

WHEN DARKNESS SUMMONS

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**Masters of Arts
(Counselling Psychology)**

in the

**Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
South Africa**

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August 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

‘When Darkness Summons’ is dedicated to every man and woman who has been summoned to explore life at a level that challenges beyond the comfort imperative of the 21st century. May every challenge be both gratifying and humbling, for it is only in knowing our own fallibility that we can transcend into greatness.

The process of constructing this journey was made possible through the commitment of the following explorers in my life...

Don Shirley, who has shared the depths of his experience and passion for water filled caves with me over the last 10 years.

My mother, who has not known a single selfish moment in her life, your support is uncompromising.

My brother, we have shared many a creative adventure, your spirit and passion for the unknown is liberating.

Leatia Stemmet, your loving presence and daily commitment to my life journey is truly empowering.

God, you gave me my passion for the unknown, and you created this world and the water filled caves within it.

I am truly grateful...

When Darkness Summons

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SUMMARY

On the 8th of January 2005, two deep technical cave divers entered Bushman's Hole, a water filled cave system in the Northern Cape in South Africa. One did not return, the other, fighting the elements for over 12 hours, narrated the event the very next day.

This exploration into the narratives of a technical cave diver, is an interpretive journey into the various constructions informing the process of making sense of the death of a fellow dive partner. Exploration of the unknown within the wombs of the earth uncompromisingly challenges society's dominant views on death and the safekeeping imperative. This exploration of the culture within death and survival in water filled cave systems is situated within the narrative ontology. Subsequently this exploration is aimed at continuously integrating the historical and cultural messages within this dangerous pastime in attempt to find meaning within the narratives of one such individual who ventured into this darkness.

Ultimately this exploration is aimed at understanding narratives of sense making employed by a technical cave diver after the loss of a fellow diver amidst the passion that summoned them to explore the darkness within water filled cave systems; a pastime that has been labelled by some as the most dangerous sporting pursuit available to humankind.

The journey starts with a literature exploration on death, moving through various researched understandings of the bereavement experience. From there it continues into the

nature of interpretive methodology, with an in-depth focus on the historical and cultural situated nature of the narratives we employ in making sense of our world. This qualitative approach is based on the subjective experienced and interpreted meaning that I discovered while moving through the narrated text, hence this journey is also reflective of the co-construction of meaning that implicitly takes place between individuals when making sense of their own experiences. As the receiver of this narrative exploration, you too will find meaning within this journey, meaning co-constructed with the multitude of narratives and experiences that have historically and culturally entered your interpretive process.

Implicit within this exploration is the unique nature of the death and bereavement experience within the specific context of deep technical cave diving. This journey places the emphasis on the uniqueness of the bereavement experience, and ultimately challenges the objective approach to dealing with bereavement as a psychologist.

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Deep technical cave diving, interpretive, narrative, meaning, sense making, construction, culture, history, dominant societal narrative, death, bereavement, exploration, competency.



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WHEN DARKNESS SUMMONS

PROLOGUE

8 January 2005

You know Dave and I were both kitting up on the surface, and um yes, Dave is about to go, and we shook hands and said I'll see you, see you in twenty minutes I think it was, and then he went, and then I waited for my countdown, and then I went, perfect, everything was exactly right... ..we came down, and then on. Quiet, pretty, the line is just stretching off as it goes, straight down, um, started the main descent quite happily, um, and you know, just, just, came reasonably fast down, trimming for buoyancy just to make sure everything is not too fast, and um, when I passed one 50 I could see that a, I would have expected bubbles by then, you know, Dave would have been on his way up, and he could have, he would have been venting off as he came, and there was nothing! ¹

On the surface all seemed well, yet beneath in the deep there were two men fighting the elements minute by minute in an attempt to accomplish what has never been done before. The recovery of a diver's body at these depths under such extreme circumstances on closed circuit scuba² was a first. Mr. David Shaw and Mr. Don Shirley's³ attempt was pre-planned months in advance, every scenario of difficulty and danger pre-anticipated a hundred times. But when you attempt to do what no one has done before, in a sport that has been labelled as the most dangerous in the world (Exley, 1994; Farr, 1991), chances are that something will go wrong ...and it did.

As technical cave diving companions, their lives pivoted around these extreme circumstances. However, this time, on the 8th of January 2005, Mr David Shaw did not return, and Mr. Don Shirley barely made it back to the non-diver's world of sunlight and vast open spaces. Cave diving has claimed the lives of numerous esteemed technical cave

¹ Transcript: Appendix A

² Closed circuit scuba: This refers to the recirculation of the breathable air within the scuba unit, thereby increasing the available air supply for the diver (Mount, 1998).

³ The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology, University of Pretoria, has approved the use of the actual names within this research. For more details see Level 3: "Interpretive Inquiry into Darkness".

divers (Exley, 1994; Farr, 1991), yet they keep on going back. Don Shirley narrated the events that claimed the life of David Shaw that day in Bushman's Hole. Furthermore, a couple of years later he is still involved in technical cave diving, still summoned by the darkness.

This research exploration focuses on the sport of technical cave diving. Subsequently I shall use the sport of technical cave diving as metaphor to guide the writing of this research journey. As technical cave diving involves movement by the technical cave diver from one level to another in the water-filled cave, so I shall also move from one level to the next in the research cave. As researcher, I shall move through various levels, which are "Preparing for Darkness" (Level 1), "Death in the Darkness" (Level 2), "Interpretive Inquiry into Darkness" (Level 3), "Meaning in the Darkness" (Level 4) and the "Ending of Darkness" (Level 5). These five levels will constitute the research report: "When Darkness Summons".

LEVEL 1

PREPARING FOR DARKNESS

On this level, the first of five levels, of my research dive, I shall address the research context, which will include stating the research question. Furthermore, I shall address the research goal and also give a brief description of the different levels that I will be exploring through this research journey.

THE EXPLORATIVE CONTEXT

On the one hand this research project is situated within the channel of deep technical cave diving, an explorative passion that has been described as “the most dangerous sporting pursuit known to man” (Farr, 1991, p.9). Deep technical cave diving can be classified as an advanced form of scuba diving, where the nature of the environment, deep water-filled cave systems, requires an elaborate scientific and technically demanding approach (Exley, 1994; Farr; Mount, 1998). It was in such a cave system, Bushman’s Hole in the Northern Cape, South Africa (SA), that Don Shirley and David Shaw attempted on the 8th of January 2005 to recover the body of a previous diver who was lost to the darkness. Don Shirley acted as the major back-up diver in this attempt, while David Shaw went down to a depth of over 270 metres in this retrieval attempt, narrated as the deepest ever attempted body recovery within these circumstances⁴. David Shaw did not return, while Don Shirley’s exit from the water was over 13 hours later. On the 9th of January 2005, unable to stand unassisted as a result of the physiological toll the dive took on his body, he told his story.

It is this narrative of the death of a technical diver in Bushman’s Hole, told by a highly experienced explorer of underwater cave systems that became the narrative within this research exploration. This is an exploration into death, it is also an exploration into a world that is passionately followed by a few with an intense drive to follow the darkness: “To

⁴ Don Shirley narrated this recovery event as the first of its kind. See Appendix A.

most, this eternal darkness holds little attraction, but to a select few, the cavers, pot-holers or speleologists, it is their life blood” (Farr, 1991, p.15).

Research requires an inquisitiveness, a drive to make sense of and find meaning within the events that shape people’s construction of their identities and life at large (Lawler, 2002; Sclater, 2003). My own curiosity about this incident guided me toward this research dive’s question, being:

“How did a deep technical cave diver make sense, through narrative, of a cave diving experience and accompanying fatality?”

To answer this research question the following research goal guided my exploration.

THE EXPLORATIVE GOAL

The aim of this research dive was to make sense of Don Shirley’s narrative on the 9th of January 2005. Through his narrative of David Shaw’s death, Don Shirley made possible the exploration of a death narrative within the unique context of technical cave diving. Ultimately I believe that the research on the psychology of cave diving is lacking significantly, with the scope of available theories predominantly limited to the mental preparation required during the pre-dive stage, as well as the mental control required during the actual exploration (Mount, 1995; 1998). Yet, while constructing this exploration, research on death within the context of cave diving appeared to be unavailable. We are dealing with an explorative passion in an environment that is unquestionably hostile to the normal physiological requirements of our existence (Farr, 1991). Why then do explorers such as Don Shirley and David Shaw venture into this darkness? Somehow I am hoping that this project will shed light down that channel. I was also aiming at constructing a curiosity within research on this pastime, and the significance of the narrative within it. The cave diving narrative is an unexplored field within the context of psychological research. I

hope many more will venture here in the future, for it is rich with metaphors, excitement and a fanatical passion for the mysterious gloom within level after level of the darkness. To actualize this research goal the research report will be structured as follows:

STRUCTURE OF THE EXPLORATION

To address the general goal that was stated above, the following specific goals will be addressed in this research report.

Literature

My first specific goal of this research exploration was to venture through the literature on death, my decision to journey through death was informed by the initial reading and re-reading of the story told by Don Shirley on the 9th of January 2005. Within the literature level, Level 2, certain channels on death had to be explored, predominantly journeying the narratives on the sense making process within bereavement and the use of rituals in dealing with grief.

You will also be journeyed through the channels holding some of the complexities underlining technical cave diving. Predominantly focusing on the differentiating factors between the dominant narratives of recreational scuba diving and the technical narratives within cave diving. Level 2, “Death in the Darkness”, is ultimately a journey into death and into the darkness found within water filled cave systems, both contexts distinctly present within Don Shirley’s experience.

Methodology

The next level of exploration, Level 3, “Interpretive Inquiry into Darkness”, will prepare my search for meaning within this research project. In Level 3 the specific explorative aim

is the defining of the research methodology within this journey, thus Level 3 will journey through the various constructions required when diving interpretively. Ultimately, Level 3 will dive through the various detailed complexities of constructing narrative research, focused on exploring the method of narrative analysis, thus moving through the interpretive nature and underlining philosophy that defines the narrative approach.

Narrative

Level 4, “Meaning in the Darkness”, will then take me to the area that I initially came to explore. The specific aim of Level 4 in this research cave, is to journey interpretively through Don Shirley’s narrative of life and death at Bushman’s Hole on the 8th of January 2005. The depth of this journey will be furthered through the exploration of Don Shirley’s historical narrative, exponentially deepening the understanding of his narration of that day of loss and survival. Ultimately Level 4 is a narrative exploration, attempting to journey insightfully through Don Shirley’s process of constructing meaning and narrating the death of his fellow dive partner, David Shaw.

Conclusion

The exploration of the narrative of Don Shirley will come to an end in Level 5, the “Ending of Darkness”. I will reflect on the meaning found in mapping this entire project, I will conclude on Don Shirley’s narrative on that day at Bushman’s Hole, and ultimately I will explore the future narratives made possible by this research exploration.

The power of a research journey in the context of deep technical cave diving is captured within the metaphor of exploration, the dedicated cave diver’s ultimate sense of fulfilment lies with venturing into the unknown. True discovery is moving into a space where none has been before, be it with cave diving or research in the field of psychology. I now invite you descend with me into Level 2, “Death in the Darkness”, where I shall explore the literature relevant to this research study.

LEVEL 2

DEATH IN THE DARKNESS

Considering the events that shaped the narrative of Don Shirley, “Death in the darkness” demands an exploration down two main channels within the literature applicable to this research exploration. On the one hand this exploration implicitly demands a journey into the context of technical cave diving, for this context and accompanying complexities will situate the research within the very unique circumstance surrounding the death of Don Shirley’s dive partner.

On the other hand it demands a journey into the depths of bereavement, for the narrative of Don Shirley on the events of the dive at Bushman’s Hole predominantly circles around the loss of David Shaw. The lack of research exploring the bereaved process within technical diving in specific, and within scuba diving at large, requires moving through the text on bereavement constructs rather than exploring specific contexts. This will be the second major channel within our Level 2 exploration.

First however, this literature exploration will deal with the context of technical cave diving. For the sake of my narrating of this exploration, I have decided to include an overview of the complexities informing deep technical cave diving within Level 2, with a more elaborate explanation on the dive in Bushman’s Hole specifically in Appendix A⁵. Returning to the research question, “How did a deep technical cave diver make sense, through narrative, of a cave diving experience and accompanying fatality”, the first channel is aimed at broadening your understanding of deep technical cave diving.

⁵ Appendix A includes an elaboration and clarification of diving terminology narrated by Don Shirley.

DEEP TECHNICAL CAVE DIVING

Understanding the specific complexities grounding the explorative pastime of technical cave diving requires a basic understanding of the rules and regulations governing the dominant recreational diving context; thereby creating a frame of reference by which technical cave diving as an extreme sport can be interpreted.

In this exploration of diving, I am not attempting to train you in all the knowledge required to engage in either recreational or deep technical cave diving, rather, this exploration is aimed at understanding the complexity of the environment within which David Shaw was lost to the darkness.

Recreational Scuba Diving

SCUBA⁶, (Kayle, 1995; Mountain, 1996), is the general abbreviation employed when describing the adventurous pastime of strapping breathable air to oneself in an attempt to negotiate an underwater environment for longer than the minute that you can hold your breath for. Recreational scuba diving is informed by various principles that can be associated with the context of recreation. These principles can be deduced from the training and participation culture within which recreational scuba diving is grounded.

The Principle of Majority Participation

Scuba diving has significantly advanced in terms of knowledge, equipment quality and subsequent safety over the last few decades (Farr, 1991; Kayle, 1995). PADI⁷, NAUI⁸ and SSI⁹, some of the world's largest recreational dive training organisations, provide high quality, safe and enjoyable training aimed at the diver who has the need to explore the

⁶ SCUBA: Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus.

⁷ PADI: Professional Association of Diving Instructors.

⁸ NAUI: National Association of Underwater Instructors.

⁹ SSI: Scuba Schools International

numerous coral reefs and wrecks offered by the vast open oceans (Kayle, 1995; Mountain, 1996). This is often a pastime shared by the whole family, with a full junior qualification available at 12 years of age (Kayle). Subsequently the scope of participants include the entire age range from 12 years and older, with only a reasonable level of physical fitness as a prerequisite for sustained participation (Kayle; Mountain). From my personal longstanding relationship with recreational dive training, I experienced the social nature of the sport as being as much a reason for my participation as the actual act of scuba diving. In the end, recreational diving is aimed at socialisation and complete family participation. Considering the range of participants, the predominant aim of the actual scuba experience needs to be defined.

The Principle of Enjoying your Environment

Recreational diving has as its goal the enjoyment of nature and sites of historical significance (Mountain, 1996). Numerous underwater ecosystems and wrecks afford divers the opportunity to explore worlds not dissimilar from national parks or historical monuments. It is focussed on the sighting experience, to most the dive itself being merely the tool that allows them to enter these sights of historical and environmental beauty.

For those who want to take recreational scuba diving to a professional level, there are various careers spreading from this pastime: instructing others on how to dive, the historical and archaeological context of research, the scientific context of marine biology and accompanying conservation to name but a few (Mountain, 1996). The aim here is safety, and the goal by and large being exploration of an underwater natural realm that we have access to thanks to the necessary knowledge of the human physiology and advancement in technology on underwater breathing apparatus. The dominant aim, therefore, of recreational diving seems to be enjoyment of the environment, with the act of the dive being the tool that equips the diver to journey and explore the underwater world.

In order for the majority participation to have access to the enjoyment of the natural and historical underwater world, the level of safety becomes a contributing factor.

The Principle of Conservative Safety

With recreational diving, safety of this pastime is ensured through various measures and regulations taught through training and governed by the dive operators that enable recreational scuba divers to gain access to the various dive sites.

One of the major safety precautions is the limiting of the depth of recreational scuba divers. The first qualification limits divers to 18 meters depth, and a maximum of 40 meters regardless of your follow-on qualifications and experience on a recreational dive level (Somers, 1997).

Another safety precaution is the limiting of access to overhead environments. Firstly, no overhead environment should be entered unless trained to do so (Mount, 1998). A non-overhead environment refers to having direct access to the surface, without having to exit a wreck or cave before ascent to the surface is possible. There are recreational courses which allow more qualified and experienced recreational divers to have limited access to overhead environments (Mountain, 1996). Usually three basic rules govern the concept of a limited overhead environment in recreational diving: (1) The linear depth cannot exceed 40 metres, which means that at a vertical water depth of 35 metres a diver can only penetrate the wreck or cave 5 metres linearly; (2) The diver should always have direct access to the non-overhead environment. This means that there should, for example, only be one door of the wreck between the diver and open water. The diver cannot access through one chamber into the next in either the cave or the wreck; (3) Light should be visible, thus when a diver turns off his torch, he should be within sight of natural light penetrating the water. These rules are there to maintain a maximum level of safety in the event of an unforeseen difficulty. Thus, whatever happens, the diver has no more than 40 metres to the surface, and can see

his/her way out. Also, the way out must not include the negotiation of multiple confined spaces.

Safety is further ensured by limiting the time a diver is allowed to spend at a certain depth on a dive (Kayle, 1995; Somers, 1997), time limits which have been established through research done by various organisations such as NOAA¹⁰, where research on this matter is continuously updated. The principle being that the amount of Nitrogen a diver inhales on a dive limits his/her time underwater through the laws of pressure within the body (Kayle; Mountain, 1996; Somers), a matter I will elaborate on at a later stage.

Considering the discussed principles, recreational diving is ultimately aimed at equipping the majority of adventurers to explore and enjoy the natural and historical underwater realm in a conservative safe way. With this basic outline of the principles informing recreational scuba diving, I think it time for us to explore the unique context of technical cave diving.

The Complexity of Technical Cave Diving

Cave diving as an explorative pastime has its origins within dry caving, being the exploration of non water-filled caves for reasons of archaeology, science and adventure (Farr, 1991). At stages within the dry caves, a water barrier prevented the cavers from venturing further. These pockets of water are called sumps, and accounts of cavers negotiating these sumps stretch back as far as the 18th century:

At the distance of about seventy-five yards from the entrance the rock came down so close to the water that it precluded all further passage; but, as there was reason to believe from the sound that there was a cavern beyond, about four years ago a gentleman determined to try if he could not dive under the rock and rise in the cavern beyond... (Farr, 1991, p.19).

¹⁰ NOAA: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

This was the beginning of cave diving, and as the equipment developed and the science of breathing under pressure evolved, the exercise of cave exploration became more complex and technical (Mount, 1998). World War II and the Cold War thereafter dictated a significant advancement in diving equipment, all in an attempt to stealthily penetrate enemy harbours and ships. The military progress on underwater breathing apparatus moved hand in hand with furthering the limits to which divers pushed cave diving (Farr, 1991). Subsequently, the further cave divers pushed the limits, the more complexities became associated with the dive environment and dive procedures.

The Complex Environment

Technical cave diving is predominantly a pastime focused on exploration. The difference between recreational and technical cave diving then being not the exploration in itself, but rather the complexity of the environment where the exploration takes place.

Technical diving ventures into depths that are beyond the training and safety limits governing recreational diving. Depths that often require advanced procedures, complicated equipment configuration and extreme mental control.

Cave diving is a subdivision of technical diving, where the complexity of the dive is further increased through adding the additional considerations of a cave system, bringing the darkness, confined spaces and maintaining positional orientation in a three dimensional maze into the already demanding context of technical diving. Other subdivisions include technical wreck diving and technical ice diving, with the understanding that these subdivisions are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The Act of Mastery as an End in Itself

Why venture into water filled cave systems? I believe the reasons are as many as the divers who venture there. Chances of this explorative drive into the unknown to be satisfied

through being chosen as an astronaut is fairly minimal, water filled cave systems into the womb of the earth seems somehow more feasible. Yet this drive into the depths of the earth requires an extremely high level of precision and execution of procedures, and control of equipment and mental focus (Farr, 1991; Finch, 2008).

One common goal of technical diving seems to be locked within this act of mastery. Thus the act of executing the dive according to the pre-dive plan with precision and control seems to be equal in importance to the exploration of the environment (Finch, 2008). The act of technical diving seems to be an end in itself, therefore not requiring an explorative goal such as sites of historical significance or naturally beautiful underwater environments.

This notion is supported in a phenomenological study done by Willig (2008), where the themes of mastery and skill acquisition was acknowledged as implicit within the repertoire of reasons for engaging in extreme sport. From the study, which focussed on mountaineering and skydiving, various other themes were related to the mastery and skill acquisition dynamic found within extreme sport participation, of which the challenge and suffering dimension dictated. Thus, the challenge of mastering a context such as the mountain slope, or in this case the water filled cave system, required an embrace of the suffering implicit in achieving mastery over the context. To an extent the level of suffering defined the challenge, and subsequently increased the sense of mastery upon completion of the challenge.

In order to understand the level of mastery required when actively engaging in technical cave diving, a basic understanding of the physiology and resultant complexity of all facets of a technical cave dive is required.

The Complexity of Depth

Technical cave diving is made possible through our in-depth understanding of human physiology and the availability of complex systems and procedures that allow for

reasonably safe participation. To understand the complexity of the dive explored within this research project I do need to explain some of the concepts and systems that will help me to differentiate technical cave diving from recreational diving.

First I need to draw a distinction between water depth and penetration depth. Water depth is the vertical depth of the water; an increase in water depth causes an increase of surrounding pressure. On the beach at Sodwana Bay in South Africa, at sea level, we have approximately 1 bar of atmospheric pressure around us. This atmospheric pressure is literally the weight of the air in the atmosphere pushing down upon us (Mountain, 1996). Every 10 metres of seawater adds another 1 bar of pressure on our bodies. Thus, breathing at a recreational depth of 30 metres, we are surrounded by 4 bars of pressure (Somers, 1997).

This is an important concept, for our lungs will not be able to expand and let air into our system unless we breathe air at the same pressure as the pressure surrounding us (Kayle, 1995). It is exactly this principle which causes difficulty in inhaling when lying at the bottom of a pool trying to breathe through a hosepipe [garden hose]. Therefore, at 30 metres depth in the ocean I need to inhale air at 4 bars pressure, hence the reason for using complex breathing equipment when scuba diving.

Penetration depth on the other hand, is the distance from the straight vertical surface access, to the position of the diver in the overhead environment (Mount, 1998). In cave diving, the water depth might only be 10 metres (2 bars of surrounding pressure), but my access to a direct vertical line to the surface might be 500 metres.

According to the IANTD¹¹ dive tables, a recreational diver may spend 10 minutes at a depth of 39 metres before having to surface (Mount, 1998). This is dictated by the in-gassing of Nitrogen. Simply put, breathing at the same pressure as the pressure around us, means that we are breathing air at a pressure of 5 bars when diving at 40 metres. This air

¹¹ IANTD: International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers.

consists of roughly 21% Oxygen and 79% Nitrogen (Kayle, 1995). We are, therefore, slowly increasing the pressure of Nitrogen in our bodies at depth. Usually we breathe 79% of Nitrogen at 1 bar or less¹², thus at 1 bar we are breathing Nitrogen at 0.79 bar. At 40 metres we are breathing Nitrogen at 79% of 5 bars, thus breathing Nitrogen at 3.95 bars of pressure.

This increased pressure of Nitrogen takes time to be released from our respiratory and circulatory system when ascending to the surface (Kayle, 1995; Mountain, 1996). Should the diver extend beyond the safe time in the water, the pressure of Nitrogen inside the body is greater than the pressure outside the body upon surfacing, and subsequently decompression sickness can follow. This is the result of various tissues in the body becoming damaged as a result of the pressure difference being too great for the physiological system to handle (Kayle; Mountain; Somers, 1997). It is literally the increase in size of Nitrogen gas that tears and damages the surrounding tissues such as the lungs and bone marrow in the joints and limbs (Kayle).

This brings us to the concept of a theoretical or physiological ceiling on a technical dive. When a diver extends the safe time-depth limit as per recreational diving, it is possible to gain safe access to the surface through various stops on the way to the surface, which allows for the Nitrogen to gradually release. These stops are called decompression stops (Kayle, 1995; Mount, 1998), literally meaning the body decompresses over time, thus minimising the final pressure difference of Nitrogen between the bottom depth of the dive and the surface pressure. These stops then cause a theoretical or physiological ceiling, a diver might not have any overhead environment above him or her, yet as a result of the mandatory decompression stops, the diver does not have immediate access to the surface in the event of equipment failure or malfunction, for the physiology of decompression prevents this (Kayle).

¹² The higher we are above sea level the less the pressure we are breathing at.

Subsequently, the safer practice of non-decompression diving limits the depth of recreational diving to 40 metres (Kayle, 1995). Deeper than 40 metres does not allow for diving safely without doing decompression stops (Somers, 1997), the latter being strictly confined to the technical diving domain.

The Complexity of the Physiological Ceiling

When moving from recreational diving to technical diving, there is a significant increase in the complexities of the dive profile. Technical diving is when the nature of the dive, be it the water depth or the cave that you dive in, together with the length of time that you spend down in the water, does not allow you to have direct access to the surface. To ease the comprehension of the above-mentioned theoretical explanation, let us consider a basic cave dive to a depth of 30 metres. Assuming your penetration depth extends to 300 metres, should anything go wrong with you or your equipment, you are required to negotiate 330 metres of water before you have access to the breathable atmosphere.

However, if this dive took you 40 minutes, you have a set of mandatory decompression stops, where the stop at the 4.5 metres depth (and it is not the only one) on the way to the surface, requires the diver to stay there for 22 minutes when breathing air (Mount, 1998). Thus, regardless of the emergency situation, with this dive, when the diver reaches a depth of 4.5 metres, and the surface of the water is visible, he or she has no access to it for 22 minutes. In not adhering to this decompression stop, paralysis, and even death, as a result of decompression sickness, is possible (Kayle, 1995).

Now consider Don Shirley's situation, equipment failure occurred at a water depth of over 240 metres, the mandatory decompression stops required extended beyond 10 hours. Don Shirley had no option but to negotiate his way to the surface by adhering to these stops, experiencing extreme nausea and vertigo, and after 13 hours in the water, Don Shirley was back on dry land.

Task Loading and Complex Equipment Configuration

Technical diving is further complicated by the use of various gasses. Thus mixtures other than air aids the diver in breathing the optimal pressure of Oxygen and a minimal pressure of Nitrogen throughout the dive. This sometimes requires the use of Helium as an addition to the breathing mixture. The result is various cylinders of breathable gas, with every gas specific to a certain depth segment of the dive, therefore requiring the switching between different cylinders at different depths (Mount, 1998). In short, the mixture you breathe at the bottom cannot sustain life at 10 metres, and the optimal mixture at 6 metres will cause Oxygen poisoning at 30 or 40 metres.

An in-depth understanding of the implications of different gasses consumed is not required by this exploration. What is important is that a single diver on a dive to the bottom of Bushman's Hole would be required to negotiate his/her way around various sets of cylinders with different gasses, which significantly increases task loading on the dive; it also increases the volume of equipment which could malfunction (Mount, 1998).

Technical diving at depth or in cave systems is further complicated by the lack of natural light. In a cave system with a reasonable penetration depth, in the event of torch failure, the diver is left in total darkness, and is subsequently required to negotiate his/her way through the cave and his/her equipment by touch. For this reason, technical divers have a minimum of two back-up lights over and above the primary light source, which increases the complexity of gear configuration (Mount, 1995).

Yet another factor differentiating technical diving from recreational diving is the physiological implications with respect to maintaining core body temperature on the dive. The breathing mixtures other than air have a significant impact on the body's ability to maintain core temperature. Subsequently, a diver going to depths of over 100 metres is fighting the elements while doing the dive. Hypothermia is a physiological condition of a drop in core body temperature which causes dizziness and can lead to unconsciousness

(Kayle, 1995). Some of the temperature loss can be dealt with through the use of different suits, such as a dry suit with thermal wear underneath (Mountain, 1996), which again increases the task loading¹³.

Another physiological implication of technical diving is the pressures of the different gasses within the breathing mixture (Kayle, 1995). Often the extended time of breathing Oxygen, Helium and Nitrogen at depth comes very close to toxic levels of these gasses. Toxicity with extended breathing of Oxygen would have played a major role in Don Shirley's nausea in the recompression chamber (Kayle).

Recompression chambers are used in the treatment of decompression sickness. The gasses used when the diver enters the recompression chamber is different from air; this is all in an attempt to minimise Nitrogen intake which causes the condition in the first place (Kayle, 1995). The concept of recompression is literally re-pressurising the diver and therefore allowing for the gradual release of the Nitrogen, similar to decompression stops, with the difference that it takes place in a controlled environment where a doctor can assist in the process (Kayle; Mount, 1998).

Complexity versus Safe Enjoyable General Participation

To bring it together, the dominant presence of complexity within technical cave diving distinguishes it from the principles of recreational scuba participation. To sum these complexities: Task loading and equipment complexity as a result of the extended time underwater and the different breathing mixtures; the inability to directly access the surface as a result of physiological ceilings (decompression stops), and the actual ceiling such as the cave roof or the chambers within a wreck; physiological task loading, such as potentially threatening breathing mixtures and the process of physical exertion, such as dropping core temperature; the added complexity in the dive plan and the precision that is

¹³ Drysuits, unlike wetsuits, are pressurized with a gas, and needs to be managed in terms of depth fluctuations by the diver.

required in executing this plan; and equipment complexity and volume as a result of the different breathing mixtures and the planned redundancy. Subsequently the focus of the technical cave dive shifts to mastery of these complex considerations and resultant procedures; it is not aimed at relaxation. The technical cave dive is an end in itself, not just a tool that allows the diver to explore a specific aquatic realm. It is exactly the complexity of participation which prevents the majority of divers safely partaking in technical diving; the demands are just too high. Nor is it the majorities' aim to engage in this demanding pastime, for recreational diving is about enjoyable sightseeing, not about mental and physical task loading.

At this point you might ask why engage in such a complex and dangerous activity. In returning to the study done by Willig (2008), active participation in extreme sport embraces the 'suffering' dimension, which is challenged by society's dominant rationale of self preservation and physical safety. Willig asserts that it is exactly for this reason that psychology often looks upon extreme sport participants from a basis of pathology. The study was focused on mountaineering and skydiving, and from the repertoire of responses it is clear that the participants did not intend to injure or kill themselves through having an extreme experience. Rather that the extreme experience allowed for unique contrasting emotional reactions while participating, such as the simultaneous experience of fear and calmness. A central theme from this study was the emotional lift caused by these unique contrasting emotional experiences, and that extreme sport participation actually restored "psychological balance"(Willig, p.700) when feeling down and mundane as a result of daily troubles such as tax and other life issues.

Another reason for participation in extreme sport is the total focus this high level of physical and mental task loading requires, it allows for the participant to be only in that moment (Willig, 2008). There is only the here and now, complete focus on the task right now; there is no space for the trouble and concerns that might be at home. Considering the high levels of satisfaction and "liberation"(Willig, p.699) experienced while engaging in extreme activities, the usual day concerns become a mundane matter, especially amidst the

element of danger implicit within the extreme activity. In translating the above to technical diving, the implicit task loading and complexity of participation would allow for technical diver to be completely focused on only the task at hand.

Technical diving, such as the dive at Bushman's Hole, is so complex that it requires other divers to transport equipment for and to assist the divers going to great depths. Diving beyond 200 metres is classified as an ultra deep dive, with but a select few technical divers ever having ventured there (Exley, 1994). Technical diving has come a long way since the breath hold sump dives attempted in the 18th century. Water depth records stretch beyond 250 metres, and on some explorations penetration depths extend beyond 4 kilometres (Exley; Farr, 1991).

I do hope that this simplified account of technical diving constructed a better understanding of the environment and accompanying complexities that Don Shirley negotiated. When considering his narrative of that day, the interpretive journey through David Shaw's death should include this explorative context. This quest into the depths of the earth is certainly not every individual's desire, yet those who do venture there seem passionate about the summons of the darkness. On the back cover of Sheck Exley's *Caverns Measureless to Man*, this passion is beautifully defined:

Sheck lived a life of adventure, danger, and excitement of a degree that few people can even dream of, or, if they do, those dreams are nightmares. Cave diving is the world's most dangerous sport. If you participate on the highest level, you know that some of your best friends are going to die. If you continue to push yourself and your equipment to the limits – if you persist in being a world class diver as Sheck was – the chances are very high that you, too, will die.

(Exley, 1994)

With this I believe we should move to the passage of bereavement, for this too is part of our dive into Don Shirley's narrative.

EXPLORING THE CHANNELS OF DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT

Many have ventured down channels of bereavement, even more have explored death at large, for death is more certain than birth. I had to confine this exploration of bereavement, for else this journey would not have had an end. I took the narrated experience of Don Shirley, dived it, mapped it, and from there I constructed the channels of bereavement that I would like to share with you.

Research on the loss and bereavement experience at large is fairly saturated, with two main channels within bereavement being ever present.

The one major channel within bereavement research journeys toward the loss of the self, thus the focus being on the experience of losing one's own life and coming to terms with that as a result of disease. The other major channel within bereavement research ventures down the literature focused on the loss of another, be that in one's immediate family or someone part of one's extended culture.

Considering the narrative of Don Shirley that I will be exploring, the latter channel will be explored in detail, thus I will be swimming down that channel for a significant distance, mapping all the turns and caverns applicable. Prior to this I will enter shortly into the channel dealing with the loss of the self, however, this channel within our research cave does not lead to level 4 where we will analyse Don Shirley's narrative on the loss of his dive partner, and hence as a research diver with a specific goal, I cannot afford to spend too much time down this channel.

I wish to start the exploration on bereavement through establishing a connection between *bereavement* and *moving toward meaning* within the process of loss. A connection implies that these two constructs are threaded together, in this case the thread being the process of *making sense*. Hence, for the purpose of this research exploration, *making sense* is the process of integrating and understanding experiences and knowledge into one's own life, a

process that includes a certain level of evaluation of the repertoire of experiences. Literature on bereavement, for the most part, seems to use the *making sense* and *finding meaning* constructions synonymously, subsequently these two terms will be used synonymously in this research exploration as well.

Bereavement as a process of making sense

Victor Frankl's (1962) influential work on human being's sense of purpose, "Man's search for meaning", outlined the human being's ability to transcend even the most horrific circumstance through the drive to arrive at or achieve some sense of meaning and purpose in life. Even though recent evidence shows that many who have suffered loss of a loved one do cope resiliently with the experienced stress and anxiety (Bonanno, 2004; Neimeyer, 1998, 2001), loss and the subsequent distress impact significantly on the lives of most. How then do we integrate the loss and distress involved with a perspective of meaning in the loss and a future purpose driven philosophy?

Considering the association between experiencing loss and the complexity of the grieving process, a postmodern view on bereavement holds that: (a) individuals bring a set of existing understandings and subjective truths about the world and themselves into the loss experience (thus there is a perceived sense to the world); (b) the loss experience can deconstruct these basic life understandings; (c) reconstruction of the life understandings and beliefs requires adaptation of the individual's world of sense making regarding the loss; the more violent or out of the ordinary, the more difficult the comprehension of the loss; and (d), grieving complications arise when the individual experiences difficulty in finding sense within his or her context of meaning (Currier, Holland & Neimeyer, 2006; Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006; Neimeyer, 1998, 2001). Ultimately, even though the objective circumstance surrounding loss does play a role in the grieving process, it is the survivor's subjective experience and loss interpretation which predominantly impacts on the grieving experience (Currier et al.; Janoff-Bulman & Frantz 1997).

The process of sense making and finding meaning seems to dominate the bereavement experience and its various stages. Subsequently, the literature exploration on the bereavement experience will have the common thread of sense making guiding me throughout this exploration, not dissimilar to the line that guides the cave diver from the entrance of the cave to the deepest point of his explorative journey.

In returning to this research journey's explorative question: "How did a deep technical cave diver make sense, through narrative, of a cave diving experience and accompanying fatality?" The importance of this sense making thread is implicit within my attempt to answer the posed question.

Bereavement as a Process of Sense Making: The Loss of Self

I would now like to introduce the first major channel within bereavement research, the experience and process of making sense of the loss of oneself. In considering the work of Kübler-Ross (1969), whom is well known for her attempts to humanise the process of coming to terms with one's own death (Kimmel, 1990), five stages of reactions toward being terminally ill dominate the process of sense making:

In the first stage, *Denial*, the terminal patient is continuously implementing reasoning to nullify the diagnosis (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Responses will include claiming that the hospital results have been mixed-up, attempts at attaining a second more positive opinion, and unwillingness to discuss the matter at all. The stage of denial acts as buffer for the initial shock and often finality of the bad news.

In the next stage, *Anger*, the anger is directed at the whole spectrum of involved parties (Kübler-Ross, 1969): From the self, to the doctors and family, often extending toward a higher power, such as God within a religious context.

Then follows the *Bargaining*, which is predominantly in reaction to the anger not achieving resolution (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Often a trade negotiation between God and the terminally ill patient ensues, all in an attempt to regain health and being willing to somehow pay for it.

To follow is *Depression*, often being the initial movement toward mourning the loss of the earthly existence. Experiencing the depression phase “is necessary and beneficial if the patient is to die in a stage of acceptance and peace” (Kübler-Ross, 1969, p.88).

The last of the stages, *Acceptance*, is the process of being silently contemplative of life as it was, with the prospect of death being seemingly less frightening and horrible (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Later on Kübler-Ross (1974) acknowledged that these stages do not necessarily follow a specific order, but that the patient often moves in and out of the stages randomly, with some stages occurring simultaneously.

Added to these reactions, Kübler-Ross (1969) viewed *Hope* as a continually involved factor that assisted the terminally ill to move and process the stages discussed previously. Hope was somehow the thread that kept them together amidst the journey of making sense of the whole process of dying.

Kimmel (1990) specifically stated that these stages of death according to Kübler-Ross do not constitute what he terms, “a prescription for a successful death” (p. 548). Furthering his argument by emphasising the individuality and uniqueness of the death experience, a notion supported by Gilbert (2002) and Neimeyer (1999), which I will elaborate on later within this level.

In the end, Kübler-Ross’s model on bereavement reactions possibly holds its value within the process of understanding dominant themes of emotional reactions that the terminally ill experience. In addition to this, the whole process can be viewed as different stages of coming to terms with, or then, making sense of one’s own death.

In considering the applicability of the Kübler-Ross model on Don Shirley's experience of David Shaw's death, the following needs to be noted: In the model, the focus is predominantly on the experience of one's own death, not on the death of another human being. Thus Don Shirley's experience of David Shaw's death will unlikely include the bargaining stage. The other major consideration is the fact that both Don Shirley and David Shaw decided to do this extreme dive, knowing and discussing the possibility of death prior to the dive¹⁴, the Kübler-Ross model was not designed around individuals actively and knowingly engaging in recreational activities that holds within it a real possibility of death. It might just be possible that individuals who engage in such dangerous recreational activities are informed by a different view of death within the unique context of extreme sport, a notion supported by Willig (2008), which in turn could inform a rather different bereavement experience.

With that said, considering the narrative of Don Shirley on the death of his fellow dive partner, a different exploration of bereavement experiences and the accompanying loss is justified, thus allowing Don Shirley's bereavement experience to unfold as it was, without implicitly placing it within the boundaries of the Kübler-Ross model. This is not to say that Don Shirley had none of the reactions mentioned by Kübler-Ross, but the uniqueness of the context of his loss experience directed at his fellow dive partner, David Shaw, qualifies a different exploration.

Bereavement as a Process of Sense Making: the Loss of Another

In the hope of honouring the narrative phenomenology, I will set out with the view that grieving is a process of meaning reconstruction, with special emphasis on its uniqueness rather than sameness across bereaved individuals (Currier et al., 2006; Janoff-Bulman & Frantz 1997; Neimeyer, 1999).

¹⁴ Appendix A includes the full interview transcript, which includes evidence of this discussion.

I have established bereavement as a sense making process, in the construction of the depth of this process and the various channels associated with it, understanding the integration between sense making [finding meaning] and self evaluation is imperative.

Sense making, meaning, and self evaluation

The way we tell our own narrative of self evaluation, plays a significant role in how we deal with grief (Bauer & Bonanno, 2001; Gilbert, 2002; Neimeyer, 1999). The positive self evaluation does create a basis by which loss can be critically evaluated without it extending the grief onto the sense of self in life, in other words, not believing that these problems define one's own life in general. Bauer and Bonanno (2001) elaborated on this by distinguishing between *being based* self evaluations and *doing based* self evaluations; where the *doing based* self evaluations generate a higher adaptability to dealing with grief than that of the *being based* self evaluation. Thus the most adaptive self evaluations seem to consider our actions as determining of who we are.

The death of a loved one threatens key aspects of our identity (Bauer & Bonanno, 2001; Neimeyer, 1999). With such significant meaning in one's own life being in a state of change, focusing on concrete behaviour directs the focus to manageable aspects of life which limits stress levels (Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Parkes & Weiss, 1983). Thus, focusing on specific activities rather than abstract personality characteristics of the self, helps the narrating individual to construct a concrete strategy for the future (Baumeister, 1991; Zirkel & Cantor, 1990).

There appears to be a greater achievement of adaptive reconstruction through the focus on tangible behaviour when dealing with loss, as it allows greater flexibility to create new meaning centred on self evaluation (Baumeister, 1991; Janoff-Bulman, 1992). In viewing self evaluation as a process that takes place over time, the channel of personal continuity comes into the cave torch's light.

Sense making and personal continuity

Theory on meaning reconstruction in the field of bereavement seems to focus on the sense making process that allows for life pre-loss to extend into the future in such a manner as to allow for the effective continuation of the view of self and of one's world experience (Gamino & Sewell, 2004): "Loss challenges the coherence of the griever's life story, thus forcing revisions in her [his] understanding of the world and her [his] place in it." (p. 399)

When exploring the bereavement process as a result of the loss of others, the past present future incorporation of death seems to be imperative. Death is certain, within death there is a past leading up to the actual experience of loss. Then comes a reshape of the future directedness, which requires an evaluation of the self on various levels.

Another important aspect is the concept of attribute continuation over time, referring to how the qualities which we attribute to ourselves exist from our past into our future; a process that is facilitated through our behaviour. The construction of one's own qualities in such a way that they are maintained throughout the grieving process is imperative in the sense making process. This holds that the integration of actions involved in self evaluation and the abstract qualities present in self evaluation increased adaptation to bereavement (Baumeister, 1991). A key factor in constructing identity amidst severe life changes is the ability to view one's behaviours within the context of one's valued attributes over time, thereby constructing a sense of personal continuity (Bauer & Bonanno, 2001; Gamino & Sewell, 2004).

An integral part of our self evaluations seem to be locked within our various views and attitudes toward the world and ourselves within that world. With this exploration venturing down the channels of bereavement, my curiosity moved toward attitudes on death as a determining factor within the sense making process.

Sense making and personal meanings of death

Literature supports the notion that death attitudes cannot be characterised as implicitly negative or fear inducing, but that there appears to sometimes be characteristics that point to positive or neutral constructs depending on personal views and life philosophies (Linley & Joseph, 2006; Wong, Reker & Gesser, 1994). Dyregrov, Kristofferson and Gjestad (1996) noted that professionals dealing with death, often experienced positive changes in life attitudes and close relationship appreciation post the death incident encounter. This is in line with existential views that the death experience can act as the transformational vehicle allowing personal growth and meaning (Frankl, 1962; Linley & Joseph, 2006).

In a study done by Gamino and Sewell (2004), nine unique meaning constructs were established through the content analysis of narrated essays by 85 individuals mourning the loss of another. The question posed, “What does the death of your loved one mean to you?” (Gamino & Sewell, p.397). Findings suggested that the inclusion of narrated themes of hope and recovery correlated with a greater possibility in positive bereavement adjustment, where the exclusively negative narration pointed towards difficulty in the adjustment process following the loss of a loved one. Here we thus find the correlation with Kübler-Ross’s views on the importance of hope within the bereavement process.

In a study done by Holcomb, Neimeyer and Moore (1993), on the unique personal meanings of death, incorporating free response narratives with content analysis, the findings predominantly pointed toward the value of researching personal meanings of death, as well as emphasising how these personal meanings of death differ across individuals and genders, be it in preparation of one’s own, or in response to the death of another.

Perhaps the greatest contribution within this study was the connectedness between a personal philosophy on death and the sense of purposefulness. It appears that having some sense of death and afterlife, be it in a religious orientation or self defined understanding, that the sense of continued existence created less apathy around the meaning of death, and

held within it a greater focus on the various positive possibilities regarding the afterlife (Frankl, 1962; Holcomb et al., 1993; Linley & Joseph, 2006). At the same time, those without a philosophy on death and the life beyond, seemed prone to being overcome by questions of death's purpose, dwelling more in the darkness associated with the loss of life.

Earlier I journeyed through the importance of personal continuity within the sense making process of bereavement. Considering the finding from the aforementioned study by Holcomb et al. (1993), a belief system where personal continuity extends beyond death, seems helpful in constructing a purposeful life amidst the loss of a loved one.

Holcomb et al. (1993) acknowledge the increase in substantial research on death since the 1970's, however, goes on to say that the focus is predominantly on the fear and anxiety enwombed within the death and fear construct. Research in the field of attitudes toward and around death and loss have recently begun to counter such limitations in focus, employing constructs such as competency (Robbins, 1992) and acceptance (Wong, Reker & Gesser, 1994) within the death experience domain.

It has to be said though that the focus seemed to be limited in allowing for the individual's unique experience, considering the predominant use of forced choice questionnaires in this process (Holcomb et al., 1993). As clarification, this holds that the response possibilities are predetermined by the researcher, therefore not lending it to discovering the major salient death attitudes within the respondent's experience. Moreover, the influence of these questionnaires could further impact on the results by possibly sensitising the respondents to emotional aspects of comfort or discomfort within the death experience by means of the probing questions (Holcomb et al., 1993). Simply put, questionnaires on our death attitude and experience, cannot account for the full reflection of the unique experience as held by the individual owning that experience.

This in the specific qualifies the interpretive basis of this research dive (Neimeyer, 1999), in considering the uniqueness of the incident that resulted in the loss of David Shaw, and

the availability of the interview done by Gordon Hiles with Don Shirley, an interpretive study focussed on Don Shirley's sense making process unfolding within the interview would eliminate the sensitising process typically found within the questionnaire approach.

Moreover, measuring the death experience by means of researcher determined questions is unlikely to capture the multitude of different aspects involved in the death experience; such as the way we experienced the relationship between us and the deceased, the subsequent depth of the death experience and abstract nature of the sense of loss (Holcomb et al., 1993).

Considering the importance of the uniqueness of the death and bereavement experience (Currier et al., 2006; Janoff-Bulman & Frantz 1997; Neimeyer, 1999), and the shortfalls of quantitative measures in this regard (Holcomb et al., 1993), a better understanding of personal meanings of death require the use of more in-depth qualitative approaches, with the predominant focus being on the unique process of sense making and personal meaning.

I then wondered about the way that death came about, and the possible impact thereof on the bereavement and sense making process. Could it be that accidental traumatic deaths complicate the grieving and sense making experience?

Sense making within the cavern of violent and traumatic deaths

Currier et al. (2006), and Green (2000), acknowledged that violent death following accident, homicide or suicide increases the complexity of the bereavement process. Suicide, homicide, or accidents resulting in loss are often constructed as traumatic events potentially causing symptoms of trauma and distress (Green; Rubonis & Bickman, 1991), complicating the grief and adjustment responses.

In a study done by Murphy, Johnson and Lohan (2003), various themes were tabulated based on the sense making narratives of parents losing their children to violent deaths. With finding significance in the loss, the following themes dominated their narratives: (a)

gaining new insights into life's meaning; (b) enhanced existential views; (c) the valuing of the deceased; (d) the believe that the deceased's suffering has come to an end; (e) an increase in altruism; (f) acknowledgement of their own strength within the face of difficulty; and (g) benefits perceived resulting from the loss.

Baumeister (1991), as well as Janoff-Bulman and Frantz (1997), emphasised how traumatic events often resulted in questioning the justice of this world, often extending to questioning the meaning and purpose of one's life in a world where one's views on controllability of self and context have been compromised. When a traumatic event takes place, individuals assess the event, that is, what has happened. The extent to which this assessment stands in contrast with beliefs about the world and self, is predictive of the distress resulting from the event (Park & AI, 2006). The contrast between these assessments and world beliefs creates discomfort, reflective of the sense of loss within the predictability and controllability of the world (Park & AI), subsequently challenging the sense of personal continuity (Bauer & Bonanno, 2001; Gamino & Sewell, 2004).

Payne, Joseph and Tudway (2007) explain this process of sense making through the following psychosocial constructs: "Adversarial Trauma" (p. 82) takes place, this being the traumatic event that disrupts pre-trauma views on the world and the self. Post this traumatic event, "Attempts to assimilate" (p. 83) defines the mental constructs employed in an attempt to salvage pre-trauma beliefs amidst the disruption of these beliefs and views. These mental constructs include justification of the event, downplaying of the trauma intensity and severity, and the changing of perceptions regarding the trauma, rather than changing world views and beliefs to accommodate the traumatic event. The final step in the sense making process is the "Drive to accommodation" (p. 85), which holds the effective change of world and self beliefs allowing for the incorporation of the trauma, thus allowing past, present and future coherency.

Ultimately it would seem that most of the literature on the bereavement process places the emphasis on the redirecting, or the re-narrating traumatic events in such a way as to allow

for the personal continuity of beliefs about the self and the world. The process of sense making after the traumatic loss of a loved one seems to be somewhat more complex, for it challenges our perceived sense of control within our existence. Yet the process still maintains a predominant focus on establishing continuity, with the maintenance of personal beliefs being key. Let us explore this further.

Sense making and constructing significance

From a narrative perspective, when the grieving individual experiences traumatic loss, the disturbing recollections associated with the death complicate the process of constructing significance within the event (Neimeyer, Herrero & Botella, 2006). The grieving individual needs to incorporate the intense emotions of anxiety whilst reconstructing his or her identity in an attempt to create continuation of the sense of self, adding to the complexity of traumatic grief.

Complicated grieving experiences resulting from violent loss, as proposed by Gillies and Neimeyer (2006), take on the following process: (a) the individual has situated a set of personal beliefs and assumptions around the self and the world, which are brought into the loss experience; (b) experiencing the loss event can disrupt, challenge and untangle these belief and assumption constructs; (c) the process of sense making implies the adaptation of these personal belief systems to incorporate the loss experience, a challenging process, where the increase of the traumatic intensity of the loss experience increases the difficulty of reconstructing personal worlds; and (d) complications in the grieving process arise when the individual is unable to make sense of the loss experience within their current personal belief system.

Ultimately, Currier et al. (2006) found that the individual's unique subjective experience of the loss is more determining of the nature of the grieving and sense making process than that of the objective distinctions drawn between traumatic and natural loss. Whatever the loss type, research does emphasise the bereaved's incorporation of the loss experience into

his or her existing set of beliefs about self and the world in order to achieve a sense of future possibility and continuation.

Sense making and the process of guilt

I turned to a different theme of possible significance, the experience of guilt within the bereavement process. From a phenomenological perspective, family members of the deceased appear to move through various stages of guilt and shame before they focus life outward and forward again (Fielden, 2003; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 1998). First, let me explore guilt as a negative social emotion.

Terming an emotion as negative or painful holds three propositions, partially related to each other: (1) they signify a threat to the individual's goal; (2) the individual does not like to feel these emotions; and (3) society often takes a judgemental stand toward those who feel them (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 1998). Pertaining to guilt in the specific, a strong distinction exists between feeling guilt and being guilty, where with sadness, being sad and feeling sad conveys quite the same meaning, being and feeling guilty have no implicit inclusion of each other (Miceli & Castelfranchi).

Guilt as a social emotion, holds within it a value attribution that involves judgement, or perceived judgement from society and its norms; guilt is aimed at someone, either the self or the individual who have been implicated in the self's action or inaction implicated in the guilt causing event, however reasonably justified this may or may not be (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 1998). The social nature of guilt is also implied when one considers the actions undertaken in restoration of the event; this happens through acknowledgement of one's fault, or through the making of amends (Miceli & Castelfranchi), which could implicate the mental and cognitive reconstruction of the event in such a way as to narrate the experience in a more sociably acceptable way (Ayalon, Perry, Arian & Horowitz, 2007).

At this point I would like to turn to ‘survivor guilt’, a term introduced by Nederland in 1964, in an attempt to define the collective of guilt emotions accompanying those victims who have survived the holocaust during the Second World War (Ayalon, et al., 2007).

In the study done by Ayalon et al. (2007), interviews with previous holocaust victims brought certain themes into the process of guilt resolution: (1) the tension in choosing and acting in favour of the family or larger group, or the sense of standing alone, even acting at the cost of the group for the sake of self preservation; (2) the tension between the self views and beliefs pre- and post-war, in conflict with their actions during the war and accompanying holocaust. This was often reflected within their viewing of the self as an actively engaging individual, now challenged by regular inactivity during the holocaust as a means of self preservation at the time. This frequently led to mentally projecting actions onto those who caused the harm; with clear threats of what the victim would do to the oppressor should he or she have the chance. In this cluster, the circumstantial inability to do something that could have saved the victims being killed is used to validate inactivity which plays a vital role in the guilt process; (3) the notion that there was some sense in all of the suffering during the Holocaust constituted part of the guilt resolution process. This involved various themes of meaning and views on the positive implications of death and accompanying afterlife; (4) the process of rationalisation of the events and the action or inaction as a victim within the circumstance, this resulted in rather factual and intellectualised accounts of what happened in the narratives of some of the victims.

Again, even the process of guilt resolution seems to require a sense of purpose amidst the suffering, and a sense of continuity of self perceptions and beliefs. The process of bereavement at large seems to be focussed on constructing a sense of significance within the loss that has occurred. A dominant part of this process is aimed at establishing continuity from the self definition prior to the loss toward the redefinition of the self and belief systems after the loss. This process involves the letting go of the diseased loved one. I now think it time for the exploration of the process and rituals involved that forms part of this journey of letting go.

Sense making and the symbolism within bereavement

All cultures engage in funerals and other rituals of bereavement in a process of marking the death's finality, and also to adhere to the societal norms regarding the bereavement and grief process. These rituals are however as diverse as the cultural differences within our world (Irish, 1993), and could be personally very unique or traditional within societal prescription (Castle & Phillips, 2003). "By definition, ritual includes the use of symbolic elements, objects (both physical and non physical) as well as actions," (Castle & Phillips, p. 47) which could include remembrance celebrations and the creation of altars in honour of the deceased. Bereavement rituals often facilitate the honouring of past relationships, marking the transition to and initialising of the bereaved survivor's new social identity (Castle & Phillips). Bereavement rituals hold in them a paradox, on the one hand it holds onto those who have come to pass, on the other hand it signifies a role and identity readjustment which physically excludes the deceased, a process that could complicate grief resolution (Romanoff, 1998).

Rituals can be described as culturally created symbols which allow those with strong emotions or beliefs to act out on these in a culturally acceptable and socially prescribed manner, thus often containing and soothing these strong emotional reactions to an event (Castle & Phillips, 2003; Romanoff, 1998). These rituals have been suggested to facilitate a process of healing and adjustment (Imber-Black, 1991) with funeral rituals being characteristic examples of these healing processes (Jacobs, 1992).

Funeral rituals are multi-functional, providing a vehicle for the public display of grief, acknowledgement of the deceased's seizure of existence publicly and marking the change in social identity of the bereaved in relation to the deceased (Castle & Phillips, 2003; Romanoff, 1998). When considering the effectiveness of bereavement rituals, two distinct components need to be present: (1) the ritual should meaningfully include the experience of the bereaved; and (2) the ritual should encompass all the stages of the bereavement process (Romanoff). Elaborating on this, Romanoff incorporates the following three dimensions within the process of successful bereavement resolution: (1) on an intrapsychic level

resolution requires transformation of the bereaved's identity in connection with the loss; (2) on a psychosocial level it requires the facilitation of reconstructing the social identity from pre-loss to post-loss; and (3), the effective facilitation of maintaining a connection with the deceased.

Romanoff (1998) conceptualised these dimensions as follows: (1) The transformation of identity refers to the reconstruction of the identity of the bereaved through the integration of his or her meaningful pre-loss intrapsychic components and identity status, as defined by the relationship with the deceased. This requires the symbolic unification of the deceased with that of the intrapsychic life of the bereaved. Successful transformation and unification will allow the bereaved to experience a continued sense of significance and relatedness with the deceased. The selection of a significant bonding object or a shared moral legacy would valuably be implicated in the resolution process (such as caves, or unique needs when dying in caves).

(2) The reconstructing of the social identity involves the psychosocial resolution from pre-loss social status towards post-loss social status; this would include the funeral ritual, where the deceased is symbolically acknowledged into the afterlife and the new social status of the bereaved confirmed.

(3) The effective facilitation of a connection with the deceased includes rituals of connection; some culturally oriented and prescribed, others deeply personal - all serving as a symbolic act of the reformed functional connection with the deceased.

Castle and Phillips (2003) distinguish between generated and culturally traditional rituals, the former being designed by the mourner in fulfilment of a personal need or context. The personal meaning attributed to the ritualistic event was found to be significant in determining the impact of the ritual on grief resolution.

A bereaved person is sometimes so overwhelmed with intense feelings and chaotic events that the time-limited and structured nature of ritual can provide a welcome sense of safety and comfort (Castle & Phillips, 2003, p. 60).

Ultimately, rituals seem to hold within them the ability to facilitate movement toward grief resolution. In addition, when it comes to personal meaningful rituals, a sense of comfort and safety can be experienced, especially when it is symbolic of the connection between the bereaved and the deceased.

Reflecting on the Exploration of Sense Making

We have now come to that cavern in Level 2's exploration, where we can venture one level deeper, into Level 3, which will later on in this exploration lead us into Level 4, the exploration of Don Shirley's unique sense making process. To emphasise the significance of Level 2's exploration, "Death in the Darkness", I deem it necessary to reflect on the various channels of bereavement that I have journeyed.

In order to situate this reflection, I need to consider the research question of this exploration: "*How did a deep technical cave diver make sense, through narrative, of a cave diving experience and accompanying fatality?*" I entered the major channel of bereavement within Level 2 by distinguishing between the process of self loss and the process of the loss of another. The latter being the dominant channel of value to this exploration, simply because the research question is focused on a cave diver's process of sense making of a fellow dive partner that was lost on a cave dive.

In viewing grieving and sense making as a meaning reconstruction process, the uniqueness of the bereavement experience dictates moving away from the assumption that there are general themes that have to form part of the healing process (Gilbert, 2002; Neimeyer, 1999). In considering this, I have to ask how much of the research question the explored literature allows me to answer.

Firstly I believe we will find that the deep technical cave diver's process of sense making will include various themes of continuation of his identity and personal beliefs. What this continuation of identity and personal beliefs about the world looks like within a technical cave diver I cannot answer from the literature. Secondly, I can reasonably assume that the technical cave diver will have various personal meanings around death and dying, what these are and how they influence the process of sense making within the cave diving domain remains unanswered. Should these personal meanings of death construct the loss of a dive partner as a traumatic violent death, literature supports the notion that the sense making process will be fairly complex, and that integration of continuity could be hindered. Again I cannot answer this without exploring the specific narrative of the technical deep cave diver. Lastly, I could reasonably expect that symbolism would form part of the bereavement process, and that it would provide some connection, a kind of safe place, where the technical cave diver can commemorate the dive partner lost. With bereavement symbols being sometimes very personal, the literature cannot guide me toward constructing the specific symbolism that could be part of the diver's sense making process.

The channel of literature that could have assisted my exploration; the bereavement experience within the sport context, specifically focused on an athlete's experience of losing another fellow athlete or team-mate, surprisingly enough, has not been researched yet. What is more, the insatiable darkness of water-filled caves has claimed the lives of numerous divers (Farr, 1991), with this and the mental focus required within technical cave diving in mind, the lack of psychological research in this field is a matter of concern.

Considering this, Holcomb et al., (1993), seems to suggest that the most comprehensive exploration into a technical cave divers experience would entail a dive through his unique understanding and narration of the events within which the loss of his fellow dive partner is grounded, not definable by any objective means, but rather specific to his telling of the event as found within his narrative. In order to explore such a specific narrative of sense making around the loss of a fellow dive partner, requires an elaborate understanding of the

methodology and underlining principles that guides narrative inquiry. With this said, I believe we should move down into Level 3, “Interpretive Inquiry into Darkness”.

LEVEL 3

INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY INTO DARKNESS

I have dived through the research on death, the implications and complexities in dealing with loss, the construction of coherency through past, present and future, and the intricacies of meaning embraced by the change in world and self views resulting from leaving behind loved ones in caves of the afterlife.

To help you understand what Don Shirley experienced when narrating the events of the 8th of January 2005, I have to take you deeper into Level 3 of this cave research metaphor, extending our journey into the method of inquiry which I used in exploring Don Shirley's narrative of the death of his fellow dive partner. In a cave, the depths we dive to determine the preparation, where caving meets inquiry will be the final preparation for my exploration of meaning to follow in Level 4.

Level 3 has many channels: first we will swim down the contexts of this inquiry, then upon return we will meet the divers who entered the event at Bushman's Hole. Water-filled caves have many avenues, channels, a web of mazes that systematically come together. In the same way I will then map and explore the theory and nature of Narrative Inquiry, guiding you into understanding why I selected this event, and how I attempt to explore the meaning within this event. Finally, I will explore the channels holding the ethical concerns within this exploration, and the relevance of undertaking this exploratory effort into meaning and death in water-filled cave systems.

CHANNEL 1: CONTEXTS AND SAMPLE

This research exploration is grounded within two distinct contexts, the academic context of formal research, and the organisational context of technical deep cave diving.

Academic Context

The academic context constructed my dominant motive for this exploration. I was enabled into this academic journey by the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, where this exploration was done as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the completion of my Masters of Arts (MA) degree in Counselling Psychology. The academic context of this exploration schooled me in the narrative methodology, subsequently providing me with the principles underlining the analysis of Don Shirley's account of the events that shaped this exploration.

Organisational Context

The narrative of Mr. Shirley, who was involved in the Mr. Shaw dive fatality at Bushman's Hole in the Northern Cape Province, will be used in answering the question posed in this exploration. This narrative was constructed around the loss of a life within a technical cave dive, subsequently providing the experiential content explored within this research journey. Due to my passion for the darkness running through the water-filled channels, exploring this context is a challenging ordeal, for my relationship with the darkness in these channels could cloud my exploration of Don Shirley's narrative. On the other hand, my involvement within technical cave diving might just enable me to recognise the depth of certain diving culture narratives, subsequently allowing me to interpret meaning that would otherwise have been missed.

The Research Sample

With regards to the question as to why I chose this narrative as the basis for my exploration into meaning, the death of David Shaw during the dive at Bushman's Hole afforded me the opportunity to explore death in the darkness. The darkness summoned David Shaw and Don Shirley, they obeyed the summons, one the cave took, one it gave back. This very

unique situation of a diver narrating death and survival in a technical cave dive is a very rare opportunity to do research on death in an unexplored context.

The technical cave diving community in South Africa is a small community; I am IANTD qualified and part of this community. Being a member of this community gave me access to the narrative of Don Shirley. I chose this narrative, for the uniqueness of this event afforded me an exploration into meaning and death within a context that I am passionate about. It also provided me with a narrative text in a context that will in all probability never be recreated.

Subsequently, the uniqueness of this event and my interest in technical cave diving implicitly dictated my decision to use the narrative of Don Shirley regarding the Bushman's Hole incident as the content for my research journey. In pure research terms this would be labelled as a convenient or accidental sample (Delpont, 2002; Neuman, 2000), personally I would much rather refer to it as a unique sample, with this specific combination of events rarely, if ever, being available for research in the field of psychology.

CHANNEL 2: PARTICIPANTS

Considering the uniqueness of this event, constructing clarity within the research journey requires an introduction to the participants directly involved within this research exploration.

The Surviving Diver

Throughout this exploration various references have been made to Don Shirley. To situate him as the constructor of the narrative within this exploration, a certain degree of background information is required. Don Shirley, the diver who surfaced and subsequently reflected upon his experience as the major dive back-up partner in the fatality which

happened on the 8th of January 2005 in Bushman's Hole, narrated the content of this exploration. Don Shirley is a white male who resides at Komatie Springs in South Africa. As a highly qualified and experienced cave diver, he is the Director of the International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers Africa (IANTD). He has completed thousands of cave dives and is by qualification and experience one of the leading cave diving instructors in the country.

The Researcher

Exploration to me, Johan Fredrich Smook, is a two-dimensional construct. The one is to discover, to find, to experience, not to judge, not to define. It implicates being in the process rather than evaluating it. On the other hand, exploration requires uncharted territory: To venture into the unknown, to embrace the novelty and difference possible within contexts that have not been adventured yet. As a diving instructor, a technical deep cave diver, and ultimately as a psychologist in the making, this notion of exploration is within my being. It is this then that allowed the exploration of the darkness within the various levels of water-filled caves, and the exploration of meaning within narratives to come together in fuelling this inquiry. The Narrative approach on this exploration is opening up various self explorative questions on the reasons for my own involvement in this risk laden pastime, which I call, 'the summons of the darkness'.

My interest in this chosen field of narrative, technical cave diving, comes from my longstanding relationship with the diving industry. I have over 10 years experience as a scuba diving instructor, with my own participation with cave diving having started during the early months of 1998. My passion for this explorative pastime could very well impact on the research, hence my own narratives around diving had to be explored in order to better distinguish them from the narratives employed by Don Shirley.

My first year in the MA (Counselling Psychology) process, introduced me to the ontological nature of Narrative Inquiry. The exploration of narratives and metaphors as a

system to discover the meaning which individuals attribute to their experiences became the basis for my therapeutic views and method (Freedman & Combs, 2002; Morgan, 2000; White & Epston, 1990). These therapeutic methodologies were tested, refined and shaped around my individual style during my internship year at Stabilis Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre. It was during this year, 2006, that through supervision and guidance from similar minded qualified psychologists, that the narrative explorative me, shaped into being.

The MA Counselling Psychology process at the University of Pretoria is based on the practitioner-researcher model, which holds that research inquiry and therapeutic philosophy continuously substantiate and grow as an inseparable whole. Thus, research, at undergraduate, honours and masters level, as undertaken and experienced by me through the multitude of assignments and theoretical frameworks discussed and evaluated, is yet another vehicle moving my understanding of narrative therapy into a deeper level. In the end, I am exploring the field of narrative inquiry through this research project, I am narrating my meaning within the narrative of Don Shirley post incident at Bushman's Hole, but more so, I am, through the construction of these findings, narrating the meaning of research within Johan Fredrich Smook (Freedman & Combs, 2002; White & Epston, 1990).

The Journalist

There is a third explorer who co-constructed this research journey: Gordon Hiles, the photographer and director of the interview, which took place the day following the accident at Bushman's Hole. Gordon Hiles conducted the interview as part of the directing of a documentary on the dive. Gordon Hiles and I had never had any contact prior to the interview which was done with Don Shirley. The value of a third party conducting the interview independently from the researcher will be discussed later within Level 3.

Up to this point within Level 3 I have ventured down the channels of contexts, the sample that this exploration is built upon, and the various participants that in there own way co-

constructed this research exploration. I have shown you where the narrative of this research exploration came from, now it is time for me to introduce the method of inquiry which I will use to analyse this narrative.

CHANNEL 3: INQUIRY

Inquiry Position

I have been speaking of narratives and the construction of this research exploration, even referring to the participants as co-constructors of this journey. It is common for constructionist theories to frame the human experience in terms of their own life narratives, simply because we live in narratives and not in statistical evaluation (Gilbert, 2002). We are continuously authoring our own life narratives as we reflect upon, interpret and reinterpret our life experiences, narratives we then tell and retell to those around us and ourselves. Meaning then is grounded in these life narratives, meaning which can be accessed through the narratives people tell in their own words (Freedman & Combs, 2002; Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006; Morgan, 2000;). Don Shirley told one such narrative, the narrative of the dive that claimed the life of his dive partner David Shaw on the darkness of January 8, 2005. The events of that day included death, Don Shirley's telling of that day includes meaning, and within this telling there is a process of making sense (Lawler, 2002).

As the explorer of Don Shirley's narrative, the nature of my exploration will be interpretive (Lawler, 2002; Riessman, 1993), I only have access to what Don Shirley decided to narrate. Think of it as a torch in a cave: as I move down the passage of darkness, I can only interpret that which Don Shirley's beam lit up. My focus then is not on Don Shirley's narrative, but on the significance of what he is telling in his life (Lawler, 2002). The account of this significance is based on interpretation, thus, ultimately my account of the interpretation is yet another narrative, as I now determine the direction of the beam (Riessman, 1993; White & Epston, 1990). Hence, the co-constructive nature of this

research journey for Don Shirley and Gordon Hiles determined the narrative I could access in my interpretive exploration. In turn, their choosing of the narrative was determined by a multitude of their interpretations of their own experiences.

To further your understanding of the relationship between the narratives of our lives and the experiences we own, the uniqueness of the act of experiencing needs to be explored.

Experience

Human beings experience the actual content of their lives through a lens determined by their culture, history and subjective interpretation of the triadic relationship between these elements. As human beings, direct access to our own experience and that of other's is not possible, rather, we deal with an indistinct and subjective representation of these experiences through written and talked narratives, interaction, and culturally and historically bound interpretation (Riessman, 1993; White & Epston, 1990). What is more, there is a selective telling of these experiences, inevitably there always remain the unaccounted experiences within a narrative (White & Epston), and they too have meaning, causing a distinction between the dominant narratives we narrate often, and the alternative narratives hidden away, sometimes even from the narrator. It is the awareness of the existence of these unaccounted experiences that allows for the alternative narration (Freedman & Combs, 2002; Morgan, 2000); it is exactly this alternative possibility that constructs curiosity and inquisitiveness within the field of narrative exploration.

Experience and embodiment

Individuals are continuously constructing the meaning of life through the interpretation and telling of narratives, which then become their truth (Corey, 2005; White & Epston, 1990). These narratives are culturally and historically bound, in considering the power situated within these cultural narratives, White and Epston further assert that individuals then tend to form their identities around these cultural messages and internalise the narratives which

they use in interpreting their own and other experiences. Subsequently, these narratives shape humans' realities through constructing interpretations of their unique sensory and perceptual realities (Monk, 1997; White & Epston, 1990). These realities are experienced through our bodies, our embodiment being the point of reference through which the experiences are integrated into our narratives. Furthermore, Crossley (2007, p.82) states:

Human bodies, for the phenomenologist, are both perceptible and perceiving, sensible and sentient. Having said that, I do not *perceive* my sensations. I *have* my sensations and *only I have them* but what I *perceive* is a world beyond myself which is meaningful to me.

As it were, humans become the hosts for perceptual constructions of past, present and future interpretations of experience. In Sclater (2003), the subjective account of the self and of other's is confirmed in assuming an intricate connection between the narrative and identity.

To understand this relationship narrative has with identity, we need to view it in conjunction with the experience of history and culture. Before I can deepen the understanding of the relationship between culture and history within our experienced repertoires, I need to deepen and refine the relationship between experience and narrative.

Experience and Narrative

We are beings in this world, inextricably connected to all of the passages of life, experiencing the world, experiencing ourselves within this world, and then we narrate (Rodriguez, 2002). Every experience that we share, be it with ourselves or other explorers of knowledge and life, is captured within narrative. Whether I plan a dive or speak of death I do so through telling. Lawler (2002) explains narrative's relatedness to experience as being the interpretive device through which experience is shared; this holds that the narrative is not the transparent vehicle of the total experience, but rather the interpretation of the individual owning and sharing that experience. We employ narratives as self representations (Lawler), yet narratives also extend to representations of others and events

that we experience, it is not the vehicle shedding light on absolute empirical fact, rather, it is the reflection of our interpretation of our subjective truth, the only truth we as ‘beings part of this world’ have access to (Lawler; Rodriguez). These narrative representations are produced in an attempt to bring the total plot of our interpreted experience of past and present together, produced by us within our historical and cultural contexts (Lawler).

Experience, Narrative and History

Through past experiences within the social context, realities are constructed from interpretations of historical accounts that aided in the writing and rewriting of identities (Gergen, 1998; Roberts, 2004). Experience is therefore situated within the interpretation of historical events and the paradigm that was underlining that moment in the past (Lawler, 2002). Subsequently, the history at the time directs the future identity in the present, based upon the individual’s account of the meaning of the past experience. As a function, this process of narrative accounting aims for the coherency of the past memory and sense of identity (Fivush, 1998; Lawler). We have past actions and future possibilities coming together in the experience and unfolding of the here and now, the “landscape of action” (Bruner, 2004, p.698). Ultimately Don Shirley’s experience of himself over time, informed the narrative of David Shaw’s death he constructed on the day of the interview, all in an attempt to maintain the possibility of coherency in the way that he will view himself in the future. Narratives are shaped through time, memories hold these narratives, these memories inform the narratives we produce in the present (Lawler, 2002), and with time being dynamic, it inevitably informs our future. The implication of this is that Don Shirley’s account of the incident will inform us not only on his past, but his interpretation of himself pre-accident will also inform the narrative that he produces in the present¹⁵.

Experience Narrative and Culture

Culture is ultimately historically situated; our cultural ways are constructed over time, and inform our social ways (Bruner, 2004). From the postmodern perspective at large and a

¹⁵ The present is defined here as the actual date of the interview: The 9th of January 2005

narrative ontology in particular, realities are viewed as socially situated, the writing and rewriting of our own identity through the passing on of our interpretations of our experience, known as the “landscape of consciousness”, this “inner experience” (Bruner, p.698) happens through socialisation, which is ultimately embedded in our culture (Freedman & Combs, 2002; White & Epston, 1990). This culturally socialised inner world directs the social process in which we function, allowing for and limiting certain interpretations in the telling and retelling of our experiences, subsequently we construct our realities as we live and retell them.

The interpretive nature of narrative allows for certain dominant events to be narrated into our accounts of our experiences, we are often informed as to which events should be narrated through socialisation, which in turn is informed by culture created within history. Narratives informed by these dominant societal stories constructed and transferred through time, is called the dominant discourse (or the dominant societal narrative), which in turn further constructs interpretation of culture and the future narrative thereof (Cortazzi, 1993; Lawler, 2002).

As the leader of this exploration, my focus will remain within the beam of narrative inquiry, diving through the historical and cultural events involved in Don Shirley’s account of that day at Bushman’s Hole where the darkness summoned.

To lead you through this exploration, I require of you an understanding of the process of data construction that informed my narrative account of Don Shirley’s experience; in turn, I was informed on this process through the work of Riessman (1993).

Inquiry Material: Interview

Phase 1: Awareness

The significance of the dive at Bushman's Hole, an ultra deep body recovery attempt by David Shaw, and the dominant media narrative of reporting on death brought the events of the dive into the public domain. Through various diving websites and my contact with Don Shirley, I became aware of not only the detail pertaining the incident, but also of the interview which was done by Gordon Hiles with Don Shirley.

Phase 2: Receiving

Don Shirley narrated his experience of the actual events of the 8th of January 2005; this was done post dive in an attempt to capture the significance of what happened in Bushman's Hole and aimed at the creation of data for future documentaries. Subsequently, Gordon Hiles used video recording as the medium for capturing Don Shirley's narrative.

Considering my own involvement in Technical Cave Diving, the raw interview material was made available to me for explorative purposes. The material subsequently falls within the category of Naturalistic observation, being defined as unobtrusive research through the use of physical evidence, the interview, also known as a physical trace measure (McBurney, 2001). The value of this type of material is greatly significant, in that I as the explorer had no impact on the collection or creation of the material. The interview would have taken place as it did, with or without the research exploration being undertaken; subsequently the data was created independently from the research project (Potter, 2004; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Hence the accuracy and value of the material is reflective of the real situation under which it was constructed. I, the leading explorer of this narrated event had no impact on the narratives Don Shirley constructed. His complete narrative of the events of Bushman's Hole can be viewed in Appendix A.

Potter and Hepburn (2005) argue the value of using naturalistic interviews through which certain problems in data gathering are avoided. These are listed as follow: 1) the interview is not flooded by predetermined research and psychology agendas, 2) some of the interviewee-researcher interactional difficulties relating to rapport building are avoided, 3) the scope of data is not limited to the predisposed context of the research project, and 4), cognitivism is avoided, allowing for more abstract accounts of experience by the interviewee.

The ultimate value of this being that my only influence on this exploration is in the actual analysis of the interview, as I had no impact on generating the analysed narrative. Bear in mind that Don Shirley would have evaluated his narrative's impact on those he believed would receive this narrative; narratives are not linear constructed accounts, they fuse the event with the implicit knowledge that the narrative will be received by someone whom ultimately will attempt to make sense from it (Cortazzi, 1993; Riessman, 1993).

Phase 3: Transcription

After receiving the raw interview material, the transcription process commenced. The function of this process was twofold, it allowed my familiarisation of the narrative, and upon completion increased the ease with which I could move back and forth through the narrative while exploring the meaning within.

Phase 4: Reading

This interpretive exploration of Don Shirley's account focused on the discovery of the constructed and creatively narrated experience with all the accompanying assumptions and narratives which aided in his sense making process (Riessman, 1993). It can be defined as a search into the subjective experiential account of Don Shirley; a qualitative analysis focused on the construction of meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). Reading the narrative required continual awareness of my personal positional and subjective nature as a

research explorer (Riessman), diving through the depths of the text informed a process of selecting evidence for meaning, a selection process that in turn was informed by my personal cultural and historical narratives.

Inquiry Material II: Historical Account

Through the process of reading and re-reading the text as narrated by Don Shirley on the incident at Bushman's Hole, as the explorer of this interpretive journey, I was guided into requesting a historical account of Don Shirley's diving experience. This account was obtained by means of e-mail correspondence with Don Shirley, and was aimed at furthering my understanding of the possible cultural and historical experiences that could shed light on the meaning of his current narrative of the incident under exploration. Within the e-mail correspondence, I framed the question as follows:

Write an account of your experience of your own diving career, including significant events, prior to the incident which took place on the 8th of January 2005 at Bushman's Hole.

The full historical account as narrated by Don Shirley, is available in appendix B.

Phase 5: Reading the Historical Account

People construct narratives which allow for the sense making of the experience. These narratives are primarily dictated by history and culture, thus the past and the future are fused into the present narrated experience, an experience always embedded in the culturally lived background of the person (Bruner, 2004; Crossley 2000; Sclater 2003; White & Epston 1990). There is a clear integration of past lived experiences and predicted future experiences into the narrating of the current experience, where the narrator draws from the lived culture throughout this experiential process; hence requiring the added correspondence with Don Shirley with regards to his diving history and significant events.

Employing culture in our experiential narration includes traditions, metaphors, rituals and folk tales which have guided our worldly understanding (White, 2000). Yet, the act of narration itself also constructs experience (Bruner, 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; White & Epston 1990). As Bruner (p.694) puts it: “In the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we "tell about" our lives.” There seems to exist a circular notion of constructing experience through culturally and historically situated narratives, and the use of narratives to construct our experiences and thus shaping our lives and identities.

Upon receiving the historical account of Don Shirley’s diving career, the process of analysis integrated his historical narratives as evidence for the meaning of his current narrative of the Bushman’s Hole incident. The predominant focus of the analysis was on the way that narratives of Don Shirley’s diving experiences in his past shaped the narrative of the dive at Bushman’s Hole where he lost his diving partner David Shaw.

Phase 6: Writing the Report

The written account of my interpretations of Don Shirley’s narrated experience was further informed by the flow of his narratives. Throughout Level 4 you will find that I approached the exploration of his narrative in a similar sequence as that of his narrated experience. Through this approach I hope to inform your interpretation of the holistic nature of meaning and narratives within his experiential construction. At the same time it afforded me the opportunity to convey the message that I interpreted from Don Shirley’s narrative, to you the reader.

True to the circular interpretive nature of narrative inquiry, Level 4 was made available to Don Shirley in an attempt to validate the meanings which I constructed from his narrative. Towards the end of Level 4 you will find his response on my interpretations and meaning reconstructions that resulted from the narrative exploration.

I have now introduced you to the process of data construction, a process that journeyed through various narratives and the analysis of these narratives within a cultural and historical perspective. The historical narratives of Don Shirley includes various accounts of death, the current narrative includes a great deal on death, specifically focussing on the loss of Don Shirley's dive partner David Shaw. When dealing with a sensitive subject such as death in research, specific ethical concerns need to be addressed.

CHANNEL 4: ETHICAL ASPECTS

Allowing the darkness to be explored has very specific implications; experiencing the death of your dive partner, then allowing an explorer such as myself to analyse this experience for academic purposes, is a significant exposing venture. In this exploration, "When Darkness Summons", there were distinctive ethical considerations. First and foremost, the exploration dealt with the death of David Shaw. As the explorer, the public availability of the information on his death¹⁶, as well as the nature of this exploration – a narrative inquiry into Don Shirley's account of the death, cleared the ethical way in relation to David Shaw. After all, this exploration was not about David Shaw, it was about Don Shirley being on a dive where he lost his dive partner.

Don Shirley narrated his experience of that day independent of me, which somewhat simplified the ethical considerations. The interview existed, I only needed consent to use and analyse it. Both participants are aged over 18, therefore legally entitled to sign formal consent in their personal capacity. Don Shirley, the diver, and Gordon Hiles, the interviewer, consented to the use of the raw interview material, with the understanding that the information will be used for academic and other related purposes. The consent also indemnified the University of Pretoria and the researcher from any claims.

¹⁶ David Shaw's death and the incident is available in the public domain: www.iantd.co.za; www.deepsix.com; www.dansa.org; www.scubaboard.com

These ethical procedures were undertaken by both the parties involved in the form of written consent, undersigned by the participants. These consent letters have been submitted as attachments with the research proposal to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. The Ethics Committee cleared the research proposal and accompanying consent letters, with the understanding that I as the researcher need to adhere to all the guidelines as prescribed by the Ethical Committee on this explorative process.

Another matter cleared in the consent procedure, was the use of the actual names of the participants. The freely available discussions and diving related literature on the matter cleared the way in this regard. Throughout the exploration I was under continuous supervision from my narrative coach and research supervisor at the University of Pretoria¹⁷. Before the publication of any findings resulting from this exploration, be it the form of articles or research publications, both the participants' approval will be obtained. In this event the article will be made available for their evaluation pre-publication.

Considering the context of this exploration, technical cave diving, I feel competent and qualified in effectively researching this event, with the ability to understand the context within which the experience took place. I have been trained as a technical-cave diver and have been pursuing the darkness for eight years.

CHANNEL 5: RELEVANCE

The relevance of this exploration lies within the context: experiential accounts of meaning within deep technical cave divers in specific, and scuba diving at large is a totally unexplored domain. From this project I hope to achieve awareness that the exploration of underwater cave systems is a distinctly unique pastime, and that those who enter are

¹⁷ Research Supervisor: Dr. Lourens Human - MDiv Practical Theology (UP), MA Counselling Psychology (RAU), PhD (Psychology) (UP)

interpretive sense making individuals who narrate a story of depth and darkness with every new exploration. With this exploration, I wish to bring to you one such narrative, a deeply personal narrative, as all narratives go.

I would like to believe that this explorative effort will expose curious explorers to the possibility of narrative research in the field of technical diving and other extreme sports. I often find that the extremists I come in contact with have marginalised narratives; narratives that often oppose and challenge dominant societal narratives. In the end, meaning is in all facets of every narration, maybe one day this exploration becomes part of a deeper understanding of why we venture into the unknown. For I believe in this world, nothing else is quite as profound as the simultaneous fear and excitement experienced in journeying into unexplored passages of life.

LEVEL 4

MEANING IN THE DARKNESS

I now invite you to join our journey of meaning in the darkness. This journey started many years ago, and was written over time through experience, with Don Shirley adding up one dive at a time until that day on the 9th of January 2005, when he narrated loss and survival in Bushman's Hole that happened the day before. This exploration will venture down the caves of personal narratives and various constructions of meaning that I interpreted in the text narrated by Don Shirley. These interpretations and meaning constructions are informed by my personal narratives as well, and as the reader you may find that you have the need to explore and interpret Don Shirley's narratives differently. This in the end then affirms the unique interpretive nature of narratives constructed through our historically and culturally lived experiences (Gergen, 1998).

Upon our descent into Level 4 of this research cave, I would like to introduce a metaphor capturing my experience of the exploration to follow. Through my personal explorative wreck diving encounters, I have been continuously confronted with the very unique relationship between death and beauty, where the shipwrecks, dead dysfunctional metal, and often associated loss of life, becomes a preferred environment for passionate explorative divers. In a similar way technical cave diving runs a connected thread between giving and taking life.

Don Shirley's diving journey started many years ago...

My interest in diving was sparked when I was 10, when I saw the entrance pool to the show caves in Wookie hole, they had turned on the lights under the water, and you could see the cave roof. I did not dive in caves for many years after this, but diving, all forms of technical diving, cave and rebreathers and teaching diving became a way of life for me.

Diving Gives Life...

Don Shirley introduces the historical narrative of his diving career with the aforementioned paragraph, immediately setting a stage where the entire scope of diving is narrated as “a way of life.” His career started in 1974 and stretched all the way to the 9th of January 2005 when he narrated his experience of the incident at Bushman’s Hole which occurred the previous day. Where did his narrative of that day come from? To understand his present we need to explore his past (Lawler, 2002). In this introduction Don Shirley constructs diving as a life essence, something that he lived for, something that he lived by. He then situates the origins of his life of diving within a career as a soldier...

I joined the army in 1974 and started sports diving. I had joined as an apprentice tradesman in the REME. I wanted education and the adventure sports. I was a young ‘boy soldier’.

Note how even being a soldier is filled with excitement. He uses “education”, “adventure sports” and “young ‘boy soldier’” in explaining his status then. There are many ways to introduce being a soldier. Don Shirley’s way is filled with adventure, not war, not death, not gloom. He then continues narrating his being a soldier that *gives life* to diving through education...

In those days when you learned something, you then taught someone else. So I started instructing diving, straight away. These were also the days when to start diving you needed to be an athlete, many pool lengths with weight belts, press ups, breath holding etc. and qualifying as a snorkel diver before touching an aqualung!

He maintains the energy in his narrative through introducing himself as an athlete, speaking of the mandatory physical achievements that qualified him as fit for scuba diving. He then elaborates on his achievements...

By the end of my time in the Army Apprentice College, I had shown myself as a good diver, I was BSAC Advanced/CMAS 3 star, and had many dive trips behind me including an

expedition on a hard boat to the Channel Islands – that was pretty major for those days. I had done all the other sports, parachuting, gliding, hill walking. But diving was my passion.

Don Shirley introduces competency and achievements in support of this energy filled *diving gives life* narrative. He furthers evidence for his sense of adventure, “parachuting, gliding, hill walking”, and then clearly states diving as being his ultimate passion; “But diving was my passion”. Don Shirley then provides evidence for how passionate this following of diving was...

Over the years whenever possible I would dive and go on expeditions, this was all tied in with a hectic career in Electronics in the Army and family life. I became an Army Sub Aqua Diving Supervisor (SADS), primarily so that I could organize my own expeditions. As time went by I led many expeditions, and was involved in training what must have been 1000's of divers, and showing young soldiers and officers how to organize and lead diving trips. As I moved around the Army if there was no army diving club I would start one, or re energize any club that I came to.

It almost seems like Don Shirley and diving had a mutual relationship of giving life and energy. Don Shirley's various involvements with diving reaffirm the “way of life” that it became for him...

I was involved in civilian diving as well, in the early days this was British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC) related. My main diving activity involved training other people and wreck diving. In the late 80's, there was a new form of diving evolving, this was the use of mixed gasses; gasses used for diving other than air. This allowed more control of the underwater environment. I pursued these techniques, it was not widely understood in the diving community. I began diving the gasses and became an instructor in their use.

Don Shirley affirms his status within the diving community. Not only was diving a way of life for him, but he also seemed to be at the forefront of new techniques and the diving evolution. He then introduces his passion for two specific environments, wrecks and caves...

I still harboured the desire to go into caves - kindled in the early days of my childhood. In UK it was difficult to get into cave diving as to gain access to the caves, you had to be a dry caver first, and only then begin to dive in the caves. In the sea wrecks became my passion, they allowed exploration, and I enjoyed the environment. When I did start cave diving, I found that the techniques that I used in the wrecks were very similar to the cave techniques. I loved the environment.

Don Shirley introduces his relationship with cave diving in this section. He immediately situates this relationship as one of being in love with the caving environment, "I loved the environment." In the passage, "In the sea wrecks became my passion, they allowed exploration...", Don Shirley constructs his passion for exploration. From here forward, the narrative of *diving gives life* is continuously informed by this passion for *exploration...*

In the early 90's I decided that when I left the Army on retirement in 97, I would go into diving related tourism. I began looking at South Africa as a tourist destination. In this process I found that there was little technical diving, so I decided to bring a formal training organization to South Africa. This I did in the form of the International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers (IANTD) an American based organization that had started training technical divers in 1985 – it was through IANTD that I obtained my formal technical diving qualifications. I obtained the license for the Southern African territories in 1995, started a South African company early the following year (with the aid of a friend that had just left the army), finally leaving the Army in 97, after 4 trips to South Africa.

In the above section, Don Shirley explores and ultimately settles in a new country, South Africa. Again the *diving gives life* narrative continuous, this time through the establishment of IANTD in South Africa. This was Don Shirley's stage of transition from being a military diver to being a devoted technical diving instructor...

Once I had left the Army I was able to devote myself fully to diving and began to teach technical diving, I am at the top of my field and able to teach all levels of diving over the entire range of technical diving, and can teach instructors to train instructors in all levels, formally to 120m. This includes all mixed gasses and both open circuit and rebreather technology, in sea or cave.

Again Don Shirley affirms his competency within technical dive training, which he then backs up with his level of experience...

During the 33-year diving history I do not have a complete record of my dives. Generally I would do 200 + dives a year. So that gives me approximately 6600 dives. In the past 10 years these dives have averaged over 1 hour under water per dive. With over half of the dives below 40 meters, and approximately half of the dives in cave.

I have dived extensively around UK, spending a lot of time in the wrecks; my favourite area was Scapa Flow and the wrecks of the WWI German fleet. I have dived in Norway, Jamaica, Southern France, Malta, Gibraltar, Cyprus, the Baltic, the German lakes, the Persian Gulf (Saudi Arabia), oasis and sea, Falkland Islands, Southern Africa, Mozambique. Zimbabwe caves, and Florida and its caves. I may have missed a few places.

Up to this point in Don Shirley's historical account, we have his dominant personal narrative of *diving gives life*, a narrative that is informed and constructed primarily by his *competency*, which he establishes through various accounts of qualifications and experience; and his passion for *exploration*, thus finding new environments. He also constructs his "love" for wrecks and caves and the exploration of these. He then strengthens the competency construction through the listing of his formal qualifications...

My formal qualifications are IANTD Instructor Trainer Trainer¹⁸, for all levels offered by IANTD. This includes Cave, and Rebreather (Inspiration, Evolution, Halcyon, KISS, Cis Luna, Submatix, Draiger). PADI MSDT and DSAT Instructor. DAN Trainer all levels.

At this point Don Shirley introduces an exploration of the events that shaped his personal historical narrative of diving. He takes us back to 1974...

Things that stick in my memory? There are so many over the years, a few:

74 First pool dive with an aqualung! A twin hose regulator – not to far dissimilar to my rebreather hoses that I use now!

¹⁸ Instructor Trainer Trainer: The qualification that allows a diver to teach other divers to train instructors. (This is not a repeated word)

Then the first account of trouble, 1975...

First sea dive early 75, blue water, could not get to the bottom, as the instructor had ear problems, great dive though!

This is Don Shirley's first narration of experienced problems, not his own though. Notice how the "great dive" is written simultaneously to the *experienced problem*. He then continues with another account from 1976 that combines "great" with a situation which could cause trouble...

76 first remembrance of narcosis, on a 35m scenic dive in the Channel Islands, 'Tubular bells' sounded great!

Ears ringing or hearing "bells" is often associated with nitrogen narcosis, a condition which is potentially dangerous. Nitrogen narcosis is a direct result of the excess nitrogen uploaded by the body as a result of breathing under pressure. He then moves to the next account, narrating a carefree experience from 1978...

78 lying at 6m harbour in the south of France, on my own, just staying still and watching the small fish! For over an hour, no cares, just with the sea.

In this narration there is a carefreeness that allows for a very peaceful construction of Don Shirley's relationship with diving. Then he moves to an account from the mid 1980's, where we find the first serious situation...

In the mid 80's I was once lost in zero visibility in an underground building at 30m in a German lake. I was using a single 12L cylinder, but had a pony (3L – which was quite modern, for that time) I controlled the event, and came out unscathed.

This time the *experienced problem* does not have an immediate counter of the dive being great. However, this construction allowed life to continue amidst trouble through Don

Shirley's survival of the incident. The deliberate and definitive nature of the statement "I controlled the event," again constructs Don Shirley's *competence* and *experience*. Don Shirley's construction of the *diving gives life* narrative includes the *experience of problems*, and this time he employs *competence* to deal with the experienced problems and continue the exploration. Notice how he narrated the incident as an "event", not as an accident, nor problem, nor trouble.

Don Shirley moves to the mid 1990's, continuing his focus on *exploration*...

95 Lead an expedition to the Falkland Islands. Dived in very remote places, that will probably never be dived again.

96 Saw Badgat (now Komati springs – where I now live, since 97) a disused mine, with a cave system, which I now know like the back of my hand. Diving dives routinely that others only dream about.

These accounts are written with a distinct focus on the nature of Don Shirley's relationship with diving. The mention of "that will probably never be dived again", and "Diving dives routinely that others only dream about", constructs a high level of diving excitement as "a way of life" for Don Shirley. In this section exploration and discovery are yet more evidence for Don Shirley's *diving gives life* narrative. He then continues with the *exploration*, first in 1996 amidst difficulty...

96 – Member of a team that dived the HMS Pheasant, I was already instructing technical diving at the time. It was the first Army sports diver expedition, sanctioned to use Trimix on duty. I was the first to see the ship that had sunk in 1914, with the loss of all hands. The last missing British destroyer to be found. Very dark, 84m dive – only myself and my dive partner got to the wreck and the sea was so rough and the current strong, no one else could follow.

Then in 1997, trouble free *exploration*...

97 First trip to Bushman's – 100m dive (to take a member of the CMAS group that I was with) – the end of the trip, had a lovely solo dive – looking up from 50m seeing the clarity and brightness of the 3 holes in the roof at that point.

In 1998 Don Shirley again continues *exploration*, yet this happens in conjunction with the introduction of an entirely new narrative...

98 Chinhoyi cave Zimbabwe, training at 110m, looking up to see the cave spiralling to the surface, being able to see the trees 50m above the water (it's very clear). This was meant to be the deepest that the cave went. On later expeditions, I found the direction that goes deeper. Swimming past dug out canoes on the bottom, I went to a planned depth of 120m, and found that it would go even deeper.

The day before '*anonymous*'¹⁹ had died on a dive with the Coelacanths. He was a friend of '*anonymous*' and myself, he was using a Halcyon Rebreather, that same night a Kingfisher was sitting at the water's edge of the cave, we had never seen one there before. A Halcyon is the scientific name for the Kingfisher. We dived anyway.

Various accounts of discovery and exploration within the technical diving domain construct the excitement within the diving experiences of Don Shirley. An excitement that became his "way of life". However, at this point Don Shirley introduces the narrative of *diving takes life*, a narrative introduced whilst narrating the explorative nature of cave diving. In this narrative of *diving takes life* Don Shirley makes an interesting reference to what I interpret as an omen. More interesting though is that he did not heed the 'omen'. Then the *diving takes life* narrative continues.

Diving Takes Life...

A week after I had returned from Zimbabwe, '*anonymous*' died in an attempt to get deeper in the cave, he had got to 165m but died on the way back up. He had no line. I went back up to

¹⁹ The names of all other involved parties have been omitted from the transcript.

locate the body with my business partner. I dived to 145m looking for the body, ran out of time – with 15 different plans, but located him on the roof in the ascent. We were so far back in the cave that the light from the entrance could only be seen as a dull glow. After marking the body with our line, we returned the next day. The sun was streaming through the hole, the stage cylinders on the lines that we had laid, looked like the charms on a key ring, visibility was stunning, and we brought ‘*anonymous*’ out like a royal procession in a cathedral filled with light.

This passage within our exploration sets the stage for an interesting construction of the narrative of *diving takes life*. We have the death of a technical deep cave diver, yet this death is narrated as being within a beautiful setting. The entire second section of this specific narrative of death includes “streaming” light, “stunning” visibility and “a royal procession in a cathedral filled with light.” Death and beauty within the cave are simultaneously narrated, carrying in it the same paradox as the wreck diving metaphor. In the very next passage Don Shirley continues with this beauty and life giving narrative of diving...

Diving is a passion; the caves are a love affair, the cutting edge technology and techniques that I use, make anything that I desire possible. You truly ‘live’ when you dive, to take diving to the way that I do it is to live on the highest plateau!

This passionate “love affair” with living life “on the highest plateau” concludes Don Shirley’s historical narrative of his diving experiences.

Don Shirley narrated diving as a *life giving* experience. This experience is filled continuously with exploration and discovery within an environment that he deems as a “love affair”. The experience of this cave environment made possible through *competency* and the ability to control difficult situations. Don Shirley also narrated diving as *taking life*, yet this environment that invites death, is simultaneously narrated as beautiful.

In one incident, an omen does not prevent diving from taking place. The *gives life* and *takes life* narratives seem to be intertwined in Don Shirley's experience of the sport of technical cave diving.

I have come to the end of my exploration of Don Shirley's historical narrative on his own diving experiences. As I move into the next cavern of Level 4, I will continually explore the influence of these personal narratives of *diving gives* and *takes life* on the narrative of Don Shirley on the death of his fellow dive partner, David Shaw. At this point, I believe I should reintroduce the research question primary to this exploration:

How did a deep technical cave diver make sense, through narrative, of a cave diving experience and accompanying fatality?

Bushman's Hole, 2005

Level 4, Cavern 1: the Death of David Shaw

I introduced Don Shirley's narrated experience in appendix A by including a section of the recording that was done prior to the formal interview. In this informal recording, Don Shirley talks about the death of his fellow dive partner, David Shaw...

...as far as Dave goes, I would leave him there, its exactly what I would want, you now, so, I, these things, you know, Dave and I, we, we discussed it even here, the fact that if something happens we'd like to stay wherever it is...

We have dived through Don Shirley's historical narrative of diving giving life and taking life. In this Cavern 1 of Don Shirley's present narrative, David Shaw, the partner he lost in Bushman's Hole, is the centre of the narrative. Don Shirley immediately situates the current account within the *diving takes life* narrative, with the emphasis on allowing David Shaw to be left at the bottom of the Bushman's Hole cave system.

Don Shirley is employing two arguments to construct this appeal. On the one hand David Shaw expressed this need in their discussion prior to the dive at Bushman's Hole, on the other hand he tells us that he would have wanted the same thing. Don Shirley is not only telling us that we should leave David Shaw at the bottom of Bushman's Hole, he is also telling us that he also would like to be left in the cave if he dies there. Don Shirley is employing his own need to be left in the darkness in strengthening David Shaw's expressed wish.

He then journeys us into the heroic death. He fills the narrative with nobility, honour and the "good way." His introduction of the battle and David Shaw being a soldier in that battle is somehow noble...

... it's like a battle, you know, um, you know soldiers die in battle, it's a bit of a noble thing, even though a battle is not a nice thing, but you know, it's a good way.

In this section Don Shirley constructs the *diving takes life* narrative by means of narrating a "good way" death. In the historical account, the *diving takes life* narrative was informed by a death in a beautiful place, now this narrative of *diving takes life* attains a fuller description, death in this beautiful place is a "good way".

Don Shirley journeys further into David Shaw's death when he adds to his construction of the *diving takes life* narrative by introducing his view on venturing beyond that which has already been achieved...

And the way that he did it, in the sensible, a sensible way, it wasn't a, it wasn't an accident, it was, it was working at an extreme depth, doing something no one ever has done before.

In the historical account, *exploration* strengthened Don Shirley's *diving gives life* narrative. Now the same construction of *exploration* is employed to strengthen the "good way" death. In Don Shirley's personal narrative of *diving takes life*, death amidst exploration is

narrated as not an “accident”, but rather that dying while exploring and “doing something no one ever has done before” is the “sensible” way to die.

Throughout this narrative of David Shaw’s death, it is at no point narrated as that emotional event which shatters lives and identities. As with Don Shirley’s historical narrative, what we have here is the interwoven dynamic between the diving gives life element of exploration and the possibility of accompanying fatality. Then he strengthens the “*good way*” *death* by again using the connection between him and David Shaw...

As far as doing the dive and not coming back, he would be fine with it, in the same way I would be...

This narrative of a cave diver not returning from an extreme dive is somehow noble, like soldiers dying in a battle, and can be found within the text written about Sheck Exley as well. In *Caverns Measureless to Man*, the editor of Exley’s autobiography wrote the following on the back blurb...

This book may terrify you, but it will unquestionably fascinate you, and in the end Sheck Exley will convince you that his death came to him in the midst of the incredible intense joy he took in diving into the depths of the earth.
(Exley, 1994).

Again we find within this abstract the evidence for that dance between life and death that seems to be implicit within the culture of technical cave diving. Returning to Don Shirley, he then brings a mystical narrative into this noble account of death in the darkness...

...as it was, my handset went, and maybe there is a reason for that, once that has gone there is nothing I could do about it...

This is the only account in Don Shirley’s narrative of David Shaw’s death that hints at what I call destiny. This to me correlates with the ‘omen’ like statement within Don Shirley’s

historical account. Inevitably these accounts show us that things do go wrong in technical diving, yet Don Shirley still does this kind of diving, even with this knowledge.

Don Shirley seems to be informed by a personal experience of cave diving as that explorative dangerous sport that could at some stage claim the life of those passionately following it. You will recall that even within Don Shirley's historical account of his own diving experience we found that constant integration between life in a cave and the death or difficulty that could follow. This narrative of cave diving informs an alternative narrative of death. It is the narrative of death being noble, almost sensible. Don Shirley constructs this "good way" death through the nobility of dying while exploring, the good way of the noble soldier dying serving possibly a greater purpose, "something no one ever has done before". At this point in our exploration of Don Shirley's historical and current narratives, living on the edge within the cave diving culture constructs an alternative narrative on death.

What I find interesting is that at no stage is there a sense of denial nor ignorance regarding the implicit danger and possibility of death within this culture of exploration, but rather that the drive to follow this explorative summons somehow includes a different narrative of death within the experiences of its adamant followers.

Don Shirley's personal narrative of dying the "good way" is certainly different from the death narrative informed by society, this alternative narrative on death and danger was also found in the phenomenological study done by Willig (2008) with extreme sport participants. How would Don Shirley's construction of the meaning of David Shaw's death have been different if he was informed by the dominant societal narrative of death when narrating this event? Would it then have been at all possible for him to follow this explorative summons?

Level 4, Cavern 2: the Survival of Don Shirley

An unknown time lapse took place between this narrated account of David Shaw's death in the darkness and the formal interview. At the onset of the formal interview, Gordon Hiles immediately constructs the interview sequentially...

All-right Don, a, take me through the sequence of the events yesterday from when you entered the water.

The following sequence of events is the story of the dive. Don Shirley's response immediately takes it back earlier, once again establishing a connection between him and David Shaw...

Um, Well as far as it goes, a, well just before that is probably nicer though, um, you know Dave and I were both kitting up on the surface, and um yes, Dave is about to go, and we shook hands and said I'll see you, see you in twenty minutes I think it was, and then he went,...

This was the final verbal and physical contact between these two divers. Note the detail and methodical nature in Don Shirley's narrative from here onwards. He introduces the dive by making a reference to the beauty of the environment...

...we came down, and then on. Quiet, pretty, the line is just stretching of as it goes...

Confined dark and isolated environments are usually constructed by society as frightening. This alternative narrative of water-filled caves being beautiful and "Quiet" is strengthening the constructed "love affair" that Don Shirley has with the cave environment.

The next passage changed the journey. Don Shirley was on his way down towards David Shaw...

...when I passed one 50 I could see that a, a, I would have expected bubbles by then, you know, Dave would have been on his way up, and he could have, he would have been venting off as he came, and there was nothing!

The absence of bubbles at this point signified a deviation from the dive plan. It feels as if Don Shirley glides over it into his role of back-up diver...

So I was thinking well ok, it looks like we're on the way all the way, and see the idea was then that if Dave wasn't there I would carry on down to Dave, um...

The scenario sketched maintains a controlled narrative; there is no feel of a dire situation. It is possible that Don Shirley's past experiences of adversity and death and the interwoven construction of *competency* evidenced in his historical account, is informing his telling of the present situation. A plan is still in place, the methodical nature of the technical dive and narrative alike are still in place. It is a problem that can and will be dealt with. Through my exploration of the text, it seems possible that Don Shirley is employing the conscientious structured nature that he is familiar with, in dealing with this event that in reality is rather chaotic. Society's dominant narrative of death is informed by an out of control construction, yet one possible dominant narrative of society in chaotic contexts of death is to regain control through structure. It certainly seems possible that Don Shirley is employing the structure required by technical cave diving in assisting his personal construction of David Shaw's death. At this point in the dive, Don Shirley sees the cave torch of David Shaw down in the depths...

I could see a light in the distance like a lone star, like a real lone star in the dark, in the night...

Cave diving is a pastime taking place in an environment of total darkness. This comment was made right before the statement that David Shaw's position in the water, according to the beam of his torch, is roughly where Don Shirley expected him to be. This narrated metaphor possibly tells two different tales of meaning. Is David Shaw's visible torch beam

being where it is expected to be an event that speaks of hope? Or does this mean that someone is beyond reach? This is the metaphor of a diver, on his own in the dark at an extreme depth. Considering the isolation in the metaphorical expression, I believe that Don Shirley is attempting to narrate the distance between himself and David Shaw.

David Shaw's light in the distance is almost poetic. Again the traumatic nature of death is not narrated. Through this metaphor Don Shirley buffers the dominant societal narrative of death as that dark gloomy sad event.

At this point, Don Shirley's account of the dive in Bushman's Hole increases in complexity, with him introducing the scenario of his own equipment failure and accompanying difficulties...

...and I passed 'anonymous'²⁰ two 20 line, see the tag, and a, looking at my po2, I heard a click, just this little (click sound), and um, something is on its way, and then a few little metres on I heard a "doef", like a dull thud where things implode, a sound I'm familiar with, and um, my electronics were blown, smashed right across the front of the screen. Now without my electronics there is nothing I can do, I can't, I can't let the machine drive itself, so I can drive it manually...

Don Shirley's gear malfunction happened somewhere past 220 metres of water depth. The actual implosion of his electronics is caused by a combination of structural malfunction and water pressure. 220 Metres is an extreme depth of water. Still he maintains his methodical telling, the same narrative of step by step method as found within deep technical cave diving. It is this extreme methodical precision which brings you back after every deep cave dive.

Considering the narrative ontology, Don Shirley is constantly narrating his experience with a 'reader' in mind (Cortazzi, 1993; Riessman, 1993). Through the text it appears that Don Shirley has a constant awareness of the different narratives informing the non-technical

²⁰ Anonymous: The names of the other involved individuals have been omitted from the transcript.

cave diver's experience of death, darkness within caves and the possible frightening combination of these. Don Shirley is now telling us about such a death, yet he has to construct this narrative in a way that will allow his cave culture to maintain its embodied value of *diving gives life* within his identity (Larner, 1998). This coherency between his identity as a cave diver and his cave diving culture is implicit, as they co-construct one another over time (Bruner, 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Later within the transcript, Don Shirley narrates his ascent as problem free all the way to 46 metres depth. At this level in the cave, Don Shirley thickens his own problem narrative with accounts of his problematic physiological symptoms occurring as a result of equipment failure and exceeding the planned depth. Don's description of "spinning" and "being in a washing machine" is in sharp contrast to the executed precision we have encountered throughout the narrative. At this point Don Shirley introduces a very strong construction of gaining control over these 'out of control' situations. We find here the introduction of an instinctive drive to survive, a construction which then comes forward throughout the remainder of his account of the 8th of January. This *choosing to live* is evidenced throughout the text...

...what do I need to do now, that I need to survive with...; ...just saying what do I need to do now to live; ...everything I did made me heave, and after a while there is nothing left there, to come out, but, um, you still carried on...; ...there was never ever an option in my mind that I wouldn't come out, I did not have that, it wasn't, it wasn't on my option list, it was I will survive I will come out...; It was a case of saying of a, of I now need to breath, and now I need to exhale, and everything was at that level, it was, there was no, nothing automatic about anything; and ...um, but my, my time span was just that, that second, and surviving that second....

These constructions of *choosing to live*, evidenced through multiple accounts of Don Shirley deciding to survive his crisis in the water, informs both the *diving gives life* and *diving takes life* narratives. On the one hand, choosing to live tells us that technical cave diving can create such dire situations (*diving takes life*) that this attitude is required to make

it out alive. On the other hand, this attitude speaks of a fight for life, of not giving up (*diving gives life*). In reading through various accounts of Sheck Exley's dives,²¹ this *choosing to live* seems to inform his extreme level of cave diving as well.

I became curious about the narration of adversity within this culture, especially when we consider society's dominant narrative of comfort. In reading the narrative of Don Shirley, the lack of physiological comfort within a dive like that at Bushman's Hole, even in the event of everything going according to plan, is rather evident, and directly opposes the physiological comfort accumulation that in my mind, society at large predicates. This defiance of physiological comfort is not only evident within the narrative of the incident within Bushman's Hole, but also evident throughout Don Shirley's historical narrative of his diving progression: "lost in zero visibility", "very poor visibility, and strong current", and "the sea was so rough and the current strong, no one else could follow".

This *choosing to live* seems to inform the cave diving culture, the same culture which has informed Don Shirley's multitude of experiences in his embodied relationship with his diving history. This account of fighting for survival allowed yet another interpretation into the cave diving culture, there is a difference between the construction of the *good death* in technical cave diving and *wanting to die*. Don Shirley's account of the incident at Bushman's Hole, his historical narratives of constant adversity and regaining control, and the various diving challenges overcome by Sheck Exley within his autobiography inform us of a culture that will fight for life, yet this culture narrates death within the darkness of cave systems as *the good death*.

Throughout his ascent and the ordeal in this process, Don Shirley returns to David Shaw twice more before the end of his personal ordeal. This constant shift between his accounts of personal survival and the accounts of supporting David Shaw, flows throughout the text right up to Don Shirley's mentioning of being supported by other divers.

²¹ Sheck Exley's entire diving career can be experienced in reading his autobiography – *Caverns Measureless to Man*.

In the following account he constructs the finality of David Shaw's death...

...said you know, Dave's, Dave's not coming back, you know and don't go past me, cause the plan originally was to pick up cylinders. So I stopped everyone from going any deeper than what they would have done, there was just no point, um...

What is interesting is that this statement chronologically referred to a much earlier time in the dive. Thus, the narrated account of David Shaw's death gradually moves from him being in trouble to not returning at all. However, Don Shirley communicated to the other back-up divers earlier on that they should not venture any deeper, as there is no need, David Shaw is not returning.

The omitted account of the other back-up divers meeting Don Shirley at approximate 120 metres depth is the only account throughout this narrative that was placed later than the actual occurrence...

'Anonymous' had actually met me earlier, I did actually earlier meet other divers as well...

This passage in the narrative precedes Don Shirley's statement about David Shaw not returning. This account of the finality of David Shaw's death is the very last account that Don Shirley gives about David Shaw, until prompted by the interviewer Gordon Hiles. Did he break his precise sequencing in an attempt to gradually construct David Shaw's non return? This narrative possibly points to a process of gradually coming to terms with the reality of David Shaw's loss through the gradual construction of David Shaw being in trouble toward definitively not returning.

The intensity of Don Shirley's condition is also gradually increasing. The narrative moves from a very precise telling of the execution of skills, toward a telling of the fight for survival at regular intervals amidst difficulty. Throughout the text we also find the construction of *competency*. This *competency* is evidenced through various accounts of his

mastery of diving; Don Shirley dives at a level where he responds automatically through pre-learned and conditioned skills to his own needs in the water...

The only thing that was automatic if you can call it that, was my pre-learned skills. You know the familiarity with my gear, the fact that I could actually find things by touch...

Don Shirley furthers this level of expertise through describing his account towards the end of the dive, where he relayed information about his physiological changes and discomforts as the dive progresses. The knowledge on how to share certain possible problems in a dive like this is imperative when the ground support is readying possible emergency procedures for when you would exit the water. On one account Don Shirley actually countermanded the doctor's request...

...by that stage um, the doc was sending down messages saying I should come out and go to the chamber, had already sent down some um, some potions and lotions to stop me being sick, but it did not stay down for more than about thirty seconds. So that didn't have much hold, but I wrote back saying I didn't really wanna come out yet, I wanted to get my 6 minute stop out of the way at least.

Reflecting on this account with the doctor, I thought that one should be careful in constructing this as Don Shirley challenging what the doctor thought would be in his best interest. I believe the reason for narrating this account into the larger narrative is more reflective of Don Shirley's understanding of the diving process, and the subsequent experience that he has gained over time. What I do find interesting is that like the *exploration* construction, *competency* informs both the *diving takes life* and the *diving gives life* narratives.

From here Don Shirley talks us through his initial treatment in the recompression chamber. The account is rather factual, with some references to his experience of the temperature, his experience of the injury he sustained in his leg, and various references to vertigo and balance disturbances. The meaning of his injuries is significantly emphasised when Don

Shirley makes the comment, “maybe I’ll have a nice early retirement.” This is said as a concluding comment by which Don Shirley brings the worst case scenario of his injuries forward.

Thus at this stage, Don Shirley is experiencing his injuries as potentially able to end his career as a diving professional. This construction of retirement is interesting: is Don Shirley in some way telling us that he had a good career in cave diving, and that it would be acceptable to retire? Gordon Hiles, who conducted the interview, responds to this comment, “Not what’s desired but anyway”, upon which Don Shirley replies, “The early retirement is.” Is Don Shirley constructing the possible end of his career as a well deserved rest, an opportunity to explore other interests in life? There is a distinct difference between Don Shirley’s notion of *the early retirement* and, let’s say, a disability pension. Don Shirley’s personal account of *the early retirement* as a result of injury, could be a way to construct the possible repercussions of this event in such a way that his narrative of *diving gives life* may continue.

In addition to this, I also wonder how it would have affected his construction of David Shaw’s death as “*the good way*”, if he gave a rich description of the possible negative implications of his own injuries after the experience. Should he have done this, the text would have been significantly paradoxical in its narration. It appears that we again have an example within the narration that aims at ‘protecting’ the cave diving culture. Adversity, loss and difficulty are continually narrated in such a way that Don Shirley’s historical “love affair” with caves and the cave diving lifestyle maintains its credibility.

Don Shirley constructs early retirement as desirable, is this allowing him to find meaning within his own injuries? This is the only account within the text that explores possible long-term implications for Don Shirley as a result of this dive.

At this point I believe it is time for us to explore the narratives informing the construction of Don Shirley’s experience. Don Shirley introduced the narrative of *diving takes life*,

which seems to have an alternative construction of the dominant societal narrative on death; death in a cave being the “*good way*”, opposing the dominant narrative of the sad and unfavourable nature of death as constructed by society. Don Shirley constructs the caves as a beautiful place where death through exploration of these caves is narrated as “sensible”.

The methodical nature of Don Shirley’s narrative could well be informed by the methodical precision embedded within the cave diving culture. Don Shirley’s historical narrative of diving gives life, and his various constructions in the current narrative of competency, choosing to live and the “sensible” death allows for him to maintain the positive construction of cave diving in spite of death, danger and injury. When the positive nature of the *diving gives life* narrative is challenged by the implication of long-term injuries, Don Shirley protects it through the narration of the *early retirement*.

Nowhere throughout this account of his ordeal and fight for survival do we find the notion that maybe this dive should not have happened, nor do we find any negative view of the sport at large. Thus, Don Shirley constructed death and ‘accident’ within a cave in a way that protects his identity as a cave diver situated within his experience of cave diving, cave diving being “a way of life”. At the same time the narrative of the current incident and the historical narrative of Don Shirley continuously co-constructs technical cave diving as a way of life that is filled with beauty and explorative passion.

Level 4, Cavern 3: David Shaw’s Resting Place

After Don Shirley’s discussion of his ordeal, David Shaw is reintroduced by Gordon Hiles...

Um, If, if, taking an educated guess as to what Dave had achieved, up to what point?

This question takes us to David Shaw’s accomplishment in terms of the initial goal driving this exploration, namely the recovery of a previous diver’s body who have not returned

from Bushman's Hole either. The irony in this section of the narrative is very powerful. We have Don Shirley requesting and appealing for David Shaw's body to remain where it is, in the cave, and as evidence for this appeal he constructed a connection between them, while indicating continuously that they would both want it that way. Yet David Shaw's reason for this exploration is the recovery of another diver. In this section of his narrative, Don Shirley is talking about what David Shaw possibly has achieved in terms of recovering the body from the bottom of Bushman's Hole.

The detail and precision is maintained throughout this speculative account of David Shaw's achievement...

I was looking down and seeing that there's no bubbles, he was away from the shot line, or what looked like, you know, being away from the shot line, single light, not moving...

Don Shirley continues after this with his various assumptive scenarios as to what could have happened. Throughout this account there is no mention of David Shaw's loss; Don Shirley is strictly retelling his belief about David Shaw's possible step by step progress until the final position that we can expect to find him in. Gordon Hiles then introduces an interesting dynamic; he asks Don Shirley whether he would be interested in retrieving the camera that David Shaw had on his head, with the understanding that it could shed light on what actually took place at the bottom.

Don Shirley responds very briefly to this change of events, confirming that with the retrieval of the camera the true nature of David Shaw's death would be revealed, and adding that the police investigation would be simplified in this regard. Don Shirley almost seems annoyed by this question. Almost as if to say that his account on David Shaw's possible position is sufficient, that the actual footage will not change the implications of this event. In reading and re-reading this text, I wondered whether Don Shirley is not afraid that in the event of recovering the camera, they will also retrieve David Shaw's body. The

very first statement after his response on retrieving the camera is possible evidence of this...

...what we'll have to debate on that is, Dave, Dave's expressed wish, which he did several times, is to stay where he was...

Level 4, (back to) Cavern 1: the Death of David Shaw

With this Don Shirley brings us back to the loss of a dive partner. Don Shirley's method of narrative changes slightly, it is more loosely constructed; it lacks the execution with which the foregoing narrative has been told. The importance for Don Shirley to leave David Shaw as he was is evidenced through the same two arguments as in the pre-formal interview...

Dave's expressed wish, which he did several times, is to stay where he was... and ...to my mind I'd like to leave Dave where he is as he is, as he wanted, exactly the way I'd like to be if a similar thing happened to me, and um, I think that would be a fitting end to the whole story.

With this Don Shirley brings David Shaw's wife into the event, giving us a glimpse into his possible view of relationships and their status...

...is to stay where he was, so um, I think that unless his wife countermanded that, um, I would prefer to leave Dave as he is where he is a, end of story.

This made me think that Don Shirley's appeal is extending to David Shaw's wife; somehow he seems to think that she could possibly want David Shaw's body to be retrieved. Is Don Shirley showing us that he is aware that his *diving takes life* narrative, informed by a "fitting end" for a cave diver is different from that which a wife might want? I also thought of the hierarchy of decision-making on David Shaw's body retrieval; Don Shirley seems to tell us that apart from David's wife, no one should question David's wish to stay where he was. He is almost saying that, given the nature of the explorative pastime

and his connection to David, Don Shirley's wish of leaving David Shaw at the bottom of Bushman's Hole should not be questioned. He furthers his appeal in phrasing it as a "fitting end."

At this point, Gordon Hiles asks Don Shirley to repeat a certain section of the event...

Ok, um, just to repeat that last bit about um, from where you explain about the grave robbers, that your wish would be?

This was in reference to Don Shirley narrating his concern that some divers would actually attempt to steal the equipment David Shaw had on him. Once again Don Shirley strengthens his narrative of appeal...

Ye, um, Ye, if um, excuse me (cough), Dave's wish was to um to stay, if he'd die diving, to stay where he was, and um, I feel that Dave should stay where he is, um, I'm sure he would like the camera to come back so that we could see what were the last moments and the circumstance of it, but I think we should leave his body where it is, unless that's countermanded by his wife, but, Dave really wanted to stay there, exactly the same as I would like to stay, if something happened to me in a deep, deep cave, then it's only right to stay there, and you know, I don't see a cave as a, a nasty place, or anything like that, and neither did Dave. A cave is a place where we lived, you know, where life happened, and um, that would be a fitted end, just like the Egyptian's tomb, and a, that's the way Dave would see it. That's the way I would see it as well. He should stay in his tomb, which is a fitting end, you know.

Don Shirley strengthens his appeal to let David Shaw be in his cave grave with this *fitting end* construction. There seems to be meaning in dying in a cave, this event is almost romantic. Is this a story of dying in the way you lived, with the conviction and passion for life in caves? Egyptian tombs were used to honour the dead, to let them live in the afterlife with the same quality with which they lived during their earthy existence. Through Don Shirley's construction of a cave as '*not a nasty place*', he challenges a dominant societal narrative of dark enclosed water-filled spaces as nasty. It is almost as if he perceives

society's view on a cave such as Bushman's Hole, and the diving of it to be one of death and intimidation.

Throughout this account, Don Shirley is using his dive partner relationship with David Shaw, and their similar views to construct affirmation for what Shaw is asking. Don Shirley seems set on narrating David Shaw's death as if to ask us to trust his judgement on this matter; we should leave David Shaw at the bottom of Bushman's Hole. Throughout the total narrative, David Shaw's death has not once been constructed as untimely, as horrific or even as a loss. There is no sense of traumatic bereavement in this narration. It is all focused on the "*fitting end*", yes David Shaw is dead, but it was a good death in a good place. Don Shirley's account of David Shaw's death is not the dominant narrative of death as one would expect, but rather filled with grace and honour.

Don Shirley's narrative of *diving takes life* is constructed through this "*fitting end*", which also strengthens his appeal for David Shaw's body to be left at the bottom of Bushman's Hole. Bushman's Hole being that place where "*life happened*", the "*Egyptian's tomb*", the resting place fitting for a king of cave diving.

I cannot help but see the paradox within this narrative of death at Bushman's Hole. My dominant interpretation of the meaning within this text is Don Shirley's implementation of a good death in a good place to construct the death of David Shaw; therefore it would only be fitting to let him stay in his tomb. Don Shirley's narrative of death requires various constructions countermanding what he believes society would want, namely the recovery of David Shaw's body. Not only is he constructing an alternative narrative of death, but he is aware of it. The paradox then is that his appeal for David Shaw to be left in Bushman's Hole is the result of David Shaw dying in an attempt to recover the body of another diver who have been in his tomb for over 10 years. Is this maybe why his narration to let David Shaw be is so strong?

I journeyed this exploration in an attempt to answer a question...

How did a deep technical cave diver make sense, through narrative, of a cave diving experience and accompanying fatality?

He constructs death in a cave as a noble and fitting end. He affirms this by expressing that he too would prefer being left in a cave should he die diving it. The accounts on his past diving experiences and the current account on the incident that claimed the life of his dive partner alike, include the narrative of *diving takes life*. Yet his narrative of *diving takes life* is not informed by gloom, sadness and trauma in dark sinister water filled caves. Instead his narrative of *diving takes life* is informed by death taking place in a beautiful environment that is passionately explored by him. He understands this death as being noble, and “a good way”, a “sensible way” of dying. It is not an accident. With this death being constructed rather different from society’s dominant view on death, his unique narrative allows for his identity situated within cave diving to continue in spite of the loss. This identity of truly living within cave systems was written over time through the various experiences as narrated by him. Subsequently his past experience of *diving gives life* survives the incident at Bushman’s Hole.

Not only is this life within cave diving informing the current narrative of the incident at Bushman’s Hole, but the *good way death* in a beautiful place allows the continuation of the past caving life to continue into Don Shirley’s future. Don Shirley’s personal narrative on death in a cave is informed by nobility, the good way and the fitting end. This he possibly employed in making sense of one diver dying in an attempt to recover another diver who has already been dead for over 10 years. Society might have looked upon the death of David Shaw as senseless, yet Don Shirley managed to construct the narrative of *the fitting end for a diver summoned by the darkness*.

Don Shirley constructed the narratives of *diving gives life* and *diving takes life*. From the *diving takes life* narrative, it appears that he is informed by a very different experience on

death than that of the dominant societal narrative of death. In returning to the phenomenological study by Willig (2008), there seems to be, as with the mountaineering and skydiving participants, a very strong relationship between the challenge and the possibility of suffering (which includes the possibility of death), that informs the extreme sport participant's culture. From Willig's study, the implicit focus on health in society, which dictates the avoidance of participation in activities which have a real potential for being harmful, is regularly challenged by extreme sport participation. From Don Shirley's narrative on the events that took place at Bushman's Hole, it is clear that he did not have the desire to die, however, that he is informed by a different view on death should it happen, is implicit. It is a view on death that allows for life, at a very passionate level, to have death as a dive partner. It is that life giving environment that we find diving the dead metal of sunken ships. Is it possible that the fullness of life could increase when we arrive at that cavern where we can embrace some beauty in death? It certainly seems true for Don Shirley.

To conclude the paradox of the 8th of January 2005 at Bushman's Hole: the other back-up divers involved in the dive, eventually pulled out the line running from the surface to the bottom of the hole. It just so happened that David Shaw got himself and the body he attempted to recover tied up to that line. Subsequently, both bodies were recovered after the interview with Don Shirley by sheer accident.

David Shaw did what he set out to do, Don Shirley's appeal to let him be in his cave tomb was not honoured. Don Shirley is still summoned by the darkness.

This brings us to the end of our exploration of Level 4 in our research cave. When moving into Level 5, the implication of Don Shirley's narratives in conjunction with the knowledge I attained from Level 2, the literature level, will guide me into a concluding construction of the answer that this exploration set out to achieve.

I included the following addition to Level 4. It is the original response from Don Shirley upon his reading of the final draft of the analysis. This allowed me to evaluate and take certain corrective measures before the final Level 4 exploration was constructed.

Don Shirley's response upon journeying Level 4

Thank you for the heads up Level 4 of thesis. You draw some very interesting things from the interview; I was pretty much out of it at that time. I don't disagree with anything, in fact found it very, very illuminating. I can't wait to read the rest.

Would love to sit down over a glass of wine and discuss a lot of things. The whole document brought a lot of things back to me. I have not seen the Tape since the day it was made. Though I have retold the story many times.

Very well done.

As far as errors, there are not really any... events happened somewhere past 240, you say past 220, maybe I do on the tape (it was the last tag on the line) but hey, 240 is past 220 and it's only "2 bar" different, and as a percentage that is not much at that depth.

At one time you talk about me stopping others from going any further, and saying "Dave is not coming back", which is what I did do, logically it was fact at that time, but there was still a thought that he was alive.

There is more to that, which I know that I cannot add in as this is a discussion on that particular tape. I did not want others to go deeper as there was nothing that could be done by them, Dave was not at that time coming back, as there were no signs of him.

I did not want cylinders removed; as if Dave did come back they may be needed. Also, and most importantly, I did not want people to put themselves at risk by going deeper for no reason, at that depth the divers were already on their own personal limits. I was still very much in control at that time; I was still "caring for my team."

All the best

Thanks again

Don

LEVEL 5

ENDING OF DARKNESS

I have come to the end of this explorative journey through the caves of narrative inquiry into death in the darkness of Bushman's Hole. As I descend into Level 5, I think it time that I reflect upon the various levels I have explored. Through this reflection it is imperative that you as my fellow divers construct your own meaning from the mapping of the various caverns and channels we have dived through, bearing in mind that the following reflection is merely my interpretation of the literature text and narratives of Don Shirley's experience.

I initiated my exploration of Level 2 by diving through some of the complexities that underline deep technical cave diving, hoping to construct the uniqueness of context within which cave diving in the specific takes place. From this exploration of deep technical cave diving, the extreme, complex and dangerous nature of this pastime is evident.

From there I moved through the text on death, with the focus predominantly on the bereavement process and dealing with loss. I discovered that this bereavement process is influenced by a multitude of factors, with the bereaved's existential views, perception of their own strengths within this context of adversity, and their relationship with the lost one being significant in the sense making process (Murphy et al., 2003). I discussed the complexities of the guilt process within loss, exploring the bereaved's implementation of various constructs, such as different rationalisations and views on the afterlife, within this process of dealing with grief (Ayalon et al., 2007). Deepening my journey through the exploration of bereavement rituals, I discovered the importance of these in the transition of the relationship held with the deceased and the redefining of one's identity after loss (Castle & Phillips, 2003).

Ultimately, this exploration of death and bereavement took me through the individual's personal narratives regarding the deceased's life and death, and the importance of these in

the process of constructing meaning within the caves of loss (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Neimeyer, 1999).

I then descended into Level 3, where I explored the method of meaning construction within the narrations of our lived experiences. Don Shirley had to construct the death of his dive partner and his personal experience within the cave of Bushman's Hole in a way that allowed for his identity as a cave diver to continue, while at the same time making sense of the death of David Shaw (Lawler, 2002; White & Epston, 1990). Don Shirley's narratives were informed by his very unique culture of cave diving. This cave diving culture, through Don Shirley's various cave diving experiences taking place over time, played a major role in the construction of his narrative of cave diving in general, and the events that took place on the 8th of January 2005 in the specific.

The importance of this narrative research exploration is then grounded within the nature of narratives and the experiences informing them. For even though the exploration of literature and death provided us with insight into various themes and constructs on this topic, the specific context and culture of cave diving has not been researched with regards to the loss experience, subsequently justifying an exploration into Don Shirley's unique narratives on the death of David Shaw. It is exactly this unique interpretive foundation of the narrative methodology which allowed me to construct this research narrative on death in a cave.

Reflecting on my exploration of the narrative methodology, the integration of past lived experiences and predicted future experiences into the narration of the current experience, where the narrator draws from the lived culture throughout this experiential journey, seems to be central to the meaning making process (Bruner, 2004; Larner, 1998). Don Shirley was making sense of the event, he draws from his dominant lived culture in narrating this sense making, in the same way my exploration is a process of sense making of the narrative I received (Lawler, 2002). This exploration was aimed at interpreting Don Shirley's unique meanings: sense making shaped within his history and culture of cave diving. These

personal narratives, as constructed by Don Shirley, is implicit within the construction of continuity of one's identity, thus bringing the past view of the self and the future continuation of that self together in the narrative of the current experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

As narrators of our own lives, we only have access to our narrated accounts of the events that dictate our existence; every time we narrate an experience we reconstruct our experience in such a way that it allows our past and future to coherently exist within the current moment (White & Epston, 1990). For this reason, we selectively 'write' certain events and culturally informed views into our narratives; in the same way we omit certain events from these narratives, all in an attempt to make sense of life that often challenges the flow of our existence and subsequent identity. Don Shirley's loss and fight for survival in an environment that he knows so well, presented him with exactly this feat, having to narrate a story of loss within his passion for the darkness required him to 'write' that day at Bushman's Hole in one way, by no means the only way; and the way that he did it was his way of making sense of David Shaw not returning from the darkness.

The Narrative methodology allows for the uniqueness of any sense making experience to be acknowledged (Lawler, 2002), and extends further by qualifying the uniqueness of the interpretation of that experience within the field of psychological research. Considering the uniqueness of the event that lead to David Shaw's death, the Narrative methodology allowed for an open-mindedness toward the interpretations that could guide the future death research within the field of technical cave diving. In this regard the Narrative methodology served this research exploration to full extent. I have to bear in mind though, that the lack of general objective conclusions, possible with a more modernistic or quantitative approach, would have allowed the results to empirically extend into future studies on death within the extreme sport domain. The question I had to ask though, could I have been true to the nature of a bereavement experience within cave diving without the unique interpretive basis of the Narrative methodology?

I then descended into Level 4, where the process of interpreting Don Shirley's sense making of the loss of his dive partner commenced. Reflecting on Don Shirley's narration, the major narratives informing his life as a cave diver seems to hold various alternatives to the dominant narratives informing the lives of those not venturing into water-filled caves. Historically, Don Shirley's experiences were grounded in two main narratives, one being the narrative of *diving gives life*, the other the narrative of *diving takes life*.

From the text Don Shirley's *diving gives life* narrative was constructed through various of his experiences, he narrated caves as "*a place where life happened*", calling this relationship between him and the caves a "*love affair*". The act of cave diving allowing his life to happen "*on the highest plateau*". This passion for diving caves is emphasised through the numerous accounts of *exploration*, where Don Shirley is "*diving dives routinely that others only dream about.*" Furthermore, when problems do occur, Don Shirley's ability to control and manage the event is constructed through various accounts of *competency* and experience. His construction of *competency* also guides us through a great deal of his experienced problems on his account of David Shaw's death.

Now we know that Don Shirley's narrative of *diving gives life* has been constructed over time (Bruner, 2004; Larner, 1998), informed by his various experiences of exploration, living life on "the highest plateau", the "love affair" he has with the caving environment and his competency allowing him to master difficult situations that occurred while "doing dives routinely that others only dream about". Over time, through the embodied experience of his cave diving history, which is also informed by his cave diving culture, this narrative of diving gives life integrated into his identity (Corey, 2005; White & Epston, 1990). At this point I would like to consider the research question again...

How did a deep technical cave diver make sense, through narrative, of a cave diving experience and accompanying fatality?

Considering the literature on death and bereavement, the importance of the continuation of Don Shirley's identity from the past into the future is implicit in the process of dealing with loss (Gamino & Sewell, 2004). Bearing this in mind, his narrative of *diving gives life* was challenged in both his historical account and the current account of the loss of other divers. Clearly his experience of diving includes the narrative of *diving takes life*. In order for the *diving takes life* narrative to **not** deconstruct the *diving gives life* narrative, the latter needs to be constructed in such a manner as to allow both these narratives to continue into the future (Fivush, 1998; Lawler, 2002).

Don Shirley ultimately then made sense of his cave diving experience of Bushman's Hole and the loss of David Shaw by constructing his *diving takes life* narrative through various accounts of the nobility of death in a cave. Where dying in a cave is "*not an accident*", nor is it a death in a "*nasty place*". Rather, he equates death in a cave and the possibility of remaining there as similar to an "*Egyptian's Tomb*", where there is honour in being left behind in a cave; this then also being a clear account of how symbolism in bereavement allows for the process of making sense and identity continuity (Castle & Phillips, 2003).

Through his experienced history of cave diving, this integration of life and death narratives enables Don Shirley to continue cave diving. From Don Shirley's construction of the *diving takes life* narrative, he clearly challenges the dominant societal view of avoidance of activities that could cause harm or suffering, a notion supported by Willig (2008). From Don Shirley's narrative construction of *diving takes life*, it would appear that it is exactly this view on death in caves which allows him to actively engage in cave diving, and subsequently allowing him an experience of living life on the highest plateau. From Willig's study on extreme sport participation, this embrace of suffering as an integral part of the challenge generates experiences of "liberation" (p.699) and the restoration of "psychological balance" (p.700). For Don Shirley a cave is "*a place where life happened.*" Don Shirley is not looking for death in caves; after all, he fought minute by minute for his survival in Bushman's Hole. And as far as David Shaw goes, he narrated death as "*not a*

nice thing". However, his view on death does allow for him to experience David Shaw's death as a "*fitting end*", for what seems to be living life at a very passionate level.

In the end, Don Shirley made sense of David Shaw's death through his very unique construction of *diving takes life*, ultimately allowing both the *diving takes life* and *diving gives life* narratives to continue into his cave diving future. Considering Don Shirley's construction of the events of Bushman's Hole and the loss of David Shaw, I believe his professional career as a deep technical cave diver will remain within the summons of the darkness.

With narratives being historically situated, this research exploration would have benefited significantly from long-term follow-up with Don Shirley, which would have given us insight into the possible similarities and/or differences in his sense making process of David Shaw's death. Considering the fact that David Shaw's body was recovered, I am curious to explore Don Shirley's later narration of the "*fitting end*" within the "*Egyptian's tomb*." It is clear that there are various narratives which could be further explored within this tale of two divers in Bushman's Hole.

Other than initiating a further narrative inquiry into this specific event, the research possibilities within the cave diving culture is bottomless. This research journey only explored the culture of deep technical cave diving within the context of death and loss. Deep technical cave divers have many narratives to tell, narratives that could inform society about numerous alternatives on the dominant views of sport participation and its implications. The point being, other than the exploration of water-filled caves being a fascinating field for research, the nature of this extreme pastime might just provide the narrative therapist with numerous alternative narratives and metaphors which can challenge the dominant narratives of those in search of light within their own darkness.

Where-to from here... I believe that exploration into the various adventure and extreme sport driven minds within our societies will open-up a magnitude of alternative narratives

through all domains of meaning and sense making. I certainly believe that exploring the emotional motive behind technical deep cave diving will shed light on the various emotional and mental drivers informing extreme sport and adventure participation. I further believe that there could emerge a very unique relationship between the aforementioned emotional motive and the death sense making experience within extreme contexts.

In the end, this is the question I have to ask: How would life be different if we embrace death and life as an integrated whole, where the one allows the other to be part of our existence... ..like the dead metal of the wrecks generating explorative life on the floor of the ocean.

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Appendix A

NARRATIVE TRANSCRIPT: Interview on the 9th of January 2005

Interviewee and Technical Diver: Don Shirley (D) / Interviewer: Gordon Hiles (G)

<p>Narrative</p> <p>Transcript of Don Shirley's interview with Gordon Hiles on the 9th of January 2005.</p> <p>Please Note:</p> <p>1) The bold numbers in the transcript is in cross reference to Technical Diving Concepts.</p> <p>2) The names of other involved individuals have been substituted with 'anonymous'.</p>	<p>Technical Diving Concepts</p> <p>Goal: Explanation of the technical diving terminology and constructs within each listed event: For an in-depth understanding of the discussed constructs I recommend the reading of Tom Mount's Technical Diver Encyclopaedia (1998), and Allan Kayle's Safe Diving – A Medical Handbook for Scuba Divers (1995).</p>
<p>D But um, as far as Dave goes, I would leave him there, it's exactly what I would want, you know, so, I, these things, you know, Dave and I, we, we discussed it even here, the fact that if something happens we'd like to stay wherever it is (1), as we are. Um, it's like a battle, you know, um, you know soldiers die in battle, it's a bit of a noble thing, even though a battle is not a nice thing, but you know, it's a good way. And the way that he did it, in the sensible, a sensible way, it wasn't a, it wasn't an accident, it was, it was working at an extreme depth (2), doing something no one ever has done before. As far as doing the dive and not coming back, he would be fine with it, in the same way I would be, you know if he wasn't um, if he wasn't there, when I got there, I would go down, as it was, my handset went (3), and maybe there is a reason for that, once that has gone there is nothing I could do about it.</p>	<p>1) Staying wherever it is refers to the body of a diver remaining within the cave where he or she died.</p> <p>2) Working at an extreme depth of water can cause severe build-up of Carbon Dioxide. This is a result of the resistance of the water against movement due to the pressure at depth. This in turn causes shallow quick breathing, the typical experience when hyperventilating. The use of rebreather dive equipment at depth requires precise breathing control to avoid the build-up of Carbon Dioxide. The depth that David Shaw worked in was over 25 bars of pressure; breathing and movement within this pressurised context would have been extremely demanding.</p> <p>3) Don Shirley's mention of the handset is in reference to the computer that he needs for operating his rebreather. The handset that went is describing the malfunction of this computer. Rebreathers are very complex breathing units,</p>

		<p>where the gas that the diver exhales, is cleaned – meaning the Carbon Dioxide is removed from the exhaled gas, and clean Oxygen is added. Rebreathers allows for extended dive time as a result of this recirculation. This process of recirculation requires the diver to manage the level of Oxygen in the Rebreather unit; the computer that Don Shirley mentioned is in part responsible for the management of these Oxygen levels. Not managing the levels of Oxygen and other gasses within the rebreather can lead to toxic levels of these gasses being inhaled. This malfunction prevented Don Shirley to go any deeper, and he was subsequently unable to assist David Shaw.</p>
G	<p><i>All-right Don, a, take me through the sequence of the events yesterday from when you entered the water.</i></p>	
D	<p>Um, well as far as it goes, a, well just before that is probably nicer though, um, you know Dave and I were both kitting-up (4) on the surface, and um yes, Dave is about to go, and we shook hands and said I'll see you, see you in twenty minutes I think it was (5). And then he went, and then I waited for my count down, and then I went, perfect, everything was exactly right. Straight down the line (6) past 'anonymous', we came down, and then on. Quiet, pretty, the line is just stretching off as it goes, straight down, um, started the main descent quite happily, um, and you know, just, just, came reasonably fast down, trimming for buoyancy (7), just to make sure everything is not too fast, and um.</p>	<p>4) This kitting-up refers to the process of gear assembly before the commencement of the dive.</p> <p>5) When doing technical cave diving, the support divers run on a very tight time schedule. The 20 minute difference would have allowed David Shaw to finish his task below, and upon ascending Don Shirley would have met him in the water at a predetermined depth. Don Shirley's role was deep support to David Shaw, who aimed at executing the actual recovery of the previous diver's body.</p> <p>6) This line refers to a vertical line running from the surface to the bottom of the hole. These lines, called shot-lines, are used to attach redundancy cylinders to. It also acts as a reference for the divers while descending and ascending. Bushman's Hole as a cave system looks like an inverted funnel, with a large open area at depth, and a small channel at the top. This shot line gave Don Shirley and David Shaw a point of reference in the open funnel section of the cave.</p> <p>7) Trimming for buoyancy is the process of adjusting your level in the water. This requires the use of a buoyancy compensator, which forms part of</p>

<p>When I passed one fifty (8), I could see that a, a, I would have expected bubbles by then, you know, Dave would have been on his way up, and he could have, he would have been venting off as he came (9), and there was nothing!</p> <p>So I was thinking well ok, it looks like we're on the way all the way, and see the idea was then that if Dave wasn't there I would carry on down to Dave um, if I could see him coming up and he wasn't at the target depth then, that's fine I'd wait for it, if he wasn't there the aim was then to go down to him and see if I could do anything for him, if he was tangled up or something like that. Um, I could see a light in the distance like a lone star, like a real lone star in the dark, in the night..., and um, it was off the shot-line, roughly where I'd expect it to be, as far as where 'anonymous' was.</p> <p>And I passed 'anonymous' two twenty line (10), see the tag, and a, looking at my po2, I heard a click, just this little (<i>makes a click sound</i>), and um, something is on its way, and then a few little metres on I heard a "doef", like a dull thud where things implode, a sound I'm familiar with (<i>said with a laugh in his voice tone</i>), and um, my electronics were blown, smashed right across the front of the screen. Now without my electronics there is nothing I can do, I can't, I can't let the machine drive itself, so I can drive it manually. Um, I must have still been descending I hadn't stopped my descent, and I had a little bit of O2 and I can see what's going on this side (<i>points to right arm</i>) um, and I had a little bit of O2 (11), but, um, I pushed too much. So I had a little bit, I had two bars, which is actually not a good idea at those sort of depths. So I flushed, couldn't manage to get it down, so I went on to open circuit (12). Carrying a couple of cylinders on my side yeah, and um, I ascended. And at the same time I was trying to work out</p>	<p>the rebreather unit. The buoyancy compensator can be inflated and deflated according to the requirements of the diver's level control. With correct adjustment, a diver can be neutrally buoyant, thus floating effortless at a specific depth in the water. Don Shirley's use of the concept "trimming for buoyancy", referred to slowing down his descent by means of inflating the device.</p> <p>8) This one fifty is in reference to depth: A 150 metres of water depth.</p> <p>9) Venting of the rebreather is the release of pressure inside the rebreather machine; this is required when ascending as a means of constantly achieving the same pressure inside the rebreather and the pressure of the water. What is important here, is that Don Shirley would have seen the bubbles coming up through the water in the event of David Shaw releasing this pressure. Thus the lack of bubbles coming toward Don Shirley from the bottom indicated that David Shaw is not on his way yet. Considering the tight schedules mentioned earlier, this meant that David Shaw was probably in need of assistance.</p> <p>10) This was a depth record held by a previous diver. The two twenty refers to the depth – 220 metres. This means Don Shirley was 220 metres deep when his handset imploded. This implosion was the result of the pressure at that depth. This was the malfunction that caused Don Shirley to quit his descent to David Shaw. This reference to his equipment malfunction is the same reference discussed under point 3. The po2 is the abbreviated description for 'partial pressure of Oxygen' (discussed under point 11).</p> <p>11) This little bit of O2 is in actual fact a reference to the pressure of the Oxygen that Don Shirley is breathing as being too high. Oxygen becomes toxic at pressures beyond 2 bars. Signs and symptoms of Oxygen toxicity can occur at pressures of 2 bars over prolonged periods of breathing it. It is important to note that Don Shirley was not breathing pure Oxygen, the 2 bars was the partial pressure of the Oxygen as part of a mixed gas combination.</p> <p>12) Open Circuit Scuba is the use of standard cylinders and regulators,</p>
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<p>what my schedule was cause um I've gone past my depth I was actually aiming at. And um, so I worked out a new schedule with my slates (13), compared it to what the computer was saying, and did a calculation as to what I would do.</p> <p>And just slowly then come up, until I got to one 50, still no bubbles from the bottom, so Dave wasn't on his way back, but in my mind I still had the thought that, you know Dave, cause he wouldn't know of the bubbles, that Dave has just over stayed and could do something, but he would be pretty much stuffed up as far as his decompression later would go.</p> <p>So, with that, I just took one cylinder, which is what I, there was originally two there for me, by then I left and took one for me (14).</p> <p>(15) Dumped my empty cylinder, cause I actually drained one cylinder completely, um, well not absolutely cause I used a little bit for the rebreather, while I was driving that a. I went back onto the loop, drive it manually, um, and then I started to come up. And um, everything was working fine. The um computer was beautiful, I have got a nice new coloured VR 3 and um, that stands out beautifully. Um, I got up to um a, 46 metres, and then the world started to spin.</p> <p>There was on the roof, or I was on the roof and um, it's just like being in a washing machine, I could, I knew that something was going wrong, feel it, like you, like you know you gonna faint or something like that. So I came (16) off the loop and went onto the open circuit and it was just then like something was spinning me, and um, I was completely out of it, and I was just running on instinct.</p>	<p>where the scuba unit does not re-circulate the breathable air. The time you are able to spend underwater is much less. The Open Circuit Scuba units are much simpler though. Don Shirley carried cylinders coupled to normal open circuit demand valves (the piece of equipment that gives you air every time you inhale), these cylinders are predominantly carried for emergency situations.</p> <p>13) With Don Shirley exceeding his depth, he had to recalculate his mandatory decompression stops. The slates are dive schedules which can aid him in this regard. The computer Don Shirley is talking about here is a different computer from the one that imploded. This computer has the function of calculating decompression stops, and is not involved in driving the rebreather.</p> <p>14) These are cylinders attached onto the shot line. These cylinders act as redundancy gas supply in emergencies.</p> <p>15) This section is quite complicated, and would require an in-depth understanding of technical diving equipment. Ultimately, what it comes down to is that Don Shirley went back onto the rebreather, now manually operating what previously would have been managed by the computer. This is quite a dangerous process in terms of managing the partial pressures of the gas, and in terms of the potential build-up of Carbon Dioxide.</p> <p>The VR3 is the computer that managed Don Shirley's decompression schedule. Don Shirley claims that it worked well and was very visible – thus easy to read.</p> <p>The spinning at 46 meters depth is Don Shirley experiencing vertigo. This could have been the result of various factors. Possibly an injury relating to the pressure change from the deeper to the shallower depth.</p> <p>16) Don Shirley moved back onto the open circuit. The manual driving of the rebreather is difficult under normal circumstances, when experiencing vertigo it will be almost impossible. The open circuit is much easier to</p>
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<p>(17) And um, that area, that's the only part of the cave that we actually got a roof and a line on the roof, whereas the rest of the time you are actually on a straight line going down. And it's a quite complicated area because its got um this couple of drums there and there's a big coil of rope which we'd not manage to sort out all week.</p> <p>When you get tangled up in that you are pretty a, a you gonna stay there. So I was in this washing machine thinking I don't want to get caught up in this rope. But I couldn't think, so, what I did was come from there and it's like a, it's like kiddies playing on a washing line, you know they hold the line with their hands like this, and then they twist and hold it forward, and then they twist and hold it backwards. So that's exactly how it felt on this line. All I was concentrating on was grabbing the rope with one hand, and then finding it again with the other. Once I've done that then I move my hand to somewhere else. But I couldn't distinguish direction; I didn't know which was left or right. Um, I wasn't, I didn't even know which was up or down, um, but I knew that the drum was at the one end of the line and the coil was at the other. So I've found myself a compass.</p> <p>So I've found myself a compass, I was back at the drum. And then thought, but I wanted to go the other way, and I went the other way and then eventually I came round as one would call it that, (18) at 35 metres, now my computer was then telling me I needed to be at 46, um. I only had one cylinder with me, one breathing cylinder, um, the machine I couldn't control because I was not, not responsive enough to actually interpret anything. So I decided I'd stay on the open circuit, I'll go back, past all this nightmare of stuff and down to where the cylinders were. At 46, catch some more cylinders and then come back with those, finishing the decompression past that point and then coming up to the 50%. So I went back into the a, that roof area again, a, hand over hand, trying to stick in the same direction, um, down to the 46, picked-up the cylinders.</p>	<p>breathe from, and subsequently simplified the task loading that he had to deal with. Vertigo causes a spinning feeling, accompanied by a complete loss of reference. Even up and down in the water is difficult to distinguish.</p> <p>17) This section of the cave is where the big open area at depth meets the small channel going to the surface, think of the funnel I explained. At this section in the cave there are a couple of drums, with a coil of entangled rope. Don Shirley had to negotiate his way past this. This would have been severely difficult while experiencing vertigo and a complete loss of directional sense.</p> <p>The line to the surface was at the coiled end. The line to the bottom came up somewhere in between the drums and the coiled end. Thus Don Shirley had to use this line between the drums and the coiled end to gain access to the surface line.</p> <p>18) When Don Shirley eventually made his way to the line extending to the surface, his computer told him he had to be at 46 meters depth. At that point his depth was 35 metres. This means that in his process of vertigo he has broken the physiological decompression stop ceiling (discussed in-depth within level 2 of the research exploration). This then required Don Shirley to move back past the coiled rope to go deeper on the line. At this point Don Shirley did not have enough air in his cylinder for that depth, which required him to go back down the line to pick up more cylinders containing a mixture breathable at that depth.</p> <p>Bearing mind that the composition of gas in every cylinder was specific for a certain depth. Don Shirley could not breathe from any cylinder he had access to, he had to go and get the specific cylinders for the depth he was at.</p> <p>After retrieving the cylinders at 46 meters, Don Shirley had enough air to do his decompression stops as required by the computer. Don Shirley makes reference to "coming up to the 50%," which means that after his decompression stops in the area of the cave roof, he will eventually come up to the depth where the mixture he will be breathing will contain 50% Oxygen. The higher the percentage of Oxygen, the less the decompression</p>
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<p>And it was um, survival thing, you know you're thinking, what do I need to do now, that I need to survive with, and it was thoughts just like that, you just saying what do I need to do now to live. There wasn't an option, there was never ever an option in my mind that I wouldn't come out, I did not have that, it wasn't it wasn't on my option list, it was I will survive I will come out, and um.</p> <p>So I went there and um, at that stage I was throwing-up as well, so, um, everything I did made me heave, and after a while there is nothing left there, to come out, but, um, you still carried on (19).</p> <p>And then I um, picked-up cylinders, collected what I thought I needed, still not wanna take everything, cause there's still sort of Dave in my background, um, so I picked up what I needed (20). And then um, come back along that roof section, a little bit more bright now but not still, you know still spinning, and um, then I worked my way along hand by hand, and I didn't even try and do big hand movements, I just went like that (<i>showing hands</i>), like that along the rope, it's the only thing I could do, to actually know that I was going in one direction.</p> <p>It was a case of saying of a, of I now need to breathe, and now I need to exhale, and everything was at that level, it was, there was no, nothing automatic about anything. The only thing that was automatic if you can call it that, was my pre-learned skills. You know the familiarity with my gear, the fact that I could actually find things by touch, cause obviously I was concentrating on the line, I, if I needed a regulator I could find the regulator, I could pull out the appropriate part of the regulator, and breathe it, and, find the pressure gauge so I can actually see what's going on (21).</p> <p>(22) And move along there and right about that time 'anonymous' came along and I wrote the slate, um, basically saying I'm having a bad time and um, have got vertigo, and that I'm vomiting um, and a um, you know, got problems, and he went off with that slate, 'anonymous' had actually met me earlier.</p>	<p>stop time. This is the result of the Oxygen flushing the Nitrogen out of his body. Nitrogen intake under pressure is the main reason for doing decompression stops.</p> <p>19) Don Shirley's high levels of Oxygen, in combination with the vertigo (and possibly other factors as well), made him nauseous throughout the remainder of the dive. The difficulty in being nauseous in the water is that you need to keep breathing from the scuba equipment. Hence the regulator needs to stay in your mouth, even while you are vomiting.</p> <p>20) Another reference to the cylinders on the shot line that contained breathable gas for specific depths. These cylinders would have been taken there by other back-up divers prior to the main dive event. The whole exploration would have required numerous divers and equipment handlers.</p> <p>21) Don Shirley is talking about his familiarity with his gear and his pre-learned skills. During cave diving training, a great deal of attention is afforded to the ability of the diver to locate the appropriate equipment by touch. This skill relates to the possibility of torch failure, which would then require the diver to manage his equipment and his way along the line in total darkness.</p> <p>Don Shirley would be required to find the regulator, synonymous with demand valve, because he would be changing regulators every time he needed to breathe a different gas mixture. The regulators are attached to the cylinders containing the different mixtures for the different depths. Another reason might be that with some of the throwing-up, the regulator might actually have dislodged from his mouth. A pressure gauge gives the diver an actual indication of the volume of air still remaining in the cylinder.</p> <p>22) The divers that came down to Don Shirley fulfil a back-up and communication function. Thus, because of the depth Don Shirley has been to, he cannot ascend straight to the surface (mandatory decompression stops). The divers coming down to him, have not been at an extreme depth, thus they are able to run messages between him and the surface at fairly regular intervals.</p>
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<p>I did actually earlier meet other divers as well, and said you know, Dave's, Dave's not coming back, you know and don't go past me, cause the plan originally was to pick up cylinders (23) . So I stopped everyone from going any deeper than what they would have done, there was just no point, um. And um, 'anonymous' met me I think at a hundred and 24 on the way up, but that stage I was fine, my electronics were blown, but you know, everything was going ok.</p> <p>But now, now it was a different story, now I was, surviving, and um, the way I worked it was I just said ok I got um, what's the next thing I must do. You know, breathe in breathe out, check gauge, and um, then I break it down into tasks, I've got to get from here to the 50%'s. On the computer I turned the light on as I needed to look at it, I needed to change gasses as well, turn the gasses on, cause I was in open circuit mode, gasses all programmed into the computer. But through all this I had to say right, ok now I got to get the computer to run properly, because it is telling me the only deco that I know, cause there is nothing else, I couldn't look at my slate, you know I just, I just couldn't function at that level to look at anything more than just a straight, straight one time shot information (24). And um, so I concentrated on what the computer was telling me, and how long I need to be at a place, and, just literally holding on to the line to make sure I didn't go off in any other direction.</p> <p>The guys were great, um, come in, one after the other, um, for what was a long time, um, time just went, I didn't understand time, and the concept of time, the guys were saying they were in the water for some 5 hours on a shuttle run to me (25), um, but my, my time span was just that, that second, and surviving that second, without it being a long, a long drawn out thing. And I knew how long I had to stay, but I'm just thinking lumps of time, it's like I've got to be here, um, for fifty minutes , or I've got to be there for a hundred minutes, and things like that (26).</p>	<p>23) The back-up divers that Don Shirley encountered at depth would have picked-up some of the redundant cylinders. These divers typically fulfil a gear handling and emergency rescue function.</p> <p>24) Don Shirley had to turn the computer's light on every time he needed to know how long to stay at a given depth of decompression. Dive computers are designed to turn their own lights off; in an attempt to preserve battery power. Don Shirley also had a slate with information about his required decompression stops, the problem is that he would have needed to read and visually sift through a great deal of numbers to find the right information, which, considering his condition, could easily have resulted in mistakes. The computer only gives you the information you need at the time that you look at it, thus filtering out all unnecessary numbers that could cause confusion. The nausea and vertigo is clearly taking its toll on Don Shirley at this point in time. One has to remember that this entire dive took longer than 13 hours.</p> <p>25) The shuttle run refers to divers coming down and meeting up with Don Shirley at regular intervals. These divers were supplying him with medicine from the doctor on the surface, and fluids to keep him hydrated.</p> <p>26) These times, "fifty minutes" and a "hundred minutes" are decompression stop times for different depths. The whole idea is that the diver keeps as still as possible at the required depth for the required time. The less energy a diver uses while decompressing the more effective the out-gassing of the Nitrogen through the respiratory system. While spending this time on decompression stops, keeping as still as possible, divers tend to get very cold.</p>
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	<p>Um, so when I got to the 50's and I changed cylinders, I still had one of my high gasses on at that stage, and um, I actually took the wrong, wrong regulator, and then 'anonymous' took it away from me, and I saw that it was four eighty (27), you know that's an impossible gas to breathe at those sort of depths, and, so, went onto the 50%'s, I was quite loaded with cylinders at that stage and I asked them to take them away because, what I was trying to do is get my legs straight. Because you need to decompress horizontally, um, couple of reasons, one for the blood flow, and the other one for the actual ease of breathing. Because the regulator is designed to work with you in a horizontal position.</p> <p>Under normal circumstance you can breathe in any position, but, bear in mind I've been in the water a long time, and I was actually now hanging vertically, there's nothing I could do about it, and I asked the guys about three or four times to bring my legs up, so I could drop some more argon in my suit (28) and get my legs straight, but every time they lift my legs up, I, the world was starting to spin, and, the one stage from 9 metres I found myself at 11 again, and I think I was upside down, but again, that didn't mean anything to me, you know up and or down, was, was not a thing you know, even the fact that the bubbles going up, you just don't know which way is up, your sense of balance is completely, completely gone.</p> <p>U, and then I worked my way up, did the stops, and then I got to the Oxygen, and um, I was going to go onto the Oxygen, but it was hanging at eight metres and 'anonymous' stopped me from going onto that (29), um, and then I moved up to the tree, and um the tree has got quite old regulators on it, which would normally breathe quite fine if you're um, if you are well. Um, but by this stage I've been in the water some time, I couldn't even tell you how long now, um, but I think my dive was somewhere in the region of eleven hours, but um, it could have been ...</p>	<p>27) Four eighty refers to the combination of Oxygen and Helium within the mixture. The gas within a four eighty Oxygen Helium combination (4% Oxygen / 80 % Helium / 16% Nitrogen) cannot sustain life at a shallow depth. The amount of Oxygen in the mixture can only sustain life at great pressure, thus at great depth.</p> <p>28) Argon is a gas that technical divers use to inflate their drysuits with. A drysuit, as opposed to a wetsuit, has no water between the suit and the diver. Because of this the suit needs to be pressurised to prevent injury. Divers prefer Argon as a gas to inflate drysuits; Argon has great insulation properties and subsequently protects the diver better against heat loss. Don Shirley was attempting to use the Argon in his drysuit to float his legs horizontally. The horizontal position in diving allows for the greatest ease of breathing, this being the result of the diver's lungs and the regulator being at the same depth when in a horizontal position.</p> <p>29) The mixture that Don Shirley attempted to breathe at 8 meters is pure Oxygen. After the dive Don Shirley has done, pure Oxygen at a depth of 8 meters would have been toxic. The idea was that he should breathe pure Oxygen at a depth of 6 meters. The pure Oxygen was not in cylinders in the water, but rather in very large cylinders outside the water, with a long extended hose, taking the Oxygen to the diver in the water. This setup usually caters for various divers at once, and is referred to as "the tree."</p>
G	13 Hours.	

D	Mmm?	
G	<i>13 Hours.</i>	
D	<p>Thirteen, I haven't even looked at my computer yet. And um, I couldn't breathe. Um, I didn't have the energy, I breathed with my diaphragm which is another reason I was sick every time I did something, and um, my, um, everything was sore, and even tried to use my lungs. Didn't work, so, when I was on these, bitch of a regulator, (30) had to purge it to breathe, but um, they were connected to big cylinders out, so, but that complicated life little bit, cause I was holding onto the rope with one hand cause that was my centre of the world, and the regulator with the other, purging the button to breathe, so again it was a case of breathe in breathe out, um, purge to breathe, write slates to people to say, you know, send me a real regulator with some oxygen.</p> <p>Um, took a little while, but we actually got one there (<i>unclear</i>), and that breathed fine. Lovely Scubapro X650, (<i>looking at camera as if doing sales pitch</i>) (31), and um, I can breathe that well, and I stayed on that and by that stage um, the doc was sending down messages saying I should come out and go to the chamber (32). Had already sent down some um, some potions and lotions to stop me being sick, but it did not stay down for more than about thirty seconds. So that didn't have much hold, but I wrote back saying I didn't really wanna come out yet, I wanted to get my 6 minute stop out of the way at least. Um, and as it was that actually fitted in quite nicely because then we pumped other gasses for the chamber, um, and um, eventually the 6 minute stop finished, and then I was on the, the last stop which was a hundred minutes at 3.</p> <p>I needed something to keep me hydrated, cause I was throwing up so much, um, and I needed and as soon as I came to three I felt pains in my leg, so I knew there was a potential problem, not a bad pain, but you know just a, just a pain, that sort of deep, when it's 'Bends' (33), that sort of deep</p>	<p>30) Purging a regulator refers to controlling the regulator supply of gas by hand. Under normal circumstance the regulator will supply breathable gas when the diver inhales.</p> <p>31) Scubapro X650 is a specific regulator from the Scubapro brand.</p> <p>32) Recompression chambers, Don Shirley's referenced it just as "chamber", are enclosed cylindrical chambers that can be pressurised. By placing a diver experiencing decompression sickness within this chamber, the pressurisation can be controlled to generate a gradual release of the Nitrogen from the body.</p> <p>33) 'Bends' is a common term for decompression sickness. The three that Don Shirley came to is a depth reference: 3 meters deep. Don Shirley's leg pain was typically indicative of the onset of decompression sickness. This was a result of his extended time in the water, and the accompanying difficulty he had with completing his decompression stops and the vertigo. The benefit of the chamber is that a medical practitioner can be in the</p>

<p>pains, so I wrote on my slate I've got a potential problem with my leg.</p> <p>It might have been cause I hadn't moved it, (<i>mumbles</i>) so I was keeping everyone informed of my various ups and downs along my way. The guys were good, they keep on coming, giving me stuff, moved my hand to places I needed to move it to, and finding things that I needed to find, I'd write them a letter, so they'd say, ok, you know they'd go off and get it and come back. Took drinks, and I'd drink the water as well, you know straight water from the hole, cause something to throw up, because retching is not so nice, um and then from three metres, um, you know, said ok, I knew, I've had enough (<i>unclear</i>), and I thought, well now it's off to the chamber. And my leg was hurting and as we started to come up they'd said alright, chamber's ready. And I actually, and 'anonymous' was there, and I started unclipping stuff, you know we took computers off while were still on three meters, anything that could get in the way as far as coming out (34), disconnected the direct feeds.</p> <p>Um, so I was still, I was still with it, so I could still do things, I wasn't mentally out of it, just um, just this washing machine thing. That's why I stay here (35), cause if I stand up now I fall over, um, and um, as I came up I knew there was a problem with my leg, I could feel it, it got much worse, and um, they literally dragged me out of the water, I unclipped my buckles, the machine came off quite quickly, as far as I know, and the um, the suit was off. They disconnected all the internal connections, and things like that, I disconnected some, and um, took, took the suit off, put me on the stretcher and I was up the mountain. And I believe the whole thing took 22 minutes to get me from out the water up to the top which is actually an amazingly quick way, and, had my eyes closed, it's a natural thing. They put the drip in, and um, was up the mountain, I knew where I was by the bumps and a, moving over the ledges (36), and things like that. But had my eyes closed because it's actually much more comfortable to have my eyes closed cause I did not like the world spinning. And um, I got up to the top and they just man handled me straight out of that stretcher onto another one and into the chamber.</p>	<p>chamber with you, administering treatment and monitoring progress. The chamber also uses different gasses other than air, in an attempt to minimise Nitrogen intake.</p> <p>34) The time wasted upon surfacing and getting re-pressurised in the chamber can be lethal. Hence the divers were already helping Don Shirley to disassemble his gear while still in the water. This just eases the process of efficient gear disassembly upon exiting, allowing for quicker access to medical treatment within the recompression chamber.</p> <p>35) Don Shirley is lying down in bed at the time of the interview. This s a result of the injuries he sustained while doing the dive. This is also the reason for his broken dialogue. From the video footage, Don Shirley actually appeared to fall asleep at one stage, this is predominantly as a result of his exhaustion after the dive.</p> <p>36) Don Shirley was hauled over rocks up the mountain. The stretcher was actually moved with pulleys and ropes, for carrying a man up that mountain from the water to the chamber will take excessive manpower and time. It does however state the case that the environment around Bushman's Hole, as the cave itself, is also unforgiving in the event of an accident.</p>
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	<p>(37) We've got everything in place for this dive, we couldn't actually have had it any better, the police, the chamber's there, the task force, got the doctor there, and um, just went straight into the chamber, comix 30 table. Discussed all that with 'anonymous', one of the commercial guys, so everything was in place, the gasses were mixed, the only extra gas that we needed to mix, which was while I was still in the water was gas for an air-break, but it was actually not an air-break, it was um, a helium, a Heliox break. Cause otherwise it would go off, um, it would be terrible, and a, in the chamber they shot me straight down to thirty metres, on a 50/50 Heliox mix, and um, the pain in my leg was only there for another 2 or 3 minutes, then it had gone. Straight onto the 50/50, and did all the various stops and things.... <i>(Change of microphone)</i></p>	<p>37) The chamber was prepared while Don Shirley was still in the water. While in the chamber, the amount of Oxygen that the diver inhales is rather large, therefore air breaks are added every 20 to 25 minutes in an attempt to lessen the toxic effect and accompanying nausea that continuous breathing of high levels of Oxygen causes. Air breaks use consist of pressurised breathing air. The problem is that air contains 79% Nitrogen, which caused the decompression sickness in the first place. Subsequently air breaks are substituted with Heliox breaks, a mixture of a high percentage Helium and a low percentage Oxygen. Don Shirley's reference to being shot down to 30 meters on a 50/50 Heliox mix, means that they pressurised him to an equivalent water depth of 30 meters, and had him breathing a mixture of 50% Helium and 50% Oxygen. In a chamber the drop in pressure is very gradual. This first treatment of Don Shirley in the chamber took over 7 hours.</p>
G	<p><i>OK Don, just take me, a, take us through the, where you go into the chamber and they took you down to 30 meters.</i></p>	
D	<p>Ye , um, they put me in the chamber on a stretcher, and moved me across onto the bed in the chamber, is not exactly high luxury, but anything would've done at that stage, and then they took me down to 30 metres. And um, after about 5 minutes, my leg felt a lot better, and the pain had gone, um, I was still very light headed, I still am, and um we used a comix 30 table, which is 30 meters on 50/50, 50% Oxygen and 50% Helium, um, it's a commercial table, 'anonymous', I discussed it with 'anonymous' before um, we came here, he actually worked out all the gas requirements for the chamber, and um, 'anonymous' was the attending doctor, he had done a lot of work with 'anonymous', so we've actually did the best treatment we could possibly do, under, you know, in the circumstance. And I think, if there, if there was any damage that we have limited it as</p> <p>much as we possibly could without treatment, so I was in the chamber for 7 hours, breathing, breathing this mixture then eventually coming up onto</p>	

<p>Oxygen, and um, finishing off.</p> <p>The whole treatment with Oxygen, um, (38) um, it was quite funny cause I was, I think I was 30, 34 degrees, my body temperature, was quite cool when I went into the chamber and I was in my a, my full diving thinsulate and undergarments, the whole thing, inside a sleeping bag with a space blanket on, and the doctor was a sat there in shorts sweating and I was actually just trying to warm up inside, it maybe took me about 2 hours to get warm again. And then I started to slowly take the layers off until I was down just to my thermals, and um, with that, we eventually got to the end. I was getting bit sick of Oxygen by the time, we got there having been in the water for thirteen hours and then in the chamber for another 7, that's 20 hours breathing mixes other than air. I started to suffer the first signs of central nervous system toxicity, um, that was surprising enough vomiting (<i>laughing</i>), and so again I started to be ill on that, we extended the air-breaks and shortened the Oxygen time. So eventually I came out, but, which I was a, although I had no pains, I still couldn't stand, unaided, and um, I still can't at the moment.</p> <p>I'm going back at 12 o clock today for another treatment, and I'd probably end up with about four treatments, hopefully to a, clear any damage that there is in a, in the area. And then um, I'll be able to walk again, I'm determined to a, well I can walk, it's just that a, I can't move my head, my head feels like one of those noddy dog things in the car, you know you just flick the head and it goes up and down like this. If I do that, if I move my head, it's like it just carries on going, it juggles backwards and forwards, and even on the bed if I push down the bed is uneven, everything wobbles, and I become very disorientated and basically fall over. So to walk, as you saw me when I came back is, is quite a difficult thing, I can do it unaided but it's just a matter of getting my balance, if we don't clear this then I'm sure I'll find some way of actually getting my balance and um, sorting things out.</p> <p>Maybe I'll have a nice early retirement...</p>	<p>38) Don Shirley had various layers of thermal protection in the chamber, even though the temperature inside the chamber was 30-34 degrees Celsius. This was as a result of the extended time in the water. Another reason for Don Shirley's inability to maintain his core temperature is the dehydration because of all the vomiting. His body eventually warmed up throughout the chamber treatment, with Don Shirley gradually taking off the layers of thermal protection. Don Shirley speaks about "central nervous system toxicity", which is the result of the extended breathing of Oxygen. This condition is marked by vomiting, and convulsions similar to epileptic fits.</p>
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G	<i>Not what's desired but anyway.</i>	
D	The early retirement is.	
G	<i>Um, if, taking an educated guess as to what Dave had achieved, up to what point?</i>	
D	<p>Yeah, um, just, I was (<i>mumbling, unclear</i>), looking down and seeing that there's no bubbles, he was away from the shot line, or what looked like, you know, being away from the shot line. Single light, not moving, um, now, from his description I would say that was where the body was, so, we've got a couple of scenarios. I think that he's over exerted himself, I think he's probably got the body at least half way up, in the body bag, um, and um, he, the next thing would do is bring or cut the gear off, and then bring the bag up. Now I would imagine he is somewhere at that stage. Now, um, there is no bubbles and that's the curious thing, because if he had passed out and the mouthpiece fallen out, I would have seen bubbles, cause he would have let some bubbles out from the, thing. And I didn't see one, um, so I think, that he maybe had a problem, shut the mouthpiece down, and went to the, um, other cylinders, and maybe passed out in between shutting the mouthpiece down and going to the other cylinders. So I'd imagine that if you went down there now you'd find Dave, um, kneeling beside 'anonymous', (39) um, you know, with the cover half way up, and just sort of hanging in the water, like this, he'd be looking forward he'd be looking at 'anonymous', and he probably, he probably have come down, yeah. I think he'll be laying flat because he'll still have buoyancy on his wings, so I imagine that's how you'll find Dave, camera on his head so probably, his head's probably pulled down slightly, um, but a, that's how he'll be in that final position.</p>	<p>39) The 'anonymous' within this event refers to the body of the diver that they were attempting to recover. Don Shirley is going through various possible assumptions on what could have gone wrong with David Shaw. In this process he is speculating as to which position David Shaw might have ended up in.</p>

G	<p><i>Um, if there was a chance of retrieving the camera would you be interested to see what it's recorded, would that shed.. would that shed</i></p>	
D	<p><i>(Interrupting Gordon):</i> Then we'll really know; Yeah, I think the camera, the camera would actually tell us exactly what happened to Dave, and also, you'll see, I mean, from the police side, they'd wanna know what he um, was wearing, how he was wearing and all of this, so if we had the camera we'd actually be able to see that, um. I know that 'anonymous' is talking about buying a ROV, (40) in potentially a couple of month's time there will be a trip here with a ROV to do the same job.</p> <p>What we'll have to debate on that is, Dave, Dave's expressed wish, which he did several times, is to stay where he was, so um, I think that unless his wife countermanded that, um, I would prefer to leave Dave as he is where he is a, end of story. Um, the only thing that would be sad would be future treasure hunters, um, you know Dave sat there in a lot of gear, um, which actually wouldn't deteriorate too much, um , I'd say he's probably sat down there in two hundred thousand Rands worth of equipment, it's very different from 'anonymous' twin tens (41).</p> <p>So, it would be a shame in the future for grave robbers to come (<i>mumbles</i>), you know it's pretty um, it's not a place where many people are gonna go, but a yeah, to my mind I'd like to leave Dave where he is as he is, as he wanted, exactly the way I'd like to be if a similar thing happened to me. And um, I think that would be a fitting end to the whole story. Where I, I think Dave would actually like the video back, so that some people could see the final moments.</p>	<p>40) ROV: Remote Operated Vehicle. This is a robot like submarine which could have gone down and retrieved the camera that was on David Shaw's head.</p> <p>41) The diver whose body David Shaw tried to recover had very basic technical diving gear still attached to him. David Shaw was at the bottom with gear worth two hundred thousand Rand. Grave robbers could be tempted to retrieve this gear. Don Shirley does not seem to be concerned about this; David Shaw after all was down at a depth that only a very select view divers in the world has ever returned from.</p>
G	<p><i>Ok ,um, just to repeat that last bit about um, from where you explain about the grave robbers, that your wish would be.</i></p>	

D	<p>Yeah, um, yeah, if um, (<i>pause</i>), excuse me (<i>cough</i>), Dave's wish was to um to stay, if he'd die diving, to stay where he was, and um. I feel that Dave should stay where he is, um, I'm sure he would like the camera to come back so that we could see what were the last moments and the circumstance of it But I think we should leave his body where it is, unless that's countermanded by his wife, but, Dave really wanted to stay there, exactly the same as I would like to stay, if something happened to me in a deep, deep cave, then it's only right to stay there. And you know, I don't see a cave as a, a nasty place, or anything like that, and neither did Dave. A cave is a place where we lived, you know, where life happened, and um, that would be a fitted end, just like the Egyptian's tomb, and a, that's the way Dave would see it. That's the way I would see it as well. He should stay in his tomb, which is a fitting end, you know.</p>	
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Appendix B

DON SHIRLEY'S DIVING CAREER:

A historical account

(This was received as an email correspondence from Don Shirley)

Diving Career

My interest in diving was sparked when I was 10, when I saw the entrance pool to the show caves in Wookie hole, they had turned on the lights under the water, and you could see the cave roof. I did not dive in caves for many years after this, but diving, all forms of technical diving, cave and rebreathers and teaching diving became a way of life for me.

I joined the army in 1974 and started sports diving. I had joined as an apprentice tradesman in the REME I wanted education and the adventure sports, I was a young “boy soldier”.

In those days when you learned something, you then taught someone else. So I started instructing diving, straight away. These were also the days when to start diving you needed to be an athlete, many pool lengths with weight belts, press ups, breath holding etc and qualifying as a snorkel diver before touching an aqualung!

By the end of my time in the army apprentice college, I had shown myself as a good diver, I was BSAC Advanced/CMAS 3 star, and had may dive trips behind me including an expedition on a hard boat to the Channel Islands – that was pretty major for those days. I had done all the other sports, parachuting, gliding, hill walking. But diving was my passion.

Over the years whenever possible I would dive and go on expeditions, this was all tied in with a hectic career in electronics in the army and family life. I became an army Sub Aqua Diving Supervisor (SADS), primarily so that I could organise my own expeditions. As

time went by I led many expeditions, and was involved in training what must have been 1000's of divers, and showing young soldiers and officers how to organise and lead diving trips. As I moved around the army if there was no army diving club I would start one, or re-energise any club that I came to.

I was involved in civilian diving as well in the early days, this was British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC) related.

My main diving activity involved training other people and wreck diving. In the late 80's, there was a new form of diving evolving, this was the use of mixed gasses; gasses used for diving other than air. This allowed more control of the underwater environment. I pursued these techniques, it was not widely understood in the diving community. I began diving the gasses and became an instructor in their use.

I still harboured the desire to go into caves - kindled in the early days of my childhood. In UK it was difficult to get into cave diving as to gain access to the caves, you had to be a dry caver first, and only then begin to dive in the caves. In the sea wrecks became my passion, they allowed exploration, and I enjoyed the environment. When I did start cave diving, I found that the techniques that I used in the wrecks were very similar to the cave techniques. I loved the environment.

In the early 90's I decided that when I left the army on retirement in '97, I would go into diving related tourism. I began looking at South Africa as a tourist destination. In this process I found that there was little technical diving, so I decided to bring a formal training organisation to South Africa. This I did in the form of the International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers (IANTD), an American based organisation that had started training Technical divers in 1985 – it was through IANTD that I obtained my formal Technical diving qualifications. I obtained the license for the Southern African territories in 1995, started a South Africa company early the following year (with the aid of a friend that had just left the army), finally leaving the army in '97, after 4 trips to South Africa.

Once I had left the army I was able to devote myself fully to diving and began to teach Technical diving. I am at the top of my field and able to teach all levels of diving over the entire range of technical diving, and can teach instructors to train instructors in all levels, formally to 120m. This includes all mixed gasses and both open circuit and rebreather technology, in sea or cave.

During the 33-year diving history I do not have a complete record of my dives. Generally I would do 200 + dives a year. So that gives me approximately 6600 dives. In the past 10 years these dives have averaged over 1 hour under water per dive. With over half of the dives below 40 meters, and approximately half of the dives in cave.

I have dived extensively around UK, spending a lot of time in the wrecks; my favourite area was Scapa Flow and the wrecks of the WW1 German fleet. I have dived in Norway, Jamaica, Southern France, Malta, Gibraltar, Cyprus, the Baltic, the German lakes, the Persian Gulf (Saudi Arabia), oasis and sea, Falkland Islands, Southern Africa, Mozambique. Zimbabwe caves, and Florida and its caves. I may have missed a few places.

My formal qualifications are IANTD Instructor Trainer Trainer, for all levels offered by IANTD. This includes Cave, and Rebreather (Inspiration, Evolution, Halcyon, KISS, Cis Luna, Submatix, Draiger). PADI MSDT and DSAT Instructor. DAN Trainer all levels.

Things that stick in my memory. There are so many over the years, a few:

‘74 First pool dive with an aqualung! A twin hose regulator – not too far dissimilar to my rebreather hoses that I use now!

First sea dive early ‘75, blue water, could not get to the bottom, as the instructor had ear problems, great dive though!

‘76 First remembrance of narcosis, on a 35m scenic dive in the Channel Islands, “Tubular bells” sounded great!

‘78 Lying at 6m harbor in the south of France, on my own, just staying still and watching the small fish! For over an hour, no cares, just with the sea.

In the mid 80’s I was once lost in zero visibility in an underground building at 30m in a German lake. I was using a single 12L cylinder, but had a pony (3L – which was quite modern, for that time) I controlled the event, and came out unscathed.

Late ‘80’s In Jamaica at 40 m, in a shipping lane, effectively on a solo dive, after my dive team had submerged, in very poor visibility, and strong current. I located the wreck that we were diving – an American mine layer (Texas) – not significant in itself, but I was using a sonar “pinger” which enabled me to locate the wreck bows on. It was standing upright on a sand seabed, - a lovely sight.

Early ‘90’s, first dive on trimix, 50m on a Scapa Flow wreck, which I had dived many times before, but this was the first time that I realised how big it was!

‘95 Lead an expedition to the Falkland Islands. Dived in very remote places, that will probably never be dived again.

‘96 Saw Badgat (now Komati springs – where I now live, since ‘97) a disused mine, with a cave system, which I now know like the back of my hand. Diving dives routinely that others only dream about.

‘96 Member of a team that dived the HMS Pheasant, I was already instructing technical diving at the time. It was the first army sports diver expedition, sanctioned to use Trimix on duty. I was the first to see the ship that had sunk in 1914, with the loss of all hands. The last missing British destroyer to be found. Very dark, 84m dive – only myself and my dive partner got to the wreck and the sea was so rough and the current strong, no one else could follow.

‘97 First trip to Bushman’s – 100m dive (to take a member of the CMAS group that I was with) – the end of the trip, had a lovely solo dive – looking up from 50m seeing the clarity and brightness of the 3 holes in the roof at that point.

‘98 Chinhoyi cave Zimbabwe, training at 110m, looking up to see the cave spiraling to the surface, being able to see the trees 50m above the water (it’s very clear). This was meant to be the deepest that the cave went. On later expeditions, I found the direction that goes deeper. Swimming past dug out canoes on the bottom, I went to a planned depth of 120m, and found that it would go even deeper.

The day before Dennis Harding had died on a dive with the Coelacanths. He was a friend of Neal and myself, he was using a Halcyon Rebreather, that same night a Kingfisher was sitting at the waters edge of the cave, we had never seen one there before. A halcyon is the scientific name for the Kingfisher. We dived anyway.

A week after I had returned from Zimbabwe, Brad Craven died in an attempt to get deeper in the cave, he had got to 165m but died on the way back up. He had no line. I went back up to locate the body with my business partner. I dived to 145m looking for the body, ran out of time – with 15 different plans, but located him on the roof in the ascent. We were so far back in the cave that the light from the entrance could only be seen as a dull glow. After marking the body with our line, we returned the next day. The sun was streaming through the hole, the stage cylinders on the lines that we had laid, looked like the charms on a key ring, visibility was stunning, and we brought Brad out like a royal procession in a cathedral filled with light.

Diving is a passion; the caves are a love affair, the cutting edge technology and techniques that I use, make anything that I desire possible. You truly “live” when you dive, to take diving to the way that I do it is to live on the highest plateau!

Appendix C

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS EXAMPLE

This analysis example was constructed from the initial section of the interview between Gordon Hiles (G) and Don Shirley (D).

	Narrative	Landscape Of Action (History)	Landscape Of Meaning (Culture)
	Transcript of Don Shirley's interview with Gordon Hiles on the 9 th of January 2005.	Goal: The goal of this section is to (1) determine the sequence of events in the narrative and (2) to understand how an event links with previous and/or following events.	Goal: The goal of this section is to try and understand what meaning(s) the participant contributes to an event(s) by giving a brief description of how the participant did it, as well as a summary of the 'mini-narratives'.
<p>The following section is the first storyline within Don Shirley's narrative: Don Shirley is talking about the loss of David Shaw. (This is the pre-formal interview account)</p>			
D	But um, as far as Dave goes, I would leave him there, it's exactly what I would want, you know, so, I, these things, you know, Dave and I we, we discussed it even here, the fact that if something happens we'd like to stay wherever it is, as we are. Um, it's like a battle, you know, um, you know soldiers die in battle, it's a bit of a noble thing, even though a battle is not a nice thing, but you know, it's a good way. And the way that he	<p>Event 1: Don Shirley talks about the death of a friend.</p> <p>(This section is not included in the formal interview with Gordon Hiles yet.)</p>	<p>Don Shirley explains his wish in terms of David Shaw's final position, and the similarity in the way they both would have wanted it. There is an implicit appeal from Don Shirley to respect David Shaw's wish as he does. Don Shirley is employing the discussion he had with David Shaw as a means for strengthening his appeal "I, these things, you know, Dave and I we, we discussed it even here, the fact that if something happens we'd like to stay wherever it is, as we are."</p> <p>We find here the nobility of David Shaw's death, "it's like a battle, you know, um, you know soldiers die in battle, it's a bit of a noble thing, even though a battle is not a nice thing, but you know, it's a good way," where Don employs the soldier metaphor to construct David Shaw's death as a noble thing.</p> <p>There is also the appeal to the method of David Shaw's death being more sensible, "it wasn't an accident, it was, it was working at an extreme depth, doing something no one</p>

	<p>did it, in the sensible, a sensible way, it wasn't a, it wasn't an accident, it was, it was working at an extreme depth, doing something no one ever has done before. As far as doing the dive and not coming back, he would be fine with it, in the same way I would be, you know if he wasn't um, if he wasn't there, when I got there, I would go down. As it was, my handset went, and maybe there is a reason for that, once that has gone there is nothing I could do about it.</p>		<p>ever has done before.”</p> <p>We find a possible theme of destiny: “my handset went, and maybe there is a reason for that.”</p> <p><i>Summary:</i></p> <p><i>Narrative of the honourable death (nobility and sensibility).</i></p> <p><i>Narrative of destiny.</i></p> <p><i>Narrative of honouring a wish.</i></p> <p><i>Major Narrative:</i></p> <p><i>Diving takes life.</i></p>
<p>This section is the 2nd storyline within Don Shirley's narrative: Don Shirley is narrating his construction of his own experienced dive. (This is where the formal interview commenced)</p>			
G	<p><i>All-right Don, a, take me through the sequence of the events yesterday from when you entered the water.</i></p>		<p><i>Gordon Hiles directs the interview in a sequential manner.</i></p>
D	<p>Um, Well as far as it goes, a, well just before that is probably nicer though, um, you know Dave and I were both kitting-up on the surface. And um yes, Dave is about to go, and we shook hands and said I'll see you, see you in twenty minutes I think it was, and then he went,</p>	<p>Event 2: Pre-dive preparation and descent: All according to plan.</p>	<p>Don Shirley counters the starting point introduced by Gordon Hiles, and takes it back to the surface, once again establishing the contact between him and David Shaw: “Dave is about to go, and we shook hands and said I'll see you, see you in twenty minutes I think it was.”</p> <p>Don Shirley furthers the factual account in terms of the dive going according to plan. Don Shirley is almost setting a beautiful stage. The use of “quiet, pretty...” constructs certain peacefulness within the environment.</p> <p>Don Shirley is starting his narrative very sequentially, there is a definitive use of detail</p>

	and then I waited for my count down, and then I went, perfect, everything was exactly right. Straight down the line past ‘ anonymous ’, we came down, and then on. Quiet, pretty, the line is just stretching of as it goes, straight down. Um, started the main descent quite happily, um, and you know, just, just, came reasonably fast down, trimming for buoyancy, just to make sure everything is not too fast.		within his account right from the start: ” and then he went, and then I waited for my count down, and then I went” and “came reasonably fast down, trimming for buoyancy just to make sure everything is not too fast.” <i>Summary:</i> <i>Narrative of beauty within the cave dive.</i> <i>Narrative of sequential perfection, detail and precision (This is an implicit requirement within this kind of diving.)</i>
D	And um, when I passed one fifty, I could see that a, a, I would have expected bubbles by then, you know, Dave would have been on his way up, and he could have, he would have been venting off as he came , and there was nothing!	Event 3: Awareness of the possibility of a problem.	Don Shirley was expecting different signs at this point in the dive. The lack of bubbles rising to the surface is defined as possible problems occurring. <i>Summary:</i> <i>Narrative of problems occurring.</i> <i>Major Narrative:</i> <i>Narrative of diving takes life</i>
D	So I was thinking well ok, it looks like we’re on the way all the way, and see the idea was then that if Dave wasn’t there I would carry on down to Dave um, if I could see him coming up and he wasn’t at the target depth then, that’s fine I’d wait for it. If he wasn’t there the aim was then to go down to him and see if I could do anything for him, if he	Event 4: Don Shirley’s back-up plan.	Don Shirley is telling the story of a planned procedure in the event of trouble. This story includes his intent on the execution of this planned procedure: “So I was thinking well ok, it looks like we’re on the way all the way,” Don Shirley is telling a story of possibility of assistance, (Bear in mind that at the time of the interview David Shaw’s death was final). <i>Summary:</i> <i>Narrative of planned and intended assistance (links with competence).</i>



	was tangled up or something like that.		
D	Um, I could see a light in the distance like a lone star, like a real lone star in the dark, in the night, and um, it was off the shot-line, roughly where I'd expect it to be, as far as where 'anonymous' was.	Event 5: The Possibility of both divers being ok – two accounts are happening here. (Also consider the isolation of David Shaw – possibly being out of reach).	Don Shirley starts off with the metaphor of a “real lone star in the dark.” He is describing two things here; on the one hand, this light being in the expected position could imply that there was hope of David Shaw’s return at that stage. On the other hand, there is a sense of isolation, yet it is not a disturbing metaphor. Consider the meaning of this in the process of making gradual sense of David Shaw’s Loss. <i>Summary:</i> <i>Narrative of isolation or narrative of hope. This narrative needs to be explored further in combination with the remainder of the text.</i>

Appendix D

EXAMPLE OF CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Johan Fredrich Smook
Cell phone number: (082) 341 8010

1. Title: **When Darkness Summons**

2. Purpose of the study:

The purpose of the research is to provide professionals with a better understanding of the stories employed in making sense of loss under abnormal circumstance, and, the introduction of narrative research within the domain of technical cave diving. The research is done as part the researcher's fulfillment of the requirements for attainment of a M.A. Counseling Psychology Degree

3. Procedures:

The interview which took place between Don Shirley, the major back-up diver and Gordon Hiles, a documentary director and photographer, will be used in a narrative analysis. This interview will be transcribed and then analyzed using a narrative methodology.

4. Risks

There are no risks to the subjects involved in this research project.

5. Benefits:

There is no payment or compensation for participating in this study.

6. Participants' rights:

Participation is voluntary; the participant may withdraw from participation in the study at any time and without negative consequences.

7. Confidentiality:

The results of the project, including personal details regarding the dive accident, participants' names and any other details that could possibly identify participants will be processed into a final report of a

Master's dissertation as undertaken by **Johan Fredrich Smook** for the MA Counseling Psychology degree. The actual names of the participants, Mr. Don Shirley and Mr. Gordon Hiles, as well as other identifying information will be included in the research report.

8. Access to research:

The subjects participating in this research project has no access to the process of analysis of the interview. Access to the findings of the research will be possible only upon completion of the project. The research remains the property of the University of Pretoria.

I, _____ understand that the interview held on the 9th of January 2005, which I was involved in after the accident at Bushman's Hole in the Northern Cape which happened on the 8th of January 2005, is to be used in a research study focusing on the narratives employed in making sense of the death of a fellow dive partner. I also understand that my name and other identifying information might be disclosed in the final research report. I have read and understood all of the above clauses.

I give permission for the interview to be used in this study.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Witness: _____ Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Department of Psychology

Head of the Department: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____