpretive role of the researcher. Further, the identification of discourses may easily become little more than the labeling of everyday 'common-sense' categories of events as discourses (Burr, 1995). This is problematic because each existing object/entity, can therefore spawn an associated discourse, and the result would be a discovery of discourse for every common-sense category that is used.

Reflexivity also refers to the equal status of the accounts of the researcher and the participants in any discourse analytic study (Burr, 1995). Discourse analysts need to find a way to build into their research, opportunities for participants to comment on their accounts and those of the researcher. Sherrard (1991) states that discourse analysts do not often meet this criterion in their research, and Parker and Burman (1993) argue that even attempts to include the participants more fully in the analysis does not escape the problem of the power relations between the

researcher and the participants. Further, Sherrard (1991) points out that often researchers do not take into sufficient consideration their own participation in, for example, interviews, and how they are shaped by this participation. "They fail to examine explicitly their role in the production of the discourse they are analyzing" (Burr, 1995, p. 181). Burman (1991) argues that the "reflexivity" that is deemed significant in the research process, while adding to the strengths of the research, may also be problematic. When, for example, the researcher acknowledges his stance/subjective position, it may then render the research merely a "subjective" account. Burman (1991, p. 332) states that "rather than problematizing the ideological *power* of truth claims, the relativism this ushers in works to blunt the critical edge of critiques of the function of psychology".

Regarding the *political* slant of the framework, Burman (1991) argues that undertaking social constructionist research should not blind us to other methods that may be suitable for a given set of problems. She states that certain situations demand that instead of "mull[ing] over the discourse", it may be better to enter into the actual dispute (Burman, 1991, p. 337). It may be argued that during the apartheid regime, it was not necessary to use discourse analysis to confirm or elucidate that apartheid was criminal and highly oppressive. Rather, other kinds of more pro-active measures needed to be employed in order to fight the oppressive regime.

A final point regards Burr's (1995) criticism that researchers often do not provide sufficient detail regarding the description of the processes that were followed in conducting the research and compiling the report. More information on how the analysis was performed, such as how the material was coded or what criteria were used to identify bits of speech/text as similar or different, can only add to the "flavour" of the repertoires or discourses analyzed, and offer practical help to those who wish to attempt such studies for the first time. Burman (1991) concurs with this argument and states that the theoretical framework elaborates an analysis which resists generalized description and easy "how-to-do-it" rules, and makes it less accessible to those who may be introduced to it for the first time.

3.1.5 Social constructionism and selfhood

My goal in this section is to explore the notion of the constructed self. The discussion outlines the way that the self is conceptualized, analyzed and investigated in constructionist psychology, and therefore frames the way in which it is dealt with in the analysis.

3.1.5.1 The constructed nature of the 'self'

In today's times our talk contains numerous images that represent the individual as a single, unified, separate and solitary entity that is captured by the idea of the person as a monad (Burkitt, 1991). One only has to go back a couple of centuries, or to explore other cultures, to see that people have not, and do not, necessarily conceive of themselves as "individuals" or "selves".

The construction of the self (in the West) as we know it today, may be traced back to the seventeenth century (Gergen, 1999; Gergen and Semin, 1990; Shotter, 1993a). Slugoski and Ginsberg (1989) argue that the use of the word 'identity' in reference to personality and individuality, emerged then as well. Prior to this period, the self had been conceptualized in terms of a 'soul' or a 'human spirit'. But what does this say about the self? Firstly, it is an indication that common ways of speaking about individuals (or 'selves'), do not reflect a universal or 'true' knowledge about the individual, and have instead evolved over time with shifting historical and political circumstances. The way that the self is constructed in today's times, represents only one way in which individuals are, and have been, conceived. As with the nature of the constructed world we live in, the discourses of the self or selfhood, are constructed and located in a particular space and time (Danziger, 1990).

According to Gergen (1989), the seeds of doubt germinate over the 'real' nature of the notion of 'self', when one steps out of one's own cultural milieu and confronts the myriad of other ways that people of different cultures conceive of themselves. In line with this argument, Potter and Wetherell (1987) draw upon the work of Harré (1983) and Smith (1981) in order to describe the concept of personhood for the Maori. The Maoris believe that people are each invested with a particular kind of power call *'mana'*, which is given to the person by the gods in accordance with his/her birth circumstances and family status. The *mana* enables the person to be

effective in all spheres of life and can be enhanced or diminished by the person's day-to-day conduct. People's social standing, their successes and failures, are therefore dependent more upon external forces than their own motivation. Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that people who live in such a culture experience themselves differently, and that individuals do no represent themselves as the centre and origin of their actions, which is in direct contrast to the western concept of self.

It may be useful to use the traditional psychological view of the self to further illustrate the constructed nature of the self. Burr (1995) examines some of the principles upon which traditional views of the self are based. She states that it incorporates the notion of individual differences and stability over time, as well as a coherent and consistent self. The self is also linked to behaviour – there is thought to be a link between the individual's personality and their behaviour. One of the ways in which Burr (1995) challenges this notion is by stating that the words that we use to describe ourselves, do not have a constant meaning over time. For example, words such as 'normal' and 'abnormal', which may be used to describe the self, are definitions that have seen considerable shifts over time. Therefore, the concept of mental illness becomes not a predetermined category or illness, but something that is socially constructed according to the historical and cultural space that one occupies (Durrheim, 1997). Similarly, one would be hard pressed to come up with a definition of "ordinariness", without reference to the social context in which behaviour occurs. The concept of "ordinariness" does not represent a fixed or universal concept, but it constructed out of the available discourses in any culture, which relate to notions of morality, and acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

3.1.5.2 The self is constructed in social interaction

Following from the first point, social constructionism proposes that the self is constructed in dialogue – it is in social interaction that the self is produced. As Burr (1995) states, in attempting to understand the person we are, we can see that we are the products of social encounters and relationships. Instead of conceiving the self, or identity, as something which exists *within* an individual, the self is seen as that which is produced *between* people. This is illustrated by Burr (1995) through the use of the following example: she argues that when examining different words that are used to define the self (such as evil or hostile), these words cease to have

meaning once they are removed from the social context within which they occur. They gain legitimacy in the interaction between people – "once the person is removed from their relations with others, the words become meaningless" (Burr, 1995, p. 27). Words about the self essentially refer to behaviour towards others.

According to Shotter (1993a) the notion of the socially embedded self is a derivative of the social constructionist view that language has constructive and performative functions. It is therefore through speech and dialogue that our identities are constructed. Sampson (1993) states that language and communication are cultural practices which constitute our realities, and this includes realities considered social, as well as those we consider as psychological, such as identity, motivation and thinking. These various realities that locate the self (such as the political and cultural), are constituted in talk. Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that the very experience of being a person and the kind of mental life that one can experience, including how one experiences sensory information, depends upon the particular representations of selfhood and the ways for accounting for ourselves that are available to us in our culture. Our subjective experience of selfhood is laid down by the beliefs about being a person that are explicit in our language (Gergen, 1989; Harré, 1983). Therefore, social constructionist scholarship which seeks to study discourses of the 'self', will look to the study of language and social interaction as its focus.

3.1.5.3 Multiple selves

Burr (1995) argues that contrary to the traditional psychological view of a unitary self, social constructionism proposes that perhaps we each have a multiplicity of selves, which may not necessarily be consistent with each other. Our identities are made up of a subtle weaving of many different threads. Different identities may either 'sit well' together or may be in contradiction to one another. The following quote illustrates this view – Bauman (1989, p. 151) states that the holocaust perpetrators were "in no way evil...they had wives they loved, children they cosseted...". In this example, there is a contradiction between the different 'selves' of the perpetrators. On the one hand they perpetrated major atrocities, and on the other, they were loving family men. Bauman's (1989) quote shows him attempting to reconcile these two 'selves' or 'identities' of the perpetrators, while acknowledging that they are at variance with one another.

Our selves are therefore consisted out of multiple discourses. Class, gender, age and ethnic origin impinge upon the kind of discourses that each individual can draw upon, and impose restrictions upon the kind of person that we can claim to be. Different cultures allow/permit the use of different discourses for different groups of people. Burr (1995) points out that even though individuals may play an active part in fashioning their identities, this does not mean that all people have equal access to discourse. Our identities are fashioned out of the discourses that are culturally available to us (Sampson, 1993).

Harré and van Langenhove (1999) conceived the concept of 'positioning' to refer to this process of negotiating the self discursively. According to these authors positioning does not connote a static concept, where people occupy pre-ordained slots like coats over their selves. Positioning refers to a dynamic entity where subjects are simultaneously produced by discourse and manipulators of it. Harré and van Langenhove (1999) state that while each human is the seat of one person, they have a multitude of personas (or 'selves'). Further, being positioned in a particular way brings with it particular rights, obligations and duties. The dynamic nature of 'positioning' also means that the positions that are offered or imposed upon people, are accepted, claimed or resisted by them.

3.1.5.4 The role of power and ideology in shaping the self/identity (language and identity are sites of struggle)

According to the post-structuralist view, words, phrases, sentences and other textual material change over time, context and according to the different people that use them. The meaning of terms and other words, are contestable, and language becomes a site of struggle. Rose (1996) states that there are battles over truth, where truth is not only the outcome of construction, but of contestation. Language is a site of variability, disagreement and potential conflict, where power relations are played out (Sampson, 1993). Rose (1993) also argues that the 'economic machine' of the state which is propelled in the name of national and individual prosperity seeks to regulate experience in ways that are constituted of as 'non-political'. The very construct of self, according to Rose (1993), is a mechanism of social control, and the diverse ways in which the state polices the delicate line between private and public life and regulates

conduct is made obscure. Ultimately however, the technological apparatuses of the state work to produce particular types of subjects in order to achieve political ends (Rose, 1992).

Among the reasons why it is important to deconstruct the notion of the "individual" and to examine the institutions that support and promote it, is because the implications of this discourse are far-reaching and need challenging. Rose (1996) states that one could look at the history of psychology as embodying attempts to master people in order to better manipulate them. Psychology became an instrument of a process of domination at the service of powerful economic interests (Rose, 1996). For example, authors have shown how notions of individuality impact upon the way in which people are conceptualized, and where the locus of their problems is situated. This serves to ignore the role of power and ideology. Caplan and Nelson (1973) reviewed psychology's understanding of black Americans. They found that over 80 percent of studies on black Americans, attributed their problems to something about themselves rather than their circumstances. This means that the individual is given full responsibility to correct his/her situation, and underlying structures that thwart the opportunities of particular groups are reproduced through these practices. Feminists have argued similiarly that by placing the burden of responsibility on the individual to effect change in her life, there is a lack of acknowledgement of the social forces that contribute to the oppression of women.

Kitzinger (1989) explores the ways that lesbian identities have developed over time, and this illustrates the ways in which language and identity are sites of struggle. She states that lesbian identities emerged around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Up until the 1970's, lesbianism was constructed as pathology, and attempts to depathologize it and to construct it differently were dismissed or rendered faulty by a more prestigious social scientific interpretation. Lesbians' experience of themselves were structured in this way, and it was not until the mid 1970's that alternative discourse developed within the liberal humanistic perspective which offered alternative texts of identity for lesbians. Kitzinger (1989, p. 94) states that "identities are not primarily the private property of the individual, but are social constructions, suppressed and promoted in accordance with the political interests of the dominant social order". Although Kitzinger (1989) argues that the oppressed are actively encouraged to construct identities that reaffirm the basic validity of the dominant moral order, this does not help to understand the ways in which identities change even when the political circumstances remain unchanged. In this respect

the Black Consciousness (BC) slogan "Black is beautiful" made prominent in the 1970's, and which arose from dissatisfactions with the ways in which 'black' people were conceptualized provides a good example. Although BC succeeded in fashioning a different identity for black people, it did not evolve in a context where there was a shift in the local moral order.

This criticism can also be leveled at Sampson (1993) who explores the field of 'identity politics'. Sampson (1993) states that certain groups of people have voiced their discontent with the ways in which they have been defined and categorized, according to dominant social groups. He states that one particularly problematic strategy employed by these dominant groups has been the 'add-on' strategy. In research, for example, this would mean simply 'adding-on' to the traditional study of white Anglo-American culture (Sampson, 1993). This continues to serve the interests of the dominant groups rather than being genuinely transformative. Sampson (1993) states that it is necessary for marginalized or oppressed groups to be able to have their own 'voice' in fashioning their identities. Although he recognizes that this is a difficult task, he does not indicate how this can be done.

Identities are open to change, and they do shift and change according to changing times, places and circumstances. Identity, like language, becomes a site of struggle (Harré, 1989). According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999), the courtroom situation is an excellent example of the way in which the conceptualization of an individual is contested. Different parties attempt to position the defendant in particular ways and to achieve particular purposes. Ultimately however, it is the judge, acting in authority in the courtroom, who decides on the way in which the defendant is positioned, or identified, as either a criminal or an innocent person (cf. Billig, 1996). The positions that we take up also bring with them a particular set of self-narratives that we take on as our own. This involves an emotional commitment to the different identities that we see ourselves as belonging to. Some identities (or positions) are easy to shrug off, and some cannot be changed (such as being a criminal on a life-sentence).

3.1.5.5 Conclusion

Social constructionism offers a critical view of language and knowledge which stems from the notion that the world that we inhabit is constructed in various ways, and constructions of the

world are taken as representing the facts about the world. All forms of knowledge are located in particular historical, political and social contexts, including knowledge about the self. Conceptualizing the self as socially constructed, serves to shift the traditional psychological emphasis from the intrapsychic domain, to the social domain where social life plays out.

Language is a site of struggle, where meaning is contested, and different accounts vie for their version to be accepted as the truth. Identity is also a site of struggle. Our identities are made up of a number of different subject positions that we occupy in social interaction, and are constructed discursively, through language. Over time identities shift and change, and different groups of people are constructed differently. Research into the construction of self, therefore has as its focus, language and everyday conversation where the self is produced discursively. Various ways of constructing the self can then be examined in order to see what effects and functions these have in the different contexts that they are used. The "ordinary man" discourse is one way in which perpetrators are conceived. The next section of this chapter sees the deconstruction of discourses of the "ordinary man", as elucidated in the literature, in order to assess the functions and effects thereof.

3.2 DECONSTRUCTING THE "ORDINARY MAN"

As the literature has illustrated, conceiving of perpetrators as "ordinary men" has gained much legitimacy over time. Research has shown that most perpetrators are "normal" individuals, who show little sign of psychopathology. One might imagine that reconciling the notion of "ordinariness" with that of the perpetration of gross human rights violations is not an easy task. Yet, this is exactly what authors and researchers who have promoted this conceptualization have achieved. This section looks at how they have achieved this seemingly difficult task.

3.2.1 My political standpoint

A study of this nature would not be complete without exploring the issue of my political standpoint. In this section I explore this, as well as my reasons for wanting to deconstruct the "ordinary man" discourse.

Working with this thesis has been exciting and challenging. As an individual with strong political convictions regarding the wrongfulness of apartheid, and the deep divisions that it created in South Africa amongst its people, I engaged with the subject matter, precisely because it hooked some very personal cords. In reading the transcript, I was confronted with the ways in which perpetrators who had been responsible for heinous acts, were portraying themselves as "ordinary". The concept of the "ordinary man" is one that serves to divorce the perpetrator from his actions, and renders notions of individual responsibility and accountability problematic. It serves to promote the unquestioned following of orders, rather than the upholding of individual moral values. It decriminalizes perpetrators and their actions, and normalizes them. The "ordinary man" concept does not assist in seeking to ensure that oppression such as that which occurred during apartheid, is not repeated, because it maintains that those that were responsible for enforcing apartheid were "normal people, like you and me". Further, the TRC as an institution provides the conditions of possibility for this to occur. I will argue that deconstructing the "ordinary man" is significant for a number of reasons, especially in the context of the *new* South Africa. The implicit message from the TRC, regarding perpetrators, is that they are not criminals who deserve to be incarcerated. Rather, should perpetrators "come clean" about the gross human rights violations that they committed, they will be absolved of responsibility and granted amnesty. They would then be fit to be reintegrated into society because their conscience has been cleared through "confessing" their sins.

My feelings regarding the worth and effectiveness of the TRC are mixed. I am unsure of whether the odds were stacked against them, in their quest to 'heal the nation', or whether they provided the context for 'normalizing' the horrors of the past. I am also aware that democracy was born out of a negotiated settlement, and perhaps a truth commission was one of the few possible alternatives to deal with the past. However, all this aside, my argument is not that the TRC is wrong, but that it treads on dangerous ground. It proposes that the past be put to rest through the uncovering of the 'truth'. While it attempts to 'heal the nation', this is a goal that is far beyond its reach or its scope. The issue of those who ensured the survival and continuance of the apartheid regime, is not adequately addressed. Also, if perpetrators are constructed as "ordinary", this, by implication, renders 'ordinary' people who benefited from apartheid, also as not responsible for a regime that they put into power, and from which they benefited and continue to benefit to this day. The TRC, in putting forward the rhetoric of reconciliation and forgiveness,

has not, and does not, deal with this issue. How does one reconcile the poor and the rich? How does one reconcile millions of South Africans, for whose daily conditions have remained relatively unchanged, with the change in political dispensation? One could argue that I am laying too much blame at the hands of the TRC, and that the government of the day is not doing enough to change the lives of 'ordinary' South Africans. In my view, it will take many, many years, in order to set the balance more evenly, for the oppression of black people has been prevalent for too long to expect that changes will occur overnight. The TRC is an institution which effectively allows for those who benefited from the past, to continue to do so, because the real issue of redressing the balance of apartheid's wrongs is not adequately dealt with.

The "ordinary man" discourse therefore enables an artificial bridging of the gap between the deep divisions that were created as a result of apartheid. I will argue that the reintegration of perpetrators into society does the new South Africa disservice. Those that upheld the oppressive regime, are absorbed into South African society, without really accounting for their actions, and the injustices of the past remain unresolved. The "ordinary man" discourse needs to be deconstructed to highlight the ways in which oppression continues to manifest in different ways, in the *new* South Africa.

The issue of the political implications of the "ordinary man" discourse is again dealt with in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

* * *

It should be noted that the literature review contains work from a wide variety of authors. They do not all construct "ordinariness" in exactly the same way, yet there are clearly similiarities between them. Most however, have asserted the "ordinariness" of perpetrators, and in constructing the violent acts committed by the perpetrators, they look towards the system within which perpetrators operated for the answers, to why and how such acts occurred. The deconstruction of the "ordinary man" serves to refocus the spotlight on the "psychology" of perpetrators.

This chapter will show how the "ordinary man" is constructed and/or supported, and gains legitimacy. Discourses gain legitimacy and credibility through their association with other already established or credible discourses. These latter discourses will be examined, as will the devices that authors use to make this discourse credible or believable. Further, I will argue that one of the reasons that the discourse of the "ordinary man" gains legitimacy is due to the fact that perpetrators of gross violations of human rights who commit their actions within the context of a government or bureaucracy, are constructed differently from so-called *ordinary* perpetrators of violent crime, who may be seen as sadistic or psychopathic. The former type of perpetrator is constructed as not fitting this conventional image or role. Notions of crime and criminal activities are made incompatible with the discourse of perpetrators who commit atrocities in the context of a system.

3.2.2 Scientific discourse

Under this section, it is argued that discourses of science play a key role in constructing "ordinariness". There are two parts to this section. The first examines the construction of *accounts* of "ordinariness", and how, through emphasizing the use of scientific principles, they claim legitimacy and authority. The second examines how scientific discourse lends credibility to claims of psychiatry and psychology, and their view of the "normality" of perpetrators.

3.2.2.1 The voice of the author

When constructing an account on the "ordinariness" of perpetrators, the authors mentioned in chapter two have emphasized the scientific nature of their accounts, especially when compared to the contrasting opinions of lay-people. This dichotomy is presented as a result of a couple of factors. The horrific and grossly violent nature of the acts committed by the perpetrators, it is assumed/interpreted, elicits strong emotions by survivors/victims of atrocities as well as other members of society. The opinions of lay people are constructed as irrational and based on conjecture which come in the way of an "objective" view of the perpetrators. In comparison, the authors/researchers presented represent scientific views, based on hard scientific facts, and "objective" and learned interpretations of the psychology of perpetrators.

Most authors, in asserting the "normality" of perpetrators, begin by stating that the assumption is that these perpetrators are abnormal or pathological. Implicit in the term "assumption", is that this is probably the view of the lay-person, whose view needs correction – perpetrators are not abnormal. In order to explain why this assumption is incorrect, a binary opposition is created to separate the educated/scientific author from the lay-person, where the former is clearly constructed as being in a more informed position.

In the case of Arendt (1994), although her claim of using scientific principles may not be as strong as other authors mentioned, she renders her account more worthy than those of a lay-person. Arendt (1994) positions herself in a particular way right at the start of her book:

> I covered the Eichmann trial at Jerusalem in 1961 for *The New Yorker*, where this account, slightly abbreviated, was originally published in February and March, 1963 (Note to the Reader).

She is positioning herself in this sentence, as a journalist. The use of specific details such as the dates mentioned lend the account credibility because they are based on 'factual' information. Further, Arendt's statement that she covered the Eichmann trial during the year 1961, where she does not restrict the time frame to a few months, indicates that she covered the trial for the entire year. Arendt (1994) is firstly, stating explicitly that she reported on the Eichmann trial in a journalistic capacity. This lends her credibility because it is a journalist's duty to 'uncover' the truth, and further to ensure that they remain impartial observers and commentators on it. Arendt's credibility is further enhanced through her statement regarding the time frame during which she reported on the trial. She was present for a sufficiently lengthy period, to warrant 'expert' knowledge regarding what transpired. She states that at the start of the trial, the 'audience' consisted "chiefly of newspapermen and magazine writers who had flocked to Jerusalem from the four corners of the earth" (p. 6). The use of the word "flocked" has reference to sheep, who simply follow their leader, and are incapable of making informed decisions. However, "[t]he journalists remained faithful for not much more than two weeks" (p. 8). In these extracts, Arendt (1994) distances herself here from other journalists, who are given scant credibility in light of their perseverance in staying at the trial. She is indicating that her own position, was to endure the length of the trial, in order to comment on it after having heard the 'full story'.

Other ways in which Arendt (1994) renders her account credible, is the style that she adopts (which may be considered a journalistic style). She uses formal language, and quotes verbatim when possible. She mentions "evidence" that was put at the trial, and concretizes this with her own historical research. These are among some of the devices that she uses, in addition to those mentioned above, to indicate that hers was a scientific undertaking. She followed scientific principles, and her results (or commentary) are therefore based on a careful observation of the facts.

Whilst other authors quoted in chapter two, are not from the journalistic fraternity, most come from professions of psychology, psychiatry, or are researchers. The notion of "scientific principles" is therefore not alien to them. For example, Friedlander (1995) is a professor of history, and uses terms such as "detailed investigations" (p. xi) and "massive documentary record" (p. xi) in his work. Other authors such as Browning (1992, 1998) also use similiar terminology to render their accounts as based on factual evidence, and as the product of rigorous scientific principles. Browning (1998, p. xviii) states that the basis of his research was the "judicial interrogations of ... 125 men conducted in the 1960's" of the Reserve Police Battalion 101. He states that the indictment contained "extensive verbatim quotations" (p. xvi) and supports his claims by using terms such as "this document demonstrates " (p. 36) and "the document makes clear" (p. 36) . His is also a historical account which claims credibility through its reliance on first-hand sources, and through a 'factual' rendition of events. His reconstruction of events is often in direct quotes of the words of those who were there, or he uses their testimonies or documentation as a source of much of his reconstruction.

Foster (1987, p. 167) states that:

a widely held hypothesis argues that torturers must be grossly disturbed personalities. If there were substantial evidence to support such a notion, we may perhaps have greater reason to be optimistic about the rapid demise of torture, ...Available evidence however tends to point in an alternative direction: that torturers are not particularly abnormal.

Foster (1987) makes a distinction between the knowledge of lay people (those that hold the "widely held hypothesis"), and those (including himself), who, check the relevant "evidence" before coming to a conclusion. Here there is a similar binary opposite presented between those in

the know, social scientists and researchers who rely on and use scientific methods of enquiry, and others whose opinion is uninformed or misplaced, and not based on factual evidence. Similarly, Botwinick (1996), in the preface to her book, states that it was the product of "two decades of teaching of the holocaust" (p. xiii). Although Botwinick (1996) in this statement does not refer to the "normality" of perpetrators, she is grounding her work as that which has derived from many, many years of study and experience – one could refer to her as an "expert" in her field, and this lends her work considerable credibility.

The work of Zimmler, Harrower, Ritzler and Archer (1995) is also an indication in this respect. These authors come from the fields of psychology and psychiatry (and are all professors in their fields), which have strong ties to the discipline of science. Their subject matter includes "extensive psychiatric and psychological test[s] ... performed on more than 200 Nazis in an effort to understand the key personalities of the Third Reich" (p. xiii). They state further that their book will also provide "a professionally responsible and scholarly interpretation of the psychological test data of the more than 200 Nazis..." (p. xiv), and that their text is "intended as the definitive and comprehensive study of the psychological functioning of the Nazi war criminals" (p. xiv). These authors are quite straight-forward regarding the position they grant themselves. They state clearly that their opinion, based on rigorous scientific principles, can, and should be, accepted as the authority on the psychological functioning of the perpetrators of the Nazi holocaust. The account is presented as almost factual, which cannot be disputed.

There is a similiarity in the "voice" of the authors mentioned. This plays a key role in constructing the "ordinariness" of perpetrators as a fact which has emerged from rigorous scientific investigation. It is a voice that is in opposition to the lay persons' interpretation of the "normality" of perpetrators which, it is intimated, is based on conjecture, and not an 'accurate' account of the situation. The "scientists" presented, are able to be more "objective" in rendering an opinion that is based on factual evidence and not swayed by emotional concerns.

3.2.2.2. Psychiatric & lay notions of 'normality'

When illustrating the "normality" of perpetrators, often one of the strongest forms of evidence used, is that of perpetrators passing psychiatric tests of normality, or it is inferred that

most perpetrators would pass tests of normality. The irony is that the question of the *normality* of perpetrators, is an excellent example through which one could illustrate that discourses of normality are socially constructed, for this issue begs the question of how it is possible that perpetrators of such gross human rights violations *are* considered normal as adjudged by rigorously standardized psychiatric tests?

Authors that have reconciled these two concepts, i.e. that of normality and the perpetration of gross human rights violations, instead of questioning the concept of "normality", have often tried to illustrate that the system or context within which the "ordinary man" perpetrated his crimes was criminal or abnormal. They have therefore not only quoted that perpetrators have passed psychiatric tests of normality, but they have used this to claim weight and substantiation for their argument. Such is the case with Hannah Arendt's (1994) book on Eichmann where she states that "[h]alf a dozen psychiatrists had certified him as "normal"-"More normal, at any rate, than I am after having examined him," one of them was said to have exclaimed..." (p. 25).

The latter quip shows the irony of the situation. Being in the profession and position that he is, it would be difficult to question the normality of the psychiatrist. Yet, he is left feeling *less* normal (if that is possible), after having found Eichmann to be without a doubt normal. Although his words do not overtly say so, they reflect an acknowledgment of the questionable validity of psychiatric tests in assessing "normality" as Eichmann's case had shown, or perhaps that there is more to the assessment of "normality" than what these tests are able to detect. Similiarly, Zimmler *et al* (1995), who examine the psychological test data of the Nuremberg defendants, as well as of a sample of rank-and-file officers, are unable to find any sign of abnormality. From a constructionist point of view, the psychiatrist's comment, and the findings of the latter authors, are a reflection of the constructed nature of "normality". According to psychiatry, normality is a product of scientific principles and rigorous testing, which then establish the "norms" of society. However, there is no fixed entity of "normality". It is not just a relative concept that is different from culture to culture. "Normality" is a concept that is constructed and defined based on particular available discourses, such as those of psychology.

Kren and Rappoport's (1980) assertion of the "normality" of perpetrators is not based on actual findings of psychiatric testing, but is assumed, or derived from accounts of victims who indicated that in most camps, there was one, or at most a few SS men who were known for their outbursts of sadistic cruelty. Kren and Rappoport (1980) state instead that although most SS men were not always decent, their behaviour was at least considered comprehensible by the prisoners, and it is assumed that they would have easily passed psychiatric tests. Kren and Rappoport (1980) use the opinions of lay-people – they draw on the notion that if an individual is "abnormal", this will be noted by those who have contact with him.

This contrasts with Arendt's account, where she clearly differentiates her opinions, and those of psychiatrists, from those of lay people. Bergen (1998, p. xii) states that with regards to Eichmann, Arendt felt it was "important to [listen] to him as he appeared to her in the courtroom … as a person who was conveying the meaning of his experiences to others by speaking about himself". Although both accounts rely on the interaction between people, and give credence to this, Arendt (1994), indicates that she was prepared to do what others (or lay people) were not prepared to do – they wanted to label Eichmann a "monster" and were not prepared to "listen" to him. This account constructs "normality" as something which can be assessed or judged by those interacting with a person, regardless of their psychological or psychiatric experience. The TRC FR (1998) similiarly implies that upon "listening" to the perpetrators it became clear that there was no sign of abnormality, based on the evidence. Kren and Rappoport's (1980) account indicates that contrary to what they expected, when the victims encountered the SS, they found them to be normal – these accounts indicate that experience is the key to assessing normality.

This contradicts the notion that experts, armed with scientific knowledge, are necessary to assess normality, but stresses that if ordinary people are prepared to forgo their assumptions, they can also assess the "normality" of perpetrators, by becoming objective and scientific. Key to this is the notion of being able to hold one's assumptions at bay, and not be influenced by commonly-held understandings of perpetrators as being "sick" people. There is an indication here of how notions of psychology, and psychological knowledge have been disseminated in society, which enables lay people to render opinions on the "normality" of perpetrators, which are given credibility in their own right.

Kren and Rappoport's (1980) statements show another way in which "normality" is constructed. "Normality" is an absence of sadistic or cruel behaviour. It is defined not by what "normal behaviour" may be, but by the absence of "abnormal" behaviour such as cruelty. The normality of perpetrators is asserted when contrasted to the expected behaviour of criminals, i.e. sadism, cruelty or abnormality. However, there is a splitting here of the behaviour of the perpetrators. Actions such as killing (which perpetrators engaged in), which could be conceived as cruel, are ignored or divorced from the perpetrators. The actual atrocities may also be constructed as being "abnormal", but are split off from the perpetrators, which permits them to be then constructed as "normal".

Zimmler *et al* (1995) state that the absence of any pathology in the psychological test data that they examine, indicates a need to perhaps search in the social, cultural or political sphere for the answers. They maintain that their findings do not alter the integrity of the profession, and do not question the assumptions underlying "normality". This is because they assert that their findings are based on a "scientific" analysis, which make them perfectly credible. Their account of the "normality" of perpetrators, also serves to split the cruel actions of the perpetrators from the perpetrators themselves.

It has emerged that there is a reliance on utilizing scientific discourses to construct credible accounts. Scientific discourses are also utilized by the professions of psychiatry and psychology to give credence to their work. Discourses of science, and thereby medicine, which is a discipline that is encompassed by science, have a long established and strong credibility in society. Associated with scientific discourse are notions of systematic observation and objectivity. Further, contained within scientific rhetoric are notions of rigour, accuracy and "expert" knowledge in matters of health, illness and disease, and the treatment thereof. Psychiatrists can therefore claim "expert" knowledge, and expertise in differentiating the sane form the insane, or the normal from the abnormal. The interpretive repertoire of scientific discourse restricts the notion that like other discourses, science is not based on immutable facts, but on constructions which have gained popularity and legitimacy over time.

The discourses of science are used by the authors mentioned in this section, not only to claim authority over what is reported/stated, but to strengthen the notion of the "ordinariness" of

perpetrators, since the scientific establishment finds them so. The assumptions underlying "scientific" constructions of "normality" remain unquestioned. In addition, in this section, it has been shown, that when evidence is lacking of psychological testing of perpetrators, it is assumed that they are "normal" based on the experiences of those who interacted with them. These experiences focus on particular expected notions of "abnormality" and ignore particular aspects of the perpetrators' actions.

3.2.3 "Normal" values/morals

Another way in which the "ordinary man" is constructed is by presenting him as an individual with "normal" characteristics, and as having normal values, such as "normal" or "healthy" attitudes towards his family and friends. This achieves the goal of presenting him in the same vein as others in society, or as the same as "you and me" where the "ordinary man" comes to epitomize a universal kind of individual with universal values.

Arendt (1994) constructs "normality" using both notions of what "normality" entails, and what "abnormality" entails. She stresses that the paradox of which Eichmann was a prime example, was that he had started as an "active worker in the rescue of Jews from Europe" (Arendt, 1994, p. 61). The use of the word "rescue" clearly indicates an active and altruistic motive. It is clearly differentiated from simply doing one's job, where the perpetrator is placed in more of a passive role. In Arendt's (1994) narrative this passive role is used to construct Eichmann's atrocities. The construction of Eichmann's role in evacuating the Jews from Europe, could also be conceived as a fulfillment of his duties, yet it is constructed as an active, positive and redeeming feature of his person. Further, in constructing the positive attributes of perpetrators, there is an absence of the impact of the system on these, or the context of these acts. The context is only highlighted when there is a split between the perpetrator and his inhumane actions, and the system is then seen as the key to the horror.

In a somewhat similiar way, Arendt states that Eichmann was law-abiding, and neither perverted nor sadistic, nor did he have the "insatiable urge to kill" (1994, p. 26). She also quotes a minister who stated that Eichmann was a man with "very positive ideas" (1994, p. 26). That these ideas are presented as a justification for Eichmann's normality, indicates that Arendt (1994)

supports these ideas. However, this way of constructing Eichmann's normality represents a narrow view of his *morals*. It serves to silence or divorce him from the actions for which he is accused, and other aspects of his life or personality. The actions for which Eichmann is on trial are not subjected to the same moral assessment as are his other actions, and there is a clear splitting of the two.

Thereafter, Arendt (1994) looks at the view of the minister who counseled Eichmann. The reference to religion and religious discourse is meant to further bolster this view. In using religious discourse she is subtly implying that the minister, and the institution of the church, approved of Eichmann, and indeed saw him as having a healthy outlook and values. The minister "reassured" everybody that Eichmann was not a "monster", and Arendt uses this quote to imply that he was therefore not the "abnormal" person he was made out to be.

Bauman (1989) supports Arendt's notion of the "banality of evil" and says with specific reference to Eichmann that "it is common knowledge… that initial attempts to interpret the holocaust as an outrage committed by born criminals, sadists…or otherwise morally defective individuals failed to find any confirmation in the facts of the case", and that "their refutation by historical research is today all but final" (p. 19). It is difficult to reconcile the notions of morally correct behaviour, and Eichmann's horrific actions. Bauman's construction of morality is based on the idea that in Eichmann's everyday life, and in the context of his social life, aside from his duties as an SS officer, Eichmann never killed or hurt anyone. There is a clear split between Eichmann's actions as an SS officer, and those which he undertook in a more individual capacity, which enables the construction of "ordinariness". When discussing Eichmann's morality, the acts for which he was tried are ignored. Further, Eichmann and other perpetrators are placed in a passive role in relation to the system within which their acts were perpetrated.

Milgram (1974) stated that prior to conducting his experiment, he asked psychologists, psychiatrists and lay people what they thought the outcome would be. They all expressed the view that few people would inflict harm on others, and few in the experiment would proceed to the end of the shockboard. This is an indication of the way in which cruel or inhumane actions (or abnormality) are generally constructed – they are understood as being inherent in an individual,

and not affected by context. However, according to Milgram (1974) his results indicated that inhumanity is a matter of *social* relationships.

His results, and the resulting constructions of normality and abnormality, serve ultimately to divorce the individual from his actions. Milgram's (1974) study shows that cruelty is not committed by cruel individuals, but by "ordinary" men and women trying to acquit themselves of their "ordinary" duties (Bauman, 1989). In this construction of the individual, there is a clear indication that the individual should not be associated with being branded a "cruel individual". It is the context which is blamed, and this enables the "ordinariness" of the individual to remain intact. At no point is there a questioning of definitions of normality, or cruelty, and how these are socially constructed. Instead, the participants are seen as passive, and not active receivers, of "cruel" orders.

3.2.4 Familial discourse

Arendt's (1994) views on Eichmann's characteristics and values are summed up in the following. She starts off by saying that one of the other psychiatrists who assessed Eichmann found him not only to be normal, but found that:

> "his whole psychological outlook, his attitude towards his wife and children, mother and father, brothers, sisters and friends, was 'not only normal but most desirable'. Behind the comedy of the soul experts lay the hard fact that his was obviously no case of moral let alone legal insanity..." (p. 26).

There are various ways that she constructs Eichmann's normality here. She begins by asserting that he had "normal" family values and relationships, and similiarly "normal" attitudes and relations with his friends. She is using familial discourse to construct his normality, which in Eichmann's case, as with other perpetrators of gross human rights violations, becomes difficult to reconcile with discourses surrounding the crimes or heinous deeds that he has committed. However, the "psychological outlook" presented above, also splits Eichmann's actions – it divorces his actions as an SS officer, from those that he engaged in socially.

Bauman (1989) also uses familial discourse to construct the "ordinary man". He states that the holocaust perpetrators were not evil and "had wives they loved, children they cosseted, friends

they helped and comforted in case of distress" (p. 151). In the latter quote he produces normality. It is unthinkable says Bauman (1989), that men who had such healthy and caring attitudes towards their families, actually "shot, gassed, or presided over the shooting and gassing of hundreds of thousands of people including women and children" (p. 151). In the latter quote Bauman is producing abnormality. He shows that these two constructions are incompatible, and the only way in which they can be reconciled is if these men were indeed "normal", rather than challenging this concept. It reflects the strength of one discourse over another. The perpetrators' actions, because they do not fit "conventional" images of "abnormality", when placed next to the familial discourse used, allow for the assertion of the "normality" of perpetrators.

3.2.5 Universality of the "ordinary man"

Bauman (1989) constructs the "ordinary man" as something that is and can be found *in* any or all of us. He states that some authors saw Milgram's (1974) experiments as illustrating that perhaps there was in most people, if not all of us, "a little SS man waiting to come out"; or that Milgram (1974) had discovered "the 'latent Eichmann' hidden in ordinary men" (p. 167). In this production of the "ordinary man", Bauman attempts to show how universal the "ordinary man" is. He can be found *in* all of us. He begins by linking the "ordinary man" with healthy and desirable familial relationships, a lack of mental illness, and a lack of sadism and perversion. The discourses that he draws upon to link to normality are persuasive in the context of the modern and civilized society that we live in today.

However, the narrative serves to silence the heinous deeds/actions of the perpetrators. It is like being shown only one side of a coin with which to view an individual. Bauman is trying to show that the "ordinary man" and each of us are the same. He asks, "How could ordinary people like you and me do it" (p. 151)? He states that the fear that we all have, and "what frightens us about the holocaust is not that this could be done *to* us, but the idea that *we* could do it" (p.151). Yet this paradox is never resolved and remains unquestioned. You and I have not committed these acts, so there is no way in which one could assess whether you or I would be capable of them. Browning (1998, p. xx) states that the policemen in the battalion which he studied were "human beings. I must recognize that in the same situation, I could have been either a killer or an evader...". Tutu (1999) similiarly asserts that each individual has the capacity for evil, and that it

66

is impossible to predict how we, as individuals would react provided the same circumstances. Tutu (1995) and Browning (1998) are also intimating that anyone could easily be a perpetrator, to indicate the "ordinariness" of the perpetrators that they encountered. Yet, like Bauman (1989), the possibilities or impossibilities of action remain unresolved, because they cannot be resolved.

Bauman (1989), in the quote mentioned from page 151 above, uses terms such as "you an me", "the idea that *we* could do it" to produce the "normality" of these perpetrators, and to bridge the distance between these perpetrators and Bauman's readers. Bauman here is doing two things. He is responding to conventional conservative discourses of the "abnormality" of perpetrators, which constructs them as "monsters" or psychopaths. The latter discourses serve to create a gap between so-called "ordinary" people and "ordinary" society, and insulate them from these perpetrators. By bridging this gap he is responding to or challenging conservative or conventional discourses of the "abnormality" of perpetrators. Further, he constructs perpetrators as "one of us", or as people like "you and me", and finally as something that is inherent *in* all of us (as indicated by the term "we could do it"). Therefore perpetrators cease to be "out there", divorced from society either in prisons or in asylums, and become one of us, or *in* us.

In reviewing the experiment by Zimbardo *et al* (1973) (which involved a group of prisoners and prison guards), Bauman (1989) comes to a similar conclusion regarding what is "in" each of us. According to Bauman (1989, p. 167), the men involved in the study are suddenly "transmogrified" into monsters. There is a sense of the individual changing as a result of his experiences into a different kind of being. The result of this experiment, Bauman (1989, p. 167) states, is that its outcome is perhaps an indication that each of us has a "latent Eichmann" waiting to emerge. Two points need to be made here. Firstly, the context is seen as that which elicits the cruel behaviour, and secondly, by stating that "each of us" may have a latent evil waiting to be triggered, Bauman (1989) is still asserting that all people are the essentially the same in that they all possess this *in* them.

Paradoxically, it is Arendt (1994) who sums up this issue very well in the epilogue of her book. She gives a summary of the kind of address that *she* felt the judges should have given Eichmann when sentencing him. In it she deals with the issue of the possibility that any individual in Germany, or anywhere for that matter, could have done what Eichmann did. This is in response

to Eichmann's assertion in his defense that he was merely a "cog" in the system, and that had it not been him, any other person could have fulfilled his role. She states that "there is an abyss between the actuality of what you did and the potentiality of what others might have done" (1994, p. 278). Here Arendt (1994) constructs Eichmann's actions as being infinitely separable from those of "ordinary" members of society. There is a huge gulf between what he had done, and the rest of society. Arendt (1994) constructs Eichmann's actions here as being abnormal, or out of the norm, while at the same time illustrating the problematic nature of the arguments provided by Bauman (1989), Browning (1998) and Tutu (1999).

3.2.6 The force of the system

The word "system" here represents the context of the perpetration of atrocities, and includes social systems, political organizations as well as organizations such as the security forces.

In constructing the relationship between the perpetrator and the system, the system is sometimes constructed as a "criminal" system. Arendt (1994) states that crimes such as those that Eichmann committed, "could only be committed under a criminal *law* and by a criminal *state*" (p. 262). Here she distances Eichmann from his "criminal" actions by stating that it was the state that was criminal, and that his actions would not have otherwise occurred or been possible under a different system. She also indicates the "abnormality" of the system, when she states that under the conditions of the Third Reich, only "exceptions" could be expected to react "normally". Here she is stating explicitly that the system was warped/wrong, and not the perpetrators that belonged to it. Assertions such as the latter are corroborated by Kuper (1981) who states that genocide is almost invariably, a crime of governments, or organized groups. Here again, the government or system is conceived of as criminal, and this serves to distance the role of individuals in enforcing the system.

Foster (1987) examines the psychology of torturers. He states that research indicates that torturers are "far more likely to be quite ordinary people in an extraordinary, abnormal situation" (p. 167). The findings of Zimmler *et al* (1995) regarding the "normality" of the perpetrators that they investigated, is also telling in this respect. They state that origins of Nazi genocide should be sought for primarily in the context of social, cultural and political, rather than psychological

factors (Zimmler *et al*, 1995). These authors, upon finding that perpetrators were not pathological, are indicating that the context or system within which they operated, was pathological.

In discussing the SS, Bergen (1998, p. 46) refers to it as "more than a security force, it was a vanguard for reorganizing the nation...". Bergen (1998) characterizes the SS as a strong and indomitable force. Part of the way in which the system is constructed, is as a powerful and dangerous force which could overpower individuals. This construction attributes to the system considerable power and strength, in the face of a passive, and almost meek, perpetrator, who obeys, and is swept along by this force. Similarly, du Preez (1994), states that:

> [t]he Nazi movement... intensified the prejudice against Jews as defectives and dirty disease carriers and linked this with a theory of racial hygiene which enabled them to draw in scientists and doctors to assist in the task of purifying the nation (p. 97).

The Nazi movement, is constructed here not only as a formidable force, but as an one that has an almost sucking power, which draws in scientists and doctors, who are constructed as passive in being sucked in to the movement. Bergen (1998, p. 23) states that Nazi rule was "a means for dominating and terrorizing human beings from within". This quote further enhances the powerful and feared way in which the Nazi movement was perceived. Bergen (1998, p. 45) also attributes a similar power to the SS when he refers to it as an organization that "came to assume control over the security apparatus of the nation, including administration of the concentration camps, and later the death camps, as it took responsibility for planning, administering and implementing the Final Solution". The SS is constructed as the machinery behind the ghastly acts of the Final Solution. Although it is an organization, it is given *responsibility* here, where it can be said that the SS were therefore ultimately responsible for the Final Solution. Yet this construction of the organization, serves to silence that the SS was made up of thousands of people. It was these people who ensured that the tasks of the SS went smoothly. These renditions not only construct the context or system as an indomitable force, they fail to construct it as consisting of *actions* of people.

Similiarly, in the TRC FR (1998, vol. 1, ch. 1), the authors state that apartheid was "evil", and clearly a "crime against humanity". The system was illegal or criminal. In the TRC FR (1998,

vol. 5, ch. 7), the authors quote Bishop Storey who stated that "the primary cancer will always be apartheid" (p. 275). Here as well, the system is constructed negatively; it has the power to attack and infect the people. It is a force that is impossible to stem, and the people are passive recipients of it. The authors further state that the motives of perpetrators have to be understood primarily "in historico-political terms; that is, psychological explanations and motives, while not irrelevant, are secondary" (TRC FR, 1998, vol. 5, ch. 7, p. 277). The political nature of the conflict, or the nature of the context, is seen as the driving force behind the actions of perpetrators.

The system is therefore constructed in a number of ways, all of which are negative. The system is constructed as criminal, and further as a force that cannot be opposed. It sucks in the perpetrator, who is helpless and unable to match its strength. The perpetrator is positioned as a weak, helpless, small and easily suppressed being who is swept up by the force of the system. The system in turn is the epitome of evil, and is a powerful, dangerous and indomitable force. This constructs the perpetrator as "ordinary", in that it indicates that the perpetrator has no choice, but to give in, or obey, this force. The issue of responsibility is therefore muddied, and because the system is the epitome of all the evil, *it* is to be held responsible. Yet, how does one hold a system responsible?

3.2.7 Obedience, passivity, & a lack of motivation

The issue of obedience to authority is a key issue in the way that both the individual perpetrator and the system is constructed. It reflects that the system is seen as an active agent, while the individual is constructed as a passive recipient of orders. There is little agency accorded to the individual.

Arendt (1994) quotes Eichmann as saying that his, and the obedience of others like him, was like the "obedience of corpses" (p. 135). The use of the word "corpses" indicates more than a strong passivity in the way that Eichmann constructs his and others' behaviour – he is indicating that they were passive to the point of not having a life outside of their duties. He further states that his obedience was "abused" by his superiors – here again he indicates that he saw himself in a completely passive role (Arendt, 1994, p. 175). His superiors were able to do with him as they pleased, and they abused this. Eichmann's words indicate that he felt that he could not engage in

any action on his own accord, and that everything that he did was dictated by his obedience to his superiors.

The issue of obedience as the primary reason for the committing of atrocities is highlighted by many authors. Bauman (1989, p. 90) states that "[t]horough, comprehensive, exhaustive murder required the replacement of the mob with a bureaucracy, the replacement of shared rage with obedience to authority". Other authors such as Browning (1992, 1998) have demonstrated that perpetrators followed orders, and when asked to explain their behaviour, they did so by stating that they had to obey their orders. Staub (1989), in exploring how the holocaust was possible in Germany, states that in German culture, there was respect for, and obedience to authority.

These explanations of the behaviour of the perpetrators serves to reinforce their passive role, and the active role of the system. Bauman's (1989) statement indicates that the *system* was engineered in particular ways that allowed and enforced the holocaust, thereby constructing the system as the active agent in the equation. Similarly, Staub's (1989) view is that German culture was somewhat to blame, since the culture encouraged obedience to authority. The culture, rather than the individual perpetrators, are constructed as having agency and enforcing such authoritarian values.

Milgram (1974), in examining the results of his experiments, states that individuals enter an "agentic" mode, and relinquish individual responsibility in order to act as agents of authority. He further states that the individual relies on the definition of the situation that is provided by the authority figure. Although Milgram (1974) does use the word "act" it is clear from his explanation that he sees the actions of the individual as representing or embodying a passive role. As in Eichmann's case, the *act* part of the word action, is not emphasized. These constructions of the normality of perpetrators interprets their *act*ions, as a passive activity, or render themselves passive and submitting to the will of the system. Eugene de Kock states that "[w]e were just doing our jobs, it was difficult to refuse..." (Pauw, 1997, p. 320) and "[my] orders... had come from police generals" (Meredith, 1999, p. 52). He places himself in a passive or receiving role. Even though his words include the word "doing", which is an *act*ivity, through indicating that he was following his superior's orders, which he found difficult to refuse, he places himself in this

71

passive role. This reinforces the notion of the system being responsible for the actions of the individual perpetrators.

Arendt (1994) comments that "[e]xcept for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement, [Eichmann] had no motives at all. And this diligence in itself was in no way criminal; he certainly would not have murdered his superior in order to inherit his post" (p. 287). This is yet another way in which perpetrators' actions are maintained as passive. Although Arendt (1994) mentions that Eichmann was diligent in looking out for his personal advancement, she undermines this when states that he had no other motives in perpetrating his crimes, and that he would not murder his superior in order to inherit his post. Arendt is asserting Eichmann's normality, by reiterating that murder was not an option for him. Maintaining the lack of motives or motivation of the perpetrator, constructs him as "normal" because he has nothing to gain from his atrocities – they are constructed as actions undertaken simply in order to obey orders.

Staub (1989) presents another alternative. He states that while obedience is an important force, it is not the true motive for mass killing, and that rather the motivation to obey comes from a *desire* to follow a leader. Staub's (1989) view that the tragedy of the holocaust is that loyalty and obedience were exalted over individual moral responsibility. Rather, than constructing obedience as simply where perpetrators passively followed orders, Staub's (1989) use of the words exalted, indicates that even in the simple act of obedience there is, or may be, an active component. The perpetrators would not have obeyed had they not valued obedience, and therefore they actively participated in their duties. Staub (1989) is arguing that those who willingly accept the authority of leaders are likely to have the same values espoused by these leaders. Constructions of the "ordinary man" present him as a passive individual, while ignoring any *desire* that the perpetrator may have.

Staub (1989) addresses the issue that the other narratives silence – the desire to obey is the motive or motivation that accompany the perpetrators' actions. Although Staub (1989) also presents the actions of the perpetrator as passive, because they follow orders, he renders the perpetrator accountable for any atrocities because of the role that motivation plays in them. Clearly, the depiction of the passive role of perpetrators and their corresponding lack of

motivation, plays an integral role in constructing the "ordinariness" of perpetrators, which serves to make the issue of responsibility problematic.

In constructing the system and the perpetrators as active and passive respectively, there is a split between the system and the perpetrators. The former is defined in terms of evil, and the latter as a passive channel through which it flowed. Bauman's (1989) notion of "free-floating" responsibility is accurate in summing up the way that the discourse of the "ordinary man" constructs the responsibility issue – it does so by blaming the system for atrocities of the perpetrators, and in so doing renders responsibility "free-floating" in that it cannot then be pinned down. He also states that "the organization as a whole is an instrument to obliterate responsibility" (Bauman, 1989, p. 163), and aptly sums up the core of the problematic nature of the "ordinary man".

3.3 CONCLUSION

The deconstruction of the "ordinary man" has necessitated an examination of the ways in which both the individual perpetrator and the system within which he operated, are constructed discursively. Splitting is used to divorce the perpetrator from his atrocities, by not subjecting them to the same moral assessment or criteria that other actions are judged by. Positive actions, such as acts of kindness, are seen to represent those that the perpetrator undertook in an individual capacity, and which confirm his "ordinariness". At the same time, the atrocities of the perpetrator are rendered as separate from him, and rather constructed as actions of the system. The system is constructed as an active agent in undertaking and enforcing atrocities, and the perpetrator is simply a channel through which this takes place. The perpetrator is passive in obeying the orders of the system, and is constructed as weak and ineffective in matching the powerful force of the system. "Ordinariness" is therefore constructed using both the system and the individual perpetrator – the system provides the space onto which all the evil/wrong committed can be split onto (it becomes the embodiment of all evil), and therefore plays a significant role in maintaining the psychological "normality" and integrity of the perpetrator.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY & ANALYSIS

4.1 METHODOLOGY

As an introduction to the core of the chapter, i.e. the analysis, the methodology that was adopted is explored. Under the methodology section, various pertinent issues are raised, such as sampling and ethics, which play an integral role in any research undertaking. This is followed by an examination of the research *process* – which looks at what was done and why it was done.

4.1.1 The research question

I chose to contextualize my study in the work of the TRC because the issue of dealing with South Africa's past was concretized in, and by, it. In choosing the focus, or unit of study, those who had served in the security forces in enforcing and upholding the apartheid regime, and their re/integration into South African society, was of particular interest to me. With the change in dispensation, and the recognition that apartheid was a crime against humanity, how would South Africans deal with, or confront, those whose job it had been to ensure the survival of apartheid? The research question therefore became one of how perpetrators would account for themselves and their actions.

4.1.2 The transcript/data

The focus was therefore clearly on the accounts of perpetrators as opposed to the victims/survivors. Having chosen the amnesty hearing of Biko's case as the focus, led to the purchase of the transcript of the amnesty hearing into Biko's death from Veritas, a transcription company. Obtaining the transcripts thus, meant that I had in hand an already transcribed source of data. It saved me much time and effort. Having had prior experience with transcription, I was aware of what a long and tedious process it was. However, obtaining a transcript in such a manner had its drawbacks. Firstly, the method of transcription was already decided, and I had no input into how the transcription would be conducted (there are a variety of methods of transcription which may be employed in transcribing audio material).

The transcript provided is similar to a transcript that emerges out of a court hearing, and therefore does not contain information such as pauses, or their lengths. This kind of transcript would not allow for example, in-depth analysis into the functions of laughter and gaps in the conversation (which are not transcribed). As the material under study was not the technical analysis of a small piece of data, and was more concerned with the discourses at work in the production of "ordinariness", this transcript proved highly appropriate. According to Potter and Wetherell (1987) for many kinds of research questions, fine details of timing and intonation are not crucial, and may instead interfere with the readability of the transcript. Secondly, it meant that I had not interacted at all with the subjects of study. Although this meant that there was a certain distance between myself and the object of study, there was no intervention on my part, and the subjects could be studied in a "naturalistic" setting. Ultimately, there was no researcher interference. The question then arises, regarding whether the transcript was suitable to the research question.

The use of this particular data, i.e. the transcript of an amnesty hearing, proved appropriate to the research question for a number of reasons. Firstly, the amnesty hearings were/are representative of a process whereby perpetrators are required to *account* for their actions. They are required to contextualize the specific acts for which they have applied for amnesty. It became clear that the perpetrators were also implicitly accounting for being a part of the apartheid regime – this issue was key to the thesis, and was dealt with in the hearings. Further, the fact that the applicants would be questioned by their own attorneys, and then by the prosecuting attorney, meant that the latter would try to expose the inconsistencies (or variation) in the accounts of the applicants. Because the attorney for the victim (as Steve Biko is referred to in the hearings) would challenge the story of the applicant, it meant that the issue of variation could be more than adequately assessed from the transcripts. The aims of the research proved in sufficient concordance with the aim of the TRC amnesty proceedings to warrant the use of an amnesty hearing as the data of the thesis.

4.1.3 Sampling

I have already illustrated how the subject matter of the thesis was chosen. Having done so, I had the task of reading and re-reading the transcripts. Included in the transcripts were the

testimonies of all five applicants, as well as the testimony of Peter Jones, a fellow activist of Biko's who had been arrested with him in August 1977. The testimony of Jones was considered necessary/applicable on the grounds that the detention of Biko and Jones had occurred within sufficient time proximity of each other to conclude that they had been treated similiarly whilst in detention. With the transcript totaling more than 1000 pages, it became clear that it was too large for the scope of a master's thesis. Therefore it was necessary to choose one applicant as the focus of the study.

There was unanimous agreement in the transcript that only three of the five applicants had engaged in the actual "scuffle" that led to Biko's death. This was the first point of elimination, and those that had not been involved in the "scuffle" were excluded on the grounds that the thesis was about perpetrators of gross human rights violations. The three applicants involved in the "scuffle" were Siebert, Niewoudt and Beneke. The two former applicants were part of the investigative team whose job it had been to interrogate Biko. Beneke had been working in an office next door to the interrogation room, and, according to him, had entered the fray, when he observed that Biko had acted aggressively.

Siebert was chosen as the applicant whose testimony would be used on a couple of grounds. Firstly, he had been involved in the "scuffle" that led to Biko's death. He had also jointly (with Snyman) been in charge of the interrogation of Biko, had rank and authority, and therefore had some degree of responsibility in its operation. This was an important differentiating point for the literature review and the transcripts showed that the issue of responsibility was a significant one. A last point on the choice of Siebert's testimony, especially as compared to that of Niewoudt, regarded the issue of Peter Jones' testimony. Jones testified that Niewoudt in particular had been heavily involved in his torture. Niewoudt's own testimony therefore dealt quite extensively in responding to Jones' testimony. Since the focus of the research was on the amnesty applications regarding the death of Biko, Niewoudt's testimony which dealt with Jones' testimony quite extensively was rejected.

The choice regarding which applicant's testimony to use as the focus of the study, could easily have been a random one, and produced similar results. Having acquainted myself sufficiently with the testimony of all five applicants, there is much similiarity between them. The

themes that developed could easily have come from examining the testimony of any of the other four applicants. The testimony of the other four applicants was useful in that it informed my reading of Siebert's testimony.

4.1.4 Ethical issues

The thesis did not provide me with many ethical dilemmas, as I had no intervention in this 'naturalistic' setting. One ethical question had to do with naming the actual perpetrators. In this regard it has to be noted that the TRC amnesty hearings into the death of Steve Biko were public hearings and therefore available and open to the general public. They had been reported on extensively in the media, and were by no means confidential. The transcripts of the amnesty hearings were therefore also public documents. At no stage of the amnesty process was there any attempt to conceal the identities of the perpetrators. As with most of the other amnesty hearings brought before the TRC, it was necessary for the hearings to be *public,* to facilitate the search for the "truth", and in so doing, facilitate nation building and healing.

The other way in which ethical issues formed a part of the research process, was in the actual way that the research was conducted and reported. There was always an adherence to ethical principles in ensuring that guidelines such as those provided by the American Psychological Association (APA ethical guidelines) were followed in all areas of the research process.

4.1.5 Methodology of Analyses

As is evident, a dual analysis was undertaken in this thesis. The first was the analysis of the literature review, and the second, the analysis of the transcript of the TRC amnesty hearing of Daniel Siebert into the death of Steve Biko. The texts used in the different analyses are quite different in a number of respects. The literature review is an amalgamation of a number of different works by a number of different authors, and represents their opinions and findings. While there were different emphases to the works of these authors, they shared the view that perpetrators were "ordinary" men. The literature review therefore represents a bringing together of all these strands. The transcript was of a court proceeding, and as such, a recording of the

verbatim account given by the actual perpetrator. It was essentially the "voice" of one individual, whereas the literature review was a combination of different voices, drawn together under one umbrella.

But what does this mean for the methodology of analysis that was adopted? The methodology that is outlined in this section is that which was essentially adopted for both analyses. The main differentiation between the two analyses, is that Positioning Theory (which is explored towards the end of this section), and Parker's three auxiliary criteria relating to discourse work (which follows this), are used in the transcript analysis and not in the literature review analysis. There are a number of reasons for this difference in treatment. With regards to the use of Positioning Theory, the latter is not suited to the literature review because of the many different authors and the different slants to each of their work. Parker's three auxiliary criteria (which essentially relate to issues of power, ideology and the role of institutions) are not applied to the analysis of the literature review, on the grounds that the literature is extracted from a variety of different social and political contexts. It would therefore be impossible in this thesis, to explore the role of the "ordinary man" discourse in the literature, in relation to Parker's three auxiliary criteria, adequately. However, with regards to the local context, exploring the political implications of the "ordinary man" discourse is an essential component of the thesis. Lastly, it should be noted that for reasons of expediency, in the remainder of this methodology section, the word 'text' is used to denote either the transcript or the literature review.

According to Durrheim (1999) in constructionist analysis the different phases of the research process shade into each other and the analysis is not conducted independently of the data collection. This was the case in this thesis – the multiple readings of the transcripts, and investigating the "ordinariness" of perpetrators in the literature, was done whilst examining the theories that informed these readings. However, for the purposes of outlining the steps undertaken, I would say that after multiple readings of the transcript, it became clear that the perpetrators were essentially arguing that they were "ordinary" men. A review of the literature that saw perpetrators from this perspective was undertaken. Having explored this literature and the transcripts, it was decided that discourse analysis would be used to analyze the "ordinary man" discourse. This was undertaken in order to see how "ordinariness" is constructed in the

context of the perpetration of atrocities, and to see the functions and effects thereof in the local political context.

4.1.5.1 Multiple readings

Work in the initial stages involved multiple readings of the text (with the transcript, this meant the amnesty hearings of all five perpetrators at this stage). The multiple readings involved immersing myself in the data in order to reflect on it. This was necessary to the process of becoming familiar with the text, and saw the start of the process of developing ideas or theories of what different discourses were at work in the production of "ordinariness".

In line with the theoretical framework that underpinned the study, the text was not treated as a realistic or factual account. Potter and Wetherell (1987) state that discourse analysis, in tuning in to the functional/constructive nature of talk, suspends the realistic approach, and focuses on discourse as a topic in its own right. Therefore, with the transcript for example, my aim was not to look at whether the talk was an indicator of some internal state of the perpetrator, but to focus on how the account was manufactured. The text was treated as a narrative or an account, and the focus of the analysis was to unravel the pieces or structures of the account, in order to see how they worked together and what function they served.

Parker's (1992, p. 5) definition of discourse as "a system of statements which constructs an object", has already been mentioned in the theory section. Burr (1995) elaborates upon this definition by stating that a discourse refers to a set of meanings, images, stories, statements, that in some way together produce a particular version of events. The "ordinary man" discourse in the literature review is built up using discourses of, for example, psychological 'normality' and 'abnormality'. These and other discourses such as familial discourse, and discourses of conventional criminality, together produce the discourse of the "ordinary man". This draws on Parker's (1992) notion that a discourse refers to other discourses. The next step involved picking out where in the text, the "ordinary man" discourse was at work.

Each respective discourse that builds the "ordinary man" discourse, brings with it a different slant or angle to the "ordinary man". As Burr (1995) states, there are a multitude of

different ways in which an object may be constructed in language, therefore there may be a number of different discourses which tell a different story about the object in question, which represent it in a different way to the world. The things that people say or write, can be thought of as instances of discourse, where particular discourses are given the opportunity to construct an event in one way rather than another. The different discourses that may be used in constructing an object, may be useful in showing the variation in the discourse, and in the text.

Wetherell and Potter (1988, p. 172) put forward the concept of interpretive repertoires, which they take to mean the "building blocks speakers use for constructions of actions…any particular repertoire consists of a restricted range of terms used in a specific stylistic and grammatical fashion". Interpretive repertoires may be thought of as tool kits of resources from which people can construct events and entities for their own purposes, and are textual. They function to enable people to justify their versions of events, to excuse or validate their behaviour and fend off criticism, or otherwise allow them to maintain credibility in interaction. For example, in the TRC, those who came forward regarding the abuses that they suffered at the hands of the apartheid government or the liberation movements, were called either 'victims' or 'survivors'. These people could conceive of their identity in the context of the TRC in one of these ways. The former term stresses the passive role of the individual, while the latter, is more pro-active and positive, and suggests that the individual overcame the experience.

As the multiple readings progressed, these were done by paying attention to a few key features of the text. These are identified by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) as useful tools that help to reflect on the text. They include the search for binary oppositions in the text. Examples of these include oppositions such as weak-powerful, active-passive and masculine-feminine. These authors also state that oppositions are often implicit in texts, and only one side may be explicitly mentioned. For example, in the literature review, there was a binary opposition between the perpetrators of atrocities, and conventional criminals. The latter were conceived as criminal, evil or pathological, and the former, as normal and "ordinary". One side of the opposition may be silenced (in this case discourses of the conventional criminal), and the reading of the text therefore involves tuning in to the text to be able to make explicit this binary opposition (Burr, 1995). Another way in which the text may be read, is by identifying recurrent themes, phrases and metaphors (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). Therefore, this step

involved highlighting terms and phrases in the text which referred to particular discourses which constructed "ordinariness".

4.1.5.2 The subject and agency

In the context of the analysis, Wetherell and Potter's (1988) notion of interpretive repertoires provides a useful conceptual tool in dealing with the issue of the subject's agency. Using interpretive repertoires as a conceptual tool, means that the person is given agency in constructing accounts and themselves which serve particular purposes. The individual is seen as actively selecting appropriate devices to negotiate a position within the local moral order. Wetherell and Potter (1988) state that although the individual is an active player in drawing upon particular repertoires, this process goes beyond the immediate social situation that they are engaged in, and the implications and consequences of using particular repertoires may be unintended by the speakers themselves. They further state that efforts to construct events in particular ways may be done at a non-conscious or non-intentional level, and does not mean that people are necessarily acting in a machiavellian fashion.

Similiarly, Harré and van Langenhove (1999) state that a strength of the post-structuralist research paradigm is that it recognizes the constitutive force of discourse and discursive practices, and recognizes that people are capable of exercising choice with regards to those practices. With regards to personhood, who one is, is an open question, depending upon the positions made available within particular discursive practices, and stories through which we make sense of our lives. In the context of the transcript, the perpetrator is seen as actively selecting particular discourses with which to construct his argument. However, the discourses do not originate in the perpetrator; they are already existing in his culture.

4.1.5.3 Coding

According to Potter and Wetherell (1987) the coding process essentially involves taking an unwieldy body of discourse and converting it into manageable chunks. Coding therefore involved marking off bits or sections of the text (e.g. terms, sentences, or paragraphs) that pertained to a particular theme or discourse. In the analysis of the transcript for example, any and

all references to the government and police, were therefore coded, since these formed part of the construction of the "ordinary man" discourse. A particular paragraph or sentence, was coded more than once if it contained material which could be placed under more than one theme. The cut-and-paste function of the word processor was invaluable here. In undertaking the coding process, I coded, read and recoded until I found there was nothing new or significant which had been omitted.

I have explained the method of sampling that was used, i.e. that it was purposive, and that eventually it led to the choice of using the transcript of one perpetrator as the focus of study. The hearings of all five perpetrators were used initially, and multiple readings elicited many themes from this text. This process was intensified and conducted much more vigorously upon the smaller transcript that was chosen as the focus of study (i.e. the hearing of the applicant Siebert), and was followed by coding the latter transcript.

4.1.5.4 How was the text analyzed?

According to Potter and Wetherell (1987) analysis involves trying to make sense of the text through identifying the organizational features in it. The latter authors also state that key to this process is much careful reading and re-reading, and much struggling with the data before a systematic pattern emerges. The coding process was followed by much reading, and paying attention to function and variation in the text. The issue of the 'function' of talk, i.e. that language *does* things, has already been dealt with in the theory section. The application of this concept in the analysis, involved paying attention to the implicit and explicit functions of pieces of text. In a courtroom situation for example, a defendant may take the witness stand, and defend the actions that he is accused of, through placing himself in a passive role, as one who was merely obeying orders. This functions to render him less responsible for his actions.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) also state that talk is orientated to many different functions, and that an examination of language over time will reveal variation in the talk – i.e. "a person's account will vary according to its function". Therefore, in the same example, the defendant may draw upon particular discourses to construct his account in the courtroom, and give a different account of his actions to his friends and family. This is because each account is serving a different

function. Variation in the text was therefore explored to investigate how this was related to function, and why the variation occurred at particular points in the text.

Yet another facet of the analysis concerns the 'effects' of texts. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) state that constructionist analyses aim to link accounts to actions. Therefore there is a focus not really on what texts say, but on what they do (i.e. their effects). The authors further state that texts attempt to do a number of things simultaneously, e.g. to convince the reader that the account is reliable, to advance a particular ideology, or to motivate the reader to act in a particular way. The analysis therefore involved tuning in to the explicit and implicit 'effects' of pieces of text.

While the framework as outline already was used in the analysis of both the literature review and the transcript, the analysis of the transcript took these step further through the use of Positioning Theory as outlined by Harré and van Langenhove (1999).

4.1.5.5 An introduction to Positioning Theory

As a theory that is situated under the social constructionist umbrella, and one which is geared towards the analysis of conversational activity, Positioning Theory was used in the analysis of the transcript. According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999) the theory may be framed as a possible apparatus for social constructionist theorizing based on a dynamic analysis of conversations and discourses. According to this theory, conversation and conversation-like activities are the 'place' where psychological and social phenomena are jointly created. Positioning Theory was also used because it meant that there was a concordance between the framework that grounded the analysis, and the methodology that was used.

The central component of Positioning Theory, is the notion of a 'position'. In the social sciences, this concept was first introduced by Hollway (1984) in her study of the construction of subjectivity in heterosexual relations. In her analysis, Hollway (1984) illustrated how 'positions' were 'taken up', and how people positioned themselves. She also stated that "[d]iscourses make available positions for subjects to take up [which] are in relation to other people" (p. 236). The concept of positioning in Positioning Theory is used in line with Hollway's (1984)

conceptualization. Harré and van Langenhove (1999) elaborate upon it by stating that a position involves a complex cluster of personal attributes, which impinge on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup and intrapersonal action that an individual can engage in. In the analysis, the perpetrator and others were therefore seen as 'positioning' themselves in the context of the narrative.

Inherent in the notion of positions are also that they are contested, constantly shifting, and impact upon rights, duties and obligations of speaking and acting. For example, the position of a judge, may involve rights to decide on the guilt/innocence of an accused, and also involves particular obligations to be fair and just in making judgements. Positions are relational, in that they do not occur in isolation. For example, judges and witnesses have asymmetrical positions (Edwards, 1997; Stygall, 1994). The judge therefore is more powerful in determining the outcome of a case than is a witness. In this context it is easy to illustrate that discourses make available positions for subjects to take up (it is judicial discourse that permits the taking up of the different positions of judge and witness). Positioning also relies on issues of the 'investment' that different subjects have in their positions, which accounts for why particular positions produce or reproduce specific power dynamics. Hollway's (1984) concept of 'investment' illustrates that for example, gender-differentiated positions, are not fixed, and that there is room for shifts in power, depending upon whether there is sufficient investment to take up an alternate position. In the analysis, I examined how the individual's investment in a particular position, impacted upon the positioning that took place.

In contextualizing conversational activity, Positioning Theory draws on the work of Harré and Secord (1972). The latter authors conceived of the notion of 'episodes'. These are defined as a sequence of occurrences in which humans engage in, and which have some principle of unity. Episodes shape what participants can say or do, while simultaneously being shaped by their participants. Episodes may be formal (where they are shaped by explicit rules which govern the sequence of events), or they may be informal (where the rules that govern them are less strict, and more a function of the biographical background of the participants). The amnesty hearings into the death of Biko are an excellent example of formal episodes, in that they are governed by specific rules regarding the sequence and nature of the talk permitted. An example of an informal

84

episode, may be a 'social' gathering of friends, where they will jointly determine the sequence and outcome of events based on the interaction of the people involved.

4.1.5.6 The position/act-action/storyline triad

Before exploring this triad, it needs to be located in what Harré and van Langenhove (1999) refer to as the persons/conversations referential grid. According to these authors, this grid is used instead of the Newtonian-Euclidian space/time grid of the natural world, where people are treated in the same way as natural entities and phenomena. In so doing, the social world is too often pictured as deterministic in a Humean sense, and where space and time are independent (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999). These authors propose the persons/conversations referential grid as an alternative, for Humean aspects of the social sciences have been much criticized. The grid that they propose is in line with new assumptions about the 'substance' of social and psychological realities. As speech-acts, and conversation, are taken as the 'matter' of social reality, a grid can be constructed in which "people are seen as the location of social acts" (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, p. 15).

Within this grid, positioning is then understood as "the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of the conversation have specific locations" (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, p. 16). People can either position themselves, or be positioned by others. The way in which a person's contributions are heard in a conversation, depends on the individual's personal attributes and the context of their actions/speech. Therefore, an individual who appears in court on a murder charge will be positioned in a particular way if the act occurred in self-defense, as compared to an individual who has a previous murder conviction. Whilst in both cases the context of the act plays a role, so too does the attributes, or previous actions of the individual. Positionings can and do change, and are 'fluid' in nature, as they are used to cope with situations that people find themselves in.

In the analysis I paid attention to the way that people were positioned in the narrative, and the rights and obligations of the different speakers. I also investigated how the actions of the individual were construed in light of the change in the political dispensation. This was significant

because under the previous dispensation which provided a different context, the actions of the perpetrator were seen differently. Other significant aspects of the analysis involved exploring the storylines that were running through the narrative.

Conversations have storylines, and the positions that are taken up in any given conversation will be linked to these storylines. In a storyline of victimization for example, a defendant may position himself as the victim of another individual, and his attorney will be positioned as an empathic listener. This example also illustrates how an individual positions himself and others simultaneously in a conversation. The analysis therefore explored the different storylines, and in so doing also examined the positions that these storylines opened up for the different individuals in the narrative. Positions are intrinsically linked to actions. In a particular storyline, an individual in a particular position, is able to *act* in accordance with that position and storyline. In a courtroom, the position of judge allows the judge to find a defendant guilty and sentence him to time in prison. Positions may be put forward, and thereafter challenged, so that repositioning occurs. Ultimately however, positions moderate as conversations unfold. The analysis involved conceiving of conversations as joint activities, as for the most part, they involved both the perpetrator and an attorney. Positioning has a dynamic character, and conversations often contain a braided development of different storylines, which in the context of analysis were teased out in order to assess the effects and implications thereof. The lasts steps in the analysis paid attention to the work of Parker (1992) where he explored significant features of any discourse analytic work.

4.1.5.7 Parker's three auxiliary criteria
(Discourse in relation to institutions, power and ideology)

Parker (1992) outlined seven criteria that deals with the different levels of discourse analysis, some of which have been mentioned in the theory and methodology sections already. In addition Parker (1992) proposes a further three auxiliary criteria. He states that ignoring the role of institutions, power and ideology, in discourse analysis, results in work that is "worse than useless" as it rests on the assumptions of an amoral/apolitical psychology (Parker, 1992, p. 1).

Parker's (1992) first criteria, 'discourses support institutions', in essence concerns examining which institutions are reinforced or supported through the use of a particular discourse, as well as which are attacked or subverted through the use of that discourse. Parker (1992) states that institutions are reproduced through, amongst other things, discursive practices. 'Discursive practices' of legal discourse might include drawing up a subpoena or filing for a dismissal in a case. These practices serve to sustain legal discourse. In the analysis therefore, I examined the link between the 'ordinary man' discourse, and which institutions were reinforced or subverted by it.

The second criteria, 'discourses reproduce power relations', is linked to the first. According to Parker (1992), institutions are structured around, and reproduce power relations. In terms of legal discourse, the asymmetrical power relations between a judge, lawyer, and witness, is an example of how the discourse is linked to powers to speak in a courtroom situation. Therefore, judges, and lawyers, would serve to benefit from the powers that legal discourse grants them. In line with Parker's proposed 'steps', I therefore examined what categories of people served to gain or lose through the employment of the 'ordinary man' discourse, as well as who would want to promote and/or dissolve the discourse.

Lastly, Parker (1992, p. 20) links the first two criteria to ideology. Parker (1992) conceives of ideology as a "description of relationships and effects, [where] the category should be employed to describe relationships at a particular place and historical period". The last 'steps' that Parker (1992) proposes include showing the connectedness of a discourse to other discourses that sanction oppression, as well as showing how a discourse permits dominant groups to give their narratives about the past, in order to justify the present, and prevent the oppressed from making history. Parker (1992) elaborates on this by stating that the three auxiliary criteria and associated 'steps' that he proposes, need to be undertaken with the elaboration of the researcher's political motives/standpoint. In the context of this thesis, I put forward my political standpoint at the start of chapter three. In the analysis I linked the 'ordinary man' discourse with other discourses in South Africa, in order to see how it may be connected to oppression and domination in the present political climate.

4.1.6 Conclusion to methodology

As I have stated already, the methodology adopted was concordant with the paradigm that grounds the thesis. While I have attempted to give an outline of the different 'steps' that were involved, the actual working of the analysis, and the thesis as a whole, was undertaken in a much less orderly manner. Where necessary for example, certain 'steps' were repeated, and the analysis was then reworked accordingly. Potter and Wetherell's (1987) analogy of discourse analysis being more like riding a bicycle (in comparison to qualitative analysis which they liken to baking a cake from a recipe), is an apt illustration of how the analysis was undertaken. The next section in this chapter deals with the analysis of the transcript.

4.2 INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

The analysis of the transcript explores how the applicant, Daniel Petrus Siebert, constructs his narrative using the discourse of the "ordinary man" in the context of perpetrating gross human rights violations. In his narrative, he uses this discourse in order to frame his actions, opinions and positions, in connection with the assault and death of Stephen Bantu Biko, for which he applied for amnesty to the TRC. Having stated that, I need to clarify that the construction of "ordinariness" by Siebert represents my reading or interpretation of the transcript. Through quoting various extracts, I build up my argument that this is an implicit construction.

There are three main storylines which are explored. The first titled "Doing my job" examines extracts where Siebert frames his actions as being intrinsically linked to his occupational duties. I explore the variation in this storyline which elucidates the different ways in which "ordinariness" is constructed. This is followed by the storyline entitled "Cops and criminals" where there is an examination of the use of racist discourse in Siebert's narrative. He and Biko are positioned essentially as good cop and insane criminal respectively. The last storyline titled "Passivity in the face of influence and persuasion" is in simplistic terms a contradiction of the first two storylines. Here the extracts reviewed show how Siebert constructs his ordinariness through positioning himself as one who was wrongly influenced by others around him.

To clarify some of the people in the narrative: Goosen was the head of the police unit (and is deceased), Snyman was the commanding officer (of the investigation/interrogation), Siebert was the second-in-command; the other officers involved in the interrogation were Niewoudt and Marx. Beneke had been involved in some work adjacent to the interrogation office, when he heard some commotion and subsequently rushed into the fray. The attorneys include Bizos (who represents the Biko family), Mpshe, who is his co-counsel, and Booyens, who represents Siebert.

4.3 "DOING MY JOB" STORYLINE

This storyline as it is explored in this section, is not a straightforward or simplistic one. Contained in this section are various ways in which Siebert and others in his narrative are positioned through different the angles of this storyline. For example, one way in which this is interpreted is, where Siebert places himself in a passive role – I was merely doing my job. Another way in which this is interpreted, is when Siebert places himself in an active role – I was doing my job because I believed in what I was doing (i.e. I was working for a good cause). Each different angle/interpretation, positions Siebert and the others in his narrative differently. Ultimately, the argument that will be made, is that in positioning himself and others in these different narratives, Siebert constructs his own "ordinariness" in different ways. Therefore, while there is a difference between his being passive and active, both construct him as an "ordinary man".

Under this section, various themes which relate to the ways in which Siebert constructs his actions as relating to his job, and often, as being dictated by his job, are explored. Included here, are different linguistic tools that Siebert employs to construct his actions very specifically as occupational, and not personal. In so doing, Siebert distances himself from the police system; his narrative indicates that it was the system which "ordered" his actions, and it is therefore responsible for them. However, the issue of personal actions and motivations is also linked in his narrative, to his occupational work. Siebert at other stages, shows that he was personally motivated in conducting his occupational activities (which is at variance with the first notion of simply following orders). In this way of constructing his "ordinariness" he situates himself as working within a just, fair, and right system whose responsibility it was to police and control criminal elements in society such as "freedom fighters" in order to protect society. His motives are clearly presented, he is an active and willing agent in fighting for the rights of his people, and

other South Africans. This narrative is based upon nationalistic principles, and it is through conveying these that he constructs his "ordinariness".

4.3.1 The "ordinary" career

One of the first ways in which "ordinariness" is introduced in his narrative, is when Siebert outlines the "ordinary" career path which he followed in the South African Police Security Branch:

```
1    MR BOOYENS:  You were attested in the police on the 25th of January 1962?
2    MR SIEBERT:  That is correct.
3    MR BOOYENS:  At Uitenhage?
4    MR SIEBERT:  That is also correct.
4    MR. BOOYENS:  You then provide, on page two of your application, that would be
5    13B of the bundle, an explanation of your career in the police?
7    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
8    MR BOOYENS:  According to this, you joined the Security Branch in 1967?
9    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
10   MR BOOYENS:  What would your rank have been at that time?
11   MR SIEBERT:  Sergeant.
12   MR BOOYENS:  In what section of the Security Branch did you initially work?
13   MR SIEBERT:  I worked in the section that dealt with White, Coloured and Asian
14   affairs.
15   MR BOOYENS:  As what?
16   MR SIEBERT:  As a field worker.
17   MR BOOYENS:  That would have been right from the beginning?
18   MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
19   MR BOOYENS:  I note, in addition, or rather, until when were you a member of
20   the Security Branch?
21   MR SIEBERT:  Until 1989.
22   MR BOOYENS:  In 1989 what occurred?  You became Regional Head of Crime
23   Combating and Investigation which would previously have been the Detective
24   Branch in the Eastern Transvaal?
25   MR SIEBERT:  That is correct.
26   MR BOOYENS:  And in 1992 you retired with the rank of Brigadier or rather
27   1995, my apologies?  In addition, you mention the various courses that you did
28   while in service of the police?
29   MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.  (extract 1, p.2-3)
```

Firstly, it is apparent that the extract shows the 'joint activity' of Siebert and Booyens. The narrative reveals that Siebert worked for the police in different capacities over a period of 33 years. This line of questions and answers serves to highlight a few things. Firstly, it sets up Siebert as someone who knew the extent and gravity of the security situation in the country, because he was at one stage a "field worker" (L. 16). Siebert, having worked in the field, can claim to be knowledgeable about what was going on "on the ground". This kind of narration which draws upon his personal experiences, serves to legitimize his rendition of the security situation in the country.

More importantly, the extract shows that like any "ordinary man", Siebert started at the bottom, and through hard work, was successful in working his way up the ranks of the police force. This account draws upon notions of the "ordinary" career. Siebert's having worked himself up the ladder in such a manner (which is rated highly in terms of societal values), serves as a reflection of his normality. Even though it is not explicitly stated, Siebert is orientating himself to success and "ordinariness".

The narrative reinforces the idea that Siebert did not commit his acts in an individual capacity. He was firmly and successfully entrenched in the police force, and promoted as well. This means that he performed his job well and was an asset to the police force, and, one could argue, this illustrates that he was adept at obeying his superiors and conducting his duties, else he could not have gotten as far as he did. The implicit message is that had he been unfit to be a policeman and incapable of carrying out his duties well, he would not have gotten that far. He was able to fit in to the police force, did his job, and did it well.

Siebert and Booyen's narrative attempts to show that belonging to the police force involved maintaining the laws of the country, and was an honourable job. This is achieved by stating that Siebert joined the "police" (L. 1), was part of the "security" establishment (L. 8, 12, 20), was responsible for "crime combating" (L. 22-23), and attained the rank of "brigadier" (L. 26). The use of such terms in the narrative connotes belonging to the "right" side, which was responsible for apprehending the "criminal" elements of society. Siebert's career was dedicated to maintaining "ordinary" values and norms in society, and he was therefore himself an "ordinary" man.

4.3.2 Language of instruction

One of the strongest ways in which Siebert conveys that he was "ordinary" and merely following orders, is by continually reiterating that in his capacity as a police officer, and specifically in dealing with Biko, he was merely following the orders of his superior/s. His attorney supports this, by asking at different stages whether Siebert had *instructions* to act in particular ways, and Siebert always replies in the affirmative. The word "instruction" and "instructed" appear frequently throughout his testimony (e.g. p. 10, 17, 26, 27, 29), as do other

terms which reiterate that his actions were undertaken in an occupational rather than in an individual capacity. The following is a simple example which typifies his responses as to why particular actions were undertaken. When questioned about why Biko, who was clearly badly injured, was transferred to Pretoria in a Land Rover rather than an ambulance, Siebert states:

```
1    MR SIEBERT: I did not enquire about that, Colonel Goosen made the enquiries,
2    he made the necessary arrangements or negotiations and that was the instruction.
     (extract 2, p. 78).
```

His insistence on using language of instruction conveys that he had little control over how things transpired, or were to transpire, because he was merely following orders. His job was to await instructions. This is further illustrated through his use of the term "he informed me", and such similiar terms. For example, he states that:

```
1    When I was at the office in the afternoon on the eighth, Colonel Goosen informed me
2    that the deceased was to be transferred to a Noordeinde prison for continued
3    attention... (extract 3, p. 26)
```

This reflects that he was "in the dark", so to speak, of what he would be instructed to do, as this was left up to Colonel Goosen to decide. He is positioned as one who was merely following orders, and doing the job that he was instructed to do. In the context of the way in which Biko was treated, this narrative implies that Siebert's actions were not undertaken in his personal capacity, but only influenced by what was required from him in his job. The system here is used as a background which serves to foreground Siebert's "ordinariness". It is the system which is given agency, intentionality and a sense of purpose (in the above extract the system is represented by Colonel Goosen). Siebert, in comparison, is a passive recipient and follower of orders. Constructing the system in this way serves to make Siebert almost like a "cog" within the machinery of the system. His actions seem divorced from him; they represent the will and purpose of the system, and not Siebert's. The narrative conveys a sense that Siebert's role could have easily been undertaken by anyone else in the system. There is nothing here to indicate that it was anything about Siebert per se, which had to do with the actions which he undertook.

```
1    MR BOOYENS: Prior to this date, did you have any personal contact with Mr
2    Biko?
3    MR SIEBERT: No, your Honour.
4    MR BOOYENS: Did you, to the best of your memory, ever meet with him before
5    you collected him at New Brighton?
6    MR SIEBERT: No, your Honour.
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```
7    MR BOOYENS:  Did you have anything to do, my apologies, this was Walmer
8    police Station where you collected him.
9    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
10   MR BOOYENS:  Did you have anything to do with his detention or the manner of
11   his detention?
12   MR SIEBERT:  No, your Honour. (extract 4, p. 13)
```

The above extract provides support for Siebert's claims that his interaction with Biko was purely that which was required of him in terms of his job. Firstly, there is a clear sense of the functional division of labour in the police system. Each officer had his own tasks to accomplish – in the above extract it was Siebert's duty to collect Biko from Walmer police station. Siebert, or any other officer, could have been asked to undertake any of these tasks. Siebert did not therefore interact with Biko in a personal capacity.

Further, according to the narrative, when Siebert collected Biko at Walmer police station, it was the first time he ever saw Biko, and he had not been involved in Biko's detention (or capture). Because he had never encountered Biko before, this is meant to illustrate that Siebert had no ill-feeling towards Biko. This notion of no ill-feeling or hatred towards Biko, draws on the implicit contrast of discourses of *conventional* criminals. In the case of conventional crimes of gross human rights violations (i.e. those which do not occur within the context of a system), the perpetrator usually displays strong emotions towards his victim/s, as well as intention to harm them. In the above extract, through illustrating that this was absent in this case, and through showing that Siebert was merely doing his job, he is constructed as an "ordinary man", who was clearly not a criminal.

Bizos challenges and attempts to show that contrary to what Siebert implies, his personal feelings *did* influence his job, and he was not merely following orders like a robot:

```
1    MR BIZOS:  And how did you feel having in your absolute power a man so
2    opposed to apartheid that he would actually claim the right to sit if he wanted to,
3    even though the powerful White man, like yourself, ordered him to stand?  How
4    did you feel about that?
5    MR SIEBERT:  It was not about racial differences or colour of skin.  As I said
6    earlier, what it was about was the relationship between the interrogator and the
7    detainee and, obviously, to this day, the person who is doing the interrogating
8    must be in a controlling position.
9    MR BIZOS:  And I am going to put to you that Mr Biko's death was as a direct
10   result of your attitude to him as a Black person, as a person who stood up for his
11   rights, that you, believing that you were a superior White being, were not
12   prepared to respect him at all, which, and that you assaulted him, injured his
13   head and his brain, which led to his death.
```

14   MR SIEBERT: Mr Bizos is entitled to his opinion and he is entitled to express
15   his opinion, but I do not think he has the ability to see inside my mind and to
16   interpret what is in my head. So, I never said that, anywhere, that I, as a White
17   person, was a Black person's superior and I would like to know where he gets
18   that from, where I said that. That is a lie.
19   MR BIZOS: I do not have to look into your head, Sir, your actions speak for
20   themselves. (extract 5, p. 75)

Siebert denies that he responded to Biko in any manner other than that required from him
as a police officer and interrogator. In this instance, he does not admit to any personal feelings or
opinions with regards to Biko, yet at other stages in his narrative he has strong opinions of Biko
which involve seeing him in a totally negative and criminal light (discussed under section 4.4). The
extract above gives an indication of what is at stake in constructions of "ordinariness". Bizos
indicates that Siebert's actions reflected his *personal* attitude to Biko, and black people in general.
Instead of an "ordinary man" who was only obeying his superior, Bizos suggests that this is a case
of a culpable racist. In the above extract, Siebert is positioned in clearly racial terms by Bizos,
(e.g. "the powerful White man", L. 3, "a superior White being", L. 11), and Bizos suggests that
Siebert similiarly positioned Biko purely in racial terms, i.e. as a "Black person" (L. 10). In
changing the positioning in this way from Siebert's preferred positioning of "the interrogator and
the detainee", to racial terms, Bizos highlights what "ordinariness" in the context of South African
perpetrators, attempts to hide/silence. He proposes that black people such as Biko, were treated
in grossly inhumane ways because they were black, and considered inferior. And, Siebert's actions
therefore, were not a result of his merely following orders, but a manifestation of racism. In terms
of Bizos preferred positioning, Siebert is no longer "ordinary", and instead very culpable.

1   MR MPSHE: ...Colonel, are we to believe, really, that in the whole of Port Elizabeth,
Uitenhage and the neighbouring areas there was no hospital that could house this man
and give him medical care?
2   MR SIEBERT: I cannot comment on that, because it concerns negotiations
3   between Colonel Goosen and the doctors and head office and I had no say in
4   those.
5   MR MPSHE: Colonel, are you saying to this Committee that you were just acting
6   as a robot, even if you were told that, take this man, fly him to the moon, you
7   would go to the moon without questioning?
8   MR SIEBERT: No. (extract 6, p. 78)

In the above extract, Mpshe essentially questions the limits of Siebert's obedience.
Contrary to the narrative that Siebert gives regarding his obedience to his superior, Siebert did not
act as a robot. Mpshe shows the limits of the "ordinariness" construction which is based on
notions of merely following orders. He indicates that the discourse leaves unanswered the
question of how far obedience will/can go. Mpshe highlights that if orders from superiors are

sufficiently contrary to an individual's capabilities or even wishes/morals, the individual would not undertake them. Therefore Siebert is positioned as one who did not have any qualms about what he undertook, because he had no problems with his orders. In other words, Siebert was in agreement with the actions of the system in which he worked, and therefore culpable.

4.3.3 Collective language

The use of collective language is yet another means through which Siebert concretizes his actions as those which were undertaken within the context of a system, or within a team of police officers. He links their "work" to the legal system, and further to the broader political system, i.e. the apartheid government. He reiterates that his actions were not undertaken in an individual capacity; rather they were conducted within the context of a team of officers, and further, this team formed part of a larger system, i.e. the machinery of the state. Booyens supports this by selectively using the terms "the police force", or "police officers", instead of referring to Siebert in an individual capacity, especially when he questions Siebert about the "incident" that led to Biko's death, and the events that followed it. Construing the interaction with Biko in collective terms, serves to muddy the issue of responsibility, as it becomes difficult to say who is responsible for a particular action. An example of when Siebert does this is the following:

```
1    MR SIEBERT:  Upon our arrival in the office the hand-cuffs were removed from
2    the deceased.  We were all standing at that time.  Mr Snyman introduced us to
3    him as the interrogation team.  The deceased, without any invitation, slammed
4    himself down on a chair.  I instructed him to rise, I told him that this was our office,
5    that we were in control of this office and that we would tell him when he was
6    allowed to sit down.
7    MR BOOYENS:  I apologise for interrupting you, but why this?  Why was it so
8    important that he had to sit when you were sitting and that he had to do what you
9    told him and so forth?
10   MR SIEBERT:  The general principle was that we were in control of the
11   interrogation.  As the interrogator you must maintain control.  The person being
12   interrogated could not decide on his own what he wanted to do.  (extract 7, p. 19)
```

In this extract, Siebert is distinctly positioned as one of a team. The words "we" (L. 2, 5, 5, 10) "us" (L. 2), "our" (L. 4) and "interrogation team" (L. 3), all serve to convey that the interrogation was carried out by a team of officers, who acted together as a unit. Even when Siebert uses the word "I" (L. 4), to indicate what *he* stated, his words are followed by a shift to collective language, where he states that, "…this was *our* office…" (L. 4, emphasis added). In the above extract he positions himself in two ways which serve to construct his ordinariness. Firstly,

he is positioned as one of an interrogation *team*. This conveys an absence of Siebert's individuality, and instead forces us to see him, and his actions, as divorced from him as an individual. His actions therefore cease to be tied to, or a part of, him as a person. This enables him to keep his humanity intact and diffuses the responsibility for any actions undertaken. Secondly, the storyline of a police officer doing his job, is also evident – the other positioning that occurs in the extract, is one of Siebert as interrogator, and Biko as detainee. Siebert's individuality in interacting with Biko is silenced. It reinforces that Siebert's actions were purely those of a police officer, and he did not in an individual capacity.

```
1    MR BOOYENS: If you look at page eight of your application, please. The
2    Saturday after his death, that is Mr Biko's death, what happened then?
3    MR SIEBERT: We were called to Colonel Goosen's office to try and compile the
4    necessary statements regarding this matter.
5    MR BOOYENS: What, if at all, was suggested that you say about these
6    declarations? Were they supposed to contain the full truth, the whole truth or
7    what?
8    MR SIEBERT: As it was explained to us, the whole matter was a great
9    embarrassment, not only for the security branch, the police, but also for the State
10   and that our statements should be adapted in such a way that we should deal with
11   the whole matter by omitting to mention certain facts so that it would not be
12   prejudicial for the security branch or the police or the State. (extract 8, p. 33)
```

There is a corresponding lack of personalized language in this extract, as Siebert instead uses collective language when narrating this incident. The implication here is that Siebert was not acting on his own accord, but as a member of the security police, and further, as a representative of the State. His narrative forces us to see him as a representative of these organizations, rather than in his individual capacity.

```
1    MR SIEBERT: The purpose of the questioning was to find out more about his
2    [Biko's] participation in a planning for the riots and the distribution of
3    pamphlets in Port Elizabeth and the Eastern Cape. We wanted to ascertain what
4    his role was and in so doing we wanted to protect the political dispensation of
5    the day and we also wanted to charge him and to bring him before a court.
6    (extract 9, p. 34)
```

In extracts eight and nine Siebert uses collective language and further emphasizes his role in the broader political context. He was not only part of the police system, but through working with the courts, or the legal system, his actions are tied to those of the government. Therefore, he is positioned as part of the machinery of the apartheid government. The word "we" appears numerous times in both extracts. In extract nine, he is positioned as a part of the system whose job it was to curb violence and maintain order and stability. In addition to emphasizing that he was

not acting in an individual capacity, Siebert shows that he was on the side of maintaining good values. Extract nine also sees him position the system for which he was working, and of which he was a part. In positioning Biko as one who was involved in riots and such activities, Siebert and the system are on the opposite and "right" side; they are responsible for curbing and controlling criminal activities in order to protect society. Siebert and the system are responsible for maintaining and protecting good and "ordinary" values. He is therefore on the side of "ordinary people", and is therefore situated amongst such "ordinariness".

This positioning is immediately attacked, when Bizos starts questioning him:

```
1    MR BIZOS : Mr Siebert, did you assault Mr Biko?
2    MR SIEBERT: No, I did not.
3    MR BIZOS: No.
4    MR SIEBERT: No.
5    MR BIZOS: Did you cause his death?
6    MR SIEBERT: His death was caused by the incident which took place.
7    MR BIZOS: I asked you a simple question. Did you cause his death?
8    CHAIRPERSON: You, personally?
9    MR SIEBERT: I would not be able to say if it was my own, if I was responsible.
10   There were a few of us present there.
11   MR BIZOS: Were you either responsible or partly responsible, which would
12   make you responsible, for his death? Do you admit or deny your responsibility
13   for Mr Biko's death?
14   MR SIEBERT: My participation in the incident, by implication, yes. (extract 10,
     p. 35)
```

In his questioning, Bizos continues to position Siebert as an *individual* (he insists on using the word "you" in his questions, e.g. L. 5, 7, 11, 12, 12). Siebert refuses this positioning and instead attempts to convey that he was not acting in an individual capacity, through couching his answers in collective terms. He denies outright any responsibility for Biko's death, yet he is applying for amnesty in this regard. He instead states that Biko's death occurred as a result of an "incident", and grudgingly admits participation in it. In questioning Siebert in this manner, Bizos illustrates what the "ordinary man" discourse attempts to convey and why it is problematic. By couching the actions of the individual as those which are integrally tied to the system, this essentially serves to remove or diffuse responsibility; therefore the individual is not responsible for his/her own actions. The narrative reflects a splitting where the actions of the individual are instead construed as those essentially of the system.

4.3.4 Formal language

The continual focus and emphasis on Siebert's actions as being dictated by his job, is reiterated through his use of formal language or formal terms to describe the events surrounding the death of Biko. For example, he refers to Biko as either "Mr. Biko" (e.g. p. 17, 28, 30) or as "the deceased" (e.g. p, 9, 23, 31). These terms emphasize that Biko was related to only in a formal and professional manner, i.e. as a detainee. In using such terms, Siebert also indicates that he respected Biko as a human being, and treated him as such as well. It reiterates that Siebert's own actions with regards to Biko were undertaken in a humane and professional capacity. The following statements are further examples of his use of formal language. When questioned about the interrogation of Biko, Siebert's statements include:

> "... before the interrogation we had final consultations with Colonel Goosen" (p. 17).
> "Upon our arrival in the office the hand-cuffs were removed from the deceased" (p. 19).
> "We were investigating his part in the drafting and distribution ... of the pamphlet" (p. 19).
> "Myself and major Snyman ... were excused. We were instructed to continue with our other activities... as soon as the situation would change, we would be informed and then we had to resume the interrogation" (p. 26)

In the above example, Siebert uses using formal terms or formal language to reiterate that he was operating only in his occupational capacity, and therefore merely conducting his job. Formal language use serves to distance the individual from what he is saying. For example, if one were to look at other contexts where such formal language is used, such as when a presenter is reading the news on television, or when news is reported in a newspaper, it becomes apparent that this type of language not only appears to represent an objective view of reality, but it serves to shift the focus from *who* is saying something to *what* is being said. The significance of the speaker (or presenter or journalist), is diminished, and the language conveys that anyone in that position would give a similar account.

In Siebert's case his use of formal language not only indicates that he conducted himself in a professional capacity when dealing with Biko, but emphasizes this. It also reinforces the idea that he was "ordinary". By de-emphasizing the speaker, in this case Siebert, it implies that any police officer would have, and could have, conducted himself in the same professional way. It indicates a uniformity and normality in the police force that is typified by Siebert. In other words, it is implied that Siebert was "ordinary" because his job could have been done by anybody in the

force. His individuality played no role in his actions. Rather, he was acting as an "ordinary" police officer, or as any police officer would have done.

The use of formal language by Siebert attempts to put forward that what he is narrating is factual, and not an/his interpretation of what transpired. He tries to indicate that he is impartial and unbiased, and merely narrating what was actually transpiring at the time. Essentially he is using the language of the police system, and thereby distancing himself from his words – his "ordinariness" is therefore conveyed in his showing that his actions were part of the system, and had little to do with his own character.

Siebert also conveys that his account is "factual" by backing up his statements. Therefore he states that it was not just his opinion for example, that the security situation was deteriorating rapidly in the country in 1977, but that it was the opinion of prominent leaders of the country. The next extract is an apt illustration:

```
1    MR BOOYENS:  With a view to the value that one might attach to the public
2    rhetoric of politicians, what would, generally, have been proclaimed with regard
3    to the security situation and the methods to be used by Government?
4    MR SIEBERT:  It was said that the security situation during that time damaged
5    the image of the country and that, therefore, the necessary actions would have to
6    be taken in terms of legislation available to us, to restrain the situation...
7
8    MR BOOYENS:  What would the nature have been of this pressure and of the
9    information conveyed to you?
10   MR SIEBERT:  The regular national overviews of the situation in the country,
11   which we received on a weekly basis, indicated, also in terms of instructions from
12   head office, circular letters that we received, that very serious efforts had to be
13   made to get to the core of the unrest and to control it. (extract 11, p. 5)
```

In drawing on a number of sources, Siebert backs up his narrative and conveys that what he is stating was actually what was transpiring at the time, and not simply his own opinion. He is using a similar method as researchers do when they are putting forward particular claims. They draw on credible sources to back-up or substantiate what they are stating, and, they do so using formal, rather than informal, language. This is meant to indicate that what they are putting forward is logical, unbiased and even factual. Siebert's use of formal language here constructs his "ordinariness" differently from the previous example. Siebert shows in the above extract that "ordinariness" is the correspondence between the self and the system – there is a concordance

between the opinions of those around him, and Siebert's own view. He is part and parcel of the system.

4.3.5 Personalized language

Siebert uses personalized language for specific purposes. When "I" language, and other language which indicates that Siebert is drawing on his own experiences is used, it is done so to convey his humanity. One example of this is when Booyens asks Siebert to read from his personal overview. He states:

```
1    During my service on the border I visited a variety of scenes and did investigations
2    where members of the local population were robbed, kidnapped, murdered or
3    mutilated by members of the Swapo Liberation Movement. These persons also
4    experienced the loss or destruction of their property and I visited several scenes
5    where members of the security forces were shot and killed or injured in traps. I was
6    present when the bodies of these people had to be removed and I was also present in
7    a particular incident when five members of the defence force were shot dead and
8    another incident where seven members of the defence force were seriously injured
9    and mutilated in similar incidents in ambushes. These experiences created in me, a
10   very deep horror of the so-called freedom fighters and persons who pretended that
11   they were fighting against an unjust Government system. (extract 12, p. 6-7)
```

Whereas in the previous sections on formal and collective language Siebert uses personalized language selectively, here he it is used in abundance in order to construct his "ordinariness" in a different way. He draws on personal and eye-witnessed accounts to substantiate his claims. The word "I" appears frequently (L. 1, 4, 5, 6), and he also uses the words "my" (L. 1) and "me" (L. 9). This is a very personal account of his experiences. In the previous sections "ordinariness" was defined in terms of Siebert's role in the system, but here it is defined in terms of humanity and empathy, and there is little sense of him as one of a team or as part of a system. Even when he discusses the defence or security forces, he does so as though he is not really a part of them. For example, he states "...the bodies of *these* people" (L. 6, emphasis added), which does not place him as one of them. The "local population" are referred to as "[t]hese persons" (L. 3), and Siebert distances himself from them as well. He is positioned as an unbiased onlooker to these atrocities, and one who is horrified at witnessing them.

Although he was working there in his occupational capacity, this particular extract switches from focussing on him as one of a team of police officers and as part of a system, to an

individual who first-hand witnessed the gruesome "crimes" that the "so-called freedom fighters" were committing. The graphic nature of his narrative is meant to elicit in the reader/listener the same horror that Siebert felt when he was confronted with these scenes, and to elicit the same feelings about Swapo. It serves to position him as part of humanity through this narration, because he is positioned as one who would respond in the same way as any "ordinary" or humane person to such violence.

In the above extract through his use of personalized language, Siebert indicates that there was a concordance between what he was told/ordered to do, and what he witnessed first-hand and experienced for himself. So, in addition to being instructed and taught about the security situation, Siebert witnessed and confirmed these things for himself, and this strengthened his resolve and determination to do his job well. The issue of *personal* motivation/convictions as playing a role in Siebert's job is summed up in the following extract:

```
1    MR BOOYENS:  This political background of yours, did this make you feel at home
2    in the security community?
3    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
4    MR BOOYENS:  Did this play any role in your actions as a security policeman?  Did
5    you experience coherence between your convictions and actions?
6    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
7    MR BOOYENS:  Was your personal convictions or faith also coherent with the
8    instructions you received as a security police officer?
9    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.  (extract 13, p. 12)
```

The political background that Booyens is referring to is in reference to an earlier question where Siebert was asked about his political affiliation. He replied that he was a member and supporter of the National Party. At times Siebert indicates that he was "influenced" or "convinced" that apartheid was necessary (discussed under section 4.5), and at other times, such as reflected in the extract above, he indicates that his "personal convictions" were concordant with those of the system. The above extract brings together the two different constructions of "ordinariness". Siebert is stating here that his personal convictions were coherent with those of the system within which he worked. In setting up his humanity in extract 12, and then in the above extract positioning himself in concordance with the system, he resolves the dilemma of his role within the system, by indicating that both he and the system were on the side of justice and humanity.

Other places where Siebert uses personal language to show that he acted in a humane manner occur for example when he narrates an incident where a Dr. Tucker was attending to Biko, which took place on the 11th of September, 1977. He states that: "... he was being inspected or attended to by Dr. Tucker. I asked Dr. Tucker what was wrong with the deceased and he told me that he did not know..." (p. 29). On more than one occasion he uses personalized language in order to convey that when he did act in an individual capacity, his actions/words revealed him to be humane, and even caring, for Biko's welfare. This issue is also explored further under section 4.4, where through the use of examples, it is illustrated that Siebert depicts himself as a good, caring and humane person, which is in contrast to Biko, who is implicitly blamed for murder, arson and similiar activities, in Siebert's narrative.

4.3.6 Conclusion

In the introduction to this section, I mentioned that even though the various extracts reviewed here are all placed under the umbrella of the "doing my job" storyline, they do not represent a uniform view in terms of the way that ordinariness is constructed using this storyline. Having reviewed the extracts, it becomes clear that ordinariness is constructed in a variety of ways by Siebert. At times he is positioned as a passive recipient of orders, and lacking in agency, and at others he positions himself as being on the side of humanity and good and decent values, and the protector of society. The exploration of the next storyline sees an abundance of this latter positioning.

4.4 COPS & CRIMINALS STORYLINE AND RACIST DISCOURSE

In constructing his narrative, Siebert uses racial stereotypes and racist discourse to construct his ordinariness through aligning himself, and situating himself within the bounds of humanity and normal/ordinary values. Siebert splits his world. There are two clearly differentiated poles/sides which are in complete opposition to each other. On the one side stands Siebert, and all that he represents – this includes the police system, the apartheid system, as well as white people. This side is constructed as the embodiment of good, decent and normal values. In direct contrast to this positioning of himself, is the way that Biko is positioned in the narrative. Biko is depicted as an insane and an out-of-control criminal. Various other activities and occurrences are aligned

to Biko, all of which have similar criminal and insane connotations – this includes destructive and murderous activities by black people upon one another, the "total onslaught" strategy, as well as the liberation movements and their actions. The narrative frames Biko and all he stood for in the mildest sense, as being difficult and rebellious, and in stronger ways, as inciting violence, murder, kidnapping and the destruction of property. According to Siebert's narrative, Biko was the leader of these violent activities. The use of binary oppositions, between good and bad, white and black, and Siebert and Biko, serves to reinforce the two poles, and all they stand for because they are constructed as vastly and strikingly different to each other.

There are also places in the narrative where Siebert contradicts these positionings he has set up. These variations will be explored in order to examine the function they serve. Often they occur at places in the narrative where Siebert is pushed into a corner, and has no way out but to contradict some of what he has already stated – this is evident when he is cross-examined by Bizos, who challenges these oppositions that Siebert creates. Setting up these binary oppositions serves two important functions in terms of the actions that it promotes. Siebert, by aligning himself with good and decent values, situates himself amongst ordinary people. Further, the actions taken against Biko are constructed as correct and good law enforcement, and therefore justified, because Biko is framed as a criminal. Ultimately, this section focuses more on "bad blackness" than "good whiteness". Siebert's ordinariness is achieved mostly through the juxtaposition of his and Biko's actions.

The underlying narrative in the "cops and criminals" storyline is a racist one – Siebert, a "white" man according to the apartheid system, is aligned to whiteness, which symbolizes purity, innocence and goodness. Biko, a "black" man under apartheid, is aligned to blackness, representing evil, wickedness, death and sinister doings.

4.4.1 Good whiteness and bad blackness

In this storyline, Biko is constructed as the criminal and Siebert the good cop whose duty it was to protect society from such criminals. The extracts reviewed show the way in which Siebert positions himself as the protector and defender of ordinary people, and ordinary values. The word "protector" or "protection" is used generally in relation to harm or danger, which is

embodied by Biko in Siebert's narrative. The actual physical interaction between Siebert and Biko, where Siebert continually emphasizes that his actions were defensive, and Biko's aggressive and violent, can be therefore considered a metaphor for the broader way in which Siebert and Biko's roles are conceived of in the narrative.

Before Biko's name is really mentioned in Siebert's narrative, he is implicitly positioned and constructed in particular ways. For example, early on in his testimony, Booyens asks him to read from his personal overview:

```
1    MR SIEBERT:  During my period of service in the South African Police, I, at all
2    times, acted in good faith in the service of the South African or in the interest of the
3    South African Police and the Government of the day.  I served on the border in
4    Ovamboland during 1976 during which time I was exposed to guerrilla warfare and
5    terrorism.
6    During my service on the border I visited a variety of scenes and did investigations
7    where members of the local population were robbed, kidnapped, murdered or
8    mutilated by members of the Swapo Liberation Movement.  These persons also
9    experienced the loss or destruction of their property and I visited several scenes
10   where members of the security forces were shot and killed or injured in traps.  I was
11   present when the bodies of these people had to be removed and I was also present in
12   a particular incident when five members of the defence force were shot dead and
13   another incident where seven members of the defence force were seriously injured
14   and mutilated in similar incidents in ambushes.
15   These experiences created in me, a very deep horror of the so-called freedom fighters
16   and persons who pretended that they were fighting against an unjust Government
17   system.  At the same time I was of the opinion that the situation required of us that I
18   would be the first to act, otherwise I would experience the same fate. (extract 14, p.
     6)
```

In this extract Siebert begins to draw clear distinctions between himself and Biko, and how each of them is constructed in his narrative. Although Biko's name is not mentioned here, he is implicitly positioned when Siebert makes reference to "so-called freedom fighters" (L. 15). In portraying himself, Siebert uses words such as "good faith" (L. 2) and "service" (L. 1). He is stating that he was a loyal and hard-working servant of the state. He is positioned as a good, decent individual with normal and ordinary goals and aspirations. He wanted to be a faithful servant of his country and his people. Through showing aspirations to these goals, and conveying that he held these values highly, he positions himself within the realm of normal, good and decent individuals. Key to this positioning and narrative, is the conveyed meaning that he was ordinary, and on the side of *good*.

The sense of Siebert as epitomizing normality is also achieved in the latter part of the extract where he describes what all that he stood for was up against. In the second paragraph, we

are introduced to "so-called freedom fighters" and what they stood for. Siebert states explicitly that the freedom fighters were actually terrorists and criminals who were responsible for robbery, kidnapping, murder, mutilation and the destruction of property. The sense of crime and criminal and evil deeds is achieved through his use of words such as "terrorism" (L. 15), "killed" (L. 10), "shot" (L. 10), "mutilated" (L. 14), and "bodies of these people" (L. 11). Further, the words "traps" (L. 10) and "ambushes" (L. 14) convey that the criminals who perpetrated these actions were cunning and devious in carrying out their murderous actions. This adds to the sense of them being vile and horrible human beings and constructs them as pathological and criminal. This is in direct contrast to what Siebert represents in the first few lines of the extract.

A sense of violence and criminality is also achieved when Siebert, who has already positioned himself in the first paragraph as a good and loyal servant, states that the experiences created in him "a very deep horror" (L. 15). By positioning himself as one who reacted in this "normal" way to what he saw, he again positions the perpetrators of the deeds he witnessed as insane, inhumane and criminal. His use of the term mentioned, invokes a sense of an almost physical reaction that he had to what he witnessed – "how could people do such a horrible thing?" he asks. It invokes a sense of the inhumanity of what he witnessed, and again, joins him with humanity, and therefore ordinariness. His ordinariness is achieved through his "normal" and humane reaction to the inhumanity that was perpetrated by the freedom fighters, and through the oppositional positions here where he is on the side of good and decent values.

There are clearly drawn battle lines in this narrative. Siebert is portrayed as a decent and hard-working person who was loyal and faithful to his country. He is also positioned as in opposition to the insane criminals, and is instead a normal and ordinary man because of these values.

4.4.2 Biko the instigator

The following extract provides a good summary of the way that Biko, and all that he stood for, is portrayed in Siebert's narrative.

```
1    MR BOOYENS: Particularly during the years 1976, 77, up unto the death of Mr
2    Biko, the rioting continued?
3    MR SIEBERT: Yes, your Honour, until December of 1978.
```

4	MR BOOYENS: Out of these interrogations, out of police information available to
5	you, which organisations would, in your view, have played a prominent role in
6	fomulgating [sic] this unrest?
7	MR SIEBERT: Your Honour, the black power movements in that time would have
8	been the most active since the ANC and the PAC would have been banned
9	organisations, they would have been in exile and their front organisations, at that
10	time, had not yet been well organised, not as well organised as the Black power
11	movements. In addition, the deceased was a leader, a prominent figure in the Black
12	power movements and his position as President of the Black Consciousness
13	Movement, he would, in addition, he would also have had a tremendous influence on
14	the Black youth and he was idolised as a leader. He was a very prominent leader, not
15	only in the Eastern Cape, but nationally and also outside the country.
16	MR BOOYENS: I have asked a question to one of your colleagues, but if you were to
17	place Mr Biko, if you were to place Mr Biko on a level, not taking into account those
18	political leaders that were, at that time, in prison, where would you rank Mr Biko in
19	the country?
20	MR SIEBERT: I would rank him as number one, as one of the most prominent
21	leaders.
22	MR BOOYENS: During the interrogations, and I suppose you also received
23	information and study material on the Black power movements?
24	MR SIEBERT: Yes, your Honour.
25	MR BOOYENS: What would your impression have been, what would the eventual
26	goal or purpose of organisations such as the BPC had been, the organisation of which
27	Biko was the President?
28	MR SIEBERT: It was opposed to White people. If I understand the approach of the
29	Black power movements, it was intended to combat the apartheid policy and, as such,
30	White people, White power, White domination.
31	MR BOOYENS: What would their eventual goal have been? Were they able to,
32	successfully, combat the apartheid Government?
33	MR SIEBERT: To bring about a Black power controlled Government.
34	MR BOOYENS: In your perception and in the perception of the security branch, as
35	then described in study documents and so forth, did you consider this to be a threat?
36	MR SIEBERT: Yes, your Honour.
37	MR BOOYENS: Would you have considered it to have been a serious threat?
38	MR SIEBERT: Yes, your Honour. The entire White population would be touched by
39	this, would be affected by this. Also, the established western Government structure,
40	which was then the status quo, and also the perception which would have, that a, the
41	established capitalist system would be lost as a consequence. In comparison with
42	other African countries, which had been under colonial Government and had,
43	subsequently, obtained Black independent Governments and which, at that time, were
44	deteriorating into poverty, that would have been our perception. (extract 15, p. 9-10)

In the above extract, there is a positioning of Siebert and Biko, as white and black respectively, and being on completely opposing sides of what is akin to a war situation. In the extract, the association of Biko with criminality is achieved with Booyens first question. By asking/suggesting that the rioting continued up until the death of Biko, Booyens is suggesting that once Biko had died, the rioting stopped, and Biko was therefore responsible for it. Biko is linked to "rioting" (L. 2), and then in Booyens' next question to "unrest" (L. 6), both of which have strong criminal connotations, if are not clearly criminal activities. Whereas here Siebert states that it was most likely that the Black Power movements were responsible for the violence, in other parts of the transcript he states that there was evidence that this was so.

106

The underlying narrative is that Biko, who was the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, and who had tremendous influence amongst black people, was responsible for these criminal activities. Siebert's use of the term "he was idolized as a leader" (L. 14), has racist connotations. He indicates that Biko was followed blindly by black people, who were perhaps ignorant and uneducated, and did not know what he was really up to. He does not give any credit to the people who followed Biko, in that he likens their following to blindness – being in the dark and not really knowing what was transpiring. Biko is also constructed as an extremely powerful individual in this narrative. He is accredited with having strong and tremendous influence with the black youth and black people in general. He is almost likened to a very strong and dangerous force that could easily have upset the balance and stability that the white people had maintained in the country.

In addition, Siebert's use of the term "not as well organized" (L. 10), indicates that Biko and his organization were well organized and deliberate in their acts of terrorism. It reflects an element of planning and deliberation in committing criminal activities, and further reinforces their culpability. The theme of Siebert as a protector from such deliberate and heinous acts, is also evident in the extract. Siebert affirms that Biko and his organization were a serious threat to the white population, and constructs himself and the police force, as the protectors of the people, in this case, white people. They were the protectors of civilized, decent and ordinary people, and such values, who were not involved and needed to be kept far from any of this criminality. Siebert is the protector of the innocent. His narrative does not attach any real blame to white people, or the apartheid government.

Biko is positioned as one who was "opposed" to white people, and held white people as the enemy, and was therefore racist. The narrative silences any notion that Biko engaged in his activities in order to fight oppression and apartheid, and rather paints a picture where Biko, without provocation or good reason, was opposed to white people, and prepared to combat them. It lays the initiative and action of any violent actions undertaken at Biko's door. Booyens asks what Biko stood for, but never asks why he stood for and fought for such causes. In stating what Biko's organization stood for, Siebert constructs Biko as a power hungry man, who wanted the power that white people had in the country. Again, in this way, instead of being seen as an individual who fought for the rights of his people, he is seen in a negative light, here as someone

who was power hungry. Biko wanted to control white people and bring about a black power controlled government.

Black leadership is also positioned in this extract. In line 18, Booyens uses the term "political leaders" in reference to the black leadership in the country at the time. However, he follows this by adding, "not taking into account those political leaders that were, ... in prison" (L. 17-18), and thereby positions black leadership in a completely negative light – as criminals who were incarcerated. The narrative again aligns criminality and pathology to black people, and in this case, to black leadership.

According to Siebert, the implications of a black government would be chaos, anarchy and poverty. By comparing South Africa to other African countries, he is again polarizing. South Africa represents the white, civilized, western government structure, and other African countries are represented as uncivilized, incompetent and backward. He is using racist stereotypes here – he is implying that black people do not know how to govern a country, and that it would spell disaster for South Africa should they come into power. The police force, and Siebert, had a grave responsibility to ensure that South Africa did not become like the rest of Africa – they were the protectors of the stability and civilized values that white people had achieved in South Africa.

4.4.3 The "total onslaught"

In the last extract reviewed, the liberation movements, and specifically the organization which Biko headed, are considered a "serious threat" to the stability of the country. The narrative constructs Biko's actions as using the tremendous power and influence that he had, in order to destroy the stability that the apartheid government had established. He is constructed as a power hungry man, who instigated violence, at the same time, he is also represented as an insane criminal. Siebert's ordinariness is constructed through the juxtaposition of his and Biko's actions. Because Biko's actions are those of an insane criminal, and Siebert is on the opposing side, Siebert is constructed and positioned as one who was situated within the bounds of normality, civilized individuals, decency and good values.

The extract reviewed deals with the "total onslaught" that was perpetrated by the liberation movements:

```
1    MR BOOYENS:  What would the perceptions have been concerning the situation at
2    that time?
3    MR SIEBERT:  Your Honour, the general conception and interpretation, at that time,
4    had been with reference already to the total onslaught against South Africa, at that
5    time.
6    MR BOOYENS:  You know this was the rhetoric of P W Botha at a later time, was
7    that specific term used?
8    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, in the intelligence community it was mentioned by name.  We
9    must remember that before this, the South African Police performed border service in
10   Rhodesia, the now Zimbabwe, in order to support them as one of the last colonial
11   powers adjoining South Africa, bordering on South Africa.  I think of the support
12   offered to or by liberation or freedom fighters from South Africa in that situation.
13   The efforts of the South African Defence Force in Namibia into Angola at that time,
14   the combating of terrorism by the South African Police in the then South West, now
15   Namibia, since already 1962, the then attacks, terror, acts of terror of 1966,
16   particularly during the month of November at the border gate when two MK members
17   of the ANC were arrested and two police officers were injured.  I believe they died
18   but I am not sure whether they in fact died in consequence of that event.  I think of
19   the explosion at the Carlton Centre in Johannesburg, also during November and then
20   in December, the Solomon Mahlangu attack in Johannesburg where people were, in
21   fact, shot dead.
22   With this in the background and in view of the unrest, the foreign opposition already
23   growing at that time, this would be considered to have been a total onslaught at that
24   time and it was referred to as such from head office and in our ranks.  (extract 16, p.
25   10-11)
```

This extract emphasizes the "criminal" and "terrorist" activities of the liberation movements. It shows them to be violent and dangerous and resulting in the deaths of people. Words such as "died" (L. 17), "acts of terror" (L. 15), and "explosion" (L. 19) convey the serious and grave danger that the "total onslaught" represented. It positions the liberation movements as a real danger to society, because the attacks were unpredictable, and therefore difficult to control. The "total onslaught" is constructed as a powerful and unrelenting force. It represents an out-of-control, all out attack by the liberation movements. Further, it has connotations of mercilessness in the face of opposition. Those fighting in the liberation struggle are therefore positioned as merciless criminals who will stop at nothing to achieve their goals. Siebert on the other hand, is positioned as one of a "community" (L. 8), i.e. the intelligence community. The use of the word "community", is glaringly different to the way in which the liberation movements are constructed; it evokes a sense of mutual support, partnership, good values and togetherness. These are all positive values that are ascribed to police officers such as Siebert. It was their job to deal with the violence of the "total onslaught". They are positioned as being on the defensive, and the protectors of society from such criminals.

In linking the unrest to the growing foreign opposition, Siebert indicates that the foreign opposition occurred as a result of it. He therefore apportions blame to the liberation movements for negatively affecting and impacting on foreign investment and opportunities for the country. According to this narrative the liberation movements inflicted damage on the country and were a threat to its stability. This negative connotation attached to their actions reinforces other extracts where the liberation movements, and freedom fighters, are positioned as criminals, and a danger to all South Africans. It also serves to reinforce Siebert's position as being on the "right" side of this battle; the side of good, decent and "ordinary" values.

The issues explored under the above section are also brought to bear on the individual interaction between Siebert and Biko. Siebert's narrative takes us through the information obtained before Biko was interrogated and the debriefing that took place before the interrogation, through to the actual interrogation, and its aftermath. During each of these episodes, both Siebert and Biko are positioned in similiar ways as those mentioned in the above section. Siebert places himself in a defensive position, and as a protector of society, and Biko is positioned as an out-of-control man, who is aggressive, violent, uncooperative, and even a liar. These positionings serve to reinforce the binary opposition of the two individuals, as well as confirm the "ordinariness" of Siebert. An example of this is the following extract:

```
1    ADV POTGIETER: ... you explain the situation which occurred at the
2    time and you also referred to the chair and you say a couple of lines further
3    down into the paragraph, "I had to bend forwards to stop this chair after
4    which Biko made a sudden sweeping motion in my direction. It seemed as if
5    he wanted to strike me." Is that correct?
6    MR SIEBERT: Yes.
7    ADV POTGIETER: So, he made some movement, but you are not entirely sure
8    what it was?
9    MR SIEBERT: Yes, yes.
10   ADV POTGIETER: All right. Then you say he did not actually strike you?
11   MR SIEBERT: Yes.
12   ADV POTGIETER: You then pushed him in front of his chest and then you
13   say, "Whilst I wanted to speak to him ...".In other words, after this little scuffle
14   or incident with the chair and a movement which he made, you then wanted to
15   talk to him? So, there was not a fight between the two of you?
16   MR SIEBERT: No. A lot of things have been mentioned here, a lot of sentences
17   have been referred to, but it is difficult to explain what happened in a fraction of
18   a second. All these things happened virtually simultaneously. (extract 17, p. 80-
     81)
```

In this extract, Biko is positioned as the aggressor, and Siebert is the defensive recipient of his aggression. It is Biko who is the first to act violently, while Siebert reiterates that his aim was merely to talk to Biko. The individual interaction between Biko and Siebert is therefore a

metaphor for the broader way in which each are positioned in the transcript – Biko as the out-of-control criminal, and Siebert as the "ordinary" police officer who was on the defensive, and whose job it was to apprehend and control such criminality for the sake of the safety of ordinary South Africans.

The storyline reviewed so far in this section, reflects that the construction of ordinariness is a function of the binary oppositions in Siebert's narrative, where he is on the side of law and justice, and Biko is a criminal who posed a serious danger to the safety of all South Africans. For the most part, the extracts reviewed illustrate these positionings. Contrary evidence will be examined next in order to see when and why it occurs. The first issue that will be dealt with here, is where Siebert is questioned by Bizos regarding the illegal methods that were used in interrogations:

```
1     MR BIZOS:  Right.  Did any officer in the police, any senior officer tell you that
2     you could assault, torture, hand-cuff, leg-iron, ill-treat helpless detainees?
3     MR SIEBERT:  No.
4     MR BIZOS:  You said that you, in your application, that you considered that a
5     war was going on?  Is that correct?
6     MR SIEBERT:  Yes.
7     MR BIZOS:  But now do you, did you ever bother to find out as to how prisoners
8     are to be treated even in a state of war?
10    MR SIEBERT:  That is true, the circumstances of that time and all the things that
11    Mr Bizos has asked motivated one to act in the interests of the State dispensation
12    and in the interest of the community of South Africa and not only the White
13    community, but also in the interests of these people who are sitting here today,
14    that is the Black community, because they suffered the most as a result of all the
15    murders, the burning of their vehicles and businesses and houses.  It was done in
16    order to protect them.  One took a risk of interrogating these people and this was
17    done as a result of the motivation of the organisations that I mentioned, because
18    I believed that the policy of that time, namely apartheid, was an interim measure
19    until it would develop to such an extent or that the politicians of the day come
20    up with better solutions for South Africa. (extract 18, p. 52)
```

Bizos attempts to show that Siebert and his fellow police officers were engaged in illegal activities, and cannot therefore claim to be on the side of the law. Although Siebert concedes that such activities were not directly "instructed" from superiors, he justifies these actions by instead focusing on the motivation behind them and the results they produced, rather than the actions themselves. He reiterates that he acted in the interests of the state, and white *and* black communities. He focuses on the ways that black people were affected by the violence, and positions himself as a protector of all South Africans (which is in contrast to other areas of the transcript where he is the protector of only white people). He is constructing his own illegal actions, as those that he was forced to undertake in order to deal with the powerful force of the

unrest and violence. He apportions blame to the context, and to the liberation movements, whom he had stated previously were responsible for all the violence. In so doing, he continues to resist any move by Bizos to position him as responsible and culpable for his actions.

In the next extract he follows on from this idea, while still reiterating that he was acting in the interests of the community at large:

```
1    MR BIZOS:  No, no, not that you had any control, why did you not behave in the
2    manner in which your leaders spoke?  That is the question.
3    MR SIEBERT:  There were many other persons that we detained with whom we
4    had no problems.
5    MR BIZOS:  The question is not whether you had problems with other persons,
6    the question is why did you not give heed to what the leaders were saying in
7    1977?  They were saying that South Africa is a civilised country that does not ill-
8    treat people and only communists and their fellow travellers make these false
9    allegations against us.  Is that not what they were saying?
10   MR SIEBERT:  I cannot remember the details of those statements, but then we
11   must also look at the time factor in this specific interrogation.  As I said, murder
12   was propagated and demanded from the community in New Brighton, KwaZakele,
13   which already suffered under gruesome unrests and extended unrests and the
14   interests of the individual had to be weighed up against the interests of the
15   broader community and that was one of the reasons or why I am applying for
16   amnesty. (extract 19, p. 54)
```

In his response to Bizos' question, Siebert states that not all detainees were problematic. He is positioning Biko as a difficult and uncooperative individual, who forced the hand of the security police into using violence to deal with him. Again here he uses motives and results as the over-riding criterion by which his actions need to be judged. He also uses the interests of the community as the motivation behind his actions. Through focusing on his benevolent *motives*, Siebert tries to maintain his "ordinariness". By reiterating that he had this as his first and most important priority, he emphasizes that he was "ordinary" because he aimed to protect ordinary values and principles, and ordinary people, black and white. Here again he aligns himself with humanity, and good humanitarian motives, even when he is confronted with the inhumanity of his actions. Biko is further positioned as responsible for the violence, and therefore in need of incarceration. Even in the face of contradiction, this construction of Siebert's attempts to keeps the binary oppositions intact in order to maintain his "ordinariness".

When dealing with the contradictions in his narrative, Siebert uses the defence of motivation and results to justify his actions and maintain his "ordinariness". He situates himself as part of humanity, through illustrating that he had humanitarian motives at heart, and was trying to

protect the black and white communities from the danger that Biko posed. Biko and other detainees are clearly still positioned as being a threat to society and to the safety of all South Africans.

4.5 PASSIVITY IN THE FACE OF PERSUASION & INFLUENCE

In the certain areas of the first two sections, Siebert constructs his "ordinariness" through aligning himself with the police and apartheid system within which he worked, and shows these to be just systems and on the "right" side. In contrast, this section deals with the ways in which Siebert distances himself from the police system, and other significant influences on his life. The extracts reviewed show that he felt he was persuaded to believe in apartheid, and with the change in dispensation, he has come to see the error/s in apartheid, and feels he was led astray by significant others. The storyline explores the ways in which Siebert maintains his "ordinariness" through giving others agency and indicating that they influenced him wrongly. In constructing his actions in this way, he is less responsible, as he is an almost passive recipient of their influence. The significant others, or those that have led him astray, include political leaders, his church, and his superior Colonel Goosen.

```
1    MR BOOYENS: Let us pay attention, now, to the personal overview and personal
2    circumstances. You mention or rather, maybe, you can read from personal
3    overview or "persoonlike oorsig".
4    MR SIEBERT: "I am currently 51 years in age, I was born on the 20th of
5     September 1945 in Bloemfontein. I am the youngest of four children. I grew up
6    in a conservative and Christian home. I am a member of the Dutch Reformed
7    Church and had been actively involved in the Dutch Reformed Church since my
8    childhood and have, for the past 26 years, served on the local Church Council. I
9    grew up, during my formative years, in the apartheid era. The apartheid policy
10   would, as a consequence, have been acceptable and justifiable to me since I was
11   of the opinion, at that time, that this policy was necessary for the continued
12   .survival of the White and South African at the southern end of Africa.
13   This point of view, in subsequent years, was additionally influenced and
14   strengthened by the policy expressions or statements of political leaders
15   as well as cultural and church leaders.
16   As a result of these statements and rhetoric, I was convinced that the White
17   Afrikaans-speaking person would have to fight for the right of survival and for
18   the right to continue to live as our ancestors did, with particular reference to our
19   heritage, background, culture and political way of life." (extract 20, p. 3)
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Between lines one and twelve, Siebert provides a brief summary of his early life. This narrative stresses the contextual factors in Siebert's life and silences his own personal involvement in his actions as a police officer maintaining apartheid. First he uses familial and religious discourse to support this argument. Stating that he grew up in a "conservative" home (L. 6),

stresses the role of his family in influencing him and shaping his life. This is followed by statements relating to religious influences. Not only did he grow up in a Christian home, but he belonged to the Church Council. Even though Siebert uses the term "actively involved" (L. 7), which may be considered as reflecting *action* on his part, the overall effect is that in essence, the church approved of him and his actions. Siebert uses the words "*served* on the local Church Council" (L. 8), which echoes his sentiments regarding his being a faithful servant to this country. In a similiar way, the church is positioned as an authoritative figure, who has the power to influence and persuade its followers. The word "servant" connotes being a faithful and loyal subject. It also positions Siebert as one who followed, rather than one who took action. Therefore the church is given agency and responsibility for the actions of its members. Siebert is thus positioned as a follower, and in this case, as an "ordinary" man who was led to believe in what the church espoused (in this case, apartheid).

This is enhanced by the line, "I grew up, during my *formative* years, in the apartheid era" (L. 8-9). The word "formative" alludes to the fashioning of, or the shaping of, his character – Siebert is here indicating that in his early years he was molded into an individual who believed that apartheid was justifiable. One of the strongest statements regarding how he was influenced, is when Siebert claims that he was "convinced" that apartheid was necessary because of the statements and rhetoric, of political, church and cultural leaders (L. 16). He places himself in a passive position, one where he was an innocent and ordinary individual who was led astray by these significant people in his life. Everywhere he looked, those in authority were telling him that apartheid was the only way that he and his people could survive. He distances himself from these opinions and his own opinion, "at that time", through the latter phrase. He indicates that his opinion has changed as he has learnt differently now.

The issue of the survival of the Afrikaner heritage, background, culture and way of life, reflects the local nuance on the theme of the "ordinariness" of perpetrators. This may be considered the goal of an "ordinary" man in terms of Afrikaner ideology, as well as that of other groups in society. It draws on the notion of wanting to maintain one's culture and way of life, and serves as a reflection of the good and decent values that Siebert aspired and worked towards. Siebert indicates that his opinion has changed regarding the necessity of apartheid. But he asserts his "ordinariness" through indicating that he wanted to preserve his heritage and culture.

This extract is immediately followed by Booyens' questions regarding how Siebert was "influenced" by the political leaders that he met at the time:

```
1    MR BOOYENS:  And I want to ask you not to give us or repeat to us any political
2    speeches, but in a nutshell, what did Mr Vorster communicate to you with regard
3    to his beliefs regarding the security situation and so forth?
4    MR SIEBERT:  That the security situation was becoming far more intense and that
5    serious attention would have to be paid to it to control it and, perhaps, entirely to
6    eliminate it, since this damaged the image of the Republic, particularly with the
7    view to sanctions, which was operative at that time, with regard to development
8    and foreign investment.
9    MR BOOYENS:  Were you influenced by your contact with Mr Vorster?  Did you
10   believe what he said to you, did it have any influence on you?
11   MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
12   MR BOOYENS:  Would you have considered yourself a very loyal supporter?
13   MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.  (extract 21, p. 4)
```

Siebert in this extract is positioned as one who was "influenced" (L. 9), and who was a "very loyal supporter" (L. 12). The latter term resonates with his use of the term "servant" in the previous extract, where he is positioned as a faithful follower – he is positioned as a passive recipient of Vorster's influence. It is Vorster's opinions that Siebert follows; they do not originate from Siebert. In a similiar vein, Siebert does the same in the following extract:

```
1    MR BOOYENS:  You were in your early 30's, in terms of age?
2    MR SIEBERT:  Yes, your Honour.
3    MR BOOYENS:  Colonel Goosen, as we have heard, was the Commanding Officer
4    of the branch, and had been the Commanding Officer since 1969?
5    MR SIEBERT:  That is correct, your Honour.
5    MR BOOYENS:  Could you describe, for us, or give us a thumbnail sketch of the
6    man, Colonel Goosen, his approach, his attitude towards his work and so forth?
7    MR SIEBERT:  Your Honour, he was a very dedicated person with regard to his
8    work circumstances.  He believed in the politics of the day, with regard to the
9    apartheid policy.  At all times he would take the lead, even in very serious unrest
10   and rioting situations.  He would never stay back at the office and he was an
11   example to us in this regard.  In addition, he was a father figure for us, as
12   younger people, particularly because we could see that he was willing to put
13   himself in the firing line.  In addition, he did not allow anyone to act in an
14   undisciplined manner.  He would deal with such a person and he would remove
15   such a person from the Security Branch.
16   MR BOOYENS:  Would you have considered him to have been a strong leader?
17   MR SIEBERT:  Yes, he was a strong leader.
17   MR BOOYENS:  Did he have any or did he allow any latitude to, for younger
18   officers to oppose him with regard to his viewpoints?
19   MR SIEBERT:  No.
20   MR BOOYENS:  And did he enforce these viewpoints?
21   MR SIEBERT:  Yes.  (extract 22, p. 6)
```

In the above extract, Siebert is again positioned as one who is on the receiving end – he is a junior officer to the imposing figure of Colonel Goosen. The latter is constructed as a powerful

115

leader who not only believed in apartheid, but did not allow any latitude to anyone who opposed his viewpoints. Siebert is positioned as a "young" person (L. 12), and one who followed this "strong leader" (L. 16, 17). The implication of this positioning is that Siebert is the weak one in this relationship, one who simply obeys orders. There is a sense that it was not possible to go against Goosen, as he enforced his viewpoints and did not allow any opposition in this regard.

This extract differs slightly from the preceding extracts regarding how Siebert was "led astray". The positioning here, while according Siebert a passive role, positions him also as one who had little choice in following Goosen. Siebert is "influenced" by Goosen, who was looked up to as a father figure (Siebert is a "young" officer and therefore positioned as almost child-like), and he is not allowed to disagree with Goosen's point of view. The use of familial discourse here, where Goosen is positioned as father, and Siebert and the other officers, as similiar to children, conveys an innocence on Siebert's part. He simply did what he was told to do, by this authoritative and commanding figure. Siebert's positioning as one who was innocent constructs him as "ordinary" here.

```
1     MR SIEBERT: "At that time I was of the opinion that the continued survival of
2     White people in South Africa could be directly linked to the then Government
3     remaining in power. I was of the opinion that should the organisations such as the
4     ANC ..." and I would like to add to this the PAC and the Black power organisations,
5     "... should they become the Government in South Africa, that this would lead to total
6     anarchy and chaos which would no longer allow me to maintain my way of life that I
7     had become use to. I was, as a consequence of the opinion that the security branch
8     had the responsibility to assist in ensuring that the then Government order could be
9     maintained in order to help maintain the common civilised Western standards to
10    which people in South Africa had become use (sic).
11    In view of the fact that we were engaged in an undeclared war with the so-called
12    liberation movements or organisations and in view of the support offered to the
13    security branch from both political, church and cultural circles, I was convinced that
14    the then Government status quo had to be maintained at all costs." (extract 23, p. 11)
```

In extract 24 above, Siebert uses strategic ambiguity to distance himself from his position/opinion with the term "At that time" (L. 1), which indicates that his opinion may have subsequently changed. He again reiterates that he was influenced or convinced by political, church and cultural leaders into believing that his job was necessary and correct in helping to support the apartheid government, and fight the liberation movements in order to ensure the maintenance of the status quo. In putting forward that he was "convinced", Siebert is once again placed in a passive position, and the church, political and cultural leaders are those that have led him astray. In this narrative, they are therefore ultimately responsible for Siebert's actions. The local nuance

on "ordinariness" pertaining to the maintenance or survival of his people, is again quoted here by Siebert (but here it is in reference to white people, and not white Afrikaner people). However, he links his job to maintaining civility and Western standards. This implicitly positions black people as being uncivilized, and positions Siebert as being a part of civilized and "ordinary" values.

The contradiction of his role as passive and active is evident in this extract. Siebert is a passive recipient of the influence or teachings of authority figures such as the church. In positioning himself as passive, he is constructed as an "ordinary" man who was led astray. However, there is also a different positioning occurring, where he is part of civilized and decent standards/values, and an active part of the apartheid structure. This also positions him as "ordinary" as he wanted to ensure the survival of his people, and that "ordinary" values were maintained. The device that allows him to do both of these, is the phrase "At that time, I was of the opinion…" (L. 1), which allows him to distance himself from the system which he supported, and allows him to use the principle of motive to position himself as one who was noble.

How does this positioning of Siebert as a passive recipient of authority render him "ordinary"? Essentially, it serves to distance him from the inhumanity of apartheid. By rendering himself as passive in the face of such overwhelming influence, Siebert becomes less responsible for his actions. Most importantly, Siebert's role is solidified as an "ordinary" individual who was led astray by all these forces – everywhere he looked, those in authority were telling him that apartheid was correct and justified, and the way to maintain and preserve his way of life and his cultural heritage. The latter represent the local nuance in Siebert's construction of ordinariness. Siebert had noble and pure motives – he wanted to maintain his heritage, a sure sign of his normality.

In essence this storyline is contradicted in extracts where Siebert aligns himself to the system, i.e. the police system and the apartheid system as a whole. Whereas in this section, he distances himself from the system, much of the material reviewed under section 4.3 and 4.4, positions him as one who had faith in the system, which this strengthened his resolve to do his job well.

4.6 CONCLUSION

There are two contrasting constructions of "ordinariness". The first sees Siebert as divorced from the system, and merely doing his job without questioning his orders – i.e. there was nothing about the individual character of Siebert that was involved. The second sees him as a part of the system, where the system is defined in positive terms. In the second construction, Siebert and the system are aligned with humanity.

Does Siebert see apartheid and the police system of which he was a part, and which maintained apartheid as correct and justifiable, or does he distance himself from both to indicate that with the change in dispensation, he has seen the error in the old regime, and is remorseful for his role in it? The evidence that answers this question is reflected in the second storyline – Siebert's narrative is overwhelmingly based using racist discourse. His opinions and the way in which he conceives of his past actions are clearly influenced by racist ideas. While his narrative attempts to put forward that he was humane, and "ordinary", he shows little remorse for his actions, and according to many authors (e.g. Bizos, 1998, Meredith, 1999), although the hearings were meant to elicit the truth about what transpired that led to the death of Biko, little new was revealed or admitted. The perpetrators did not really bring forward much new information which could shed light on how Biko died, and who was responsible.

The narrative as has been analyzed, shows that the storylines reviewed, essentially constructs/positions Siebert as "ordinary" in different ways. These different constructions even though they are at variance with each other at different stages, in terms of the overall picture, serve to shift the responsibility of the death of Biko onto others. These storylines reveal that Siebert uses the "ordinary man" construction in order to position himself in ways which serve to make him less culpable, and to reiterate that it was either the system or the political context, or the liberation movements, or the church, which were ultimately responsible for what happened to Biko. These storylines reveal that there is little in the narrative to indicate that Siebert comprehends his own role in taking the life of another human being. The "ordinary man" rhetoric is fundamentally one of a denial of guilt. Siebert's rhetoric aims to place the responsibility of his actions on the system, and also on those who fought in the freedom struggle. In so doing, it also shows how the old regime is alive in the rhetoric of those who upheld it. There is a denial of

apartheid, and the harm it inflicted upon the lives of millions of South Africans. And it shows that racism has taken on somewhat more subtle forms, but it is still there, in the rhetoric of people who attempt to make sense of their lives and their actions.

The TRC is an institution whose task was an attempt to deal with the atrocities of the past to build a better future for all South Africans. However, using such amnesty hearings to do so, is treading on dangerous ground. While it has provided opportunities for perpetrators of atrocities during apartheid to "tell the truth", this does not really deal with the issue of responsibility, or what follows when perpetrators do not fulfill the objectives of the Commission. Amnesty was denied to Siebert, yet the question of how this is followed up remains unclear and unanswered.

Perpetrators such as Siebert have not really answered for, or been held accountable for the actions that they perpetrated, and from which they benefited. They have been integrated into the *new* South African society, the rainbow nation, where it seems all is forgiven. In many ways the status quo remains the same. This is evident in the fact that police officers like Siebert, could actually maintain the jobs that they held during apartheid, and thereby ensure that the vestiges of the old regime continue to live and breed in South Africa. Institutions such as the TRC ensure that those that benefited from the previous regime may continue to live their lives relatively untouched by the change in dispensation. And, similarly, those oppressed by the previous regime do not see any real change in their lives with the dawn of the new democracy.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 RESULTS

5.1.1 Contextualizing this study

Discourses of the "ordinariness" of perpetrators of gross human rights violations find their roots in Hannah Arendt's articles on the trial of Adolf Eichmann. Although there had been documented psychological investigations into the "normality" of the war criminals tried at Nuremberg, this information did not come to light until well after Arendt's book was published. Subsequently, this theory has been espoused by many psychologists, psychiatrists, historians and sociologists, who have all similarly argued that perpetrators of gross human rights violations, who commit their acts within the context of a system, are "ordinary" men.

While one could argue that the contradictions between psychiatric "normality" and the perpetration of atrocities is an excellent way to demonstrate the dubious nature of "normality", and "abnormality", this thesis has been more concerned with exploring this discourse to investigate the functions and effects thereof in present day South Africa. As a study falling under the social constructionist paradigm, it was concerned with deconstructing the "ordinary man", rather than treating "ordinariness" as a psychological reality, as have other authors/researchers who have examined the "ordinariness" of perpetrators.

Before moving on to the results, the decision of the Amnesty Committee into hearing of the death of Steve Biko needs to be stated briefly. The Amnesty Committee denied amnesty to all five applicants in this case, including Siebert. This was on the grounds that they claimed that their actions were not intentional, as they were applying for amnesty for deeds for which they stated occurred 'by accident'. As a result, the case is now left to the district attorney to decide whether to prosecute these applicants.

5.1.2 Results of the transcript analysis

The analysis of the transcript has elucidated that "ordinariness" is constructed in ways that attempt to keep intact the humanity of the perpetrator. To achieve this goal, the perpetrator positions himself in different ways, i.e. sometimes as an active participant, and other times as a passive recipient, of orders and influence. As his own positioning in the narrative shifts, others such as the Biko, as well as past political and church leaders, and black and white people in general, are also positioned differently. The ways in which "ordinariness" is produced, hinges on the relationship between the individual and the system within which he worked or of which he was a part. In areas of the transcript where the individual distances himself from the system, the system functions as a backdrop to "ordinariness", where it is positioned as epitomizing agency and intent, and the perpetrator is a passive recipient of orders. The responsibility for the actions of the perpetrator are therefore placed squarely at the hands of the system. Construction of the system thus allows for a free-floating responsibility, as it becomes difficult to pinpoint who is responsible for what. Whereas individuals may be held responsible for particular actions, it is almost impossible to hold a system responsible. As such, the construction of the system enables the "ordinariness" of perpetrators to be given coherence, through facilitating the foregrounding of "ordinariness".

When the individual is positioned as an active agent, he and the system are aligned together as the protectors of society. They are therefore responsible for ensuring that the humanity of society is not affected or eroded, by groups such as freedom fighters. The latter are clearly positioned in negative ways, as pathological and self-serving criminals, which reveals the underlying racist narrative that grounds this construction of "ordinariness". The construction of the freedom fighters in negative ways, implicitly and explicitly positions the perpetrator as "ordinary" in protecting society from such inhumanity.

5.1.3 Comparing the two analyses conducted

There are many similiarities in the construction of "ordinariness" as shown in the literature review and that of the analysis of the transcript. Both reflect the integral relationship between the system and perpetrator as essential to grounding the "ordinariness" of perpetrators. The literature

121

reviewed from the German holocaust, reveals similiarities in the use of anti-semitic rhetoric in constructing "ordinariness", which echoes the way in which a racist narrative is used in the transcript to contextualize the actions of the perpetrator in this case. While the literature review elucidated the use of familial discourse to a larger extent than the transcript analyzed, it could be argued that the setting or context of the courtroom, restricted the use of such discourse in the case of the perpetrator in question. Had the transcript been of a television interview for example, where the aim was to provide an 'all-round' picture of perpetrators, the use of this discourse may have played a more significant role. Similarly, in the transcript analyzed there was no reference to the psychological/psychiatric normality of perpetrators (which had been quoted often in the literature), which is also a function of the context. As the amnesty hearing was not a criminal trial, and there was little indication of any psychological abnormality of the perpetrator, this issue was not raised, as it was assumed that he was "normal". Lastly, the use of nationalistic ideology to contextualize the actions of perpetrators has been noted in both the transcript and the literature reviewed. In the case of the transcript, the construction of "ordinariness" saw the use of the aims of maintaining Afrikaner heritage and culture, as reflecting the local nuance of "ordinariness" in the South African context.

5.1.4 Implications of the "ordinary man" discourse in present day South Africa

What are the effects and implications of this discourse? Firstly, the "ordinary man" discourse is contextualized in the TRC in South Africa. As an institution whose aim is the uncovering of the 'truth' about the past, the TRC, because it is not a criminal court, allows for perpetrators to be decriminalized. The decriminalization of perpetrators means that those who upheld and enforced the previous regime, are not really held accountable for their actions. It means that the National Party, its members and supporters, are treated the in the same way as other South Africans in society, and integrated into South African society. It means that there is no differentiation between the perpetrators, and the people whom they helped to oppress.

Ultimately, it is 'ordinary' white South Africans who benefited from apartheid, who continue to do so, and who are the biggest beneficiaries of the work of the TRC. The "ordinary man" discourse serves to support the re/integration of perpetrators into South African society, through rendering them "ordinary", and not pathological or criminal. In using the amnesty

hearings to deal with the atrocities of the past, this does not address an adequate transformation of South African society. With perpetrators being conceived as "ordinary", and less responsible for their actions, this also serves to make the white minority that kept the National Party in power, just as blameless. They played an active role in maintaining a privileged and superior role in society, and ensuring that black South Africans were regarded as 'inferior' beings, and treated as such. It is the system which is constructed as criminal, and therefore the "ordinary" person is not responsible. The work of the TRC does not address the issue of the gross imbalances that were created by apartheid, and which are still manifest clearly in today's times.

The victims, or survivors, of apartheid are undermined through the "ordinary man" discourse. The gross inhumanity that black people in South Africa were subjected to is "normalized", and the voices of black people continue to be oppressed through this discourse. While the TRC has been involved in providing a space for black people who were victims of atrocities of the past regime to tell their stories, research suggests that the TRC was inadequate in helping the victims cope with their tragedies, and helping them to deal with the ongoing personal and social difficulties created by their victimization (Hamber, Nageng & O' Malley, 2000). According to the latter authors, few of the people who came forward with their stories of victimization to the TRC, expressed a sense of closure, and instead showed a palpable disappointment.

Lastly, the construction of the "ordinary man" discourse may provide useful a way to differentiate the accounts of those who fought in the struggle against apartheid, and those who worked to maintain it. One can argue that those who fought for the liberation of the oppressed would use very different discourses to account for their actions. Further, in terms of the way in which the word 'perpetrator' has been outlined by the TRC, there is no distinction between those acts committed in the name of the apartheid state, and those that were committed in fighting the oppressive regime. The criminal actions of those who upheld apartheid are placed on an equal footing with those who placed their lives at risk to fight oppression. Therefore the TRC also does injustice to freedom fighters in essentially conceiving their actions, as on an equal par, to those of the upholders of apartheid.

5.2 AN EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH

This process would not be complete without evaluating whether the research conclusions are sound. The research will be assessed with regards to a few key factors. The first is the issue of transferability. According to Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999), constructionist researchers argue that because meanings are variable across contexts of human interaction, instead of being generalizable, research findings should be transferable. Transferability refers to the extent to which the research provides a rich and detailed description of the context of the research in order to account for the structures of meaning in the study. This then ensures that the understandings can be transferred to new contexts (Durrheim and Wassenaar, 1999). While being a huge undertaking, the construction of "ordinariness" and gross human rights violations in the context of a system have been dealt with in sufficient depth, and across different contexts, to facilitate the transferability of this study to other contexts. The issue of coherence, which Potter and Wetherell (1987) identify as a key technique to validate any research finding, also needs assessment. These authors state that one's analytic claims should give coherence to a body of discourse – i.e. to elucidate how the discourse fits together, and how it produces particular effects and functions. In assessing this issue, I believe that the analysis was able to cover the broader way in which "ordinariness" was constructed, while paying attention to, and accounting for the micro-sequences of the transcript.

One of the *new problems* that is raised in the study, [another of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) techniques for assessing research], is that of how perpetrators account for their actions which were perpetrated within a regime that is subsequently found to be a crime against humanity. This is reflected in the way in which the perpetrator in the analysis continually shifts from constructing his actions as active, and then at other stages, as passive. However, linguistic devices such as "I was of the opinion at that time...", are clearly useful in attempts to convey a shift in the positioning of the perpetrator, with the change in the political climate. Yet another technique that Potter and Wetherell (1987) outline, is that of the fruitfulness of the study. In conducting the literature review, I found that there was a scarcity of research on the "ordinariness" of perpetrators, aside from that conducted after the German holocaust. The literature on South African perpetrators has only begun to emerge with the change in political circumstances. With regards to the use of a social constructionist approach in analyzing the "ordinariness" of

perpetrators of atrocities, there is little evidence to indicate that this has previously been conducted. Therefore this study aims to add to the South African literature on perpetrators of atrocities, and in using a social constructionist approach, it also attempts to highlight the way in "ordinariness" in the context of the perpetration of atrocities in the South African context, has specific political implications for the transformation of South African society.

A criticism that may be leveled at this study is that it deals with the account of only one perpetrator. However, the accounts of four other applicants were used to inform this study. There were clear similiarities in these accounts. Further, using the account of one perpetrator allowed for an in-depth and rigorous analysis of the transcript, which would have been undermined if the accounts of all the perpetrators were used.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research designs cannot be given in advance, but must emerge, develop and unfold with the research process. This quote is useful in conceptualizing this research as a whole. One of the problems with this research undertaking was that at various stages it became clear that the scope of the study proved too large for a master's mini-dissertation. While acknowledging that in the case of such a study it was, and would have been, difficult to assess its scope in the early stages, this made it difficult as the research progressed to cut down the scope to a suitable size for which it was intended.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The way in which issues of transformation have been addressed in South African society needs to be challenged. This may be facilitated by further work on the discourse of "ordinariness" in relation to perpetrators, especially as the TRC completes its amnesty work, and there are more answers regarding the ways in which those who have been denied amnesty, are dealt with.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to analyze the discourse of the "ordinary man" in the local context and link this to the broader literature on the "ordinariness" of perpetrators. It also aimed to investigate the function and effects of the "ordinary man" discourse. There were clearly links between the

local and international literature with "ordinariness" being constructed using similar discourses of normality and humanity. This discourse functions to make the issue of responsibility problematic, as it becomes difficult to say who is responsible for what. Effects of this discourse in the context of the TRC include maintaining the unaccountability of those who upheld the previous regime. The racist narrative to define past actions was used quite extensively, and is an indication of the way/s in which racism continues to play a dominant role in South African society.

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127

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