CHAPTER 1
RESEARCH POSITION AND METHOD

> It is dawn; the early morning fog has not yet lifted. Before the sun breaks the horizon hundreds of athletes throughout the world begin their day as they have in the past, as they will continue to do in the future. This ritual is repeated everyday, on the beaches, the countryside, the mountains, gymnasiums, swimming pools and tracks. The already great and those who aspire to be, share the same dream, the pursuit of excellence.
>
> Bud Greenspan (in Lesyk, 2001, p.12)

I am intensely aware of the fact that a very specific cultural discourse is dominant in informing the writing of a research report in the science of psychology. It expects that a research report should have chapters on introduction, theoretical position, research methodology and results, as well as conclusions and recommendations (American Psychological Association [APA], 2001). The writing of this research report will not be informed totally by this cultural discourse, not because I want to be different but because the research position and method I have adopted for the research, that of narrative, requires a different way of thinking about, conducting and writing of the research.

The research position and method in a research project, such as mine, can be compared to the position that a player has, in for example, team sports like rugby and netball as well as the actions that the position requires. In both these team sports there are various positions, 15 positions in rugby and seven positions in netball. The players take up certain positions and from those positions they participate in a game of rugby or netball. For example, if a rugby player plays flyhalf, it is expected of him/her to carry out certain prescribed actions on the field, which are different from the actions expected from a rugby player playing fullback. The same principle applies to netball as a team sport. The actions expected from a netball player playing in the position of goal shooter are very different from those expected from one who has the position of goal defence.

To conclude, similar to the importance of the position of a player in sport, so is clarity on my position as a researcher essential for a research project. It determines

where I stand and what I do, what my thinking is, also called conceptualisation and what actions will follow from my thinking, also seen as the methodology followed in the research project. Just as in team sport where a player can assume only one position and make a contribution to the whole game from that position, I shall also assume only one position from which I shall endeavour to make a contribution to the whole research "game". I would now like to tell you more about my research position as well as the actions that will follow from my position.

POSITION

Narrative metaphor

The research position and method I have taken up for this research project falls within the field of narrative psychology, in which the narrative metaphor is paramount (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The narrative metaphor can be seen as an alternative root metaphor in psychology, to the more paradigmatic metaphors in psychology, such as "people as computers", "people as laboratory rats", "people as machines", "people as onions" and the "naïve scientist" (Monk, Winslade, Crocket & Epston, 1997; Sarbin, 1986). The narrative metaphor can be seen as a basic, perhaps the most basic mode of human understanding and the primary scheme by which human existence is rendered meaningful (Edwards, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1988). As Johnson (1993, p.11) states:

> There is abundant empirical evidence that narrative is a fundamental mode of understanding, by means of which we make sense of all forms of human action. There are various types of narrative structure that play a role in how we understand actions … narrative is not just an explanatory device but is actually constitutive of the way we experience things.

The narrative metaphor allows people to make sense of their everyday experiences and to see their lives as a narrative unfolding through time (history) and in space (culture)(Doan, 1998; Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1994).

Experience and narrative

Everyday life can be very chaotic and does not always greet us in an orderly manner (Ochs, 1997; Woods, 1991). As people, we often have experiences that cause disequilibrium in our lives or are idiosyncratic in nature and then we employ narrative to try and make sense out of those experiences (Carr, 1986; Crossley, 2000; MacIntyre, 1981; Ochs, 1997; Sarbin, 1986; Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1994). On the one hand experience is possible because we are embodied and on the other hand we are able to narrate our experiences, in various ways. Therefore, experience has to do with embodiment and narrative. There is no waging war between body and mind, as some philosophical positions claim but only embodied and narrated experience. We are able to experience because we have anatomy and physiology (embodiment) as well as our ability to construct narratives about our experiences (Harré, 1999; Human, Liebenberg & Müller, 2001). We can have experiences because we have the ability to language those experiences (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988; Eagleton, 1983). We do not have direct access to experience; only to the way people talk and write about experience (Riessman, 1993). Narrative is seen as the way "human beings think, perceive, imagine and make moral decisions" (Sarbin, 1986, p.6). It is the means by which "people organize their experience in, knowledge of and transactions within the social world" (Brunner, 1990, p.35) and it is "a way of organizing episodes, actions and accounts of actions in time and space" (Sarbin, 1986, p.9). Furthermore, we narrate experiences which we are unaware of, on a passive level and which we are acutely aware of, on an active level. We also narrate our whole life in the form of a narrative about life (Carr, 1986; Crossley, 2000).

Narratives, for example, allow people to make sense of experiences of happiness, as well as experiences of sadness. A good example from South Africa (SA) occurred during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission proceedings, when people were allowed to narrate their experiences of the apartheid ideology in their lives. People who enforced the apartheid ideology narrated their experiences, as well as those who were on the receiving end of the enforcement of the apartheid ideology. Furthermore, narratives, for example, allow athletes to make sense of excellent performance experiences on the sporting field as well as experiences characterized by

disappointment, such as sports injuries, or not being selected for provincial and/or national squads. In 1996 Penny Heyns won two golden medals in swimming at the Atlanta Olympic Games. She was the first South African athlete to have won gold at the Olympic Games in 44 years. She made sense of that experience by on the one hand narrating it as the highlight of her career but, on the other hand, seeing it as a shallow victory because she felt that God was not central in her life (Heyns, 2003).

The following narrative is an example from my own life, which demonstrates how people can make sense of their experiences through narrative:

> In December 2002 my daughter Hannelize (8yrs) and my son Henk (6yrs) were on holiday in the Cape. I phoned them one evening to hear how they were doing. I spoke to Hannelize first, who at a stage during our telephone conversation said: "Pappa, we visited the hospital today". I asked her: "Why?" She responded by saying: "That's Henk's story". So, she had taken it upon herself to introduce the story of going to the hospital, to me. When it was Henk's turn to talk to me, he told me the following story: "Hannelize and I were on our way to the beach when I decided to climb into a tree. She decided that I was wasting time and pulled on my towel that was hanging out of the tree. Unfortunately, she did not just pull the towel out of the tree, she also pulled me out of the tree. I fell onto the ground and broke my arm. We then went to the hospital where a doctor attended to me and put my arm into a cast".

This narrative is an illustration of what Henk did with his experience. He told a story about it, he narrated it. Hannelize introduced the story and Henk told it in a certain way. He articulated his experience about his decision to climb into a tree that he had fallen out of the tree, that a doctor had put his arm into a cast and that he was "ok". His narrative was shaped by temporality, as well as by constructing the narrative in such a way that he conveyed the message to me that he was "ok".

Experience, narrative, history and culture

The narratives that people use to make sense of their experiences are shaped through time (history) and in space (culture); they are constructed historically and culturally (Coyle, 2000; Gergen, 1997, 1998, 2001; O'Hanlon, 1994; Paré, 1995; Willig, 2001; Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1994). The narrative metaphor I am using in this research

project, on the one hand draws on phenomenological psychology and, on the other hand, it embraces constructionist psychology. Therefore, human experience, human experience and embodiment, human experience and temporality, as well as human experience as a culturally constructed phenomenon are important within the narrative metaphor (Butt, 1999; Crossley, 2000). The following metaphor from music explains how a narrative is shaped historically and culturally.

A present narrative is always constructed with past and future in mind, or shall I say, with a memory of "a" past and an imagining of "a" future (Paré, 1995). When composing music a composer places a note on a certain scale on the music bar. He/she does so not just by taking the position of the current note into account but also by taking the previous notes and the notes to follow into account. A melody is shaped therefore not just by a present note but also by past and future notes and their sequential relationship to one another. This is the historical dimension of a narrative, which primarily draws on phenomenological psychology (Brueggemann, 1981, 1985, 1993; Carr, 1986; Crossley, 2000; Edwards, 1997; Müller & Laas, 2000; Ochs, 1997).

A present narrative is not just shaped by history but also by culture. The culture a person is living in also constructs the telling of a present narrative (Paré, 1995). A composer who composes music does so by taking cognisance of when the music is going to be played, where it is going to be played, for what reason it will be played, as well as the cultural discourse informing the event. Composing music for the Rugby World Cup would be completely different from composing music for a presidential inauguration. Furthermore, when music is composed the composer indicates what instruments are best suited to play a part in the composition and in so doing he/she indicates what musical language best suits the composition. This is the cultural dimension of a narrative and draws on constructionist psychology (Brueggemann, 1981, 1985, 1993; Brunner, 1990; Crossley, 2000; Edwards, 1997; Müller & Laas, 2000).

I would like to tell you about a sport injury experience from my own life and I shall use this experience to enhance the explanation of a narrative being constructed historically and culturally:

> In June 2003, one Saturday morning, I played squash with my brother-in-law. While we were playing it felt as if my right calf muscle was going to cramp. I was a bit concerned about this as I had torn that specific calf muscle in March 2000 and received eight weeks rehabilitation for that sport injury. I was afraid of tearing the calf muscle again, as this could influence my future participation in squash. Despite this, I kept on playing and at one stage of the game I felt a terrible sting in my right calf muscle. It felt as if someone had thrown a dart into that calf muscle. I immediately knew that I had torn my calf muscle again. I asked my brother-in-law to take me to a doctor, which he did. I told the doctor what had happened in detail and also told him that I had torn the same calf muscle in March 2000 when I had not sought the advice of a doctor immediately but had waited two days before I did so. This resulted in a four-week rehabilitation process with a physiotherapist during which the blood crust that had formed under my skin had to be broken down and I also had to undergo a further four-week rehabilitation process during which the physiotherapist helped to strengthen my calf muscle. Furthermore, as this was the second time the same calf muscle had torn, I felt quite desperate that it should not have a profound influence on my playing squash in future and I conveyed this concern to the doctor as well. The doctor gave me a Voltaren injection for the pain and told me to put ice on the calf muscle for as long as I could, on that Saturday. I went home with my brother-in-law and briefly told my sister what had happened. I also told her that the doctor said I had to put ice on the calf muscle for as long as I could, on that Saturday. This I did. I sat in front of the television watching sport all day with an ice pack on my calf muscle, which at the end of the day had a significant positive influence on the rehabilitation of the calf muscle because the ice kept the blood from coagulating and forming a blood crust under my skin, as was the case in the first sport injury.

I would now like to explain to you how a narrative is constructed historically and culturally.

- Experience, narrative and history

One of the major characteristics of a narrative is that it depicts a temporal transition from one state of affairs to another. The constructing of a narrative in the present is always done with a past in mind. It is important to note that it is “a” past and not

"the" past, as past-lived experiences can be narrated in various ways. The past is not fixed but is always told in a certain way in relation to the present construction of a narrative. The telling of a past is never a telling as it really happened, as it was experienced by someone, it is merely the construction of a past in the form of a narrative. Therefore, within the narrative metaphor, there is not just one past but many "pasts". There is not just one telling of the past but numerous ways that the past can be constructed through language in relation to the telling of a narrative in the present. The telling of a past experience implies an activity, an ongoing human activity, where the past-lived experiences of people can be narrated in various ways to either support and/or contradict the construction of a present narrative (Larner, 1998; Ochs, 1997). The quotation "before the sun breaks the horizon hundreds of athletes throughout the world begin their day as they have in the past, as they will continue to do in the future" (Lesyk, 2001, p.12) at the beginning of this chapter, encapsulates temporality in the life of an athlete. Every practice session in the present and every game in the present are done with a past in mind, or, should I say, with a past playing out.

Let me explain how a narrative is shaped historically by referring to the narrative regarding my sport injury:

> When the doctor saw me in his consulting rooms, I started by telling him what had happened that Saturday morning while playing squash with my brother-in-law on the squash court. I told him that at first it just felt as if my right leg's calf muscle wanted to cramp and then while playing a game of squash I experienced a terrible burning pain in my calf muscle, as if someone had thrown a dart into my calf muscle. I then started telling him about the previous time in March 2000 when I had also torn the same calf muscle. I narrated that experience in a certain way to the doctor by telling him that I did not go to a doctor immediately and waited for two days before I did as I thought the injury would heal by itself and that with the current sport injury I had sought the advice and help of a doctor immediately. I was narrating the past as "I" being irresponsible, while at present "I" was being responsible. I was trying to tell him through the construction of my narrative that with the past sport injury I was irresponsible and did not take the sport injury seriously as I thought it would heal on its own, while I was being extremely responsible with the current sport injury by seeking his advice and help immediately because I was serious about the rehabilitation of the sport injury. I need not have told him about the March 2000 sport injury at all as I do not think it would have made a difference to the way he treated me. I did

> however need to narrate the past sport injury in relation to the present sport injury. There had been a change in my personal narrative regarding sport injuries, as I had moved from the "irresponsible me" to the "responsible me".

The constructing of a present narrative is not only done with a past in mind but is also done with a future in mind. Just as there is only telling of "a" past and not "the" past, so is there only a telling of "a" future and not "the" future. There are "futures" and not "the" future. As the telling of a past draws on peoples past-lived experiences and these past-lived experiences are constructed through language in such a way that they either support and/or contradict the constructing of a present narrative, so does the telling of a future draw on peoples imagined experiences, the not yet lived experiences - the yet to be realized experiences. A narrative that is constructed in the present therefore is not only the culmination of a past but also includes a future. The past-lived experiences and the future imagined experiences are both constructed in language and culminate in the contradiction and/or support of the constructing of a present narrative (Larner, 1998; Ochs, 1997). The quotation "before the sun breaks the horizon hundreds of athletes throughout the world begin their day as they have in the past, as they will continue to do in the future" (Lesyk, 2001, p.12) at the beginning of this chapter, once again encapsulates temporality in the life of an athlete. Every practice session in the present and every game in the present are not only done with a past in mind but also with an imagined future.

To explain the above, I once again want to take you back by referring to my sport injury:

> The narrative that I was constructing in the presence of the doctor was not just being informed by my past sport injury, or construction thereof, it was not just being informed by the medical discourse within which the current conversation between the doctor and I was taking place, it was profoundly influenced by the way in which I was constructing my future, with or without squash. I was constructing myself as the responsible squash player who after sustaining a sport injury had immediately sought the advice of a doctor, as I was not yet ready to construct a future in my imagination without squash. I was not ready for my narrative to change from a squash player in the present to a squash spectator in the future. The construction that I was a responsible squash player who had just sustained a sport injury, was not only informed by my past-lived experience of a sport injury but also by my future imagined experiences of still being able to play squash.

The present is a fusion between the past and future (Heidegger, 1962), where we "explicitly consult past experiences, envisage the future and view the present as a passage between the two" (Carr, 1986, p.74). The notion of time within a narrative, is human time, not clock time; it is existential time, not physical time (Heidegger, 1962; Ricoeur, 1988). "We experience ourselves in the present time world but with a memory of the past and an anxiety for the future" (Ochs, 1997, p.191). A narrative brings past-lived experiences and future imagined experiences into present consciousness (Abel & Stokoe, 2001; Ochs, 1997). A present narrative is a construction of an experience and not the expression of an experience. It is a version of an experience and is not equal to an experience (Carr, 1986). Carr (in Woods, 1991) states:

> Extraneous details are not left out but they are pushed into the background, saved for later, ranked in importance. And whose narrative voice is accomplishing all this? None but our own, of course. In planning our days and our lives we are composing the stories or the dramas we will act out and which will determine the focus of our attention and our endeavors, which will provide the principles for distinguishing foreground from background.

However, the construction of a narrative in the present is not only shaped by history, past and future but also by culture.

- Experience, narrative and culture

When a person has an experience and that experience is narrated, the culture that he/she lives within has a profound influence on the constructing of a present narrative (White, 2000). According to Cushman (1995, p.17-18):

Culture is not indigenous "clothing" that covers the universal human; rather it is an integral part of each individual's psychological flesh and bones … the material objects we create, the ideas we hold and the actions we take are shaped in a fundamental way by the social framework we have been raised in.

A culture is made up, for example, of ideas, symbols, rituals, people, heroes, places, institutions, metaphors and discourse. Culture is not mechanistic and static but is organic and flexible, continuously changes over time and varies greatly from place to place (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999). It has to do with the basic assumptions of a community, which influence the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of that community and which manifest in for example rituals, symbols and processes (Weisner & Millet, 2000). Furthermore, culture creates a community identity that distinguishes one community from another and it also contributes to the construction of the identity of the members of a community. It also guides the members of a community with regards to acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within a specific community (Werner, 2003). This research project is situated within the academic community of the University of Pretoria (UP) in general and specifically within the Department of Psychology, which will have an influence on how I narrate my experience of sport psychology[1]. I am, after all, not doing this research project for a magazine like "Sports Illustrated". Narrating my experience of sport psychology for this magazine would be completely different due to a different culture.

The influence of culture on the constructing of a narrative can be seen by referring again to my sport injury:

> The morning I tore my calf muscle, my brother-in-law immedialty took me to the doctor, where I saw him in his consulting room. The consulting room of a medical doctor forms part of the medical discourse that informs the dominant way of practicing medicine in Western society. The consulting room can be seen as a cultural institution, where a doctor consults and treats the patient. The narrative that I constructed within this consulting room was also shaped by my awareness that I was in a doctor's consulting room and this shaped my narrative about my sport injury. I did not tell the doctor about my work, as I was not there to discuss my work but I told him about my sport injury, as I needed him to treat the sport injury. It was not only the cultural institution of a consulting room that shaped my narrative regarding the sport injury but I was in conversation with a cultural figure, the medical doctor and this also shaped the construction of my narrative regarding the sport injury.

One of the most important aspects of culture and for this research project is discourse. The term discourse has come to the fore as part of the emergence of the

[1] In this research report the term "sport psychology" will be used in a broad sense to incorporate the fields of sport and exercise psychology.

postmodern world that we find ourselves in (Epston, 1998; Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997). I do not think it is possible to narrow discourse down to one singe definition. On the one hand, this could be because each person has his/her own definition of what discourse is, or, on the other hand, this could just be because discourse does not allow for one a-historical, a-cultural and uniform definition. It does not play or function by the positivist rules. Discourse can refer to language use, or to the communication of beliefs, or to the interaction in social situations. Discourse is about talk and text in context. Discourse is not only about the spoken word but also about the written word. In both talk and text there are users. In talk we have a speaker and a listener while in text we have an author and a reader. In both talk and text, context is important as context has an influence on the construction of talk and text (Van Dijk, 1997a). Discourse is seen as a cultural phenomenon as people engage in conversation at a specific time and place, with specific people and for a specific reason (Epston & White, 1992). Within this matrix of time, place, people and reason, conversation is created and discourse is created, which can be seen as language in action. This means that language does things (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999; Lea & Auburn, 2001; Van Dijk, 1997b). Life is experienced within language and how we experience is given meaning within the parameters of our language. The language we grow up with specifies or constitutes the experience we have (Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997).

The term discourse operates on different levels. It functions on macro and/or micro levels. On the one hand, the term discourse has a more abstract or general meaning when it refers to the macro discourses in society regarding phenomenon, for example, on age, race, gender and sexuality. I would like to refer to this as cultural discourse. On the other hand, the term discourse can have a more concrete or specific meaning when it is used on a micro level and refers to personal or conversational discourse (Van Dijk, 1997a). It is important to note that cultural discourses inform personal and conversational discourse and have lead to different research traditions. The influence of cultural discourses on the personal discourse of people is often studied through discourse analysis within the Foucauldian tradition (Carabine, 2001; Coyle, 2000; Powers, 1996; White, 1995; Willig, 2001), while the influence of cultural discourse on conversational discourse is studied through discursive analysis (Horton-Salaway, 2001; Willig, 2001).

Cultural discourses have been described as "regimes of truth" (Lowe, 1991, p.43) and can be seen as a "public process of conversation" and/or "systematic and institutionalised ways of speaking/writing" (Lowe, 1991, p.45). This way of describing a cultural discourse refers to the macro-linguistic worlds that we live in. Parker (1992, p.245) describes a cultural discourse as "sets of statements that construct objects and an array of subject positions". These cultural discourses are created and sustained by various people in society, such as music writers, newspaper reporters, film producers and through various mediums such as the electronic and printed media as well as the spoken and written word (Monk *et al*., 1997). Cultural discourses are found all around us, for example, there are cultural discourses on gender, racism, abuse, violence, governments, policy, buildings and cities (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999; Powers, 1996; Swain, 2000; Thorp, 1992), which afford us ways-of-being. They dictate how a person should think, feel and act in relation to another person within a given situation (Willig, 2001). The cultural discourse that will predominantly inform my experience of sport psychology will be the researcher-practitioner discourse, as postgraduate training in professional psychology is mainly done within this discourse (Beyers, 1981; Raimy, in Phares, 1992).

Cultural discourses are not descriptive and passive but are active, constructed and constructive (Coyle, 2000; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997) and consequently have a dual nature. On the one hand, they are constructed by society and, on the other hand they construct society. They are, therefore, constructed and constructive. An analogy to the world of sport is a game of squash. In a sport like squash, players, coaches, umpires and administrators get together and construct the rules that should govern a squash game. Through this social process squash rules are constructed. In the playing of a game of squash by squash players the rules become constructive in that they dictate how the game should be played. Cultural discourse can be seen as language in action as, on the one hand, cultural discourses are constructed by society while on the other hand, they afford people ways-of-being. They afford people positions and/or subjectivities and they dictate how we should think, feel and act in relation to ourselves and to other people in a given situation (Van Dijk, 1997a, 199b; Willig, 2001).

The constructed and constructive nature of a cultural discourse, of language in action, can be illustrated by using the analogy of a glass of water (Willig, 2001, p.7):

> The same phenomenon or event can be described in different ways, giving rise to different ways of perceiving and understanding it, yet neither way of describing it is necessarily wrong. An obvious example of this is the choice between describing a glass of water as "half-full" or "half-empty"; both descriptions are equally accurate, yet one of them provides a positive, optimistic gloss on the situation ('half-full'), whereas the other emphasizes absence and lack ('half-empty').

On sustaining my sport injury in June 2003, cultural discourses informed my way-of-being and the way in which I narrated my experience of the sport injury:

> I am of the opinion that there were two discourses that informed my way-of-being that Saturday morning in June 2003. The one was the medical discourse and the other was a family discourse. While I was in the consulting room with the doctor my way-of-being was predominantly informed by the medical discourse as I was the patient and the doctor was the expert. I was in need of his expert medical knowledge and he was releasing his long earned expert knowledge to me, at a price. The discourse was dictating to me that "I do not know" and that the "doctor knows". When I arrived at my sister's house with the help of my brother-in law, the medical discourse was not in the foreground but rather a family discourse. This discourse allowed me to tell my sister what had happened on the squash court; that I had been to see a doctor and that he had advised me to put ice on the calf muscle. This I did with the help of my sister that day. The family discourse did not allow me to seek any expert knowledge from her nor did it allow her to give any expert advice, rather, it allowed me to ask for her support, which she gave.

Within any given cultural context there are dominant and alternative cultural discourses regarding a specific phenomenon and it is these cultural discourses that have a shaping effect on peoples personal narratives (Redwood, 1999; Van Dijk, Ting-Toomey, Smitherman & Troutman, 1997; White & Epston, 1990). Due to the existence and function of dominant and alternative cultural discourses, certain experiences that people have will become part of their personal narratives that are told and re-told and can be seen as the privileged knowledge and practices in their lives, while other experiences that they have do not become part of their told personal narratives. These experiences remain untold and become the subjugated knowledge

and practices of their lives, which can be seen as marginalized knowledge and practices (Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997; White & Epston, 1990). Cultural discourses prescribe certain ways-of-being in the world of which there can be dominant and alternative ways-of-being in the world. Cultural discourses prescribe subject positions which, when taken up, have implications for subjectivity and experience. Gergen (1994) states that our identities, our ways-of-being are the achievement of discourse rather than cognition. For example, from within the biomedical discourse, those who experience ill health occupy the subject position of "patient", which locates them as the passive recipient of expert care within a trajectory of cure (Willig, 2001). During my encounter with sport psychology I shall try to understand which cultural discourses are dominant and which are alternative, within the discipline of sport psychology.

To elaborate on the analogy of squash. The game of squash can be played as a singles-game or as a doubles-game. I assure you that singles-squash and doubles-squash are completely different. The rules are different, the communication on the court is different, the scoring is different, the way you move on the court is different and sometimes the sporting equipment that you need is different in that doubles-squash sometimes requires protective glasses. The cultural discourses informing singles-squash and doubles-squash are very different and afford a squash player different ways-of-being when he/she is playing singles-squash versus doubles-squash.

The dominant and alternative cultural discourses that circulate in society afford people different ways-of-being. As cultural discourses make available dominant and alternative ways-of-being, they are strongly implicated in the exercise of power (Willig, 2001). In postmodernism power is seen as a relational phenomena with the dominant cultural discourses having more power than the alternative cultural discourses and the resistance to power taking place where the power exists, in relationships (De Beaugrande, 1997; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997).

The following words by a student describes the imbalance in power due to dominant and alternative cultural discourses and the impact this imbalance can have on people's lives (Rich, in Maher & Thompson-Tetreault, 1994, p.1):

> When those who have power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or to hear you, whether you are dark skinned, old, disable, female … when someone of the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.

The dominant cultural discourses privilege those versions of the world, which legitimise existing power relations and social constructions. Some cultural discourses are so entrenched that it is very difficult to see how we may challenge them. They have become "common sense". At the same time, it is in the nature of language that alternative constructions are always possible and that counter-discourses can and do, emerge eventually (Willig, 2001).

When talking about dominant and alternative discourses, I also need to take cognisance of deconstruction. "To deconstruct is to undo, not to destroy" (Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997, p.36). It can be seen as the process of analysing the "gaps, silences, ambiguities and power relations within discourses" (Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997, p.35). Deconstruction uncovers the hidden contradictions and repressed meanings in narratives and reveals the forms of social control induced by cultural discourse (Duquin, 1994). Lather (1991) says that deconstruction provides a corrective moment, it makes one safeguard against dogmatism and creates a continuous process in which we can demystify the realities that we have created. For example, the quotation: "Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of rules and sadistic pleasure in watching violence: in other words, it is war minus the shooting" (Orwell, in Lesyk, 2001, p.15) is a deconstruction of the quotation at the beginning of this chapter.

- Narrative metaphor as research metaphor

I have chosen to situate this research project within the narrative metaphor as this will allow me to make sense of my experience of sport psychology, by narrating the

experience (Freedman & Combs, 1996, 2002). The narrative, or research report, will be shaped historically and culturally.

Originally, I wanted to approach this research project from a constructionist psychology perspective but what bothered me, just like a recurring sport injury, was the over emphasis of constructionist psychology on cultural discourse and how it constructs personal identities and relationships and in that, human experience seems to get lost (Augustinos & Walker, 1995; Burr, 1998; Cromby & Nightingale, 1999; Crossley, 2000; Jenkins, 2001). Cultural discourse became the player on the field and human experience the player on the bench.

The narrating of my encounter with sport psychology will allow me to contribute meaning and make sense of my experience (Ochs, 1997). The question can be asked: "Why is it important for me to make sense of my experience of sport psychology?"

Firstly, I have chosen to do this research project using the narrative metaphor, not just because I need to make sense of my own experience regarding my encounter with sport psychology but this meaning-making-process will also allow me to be congruent when I facilitate sport psychology training and research of future postgraduate students in sport psychology, as the aim of this research project is to establish a postgraduate sport psychology module in the Department of Psychology at the UP.

I want to explain the aspect of congruency by referring to a narrative from my own life:

> I remember that when I was studying theology from 1985 to 1990 at UP, there were fellow students who used to exchange sermons amongst each other. One student would work out a sermon and preach it, where after it would be exchanged for another student's sermon that would be used for preaching. I was never able to do this. I believed that if I did not experience the message of the sermon myself it would be unethical to preach that sermon to others. I believed that the message first had to make a difference in my own life before I could share it with others.

For this very same reason I need to become aware of my experience of sport psychology and narrate that experience before I am able to facilitate the training and research of future postgraduate sport psychology students. I believe that I have to discover my own excellence first before I can assist postgraduate students in sport psychology to discover their own excellence.

Secondly, the world of sport is a very action orientated world where people are usually doing some activity: athletes perform, coaches coach, umpires umpire and administrators administrate. Even the support staff, like doctors, physiotherapists, biokineticists and sport psychologists[2] are always doing something. The doctors are medicating athletes, the physiotherapists are rehabilitating athletes, the biokineticists are strapping athlete's muscles and the sport psychologists are presenting life and mental skills programmes to athletes. I am of the opinion that as sport psychologists we have to be with athletes before we do something to them, or should I rather say before we do something for and with them. As a sport psychologist I have to understand my own sporting experiences, before I can assist athletes in a process of understanding their own experiences in their pursuit of excellence. It is because of this that I have chosen to do this research project using the narrative metaphor as it will allow me to make sense of my own experience of sport psychology, which will allow me to, firstly, be with athletes and secondly, to do things with athletes and not do things to them. This, in itself, will allow me to work in a deconstructing way within a sport context.

Thirdly, in the narrating of my own experiences of sport psychology, I become ethical towards students, athletes and myself and I become responsible towards students, athletes and myself (Kierkegaard, 1987). As I was not formally trained in sport psychology my own sport psychology self comes into being through the narrating of my experience of sport psychology (Ricoeur, 1986). Crites (1996, p.162) says, "the more complete the story, the more integrated the self". The narrating of my experience of sport psychology in a complete as possible way, will allow me to

[2] Although I am aware that there are various registration categories (e.g. clinical, counselling, educational, industrial and sport psychology) for psychologists, nationally and internationally, the term "sport psychologist", when used in this research report, refers to a psychologist working in a sport context, irrespective of his/her registration category.

develop an ethical, responsible and integrated sport psychology self. To me this means creating a sense of personal excellence.

METHOD

The method that I have followed in the research project can be divided into the planning phase, the working phase and the reflecting phase.

Phase 1: Planning phase (Research proposal)

The planning phase entailed the drafting of a research proposal, as well as getting approval for the research project from the Research Committee of the Department of Psychology, as well as from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, at the UP. The planning phase was conducted in 2002.

Phase 2: Working phase (Research project)

The working phase consisted of two phases. On the one hand I engaged with sport psychology and on the other hand Prof. Dave Beyers and I discussed my encounter with sport psychology. These two phases were conducted simultaneously and ran from 2002 to 2004.

- Phase 2a: Engaging sport psychology

During this phase of the research project I read sport psychology literature, studied postgraduate sport psychology training programmes that are offered in Psychology Departments at various training organisations, visited the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) in Toowoomba, Australia that offered a Master of Psychology (Sport and Exercise)(MPSE) and a Doctor of Psychology (Sport and Exercise) (DPSE), as well as the High Performance Centre (HPC) of TuksSport (Pty) Ltd in Pretoria, SA and the Western Australia Institute of Sport (WAIS) in Perth, Australia.

- Phase 2b: Discussing sport psychology

During the period that I was engaging with sport psychology (phase 2a), Prof. Beyers and I discussed my encounter with sport psychology[3]. He was the supervisor for this research project. Traditionally, the term "supervisor" has the meaning of "critical evaluator" in a research project. However, in this research project the term "supervisor" has dual meaning. On the one hand, it has the meaning of a "co-researcher", while on the other hand, it also has the meaning of "critical evaluator". As "co-researcher" my supervisor posed certain questions to me, which were informed by the researcher-practitioner discourse, while as "critical evaluator" my supervisor critiqued the research process. Within the field of narrative psychology it is possible for a person to have multiple identities (Abel & Stokoe, 2001; White, 1995, 2000; White & Epston, 1990) and it is for this reason that my supervisor assumed the identities of "co-researcher" and "critical evaluator" in this research project.

Phase 3: Reflecting phase (Research report)

This phase entails reflecting on my experiences during the working phase, the research project and narrating those experiences in the form of a narrative, the research report. To write this narrative I shall employ two metaphors: touring and journal (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980):

- Metaphor 1: Touring metaphor

I shall employ the touring metaphor to account for the temporal dimension of the research project, as well as the research report, as narrative. The tour with sport psychology will be divided in three parts: Part I: "Before touring with sport psychology", Part II: "Touring with sport psychology" and Part III: "After touring with sport psychology".

- Metaphor 2: Journal metaphor

[3] These discussions took place at the University of Pretoria (UP). The UP originated as the Transvaal University College in 1908. In 1930 the UP became a fully-fledged university and currently positions itself as an internationally recognized organisation with regards to teaching and research (University of Pretoria [UP], 2003a, 2003b).

I shall employ the journal metaphor to account for the cultural dimension of the research project, as well as the research report, as narrative. During my tour with sport psychology I shall make various entries into my journal. All these entries will be shaped by the researcher-practitioner discourse and will be constructed in the form of imaginative reflective conversations between Prof. Beyers and myself (Freedman & Combs, 1996, 2002).

In Part I: "Before touring with sport psychology", I shall introduce myself as researcher (chapter 2, journal entry I) and state the research problem, question and goal(s)(chapter 3, journal entry II). In Part II, "Touring with sport psychology", I shall visit a sport psychology museum (chapter 4, journal entry III), library (chapter 5, journal entry IV), conference (chapter 6, journal entry V), department (chapter 7, journal entry VI), as well as a sport centre and institute (chapter 8, journal entry VII). In Part III: "After touring with sport psychology", I shall focus on incorporating what I learnt during my tour with sport psychology into the current Master of Arts (MA) (Counselling Psychology) programme at the UP (chapter 9, journal entry VIII), as well as how my encounter with sport psychology has influenced my identity as a psychologist (chapter 10, journal entry IX).

KNOWLEDGE

There are many people who are of the opinion that knowledge has been viewed differently over time and divide time into the pre-modern, modern and postmodern eras (Barker, 1996; Edgar, 1995; Euben, 1997; Ozment, 1995; Smith, 1993).

Revealing knowledge

In the pre-modern era knowledge was seen as something that belonged to God, it was "up there". God revealed this knowledge only to chosen people who then captured this knowledge in various religious scriptures. The church became the custodian of God's knowledge contained in the religious scriptures. These religious scriptures

were thus seen as containing knowledge that God deemed necessary for people to posses and to live by, as this knowledge would give them meaningful lives (Durrheim, 1997; Kvale, 1996; Mcloyd, 1997; Vorster, 1999).

Discovering knowledge

In the modern era knowledge is viewed as "out there" or "in here". Allow me to explain the notion of knowledge "out there". Within this view reality is mainly seen as being outside of the observer, containing a-historical and a-cultural knowledge that is timeless and universal (Butchart, 1988; Dewar & Horn, 1992; Gergen, 1988; Greenwood, 1992; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Willig, 2001). The task of the scientific community is to discover this knowledge "out there", by means of objective researchers, structured methodologies, as well as reliable and valid instruments (Durrheim, 1997; Kvale, 1996). The goal of research is to discover universal knowledge "out there", so that it can be generalized to other contexts giving scientists the ability to predict and control future behaviour (Taylor, 2001). The results of this kind of research are published in scientific journals that contain knowledge about the world "out there" and which is supposed to be used to make the world a better place to live in (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Greenwood, 1992; Mcloyd, 1997). The work of the scientific community within the modern era seems mainly to be characterized by a realist ontology, positivist epistemology and empirical methodologies (Taylor, 2001; Willig, 2001). The dominant theory and practice of sport psychology is grounded within this way of thinking and working (Dewar & Horn, 1992; Semerjian & Waldron, 2001). In practical terms, if an athlete suffers from anxiety, a sport psychologist would view the athlete's anxiety as "out there", located within the athlete, on which the sport psychologist as objective observer, has no influence. The sport psychologist would measure the athletes anxiety, for example, with the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory (Martens, Vealey & Burton, 1990) and would primarily be interested in "how much" anxiety the athlete is experiencing, rather than in the athletes experience of the anxiety itself. Furthermore, the sport psychologist would use the results to diagnose the athlete, sometimes even seeing the athlete's anxiety as pathological, plan an intervention and implement it.

Knowledge is also seen as "in there" during the modernist era. Within this view, which is subservient to the notion of knowledge being "out there", reality is seen as within people. Furthermore, reality is seen as possessing knowledge that is historical and contextual and located within specific people, at a specific time and within a specific place. The role of the scientific community is to discover the knowledge "in there" (Du Plessis & Ferreira, 2000; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Krefting, 1991; Newman, 1997). In this approach, language is the focus of attention and the scientific community studies the language of people as a way of understanding the knowledge "in there". The assumption is that people express their experiences in language, in narratives and if the scientific community wants to understand the experiences, they have to focus on the narratives that people tell about their experiences. The gathering and analysis of narratives is paramount in this approach (Cresswell, 1998). The narratives people tell are seen as describing their experiences and therefore, are passive and representational in nature (Wetherell, 2001). From this perspective a narrative is like a mirror, as it reflects and represents only the image of the person who is looking into the mirror (Lowe, 1991; Potter, 1996). The narrative a person thus tells about his/her experience reflects and represents only that person's experience. In my opinion this approach is characterized by a relativist ontology, constructivist epistemology and descriptive methodologies. The role of the researcher changed from being and objective observer to that of subjective participant. It is important for the researcher to apply certain techniques to the research process, which will prevent the researcher's subjectivity to interfere with the research results (Krefting, 1991; Sparkes, 1998). The goal of this kind of research is not to discover universal knowledge that can be generalized but to discover knowledge that is unique to a person and to put the focus on individual differences (Schurink, 1998). In practical terms when an athlete experiences anxiety, a sport psychologist working within this approach will ask the athlete to describe his/her anxiety, analyze the description of the anxiety and come to an understanding of the athlete's anxiety. From this point of view the sport psychologist is more interested in the experience of anxiety itself than in the amount of anxiety the athlete is experiencing. Furthermore, the sport psychologist would also be aware that he/she is not an objective researcher

but a subjective participant in the research project and will act reflexively during the research project.

Constructing knowledge

The postmodern era embodies a position that is critical of modernism (Bloland, 1995; Gergen, 1994). In postmodernism there is a movement from individual humanism to relational humanism (Gergen, 1995). There is also disbelief in universal systems of thought and practice, for example, in believing that science can make the world a better place (Greer, 1997; Lyotard, 1984). According to the postmodern position there are no "facts" but only interpretations - interpretations of "facts" (Greer, 1997). The postmodern era sees knowledge as being constructed "between people", historically and culturally (Butchart, 1988; Dalos & Urry, 1999; Du Plessis & Ferreira, 2000; Greenwood, 1992; Magadla, 1996; Steyn, 1999). Therefore, the actual experience a person has and the narrative regarding that experience are never equal to each other (Pearce, 1989). The narrative is a particular construction of the experience and a particular version of the experience (Wetherell, 2001). The experience that a person has is private and physiological in nature, while the construction of the experience is public and linguistic in nature (Waddie, 1996; Wittgenstein, 1967). From this perspective, regarding the narrative metaphor, a narrative can be compared to a house. On the one hand, a house can be constructed with various materials and, on the other hand, a constructed house determines how the inhabitants can live. The house is therefore constructed and constructive. A narrative operates in much the same fashion as a person constructs it on the one hand and, on the other hand, it is constructive in the way that person lives because it affords that person a way-of-being (Lowe, 1991; Potter, 1996). There are different views on reality within the postmodern era. On the one hand, there are those who are of the opinion that reality only consists of the world that we discursively construct and that there is nothing beyond discourse. On the other hand, there are those who hold the opinion that there is a real world beyond discourse that is, reality is more than discourse, which we can know through our sensory apparatus (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999). The focus of science here is not on the discovery of knowledge as a product but rather on the process of how knowledge comes into being (Gergen,

1985, 1991; Gosden, 1995). There is a focus on the study of cultural discourses and how these shape the personal narratives of people as well as inform conversational narratives (Carbine, 2001; Horton-Salaway, 2001; Willig, 2001). The researcher is subjectively involved in the construction of knowledge, which can be seen as negotiated meaning within historical and cultural contexts and brought about through social action (Burr, 1995; Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997). In the postmodern worldview there is a relativist ontology, a constructionist epistemology and a hermeneutical methodology (Stotsky, 1993). If an athlete is suffering from anxiety, the sport psychologist working from this position will hold the view that the sport psychologist cannot know the athlete's experience of anxiety because it is a private experience. It is only when the athlete narrates his/her experience that it becomes a public experience and this narration is shaped through history and within culture.

The following example by Anderson (1990, p.75) is, in my opinion, a good illustration of knowledge being "out there", "in there" and "between people":

> Three umpires are sitting around over a beer and one says, "There's balls and there's strikes and I call `em the way they are". Another says, "There's balls and there's strikes and I call `em the way I see them". The third says, "There's balls and there's strikes and they ain't nothin' until I call `em".

The first umpire sees reality as independent of him, as the "balls" and "strikes" can be called "as they are". This implies that there is a reality ("balls" and "strikes") that exists independent of the umpire and that the umpire can know this reality exactly "as it is". This umpire can be seen as a positivist who perceives reality and the knowledge of that reality as being "out there". The second umpire sees reality ("balls" and "strikes") as being constructed by him as an individual because the "balls" and "strikes" are called as "he sees them". This implies that the umpire as an individual constructs reality mainly through cognitive processes and that reality is dependent on the perceptual constructions of the umpire. This umpire can be seen as a constructivist with reality and the knowledge of that reality as being "in there". The third umpire sees reality ("balls" and "strikes") as being constructed amongst people and/or things" as the "balls" and "strikes" only become something when he "calls them something". This implies that reality is constructed "between and among

people" by means of social processes and through language. This umpire can be seen as a constructionist who understands reality and the knowledge of reality as being "between and among people".

QUALITY

In any research project, qualitative or quantitative, the aspect of quality seems to be an important one (Krefting, 1991; Kvale, 1995, 1996; Sparkes, 1998). The quality aspect of research can be viewed according to the replication principle, the parallel principle or can be viewed from a constructionist perspective (Sparkes, 1998).

Quality principles

- Replication principle

As psychology has historically been linked predominantly with the positivist epistemology of the natural sciences, quantitative research has been the privileged form of research within psychology, as well as in sport psychology. The criteria that has been applied to evaluate the quality of quantitative research, has been reliability, validity and generelizability (Kvale, 1995, 1996; Sparkes, 1998). As qualitative research grew, the replication principle came into being that states, "one set of criteria should be applied to all forms of scientific research" (Sparkes, 1998, p.365). This means that the same criteria that are applied to evaluate the quality of quantitative research, namely reliability, validity and generelizability, should be replicated to the field of qualitative research (Sparkes, 1998).

- Parallel principle

As many researchers saw fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research, the parallel principle came into being (Agar, 1986). This means that there is a set of criteria for quantitative research, namely reliability, validity and

generelizability, as well as a set of criteria for qualitative research, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, which all aim to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Krefting, 1991; Sparkes, 1998). The parallel principle has been taken so far as to state that there are criteria that are applicable to enhance the quality of quantitative and qualitative research but that these criteria should be translated differently for quantitative and qualitative research because of their different philosophical underpinnings. These criteria are truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Truth value is translated as credibility in qualitative research and as internal validity in quantitative research; applicability as transferability in qualitative research and as external validity in quantitative research; consistency as dependability in qualitative research and as reliability in quantitative research and neutrality as confirmability in qualitative research and as objectivity in quantitative research. In qualitative research there are strategies that can be employed to adhere to each of the criteria. For example, concerning the criteria of credibility: the researcher can employ the strategies of member checking and peer examination; in the case of transferability: the researcher can employ the strategies of dense description and nominated sampling; for ensuring the criteria of dependability: the researcher can employ the strategies of stepwise replication and code-recode data analysis; and lastly, the criteria of confirmability can be addressed when the researcher employs the strategies of triangulation and reflexivity (Guba in Krefting, 1991). The main critique against the parallel perspective regarding the quality of qualitative research is that it has its "roots and origins in positivist assumptions, which means that they continue to play in the friendly confines of the opposition's home court" (Sparkes, 1998, p.374).

- Constructionist principle

Today many researchers are calling for alternative criteria to evaluate the quality of research and are rejecting the replication principle and parallel perspective. As Wolcott (1994, p.366-369) states:

What I seek is something else, a quality that points more to identifying critical elements and wringing plausible interpretations from them, something one can peruse without becoming obsessed with finding the right or ultimate answer, the correct version, the Truth ... And I do not accept validity as valid criteria for judging my work. I think we have laboured far to long under the burden of this concept that might have been better left where it began, a not-quite-so-singular-or-precise criterion, as I once believed it to be for matters related essentially to tests and measurement. I suggest we look elsewhere in our continuing search for and dialogue about criteria appropriate to qualitative researchers' approaches and purposes.

Criteria that are being proposed to enhance the quality of qualitative research are craftsmanship, communicative value and pragmatic validity (Kvale, 1995, 1996). The criterion of social agreement is proposed as a viable alternative criterion for enhancing the quality of qualitative research. This means that what the researchers and participants agree upon can be seen as true and trustworthy (Smith, 1989). There are researchers that are of the opinion that validity within qualitative research is more personal and interpersonal and is not methodological. Validity therefore has more to do with researcher sensitivity as well as researcher skills (Reason, 1981). Furthermore, there is the criterion of catalytic validity where one aim of the research process is to empower the participants by altering their consciousness so that they can change their reality (Lather, 1986). For many researchers the criterion of social change is used for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. The research process has to lead to some form of social change in society for it to be quality research. An example of such a research outcome would lead to the empowerment of females in a male dominated sport world (Krane, 1994).

Enhancing quality

As I am using the narrative metaphor to guide this research project, the enhancing of the quality of this research project in my opinion falls within the constructionist perspective. Allow me once again to use an example from sport to describe my

understanding of enhancing the quality of this research project. In 1995, the Rugby World Cup was hosted in SA one year after the first democratic elections were held. The South African rugby team won the tournament by beating New Zealand (NZ) 12-9 in the final game. What made it such a memorable game? Was it the fact that we beat NZ in the dying moments of the game because of Joel Stransky's drop goal? Yes! But it was not just that. In fact it was much more. In my opinion there were three factors that made it an incredible game. Firstly, each of the players knew what position they were playing in and played from that position. There was congruence between assuming the position and performing that position. Secondly, there was interaction between the players and spectators. The players played in such a way that they got the spectators enthusiastically involved in the game and the spectators cheered in such a way that it influenced the performance of the players. There was therefore interaction between players and spectators. Thirdly, the game had social value. Although we won the game against NZ the winning had broader implications than just beating NZ. After the game the political captain, Nelson Mandela and the rugby captain, Francois Pienaar, both stood on the podium wearing their number six Springbok jerseys. As a country we had gone through fundamental political changes and the unity between black and white was symbolized in Nelson Mandela and Francois Pienaar. Thus, in this research project I shall strive to construct congruency, engagement and social value in order to enhance the quality of this research project. As this research project is guided by the narrative metaphor, criteria from the replication principle and parallel perspective are not applicable to this research (Riessman, 1993).

Firstly, congruency has to do with me as the researcher being as true as possible to the narrative metaphor that I have chosen to guide this research project and report. To return to the above-mentioned example from sport: just as each player knew their position and played according to that position, so too have I chosen a certain research position and I shall conduct the research from that position.

Secondly, I shall also strive to construct interaction throughout the research process by narrating my experience of sport psychology in such a way that it will keep you as the reader and myself as the narrator engaged in the narrating process. Just as there

was engagement between the players and spectators in the final game of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, which made it an unforgettable experience, so shall I try to construct engagement between you, the reader and me, in how I narrate my experience of sport psychology.

Finally, concerning quality enhancement, to me the most important aspect regarding the quality of the research project is social value. I am of the opinion that, at the end of the day, research should lead to some form of social change. SA did win the 1995 Rugby World Cup but it was not just a victory on the scoreboard, it was also a victory for the nation that resulted in the political and Springbok captains standing side-by-side on the podium. I intend to use this research to implement a postgraduate module in sport psychology in the Department of Psychology at the UP. This will allow students to train in this area and to work as fully trained sport psychologists in the sport context of SA.

In this chapter I have stated that my research position and method falls within the field of narrative psychology. In the next chapter I shall address the history of sport in my own life, as well as the development of my own career and how sport and psychology became teammates in my life.