

**The South African exodus: a social
constructionist perspective on emigration**

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And to New Zealand for all the experience it gave me. It is a thread that just keeps on running through my life and it appears to have no ending...

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SUMMARY

This study can be described and summarised by making use of the construct of emigration. Firstly, it focuses on the discourses circulating in South Africa that inform people's decision to emigrate. It consists of two narratives, written by the participants, concerning their experience around emigration and how they have constructed meaning from it. By qualitatively exploring these narratives an attempt was made to understand and illuminate the discourses informing their decision to emigrate. Secondly, it incorporates my self-narrative as a thread running through the study, using the metaphor of emigration.

This journey starts with an introduction to the social constructionist approach that informs the position from which this study is written. In this part of the journey basic ideas from this approach are discussed and linked to the participants' texts. I also introduce my self-narrative and my personal experience with social constructionism.

From this, a research narrative is introduced according to which the co-researcher's texts will be explored. Discourse analysis is then used to explore and deconstruct the various themes that are highlighted in the texts. I have used grounded theory to guide me through this process.

Existing literature and narratives on emigration have also been included and explored in this study to point out any similarities and differences in the presenting discourses.

Further more, this journey is constructed to illustrate the discourses around emigration that individuals might bring forth in conversation with psychologists. It is the intention of this study to make psychologists aware of personal emigration narratives and to discourage psychologists from entering into conversations with assumptions as to what informs their client's decision to emigrate.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Emigration, social constructionism, postmodernism, discourses, qualitative research, deconstruction, self-narratives, alternative narratives, stories, discourse exploration, discourse analysis, psychologists.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse uittog: ‘n sosiaal konstruksionistiese perspektief van emigrasie

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OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie kan beskryf en opgesom word deur gebruik te maak van die konstruk van emigrasie. Ten eerste fokus dit op die diskoerse wat in Suid-Afrika sirkuleer wat individue se besluite om te emigreer beïnvloed. Hierdie studie bestaan uit twee narratiewe wat deur die deelnemers/ko-navorsers geskryf is rondom hulle ervaringe van emigrasie en hoe hulle betekenis daaraan geheg en daarom gekonstrueer het. Deur die kwalitatiewe eksplorاسie van hierdie narratiewe, is gepoog om die diskoerse wat hulle besluit om te emigreer beïnvloed het, uit te lig. Tweedens inkorporeer hierdie studie ook (die reisiger se) my eie narratief met emigrasie as metafoor.

Hierdie reis begin met ‘n bekendstelling van die sosiaal-konstruksionistiese benadering as posisie waaruit hierdie studie geskryf word. In hierdie deel van die reis word basiese idees vanuit hierdie benadering bespreek en in verband gebring met die deelnemers se tekste. Die reisiger se eie narratief en persoonlike ervaringe met sosiaal-konstruksionisme word ook hier bekend gestel.

Die navorsingsnarratief, waarvolgens die ko-navorsers se tekste ge-eksploreer word, volg op die eksplorاسie van sosiaal-konstruksionisme. Diskoers analise word hier toegepas om die verskeie temas vanuit die tekste te eksploreer en te dekonstrueer. Gegronde teorie is gebruik om die reisiger te lei in hierdie proses.

Bestaande literatuur en narratiewe rondom emigrasie is ook in hierdie studie ingesluit en ge-eksplorieer ten einde ooreenkomste en verskille tussen die presenterende diskoers te kan illustreer.

Hierdie reis is verder gekonstrueer ten einde die diskoerse rondom emigrasie wat individue teenoor sielkundiges kan opper te illustreer. Dit is daarom ook die intensie van hierdie studie om sielkundiges bewus te maak van persoonlike narratiewe rondom emigrasie en hulle gevolglik ook te ontmoedig om eie veronderstellings te maak in gesprek met individue in terme van redes vir emigrasie.

SLEUTEL BEGRIPPE

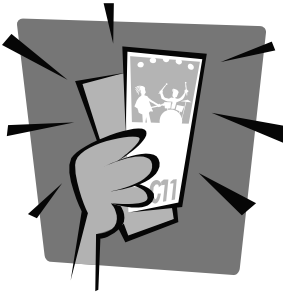
Emigrasie, sosiaal-konstruksionisme, postmodernisme, diskoerse, kwalitatiewe navorsing, dekonstruksie, self-narratiewe, alternatiewe narratiewe, stories, diskoers eksplorاسie, diskoers analise, sielkundiges.

“It is people who lead storied lives and recount stories of their lives, and it is narrative researchers who describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience”

(Clandinin & Connelly in Rapmund & Moore, 2002, p.24)

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THE BOARDING CALL

I would like to welcome you, the reader, to join me, the researcher, on this journey through the land of emigration. You have already purchased your ticket, a one-way ticket or a return ticket and are sitting in the departure terminal awaiting the boarding call. This allows me the opportunity to explain to you why we are on this flight and our itinerary for the voyage.

There are many South Africans who are making the decision to emigrate to another country on a daily basis. Amongst others, it has been referred to as the 'brain drain', the 'new great trek', or the 'exodus' (Van Rooyen, 2001). Each of us has attached a certain meaning to each of these words. These meanings will differ from individual to individual based on our personal experiences, even though we use the same language (McNamee & Gergen, 1996). These meanings may differ from positive thoughts and experiences around emigration, to negative thoughts and experiences around emigration. Nevertheless, it is an *experience with meaning*, and one that I have chosen to explore through this research narrative.

Many individuals sit with the decision on whether to emigrate or not. My curiosity took me to a place where I started to ask the question, 'what informs peoples' decision to emigrate?' and 'What are the narratives circulating in South Africa around emigration?' I wondered what was either pulling them to another country or what was pushing them away from South Africa. What it eventually comes down to is the same old question, 'why are people leaving South Africa?'

Many researches have answered this question from various positions. The dominant literature focuses on the narrative of South Africa as a country, as opposed to the narrative of the person, the citizen.

I would like to introduce you to a few more narratives that I have found circulating in the existing literature on emigration. Perhaps the way I would like to construct my experience with the literature would be best described in terms of a metaphor. Along my journey of researching I found myself visiting many embassies. I found myself first going to the Australian, UK and Canadian embassies, as they are the ones that I know most about. These countries have been highlighted in many texts and would appear to be the 'chosen' in terms of the number of South Africans who select these countries, out of a few hundred, to emigrate to. I would like to refer to these three embassies as the 'busy' embassies. The number of advertisements in newspapers, such as the Sunday Times, highlight these embassies as busy. Many people have visited these embassies and have written about these embassies and countries. One is able to find plenty of information with regard to these countries. The embassies are well established in various countries and have almost got us to believe that these are the only three countries that exist in terms of our choices when it comes to emigration.

I would like to link these busy embassies to the dominant literature that exists on emigration. This literature (de Chaud & Thompson, 2001) consists of statistics, patterns and trends. It is synonymous with statements such as:

- Five countries absorb three-quarters of South African emigrants. These are: the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand. Most emigrate to the UK.

- Unofficial estimates are that 250 000 South Africans emigrated in the period 1989-1999. This represents about 0.5% of the population.
- Official statistics place emigration in the period 1989-99 at about 82 000. This is generally recognised as an underrepresentation, because emigrants often do not declare they are emigrating.
- It is estimated that between one-eighth and one-fifth of South Africans with tertiary education now reside abroad. A total of 24 196 professionals emigrated from South Africa in the period 1994-97.
- The HSRC found that 53% of graduates leaving the country annually intend returning.
- The number of professionals to Canada and New Zealand increased massively in 1993, prior to the 1994 election.
- The 'brain drain' is not a recent phenomenon. Pre-1994, South Africa experienced a substantial net emigration of professionals. Skilled personnel constituted a high proportion of emigrants since 1970, on average 16%.
- The problem is not solely one of emigration, but low immigration – immigration is falling.
- Given the number of emigrants that are high earners, it is estimated that almost R11-billion left the country in the

emigration period 1994-97. This excludes physical assets.

- Other costs to the economy include R2.5-billion per annum due to staff turnover; increased wages for skilled labour; and billions of human capital exported in the form of education, training and experience.
- Economist Dawie Roodt has calculated that if a family earning R300 000 leaves, the tax support for roughly eight people is lost. If a family earning R1-million a year decides to emigrate, the tax support for as many as 36 people is lost.
- In 1999, at least 267 engineers, 93 doctors and dentists, 311 teachers, 266 accountants, 673 executives and 255 artisans left South Africa
- 'High rates of professional emigration are likely to continue. A recent international survey of the well educated found that the likelihood of them remaining was lower for South Africa than for any other country, except for Russia, which was marginally lower'
- A recent survey by IT Web found that 54% of computer experts are considering leaving SA within the next two years.

I was initially going to focus on texts such as these but in the process found myself bored and uninterested in the material I was researching. At one point along this journey I started to discover quiet embassies, text that looked and

sounded different. These texts were filled with personal narratives. I found myself drawn to spend more time in the quiet embassies rather than the busy ones. They seemed far more interesting as I did not know much about these other countries. I love exploring new land and so decided to give the busy embassies, which I know so well, a skip and concentrated on finding out what narratives are being told in these quiet embassies. I have chosen to invite you, the reader to join me in these unfamiliar embassies, and perhaps we will be able to discover a different way of viewing emigration.

It would appear that emigration has been written about or constructed from different points of departure. There are four viewpoints, which I have discovered in the texts I have read and on which I would like to comment. These include the political, economic, academic and humanitarian positions of understanding emigration. I consider the first three rather busy embassies and the last one, humanitarian, a quiet embassy, with regard to the amount of literature constructed from this position. It is also interesting to have a look at who is writing these texts.

The question remains as to why, when, what and how people are leaving South Africa. Below I will give an account of some of the answers that have been given and documented. These are some of the stories circulating around emigration. De Chaud and Thompson (2001), in their article, "Loosing Our Minds", bring together the four positions mentioned earlier. They speak about the decision to emigrate as one of the most traumatic events in anyone's life. They explain that nearly all people leaving South Africa have a valid return ticket, yet up to three times the official figure will be going for good. There appears to be a discrepancy in statistics. Statistics South Africa recorded the departure of professionals in various fields in 1999, and the figures are at least three times lower than those recorded in recipient countries. Official South African figures claim that 29 000 South Africans had settled in the UK between 1984 and 1993, compared to a figure of 100 000 claimed by British sources. This means that three times more

emigrants arrived in the UK than was counted by South African Sources (Van Rooyen, 2001). Official numbers of skilled emigrants in the last decade are around 83 000, but in actual fact, close on 250 000 professionals settled abroad in that time. The reason for this is that many people who leave the country do so under the pretext of temporary visits and do not state on their departure forms that they are emigrating, but merely going on holiday. They will therefore not appear in the official emigration statistics.

This has a strong link to the economic narrative. The economists believe that this exodus or trend has a negative effect on our national development. We have become very familiar with the term 'brain drain' and this skills shortage, as it is also referred to, is experienced as a cause for concern. Economists also refer to this trend as a loss of 'human capital' (de Chaud & Thompson, 2001). Human capital is explained as referring to an individuals' worth, based on his or her skills and earning capacity in a lifetime. The average person with a Bachelor's degree is worth R5.8-million per person, multiply this with the amount of people emigrating and the loss is estimated at R1-billion. The economic narrative includes the idea of trying to become a competitive nation internationally, on the back of a very small skilled workforce.

Emigration is part of our history, there is nothing new about people coming and going – in recent South African history there have been peaks of emigration: Soweto 1976; the State of emergency in the mid-80s; the run-up to the 1994 general election (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Emigration has largely been experienced as an emotional issue in South Africa because it has been constructed from a political perspective, rather than as a social or economic phenomenon (Van Rooyen, 2001). Arguments for and against emigration have become more politicised, personal and have taken on a racial flavour. This has come about because the vast amount of emigrants are predominantly white, young, skilled South Africans and the vast majority of whites voted against the ANC in both post-apartheid elections (Van Rooyen, 2001). This anti-government

sentiment has been constructed as disloyalty against the ANC and against the country – the perception is that emigrants are disloyal South Africans.

The Employment Equity Bill has added to this racial flavour. South Africans feel that they are being 'held back' and treated unfairly, that everyone should be given the right to go as far as they can. Parents believe that the future of their children, especially young white males, is compromised (de Chaud & Thompson, 2001).

Whether emigration is perceived as 'natural migration', 'escaping', 'brain drain', or 'exploration', the real issue according to Van Rooyen (2001) revolves around the impact that emigration has on the South African economy. Surveys commissioned by the Sunday Times in 1998 (Van Rooyen, 2001) concluded that between 71% and 74% of professional people in South Africa were considering emigrating. The same percentages applied to skilled black people who were considering emigration, except that their departure was for the purpose of studying with the intention to return.

Emigration is defined against immigration and one would think that because the two go together that South Africa's economy should be balanced in this respect. The problem is that South Africa does not have equal numbers emigrating and immigrating. A study commissioned by Sansa – the South African Network of Skills Abroad – found that for every skilled person entering South Africa, ten similarly skilled people left the country (de Chaud & Thompson, 2001). The Department of Home Affairs makes it extremely difficult for skilled foreigners to settle in South Africa. They have absurdly stringent immigration policies and restrictions on work and residency visas. De Chaud and Thompson (2001) account for this through two personal narratives:

Lou Wells was trained in the United Kingdom in a highly specialised area of psychology, her area of expertise being

“anti-discriminatory practice and empowerment”. Lou’s application for residence was turned down and she and her son Khanya are now reluctantly back in London.

South African Lisa Yahooda and her Israeli husband Amir fought the department for permission to stay for nine months, before unwillingly leaving South Africa to settle in Israel. The problem has been recognised at the highest level: in his address to the nation... President Mbeki made specific mention of the shortcomings in our emigration policies.

It has been recognised across the world that skilled immigrants, rather than taking up local jobs, tend to create employment. Australian authorities have calculated that every skilled immigrant to that country has set up an average of six jobs for locals (de Chaud & Thompson, 2001). While South Africa has an urgent need for professionals in most categories, official policies have led to a decline in the numbers of professionals such as doctors, managers and engineers entering the country over the past five years (Van Rooyen, 2001).

The humanistic narrative takes a closer look at the impact emigration has on the person, compared to the political and economic story, which focuses on the impact emigration has on the country. According to Van Rooyen (2001) there are at least four distinct obstacles facing a typical emigrant. These include; emotional and psychological barriers; the steep costs of emigration; the financial and administrative barriers erected by South African authorities; and the entry restrictions placed on emigration by various countries through a multitude of entry requirements.

The emotional ‘costs’ of emigration such as saying goodbye to friends and family, a particular lifestyle, traditions, one’s country of birth, are extremely tough obstacles, yet South Africans are still making the decision to emigrate. It is

interesting that many people avoid the term 'emigration' and rather refer to the process as 'relocating' or 'just going overseas for a while'. People are starting to use different language in their experience of emigration.

My aim in this research is to focus on the personal narratives that are being told by South Africans. I have chosen to answer the question from the position of social constructionism. Social constructionism implies that reality is constantly being constructed and that this construction takes place in language, when individuals come together in a certain place, time, culture, community or social context and where meaning is mutually constructed (Botha, 2002; Burr, 1995).

The narrative approach, originating from social constructionism, informs us that we choose to tell certain stories about ourselves constructed from our life experiences. In this approach, it is common practice to look at cultural or dominant narratives or discourses, which are narratives containing definitions of reality on which systems are based (Freedman & Combs, 1996). These narratives are typified, institutionalised, legitimised and reified in order to satisfy the needs of the community at large (Botha, 2002).

The research narrative that I will be using to guide this study is that of discourse analysis. Consistent with the qualitative research approach, discourse analysis entails a wide variety of actual research practices with quite different aims and theoretical backgrounds. One of the reasons for this according to Potter (2003) is that analytic and theoretical approaches have developed in a range of different disciplines – including linguistics, sociology, psychology, ethnomethodology, philosophy, social constructionism and cultural studies, to name a few. The commonality in these approaches is that they all take language as the focus of interest.

In order for us to take this journey I will be making use of two texts that have been written by two people independent of each other. Both these individuals

have emigrated to other countries. I asked them to reflect on their decision to emigrate using certain questions I posed to them, in the construction of their texts. This included questions such as, 'what informed your decision to emigrate', 'what will emigration offer you', and 'what does emigration mean to you', amongst others.

Working from a social constructionist stance means that I have to be aware of my own role as researcher. As researcher, I am recognised as being part of the research process, coming from a position of subjective participation, as opposed to the modernistic approach, which positions the researcher as objective observer (Clifford & Marcus in Hoffman, 1992). Anderson and Goolishian (in Botha, 2002) emphasize that the researcher needs to remain open to the full experience of the co-researcher's stories. This marks a clear distinction between the modernistic viewpoint, where the researcher tries to prove or disprove an hypothesis using the research participants' texts and the postmodern viewpoint, which seeks to illuminate the voices of the research participants. The role of subjective participator, that I the researcher will be assuming implies that I have to explore my own narratives, background, perceptions and interests in emigration and how this impacts on the narrative that is constructed in this text. This process is called reflexivity and has the ability to enhance the research narrative (Botha, 2002).

Having been overseas to New Zealand for eighteen months working in the field of psychology and interacting with the indigenous community as well as South African immigrants, will have an impact on my understanding of my co-researchers texts. My research narrative is the result of the experience that I had during these eighteen months and the many unanswered questions that arose during this time concerning South African emigration. It is thus my intention to explore the dominant narratives and discourses around South African emigration in an attempt to answer these questions.

We are at the *boarding call* stage of this journey and I have briefly introduced you to emigration as a concept as well as the position, social constructionism, from which I have approached this research narrative. At this point I would like to give you a brief itinerary of the journey on which you are about to embark.

Our next stop is the *arrival* in the land of social constructionism. Here I will take you on the adventure in my discovery of this land, how it came about and how I embraced it. I will show you the basic assumptions of the approach as it is seen in the postmodernistic era. I will also illustrate the link to emigration and how the possible constructions thereof have been formed.

I will then hand you the *guidebook* where I will explain the narrative of qualitative research inquiry. This includes who the research participants are, how the participants were selected for the study, the time and space that it has been explored in, what map I used in interpreting the texts and how I have assured the quality of this study.

We will then *explore* the texts of my co-researchers. This includes the discourse exploration that took place and my interpretations of their narratives. Here I discover the possible discourses around emigration and the possible meanings that my co-researchers have attached to their experience.

Our last stop is the *departure* terminal. At this juncture I will look at the summary of my experience, the discoveries and possible future destinations. It is not a departure back to where we have come from, but rather a moving forward, on to the next journey and adventure. I am sure that you will not be using your return ticket but will cash it in for a destination that will allow you many more experiences.

We tend to always consult the busy embassies, but here and there if you look carefully, you will hear the narratives of the quiet embassies.

So sit back and relax, as we will be arriving soon. Enjoy the journey!



THE ARRIVAL

My emigration from modernism to postmodernism began at the beginning of my first year of Masters. Here I was introduced to new words such as, 'social constructionism', 'postmodern thinking', 'post structuralism', 'marginalisation', 'power', 'narratives', 'discourses', and many, many more. Much time has passed since then and each day I seem to grasp a new understanding of social constructionism. It almost seems to offer unlimited experiences in this sense. Social constructionism has become a part of my everyday life and since it is something that I have slowly started to live, I find myself in the wonderful position of writing this thesis through the lens of social constructionism. Throughout the next chapter I will try to introduce you to my understanding of this new position and how my emigration process took place.

It is important for you, the reader, to become familiar with my position so that the meaning that is constructed while reading the text is even richer. I will be using the help of some friends to assist me in this endeavour. These friends are primarily, Michael White, David Epston, Jill Freedman and Gene Combs and their contribution to social constructionism and the narrative metaphor. I was introduced to them on my journey of emigration and have since got to know them relatively well. Throughout this thesis I will consult them and share with you our conversations. The following is based on my own reading, thinking, understanding or misunderstanding.

Usually one gives a definition of the paradigm that is being introduced; however to give a definition to social constructionism and narrative would mean to include

and exclude certain ideas. This would limit the landscape for thought and experience. This is my experience with social constructionism.

The first time I heard this word it had very little meaning and I never took the time to actually look at the words themselves, I always tried to understand it in terms of concepts, which I built around the word. So maybe I should start with these two simple words and see if I can explain my position using them. When I think of the word 'social' it usually implies involving some form of interaction between two or more people. As I understand it, it is not something that can necessarily happen alone. So the approach would then involve some kind of interaction between people/things. The second word 'construction' could explain what this interaction looks like. This construction takes place between people because it is 'social' and therefore involves both people contributing to the construction. What is constructed between them is a shared thought, idea, feeling, meaning, moment or experience. As we interact with people in this way, we attribute meanings to these constructions or experiences. It is by these meanings that we choose to live our life narrative. The word 'social' and the word 'meaning' need to be linked to explain how often, without even realizing it, we take on other people's meaning of an experience for ourselves. Meaning is constructed through conversations. We start to live our life narrative by someone else's meaning and not necessarily our own. We sometimes choose to believe that their meaning is the right one, the 'truth'. How does this happen that we start trusting others experience over our own? This is a very important question when looking at the world through a social constructionist lens. The answer is simple, POWER.

When asking my friends for their experience with social constructionism, they said that its main assumption is that the beliefs, values, institutions, customs, labels, laws, divisions of labour, and the like that make up our social realities are constructed by the members of a culture as they interact with one another from generation to generation and day to day. That is, societies construct the 'lenses' (Freedman and Combs, 1996) through which their members interpret the world.

The realities that each of us takes for granted are the realities that our societies have surrounded us with since birth. These realities provide the beliefs, practices, words, and experiences from which we make up our lives, or, as we would say in postmodernist language, 'constitute our selves'. Social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance towards our taken for granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves (Burr, 1995). When both social constructionism and narrative are used as guiding metaphors, we see how the discourses that circulate in society constitute our lives. A discourse is a system of statements that constructs an object (Parker in Burr, 1995). These discourses influence the concepts and beliefs by which we understand our lives, and the world in which our lives take place. There is a continuing interaction between the stories we tell ourselves about our lives, the ways we live our lives, and the further stories we then tell (White, 1995). If we look at emigration, we think about the interactions between the stories that the people are living out in their personal lives, for example, a 'victim of crime', and the stories that are circulating in their cultures, 'crime is getting worse'. We need to look at the stories in their local culture, their neighbourhood, and their larger culture, as South Africans. We think about how cultural stories are influencing the way we interpret our daily experience and how our daily actions are influencing the stories that circulate in society. This means that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Our narratives are dependent on the particular social and economic situations of a particular time.

I will explain my process of emigration to you from modernism to postmodernism using Freedman and Combs' (2000) illustration. Here we see how I used to perceive identity and power, and how I view it now.

Modernism (then)	Postmodernism (now)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I used to classify people in terms of categories, classes and types.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In this 'country' I look for specific details and the uniqueness of a person's identity.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I valued my expert knowledge. I knew more about the person than the person did himself or herself, I had the power to 'label' them and define who they were. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now I value local knowledge. The people now have the power to define themselves based on their own knowledge of their lives and I accept this definition rather than imposing one of my own.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It used to be about taking the surface phenomena as clues and searching for the deep, core identity and way of functioning of a person. Being an expert, I had studied many theories to acquire the 'techniques' to do this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface phenomena are all we really know. We all have the power to choose how we wish to interpret surface phenomena. I choose to do it using the narrative metaphor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I used to value and interpret people's lives according to the norms and values of my society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now I look for their uniqueness and value and interpret them in terms of how they embody exceptions to what might be expected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had the power to assign meaning to people's life stories by decoding the formulas that underlie their structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the stories that they enact, tell and remember they have the power to assign meaning and construct meaningful lives.

The process of emigration can be both exciting and terrifying at the same time. I can safely say that I have landed in the country of postmodernism and am slowly finding my way around, but the journey between the two 'countries' was long and difficult. Suddenly you are leaving behind every thing that you are familiar with and going to a destination that you have never even seen before, based on the hearsay of others that you will probably enjoy it! I can only really relate my experience to when I left South Africa for New Zealand in 1999. Here was a country that I had never seen before and was told by friends and family who had

been there that it would be a wonderful adventure for me. I was a bit bored in South Africa and thought this would be a perfect opportunity to be stimulated again. Just like with modernism, perhaps I had become a bit bored and all I needed was someone to hand me an invitation to the other side. Again I was leaving for a land based on hearsay. Of course the curious side in me won and I leapt forth into this great adventure that once again, just like my New Zealand trip, altered my life narrative.

Landing in a new country, just about everything is foreign to you but there are some similarities. For example, you all eat and sleep, have jobs and play sport just like in your 'old' country. It's just what you eat, what job you have and which sports you play, that differ from before. Just like modernism and postmodernism, there are similarities such as language, research, interpretations, metaphors, power amongst others, it is now just what language you use, how you do research, which position you make interpretations from, which metaphors you use, and how you interact with power, that differs from before. This form of familiarity at least makes things a little easier; you know how to do it you just have different choices to make.

You try out new food dishes, just like you try out new words, such as 'externalising language', discourses, 'not-knowing-position'. You acquire a taste for these new 'dishes' and ascribe a new experience to them. Sometimes it takes a while to grasp and form a relationship with these words and other times you like it the first time you taste it!

I used to play netball in South Africa and when I went to New Zealand I carried on playing netball but added a few more sports to my repertoire, such as touch rugby, kayaking, I even tried skydiving. Here in the land of postmodernism I have brought creativity with me along with a few others and have been introduced to new "sports" such as, reflecting teams, narrative therapy, alternative narratives, deconstruction and reconstruction, letter writing, adventure therapy and

metaphors to name a few. With eagerness I have learnt to play these sports and hopefully in time will master them.

As all new adventures are exciting, I lapped up every experience that was offered to me in those first few months of postmodernism. I loved this land and the opportunities that it was presenting to me, the opportunity to experience multiple realities, the construction of sometimes contradicting truths. If I look back on the texts that I wrote in those early days, I can't believe how quickly I adapted to the understanding of this way of life. I was writing in externalising language, I was prophesising the not-knowing-position, I was deconstructing the discourses that I had lived by during my time in the land of modernism with amazing insight. And then it hit me.....homesickness!

Just like I remembered South Africa while I was in New Zealand, so I never forgot my experience with modernism, I have not disregarded it at all. At times I had a deep longing to return to South Africa, to a place that was familiar, to things I knew so well, like how to get from A to B, where to find certain things and who to ask in times of need. These were experiences that I had not yet accumulated in New Zealand and it would take a while to build a history there. In the same way, at times, I had a longing to return to modernism, to a land that I knew so well, to a land where I felt safe and secure in the comfortableness of its familiarity. I wanted to return to my 'truths', to my discourses, to my scientific way of understanding my world, to my search of the ultimate, to my understanding of human beings using my theories. I wanted to relish in my numbers and my facts and the one reality that society had offered me in accounting for my interaction with the world around me. I phoned home to find out if they missed me just as much, and wanted my return, only to find out that even though I was missed, they encouraged me to carry on my adventure in New Zealand. At times I would turn back to the pages of modernism only to find that as I read on they lead to the path of postmodernism and in the same way encouraged me to carry on my pursuit of curiosity with this new land.

I think it was about at this point that the confusion set in and it felt like I was taking steps backwards instead of forwards. I couldn't quite make the clear distinction between what belonged in South Africa and what belonged in New Zealand. I would see advertisements on television and couldn't remember if I had seen them in South Africa too or if they were just New Zealand advertisements. I would see a brand of food in the shops and could not remember whether the same brand was available in South Africa. The distinction, which had been so clear in the beginning, started to blur. The same happened in my experience with modernism and postmodernism. I started to experience social constructionism as the only reality, I tried to throw away experiences I had in modernism only to find that I was stumbling upon them in this land of postmodernism too, with things like, metaphors, 'techniques', reflecting, process notes, interpretations; and so the boundaries, which had been so obvious, started to fade a little. It was during this time of confusion and longing for home and finding the journey ahead a little overwhelming that my new friends stood by me. Apart from the ones' that I mentioned earlier, there were three other friends, Gary Wise, Rialene Botha and Lourens Human from postmodernism, who spoke constantly to my thoughts. I would be willing to say that what you encounter in this text is the result of a recipe of my thoughts, Gary's thoughts, Rialene's thoughts and Lourens' thoughts as I interpreted and blended them.

The confusion started to lift when I was now welcoming newcomers from modernism to postmodernism. Just as I guided the newly arrived South African's around New Zealand and showed them the ropes. I realised that I had progressed quite a bit from when I first arrived in New Zealand, I could show them how to apply for a work permit and where the exciting touring spots were and what to avoid, which food they have to try and even taught them a few Maori (native) words. My confidence grew in my achievements, and I could see just how much I had learnt and experienced. I introduced people to postmodernism through workshops, through my everyday interaction with them, through the discussion of 'cases', through my contribution of new and creative ideas to my

workteam. I began to see the progress I had made as I led them around this new land. I introduced them to the native language, the language of metaphors, discourses, narratives, constructions. I encouraged them to avoid seeing social constructionism as the ultimate reality, I introduced them to my friends that had helped me along my journey. Being able to reflect in this way on the learning process that had taken place for me I really started to become a resident of this land and no longer a temporary visitor. The homesickness started to fade and I realised that it was not about having to choose which land is better than the other, or more correct than the other, but about which land do I choose to live in, by which metaphor am I able to experience the entirety of my being. I chose the narrative metaphor to understand and reflect upon my interactions with my world just as others chose the object–relations metaphor to interact with their world, neither is more correct, it is just a metaphor by which we choose to interpret our world. Modernism did not offer me this choice.

I am content in my new country and continue to discover new things everyday, through deconstruction and reconstruction and maybe, sometime in the future, when I become familiar with all corners of this land I will be offered an invitation to yet again explore a new land awaiting.

It was interesting for me to find out from others how social constructionism came about. It was not so much about being introduced to the concepts or language anymore, but really getting to interact with how the discourses, through which I lived, came to be. I asked myself the question, ‘how has my reality been socially constructed?’

This forms one of the main concepts of social constructionism. For realities to be socially constructed a form of negotiation needs to take place. Through this negotiation process we decide how to do things, how to believe, how to relate to one another, our customs, habits – our reality that we have chosen to create through social interaction over time. Berger and Luckmann (in Freedman &

Combs, 1996) have come to describe this process as typification, institutionalisation and legitimation. Reification is the combination of these three processes.

Typification involves the process of labelling. How we create categories to put our experiences into. We tend to accept other's categories as well, and so accept their experience as reality. By accepting certain labels as reality we close ourselves off to other possible labels and therefore other experiences. There are many labels we can use to describe the reasons for leaving one's 'home' country, we could say 'a change of scenery' or 'an adventure' or 'ensuring the survival of our family name'. These are typifications that might lead to the perception of different possibilities.

When these typifications are put together, it becomes an institution, one of emigration. This is now something that exists. Once these institutions become legitimised through media, authority, and those with power, they are accepted as the truth. A reality that exists separate from oneself.

Reification is the combined processes of the three. This implies that we accept concepts as they are and do not question the origin, we take the reality we live as an external reality, one that is beyond control. We forget that it is a negotiated construction that helps us to refer efficiently to a certain aspect of experience (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

In this land of social constructionism, I was introduced to a different kind of language. Not only was I introduced to new concepts but language was something that everybody spoke about. It became as important as 'numbers' or 'theories' are in the land of modernism. So I again had to consult my friends in exploring why it was that language is so important.

“An understanding of language is essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life” (Berger & Luckman in Freedman & Combs, 1996, p.28). Language is a collection of experiences that have been passed down through the generations. It therefore has the ability to transcend the here and now. It brings forth things that are not possible in the moment, spatially, temporally and socially. Therefore we are able to construct a whole new world just by using our imagination and imagination cannot exist without language. In trying to understand and live social constructionism, I realise that language constitutes our world and beliefs and does not, as the modernists believe, represent external reality, or reflect internal representations. Rorty (in Freedman & Combs, 1996, p.28), posits the postmodern experience as such,

The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not....
The world does not speak. Only we do. The world can, once we have programmed ourselves with a language, cause us to hold beliefs. But it cannot propose a language for us to speak. Only other human beings can do that.

And so we construct our realities through language, by sharing words with one another, legitimising the words every time we use them, creating concepts such as emigration. Our language tells us how to experience the world and to experience concepts. Kotzé and Kotzé (1997) agree that meaning is constructed through language, people exist in language and as Wittgenstein (in Andersen, 1993, p.309) so aptly states “to be in language”.

Meaning and understanding come about through language (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). A word itself does not carry meaning, meaning is only understood in relation to its context, and no two contexts are ever the same and so the precise meaning of a word can never exist. This allows us to describe our experiences using different words and in doing so construct new possibilities and meanings.

So I came to realise that our realities are socially constructed and that these realities are constructed through language. I then asked myself and others, what is the next part of the process in the formation of realities becoming historically imbedded?

We organise our experiences and memory in the forms of narratives; we give these experiences a beginning, a middle and an end. Working from a social constructionist approach it is important to take into account cultural and contextual narratives as well as individual narratives.

According to Mair (in Freedman & Combs, 1996), narratives inform life. They hold us together and keep us apart. We inhabit the great discourses of our culture. We live through discourses. We are lived by the discourses of our race and place. Whatever culture we belong to, its narratives have influenced us to ascribe meaning to certain life events and treat others as relatively meaningless. A key to narrative therapy is that in any life there are always more life events that do not get 'storied' than there are ones that do. It will be interesting to look at the realities that have been socially constructed concerning emigration and the meaning that has been ascribed to it.

These experiences and meanings are maintained through narratives. The retelling of these narratives allows the person to reconstruct either the meaning attached to the experience or to 'story' an experience or event that was previously 'unstoried' (Freedman & Combs, 1996). White (1991) infers that cultural narratives or discourses shapes the individual's life narrative. This explains why people 'story' some events and not others. Within a culture, certain narratives become dominant over others. These dominant narratives become the preferred way of believing and behaving in a certain culture. If an individual narrative is experienced differently from the dominant narrative, then the experience becomes marginalised. It is these marginalised narratives that one looks for and through the re-telling of the experience it becomes rediscovered and relived

(Bruner in Freedman & Combs, 1996). These new constructions and reconstructions need to be experienced and lived in order for people to become 'un-stuck' from the dominant discourse.

I became aware, that when working from the social constructionist viewpoint, objective reality does not exist, only our own perception of reality. Each individual will have a different experience and therefore a different perception of the experience, creating the possibility of multiple realities. Therefore, no one interpretation of an experience can be considered as 'really' true. The modernist worldview that I left encouraged one to limit the possible 'realities' in search of the ultimate 'truth', the one reality that exists apart from the individual. We (social constructionists) look at the multiple interpretations of an experience and do not favour one over the other, therefore believing that there are no 'essential' truths (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

This leads on to the notion of 'self' and how in the land of modernism, I used to view the self as a 'true-self' or 'inner-self'. This idea of 'self' is merely another construction, which implies that there is no such thing as an 'essential' self. Freedman and Combs (1996, p.34) could not have stated it better when they wrote,

'Selves' are socially constructed through language and maintained in narrative. We think of a self not as a thing inside and individual, but as a process or activity that occurs in the space between people.

We construct different selves for different contexts, therefore no one self is truer than the next. This opens up the opportunity for many possible narratives about oneself and although there is no 'core-self', there is a preferred self. We need to distinguish which of the selves do we prefer in which contexts. I can only reiterate that I prefer the self that I have constructed in the land of social constructionism. I

remember when I landed in New Zealand that I had this sense of being able to be anybody that I chose to be. Nobody knew my history or anything about my 'character'. I had the freedom to construct a preferred self, I did not have to import the 'selves' that my South African narrative had constructed for me. In the case of emigration, perhaps the individuals prefer the self they create with their new environment and enjoy living out the narrative that compliments this preferred self.

As I read my narrative on my position, I realise that I have merely mentioned the words that constitute the position from which I work and live. I am so comfortable in my new 'country' that I have neglected to really explain to you, the reader, and possible immigrant, what meanings are attributed to this language that was once foreign to me.

Let me introduce you to Foucault and his conceptualisations. According to Foucault (in Kotzé and Kotzé, 1997) the term 'discourse' has become a central concept in the postmodern approach. Social construction discourse is mainly concerned with "elucidating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live" (Gergen in Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997, p.29). Social constructionism is an attempt to understand knowledge from the perspective of social processes and how these are constructed (Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997). According to Hoffman (1992) people such as myself see social constructionism as ideas, concepts and experiences that are co-constructed within social interactions and mediated through language. Therefore knowledge is experienced different from the modernistic approach, which understands it as a representation or objective reflection of external reality. We see knowledge as the construction that people make in order to understand and live in their world (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

As I mentioned earlier, our experiences are maintained through the use of language. When we look at how this language is structured, we see that it is

organised into a number of discourses or unitary knowledges (White & Epston, 1990), and the meaning of any word is subject to the context in which it is used. Parker (in Burr, 1995) describes discourse as being a system of statements, which constructs an object.

In my conversation with Burr (1995), which only took place after two years in my new 'country', I learned that discourses refer to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that come together to create a particular version of events. In my understanding of this statement I see an event that can be described in more than one way, depending through which lens or discourse you are looking. If we look at emigration we see that there may be a variety of discourses, each with a different story to tell about how we should experience emigration, and a different way of representing it to the world. When I was still part of the modernistic way of thinking I was apt to promote a specific discourse as the truth. So each discourse claims to be the 'truth'. Truth and knowledge are important aspects when it comes to power and marginalised narratives. So we see that lenses or contexts play an important role when understanding a certain concept such as emigration. Discourses can be thought of as a kind of frame of reference from which our words can be interpreted. There is a very definite relationship between discourses and actual things that people say or write. Burr (1995, p.50) explains it as:

Discourses 'show up' in the things that people say and write, and the things we say and write, in their turn, are dependent for their meaning upon the discursive context in which they appear.

All aspects of our lives have meaning and everything around us can be considered as a text, e.g. clothes and uniforms may suggest gender, age and class. Therefore 'life as text' could be said to be the underlying metaphor of the discourse approach.

A sense of identity would seem to play an important role in the discourse around emigration and identity is constructed out of the discourses culturally available to us. Perhaps I could say that if the discourses that are available are too limiting or do not offer enough individual expression, one might search for alternative discourses to experience a more real sense of identity and find these alternative narratives within another culture or country.

A discourse provides a frame of reference, a way of interpreting the world and giving it meaning that allows some 'objects' to take shape (Burr, 1995). My subjective experience is provided by the discourses in which I am culturally embedded. In this way my experience of emigration is moulded from within the South African context and, my thoughts and actions will be experienced against a backcloth of South African discourses.

How is it that some experiences are more privileged than others? Discourses are maintained through power. To understand this we need to look at the relationship between knowledge and power. Our common sense understanding, or discourse through which we understand this concept, is the notion that knowledge increases a person's power. Therefore, some constructions will have a greater tendency to be viewed as common sense or 'truthful' than others and can vary greatly depending on the culture or its location in history. What we call 'knowledge' refers then to the particular construction or version of a phenomenon that has received the stamp of 'truth' in our society (Burr, 1995).

Foucault explains power and knowledge as being inseparable. In White and Epston (1990, p.22) Foucault states that, "we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth."

We can exercise this power by using discourses that allow our actions to be represented in a favourable light. Foucault therefore sees power not as some

form of possession, which some people have and others do not, but as an effect of discourse. Knowledge is the power over others, the power to define others (Burr, 1995). If we were aware of how we were being controlled by others surely we would not stand for it? Foucault sees this very hidden aspect of power as the essence, which keeps it in place. We tolerate power only on condition that it hides a substantial part of itself. Its success is its ability to mask its own mechanisms. As Burr (1995, p.71) sums it up:

Discourses offer a framework to people against which they may understand their own experience and behaviour and that of others, and can be seen to be tied to the social structures and practices in a way, which masks the power relations operating in society.

Another important facet about discourses is that they are always implicitly being contested by other discourses and as Foucault (Burr, 1995) points out, power and resistance are always in operation together. Where there is power, there is also resistance. This forms the basis upon which social constructionism propagates personal or collective change.

White and Epston (1990) speak about these resistances as subjugated knowledges. These subjugated knowledges have either been revised through history through an ascendance of more global or unitary knowledges or, are 'local' or 'indigenous' knowledges that are denied or deprived of the space in which they could be adequately performed. Foucault (in White & Epston, 1990) suggests that by providing a space in which these local knowledges can be performed, we can develop an effective criticism of the dominant knowledges, whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought. Here I would like to introduce the example of writing a thesis and how these established regimes of thought dictate how a persons' thoughts are only validated through the thoughts of an 'accredited' author. I reflect here on my

personal experience with this specific discourse. You will distinctly be able to tell when I am writing of my own experience of social constructionism and when I am writing about the experiences of Michael White, David Epston, Vivian Burr, Martin Payne, Jill Freedman and Gene Combs, Michael Foucault and others mentioned in the reference list. In order not to change or alter what the authors mean or were meaning in their texts, I have chosen to use the voice or language as they used it. I am able to acknowledge and respect their thoughts more so in this way, than by altering them and making them my own. However because I am a few years into my journey of the land of social constructionism I have learnt to use their language and in some cases have even adopted the accent specific to this country, so much so that at times you will not be able to tell whether it is me speaking or the original authors. I have started to take ownership of this accent and have chosen to recognise the original authors through introducing them to you as my textual friends and giving them their due recognition by using their voice as they originally used it. I am creating a space where the validity of my thesis is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought, but on my ability to reflect on how limiting and distancing using someone else's thoughts to validate your own can be.

According to White and Epston (1990) we ascribe meaning to our experience and constitute our lives and relationships through language. There exists a stock of culturally available discourses that are considered appropriate and relevant to the expression or representation of particular aspects of experience. To explain it using the above example, I am expected to represent my experience of social constructionism in this thesis according to certain available discourses. What I have done, by reflecting on the discourses around how I should acknowledge other voices in my thesis, has allowed me a new experience. Michael White has followed Goffman (in White & Epston, 1990) and refers to this experience, as a unique outcome. White and Epston (1990, p.31) explain my experience in the following way:

Unique outcomes can be located through an investigation of those occasions when the person could have subjected himself or others to these (power) techniques but refused to do so...To this end, questions can be asked about how the person's defiance or refusal to perform according to the requirements of the problem might have helped him to undermine the problem and the ideas that it both reinforces and depends upon for its survival...In identifying these unique outcomes, subjugation to the techniques of "normalising judgement" (power) – the evaluation and classification of persons and relationships according to dominant "truths" – can be effectively challenged. "Docile bodies" become "enlivened spirits."

Should I choose to write this thesis conforming to all the discourses surrounding it, I would do so as a docile body, merely rewriting the experiences and thoughts of others. Social constructionism encourages me to reflect on my own experiences or unique outcomes in writing this thesis, becoming a participating spirit. White and Epston (1990) are of the opinion that in helping persons separate from these unitary knowledges, externalisation opens space for the identification of and circulation of alternative or subjugated knowledges.

Postmodern thinkers, such as myself, have recognised that such 'local knowledge' expressed in narrative – people's knowledge derived from their immediate concrete experience – is as worthy of respect, and as genuine a form of knowledge, as 'expert' knowledge (Payne, 2000). A significant difference between 'expert' knowledge and 'experiential' knowledge is that the latter incorporates *meaning* – it has no claims to be objective. It is important not to make social constructionism the 'truth' but to understand it as another discourse, attempting to make sense of our experiences.

White (in Payne, 2002) uses the terms 'thin' and 'thick/rich' in reference to 'expert' and 'local' knowledges. 'Thin' descriptions of life, are derived from a person's unexamined socially and culturally influenced beliefs, and 'thick or rich' descriptions correspond to the actuality and complexity of life as experienced by a person. Thin description can originate from the influence of many kinds of power figures and power institutions. A man (who's family has experienced a criminal attack) might have read in an 'authoritative' article that being the 'head' of the house, his duty is to protect his family, may believe that he has not fulfilled his role of protection. In the land of postmodernism, local knowledges are encouraged and this has a counter-balancing effect, producing 'richer' or 'thicker' descriptions of their lives and relationships. So the man might be able to dismiss the article for perpetuating a story that does not fit his experience. The 'thin' metaphor of truths accessible only to the 'expert' or to the power figures in the person's life have been replaced by the convincing 'rich' or 'thick' actuality of the person's lived experience. White and Foucault (in Freedman & Combs, 1996) write that we tend to internalise the 'dominant narratives' of our culture, easily believing that they speak the truth of our identities. Dominant narratives tend to blind us to the possibilities that other narratives might offer us.

The discourses of a society determine what knowledge is held to be true, or right in that society, so those who control the discourse control knowledge. White (in Freedman & Combs, 1996) argues that even in the most marginalised and disempowered of lives there is always a 'lived experience' that lies outside the domain of the dominant narratives that have marginalised and disempowered those lives.

The process by which I am able to create spaces and build a richer narrative or alternative narrative has been termed 'deconstruction'. I will explain this concept by mainly referring to Kotzé and Kotzé's (1997) understanding of, and Burr's (1995) interpretation of Derrida's understanding, of deconstruction.

Kotzé and Kotzé (1997) refer to deconstruction as an analysis of the gaps, silences, ambiguities and power relations implicit within discourses. Deconstruction is about exploring the dominant narratives by which a person defines their experiences. To deconstruct is to undo, not to destroy. Derrida could be seen as the person who took to undo traditions forming Western thought. Derrida (Burr, 1995) sees language as a self-referent system. Words (or signifiers) in the end can only refer to other words (signifiers). It is a words' relationship to other words that gives it meaning. The meaning of, say, the word 'emigration' only emerges through its relationship to other words such as 'remaining'. So we might think of 'emigration' as being the absence of 'remaining'. Derrida suggests that all signifiers are like this; the identity of something is given by that which it is not, that which is absent from it. The meaning of 'tree' is therefore to be found in everything that it is not. 'Tree is *not* shrub, *not* flower, *not* animal and so on. We are however not conscious of this when we use words, and mistakenly believe that the meaning of a word is fully present in that word alone. So, when we are talking about something, like emigration, we are also always implicitly referring to what these things are not, to what is absent from them. These absences are repressed, we forget that they are there, and Derrida (Burr, 1995) suggests that we need to find a way of revealing their action in our language. He called this process, deconstruction.

When we deconstruct a discourse or dominant narrative, we not only look at what it is but also what it is not, in absence as well as presence. To say what it is, is also to say what it is not. Derrida concludes that Western thought has been founded upon 'binary oppositions'. Such as health/illness, mind/body, masculine/feminine, rational/emotional. He argues that such binary oppositions, in which one term is always given a more privileged position than its opposite, are typical of ideologies. They 'con' the reader into believing in the existence of greater value on one side of the dichotomy rather than the other, when in fact neither can exist without its other. Thus we are led to think that the mind is

superior to the body, and to value reason above emotion. Derrida suggests that we drop the 'either/or' and take up a 'both/and' position.

Lather (in Kotzé & Kotzé, 1997) cites Grosz when identifying the three steps that deconstruction can be divided into:

1. Identify the binaries, the oppositions that structure an argument;
2. Reverse or displace the dependent term from its negative position to a place that locates it as the very condition of the positive term;
3. And transcend the binary logic by creating concepts, which are simultaneously both and neither of the binary terms.

If we use deconstruction to explore a person's dominant description, we would be able to see what informs that person's self-narrative. We would be able to unveil the dominant cultural discourses that determine how the individual gives meaning to experiences and their identity. By looking for the 'gaps' and 'ambiguities' the person would be able to experience the absence contained in the presence. To experience what it is not, through what it is. These 'unstoried' events (White & Epston, 1990) would then become storied and allow for an alternative experience or alternative meaning.

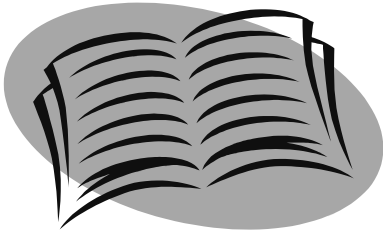
I have taken you to many parts of my journey through social constructionism. I have not mentioned all my experiences or all my understandings or all my friends that I have met along the way. Please remember that what is not here, in text, does exist in its absence. What I have not said constitutes what I have said. Looking back as to how I took you through the journey with me, I see that I have not necessarily followed a very linear path but rather a very unstructured movement. My experience of social constructionism has been unstructured and therefore I have used this text to create the movement of my experience.

Reflecting on this chapter, I have selected a few friends to help me share this journey with you. I seem to have remained with the texts that have given me

meaning and understanding of my experience. I think I could relate this to wanting to create some form of familiarity within this new country. A sense of holding onto what I know. The voices that I have used in this text are voices that I am familiar with and am able to share with you. I have come across many voices within my new country of postmodernism but am still trying to incorporate them into my experience and understanding and find it difficult to share my experience with you through their texts at this stage. I don't believe that it is the number of voices that I encounter along my travels but rather the impact that a voice has on me. I have chosen to share the impact and meaning with you rather than the multitude of echoes.

I have found writing this chapter at times very frustrating. I have deconstructed some of the modern discourses surrounding how I should write this thesis by allowing my own voice to be heard and by allowing my experiences to be heard. I have however conformed to the modern discourses by writing this thesis in a way that is still acceptable to the powers in control. At times you will be able to hear the difference between my voice and the voice of others and at times you will not be able to distinguish whose voice it is. By doing this I am no longer just a visitor to this country but have taken the responsibility in becoming a citizen.

The next leg of this journey involves introducing you to the research narrative guiding this study. Discourse analysis is the tool that I will be using in exploring the texts of my co-researchers, to elicit the dominant discourses that have informed their decision to emigrate.



THE GUIDE BOOK

My understanding of social constructionism has come a long way and as mentioned in the previous chapter I am able to live social constructionism. I am at a different stage in my conceptualisation and understanding of discourse analysis, the research narrative guiding this study. Discourse analysis is a concept that is still relatively new to me and so my understanding is still very raw. I find that I am not able to contribute my own understanding as much as in the previous chapter and so have to rely on the conceptualisations of other authors at his point. I am able to integrate what they have to say and apply their thoughts and ideas around discourse analysis but it has not been fully integrated into my broader understanding. I am still learning and interpreting their concepts and each and every time that I read their texts I experience a greater understanding. Therefore, I write this chapter on the research narrative guiding this study mainly from the viewpoints of other authors. Every time I read and re-read their texts I am able to make new meaning of what is being presented to me. It is important that you read this chapter bearing this in mind, I feel that I am still a fledgling learning to fly and for you, the reader, to interact with my text you need to be aware of my position.

Discourse analysis is the research narrative guiding this study. It is therefore important that I explain to you, the reader, the position from which I am working. By doing so you will be able to see how discourse analysis has informed the way I have structured my 'method'. It has informed the time, the place, the participants, the type of exploration and the quality.

What follows is my understanding of discourse analysis, the research narrative that I have employed in exploring the discourses that inform emigration. After reading many texts it became clear to me that there is no definite method of doing discourse analysis. The reason why I chose to use discourse analysis as my 'method' in this study is because of the link that it has with social constructionism and my research question. Durrheim (1997) is very convincing in his argument that discourse analysis is an appropriate social constructionist 'methodology'. We are working with discourses that are constructed and that meanings are derived at throughout a reflexive process or reconstructing it from other discursive positions. Social constructionism has opened up the way for alternative types of research as we are no longer dealing with the 'truth' or searching for the 'ultimate'. Therefore, modernistic ways of approaching the research material do not suffice from the position in which I work.

I offer an account for how particular conceptions of the world become fixed and pass as 'truth'. I am able to engage in a reflexive process that aims to provide an account of how 'objects' in the world are constructed against a background of socially shared understandings, which have become institutionalised and gain a 'factual' status, through the use of discourse analysis as my research narrative.

One philosophical position that has generally rejected qualitative research, as a scientific method, goes under the name of positivism. Through this modernistic lens, 'truth' is to be found through method, by following general rules of method that are largely independent of the content and context of the 'investigation'. It would, therefore, be impossible for me to employ a quantitative modernistic stance when I am certainly not in search of the 'truth' at all. Qualitative research as seen through the lens of social constructionism is about discovery rather than verification. I do not want to verify the discourses that may be present in the two emigration texts, I am wanting to discover them.

Quantitative research involves working with large numbers of 'respondents', not individual cases; it seeks laws, systematic relations, and explanations of phenomena; and the results are always statistical; the individual escapes the researcher and he is chained to group data, statistical prediction and probabilities (Kvale, 1996). Qualitative research places the emphasis on people's lived experiences (McLeod, 2001) and tries to locate the meanings people attach to events and experiences. It is also flexible in nature as there is no rigid set of formal procedures to guide discourse analysis (Coyle, 1995). The decision to make use of a qualitative approach came from the position in which I work.

According to Potter (2003) discourse can be introduced by way of three fundamental principles: Discourse is action-oriented, situated, and constructed. I will be using this form of discourse analysis to make visible the ways in which discourse is central to action, the ways it is used to constitute events, settings and identities, and the various narratives that are used to build plausible descriptions.

Discourses are seen as constructive because they do not simply describe the world or represent the world out there. Discourses are the mode through which the world of 'reality' emerges (Coyle, 1995; Macleod, 2002). Discourse analysis sees language not as simply reflecting 'reality' but as constructing it. Language, in the form of discourses, is seen as constituting the building blocks of 'reality'. Potter and Wetherell (in Coyle, 1995) are of the opinion that the analysis of discourse emphasises how social reality is linguistically constructed and aims to gain a better understanding of social life and social interaction from the study of social texts.

I have come to realize in this postmodern world that language, as a constructive tool is one of the most important aspects of discourse analysis. If I look at my two participants they have produced a discourse from a range of possible resources available to them. They have used these resources to create a certain version of

events. They may not even realize the constructive process in which they are engaged, but this does not mean that it does not exist. I will not use discourse analysis to gain access to my participants' psychological and social worlds through their language. Instead I will focus on the language itself and explore how they use language to construct versions of their world and what they gain from these constructions. Here we can see how discourse analysis works with two levels of discourse construction (Potter, 2003); the first level concerns the way discourse is constructed out of words, idioms, rhetorical devices and so on; the second level concerns the way discourse constructs and stabilises versions of the world.

I came to realize that the term discourse analysis is an umbrella, which covers a wide variety of actual research practices with quite different aims and theoretical backgrounds. One of the reasons for this according to Potter (2003) is that analytic and theoretical approaches have developed in a range of different disciplines – including linguistics, sociology, psychology, ethnomethodology, philosophy, social constructionism and cultural studies, to name a few. The commonality in these approaches is that they all take language as the focus of interest. It may be useful to consider various conceptualisations of discourse and related ideas to try and establish some basic commonalities. Foucault (Coyle, 1995) emphasises the constructive potential of discourses and sees them as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Parker (in Macleod, 2002) sees discourse as a system of statements, which construct an object, and Potter (2003) refers to discourses as 'interpretative repertoires'.

Once I had a broad understanding of discourse, I had to find a medium by which I could realise these discourses. Parker (in Macleod, 2002) posits that discourses are realised in texts and although the emphasis is on language and linguistic texts, it is appropriate to see discourse as realized in other symbolic forms such as visual images and spatial arrangements. All spoken and written material can be conceptualised as a text and subjected to discourse analysis, in the same way

that within the modernistic paradigms, almost anything can be construed as data and analysed. Texts and discourse are to me, the social constructionist, what data is to the modernist.

It is important at this point to inform you that I have chosen discourse analysis as my approach of inquiry over discursive analysis. The reason for this is that I am more concerned with exploring the 'macro-conversations' that are taking place around emigration, rather than the 'micro-conversations' (Human, Personal Communication, 29 March 2003). Discursive analysis focuses on the finer detail of language.

Social constructionism maintains that a process of reflexivity produces meanings. Reflexivity reveals the meanings that propel the participants along a particular journey but because it reveals the constructed nature of things it is also the principle that enables new meanings to be generated (Painter & Theron, 2001). I will use reflexivity in my research to move away from the everyday ways of seeing to alternative possibilities. This moving away from the 'truth' will hopefully open up new possibilities for understanding. Reflexivity is about turning my attention to my own processes of how I construct my world and how these constructions might impact on the way in which I deconstruct the texts. Shotter (in Macleod, 2002) speaks of research as a process of both 'finding' and 'making'. Reflexivity is not only about enriching the account but is also there to question the relations of power in the research. I have to consider my power as researcher and how I may be perceived as the 'expert' in relation to my participants. I have not entered this research from the 'knowing position' or as 'objective observer' but rather as 'subjective co-constructor'. Taking on the 'not-knowing position' (Freedman & Combs, 1996) allows me to remove my self from the expert position and it also allows me to interact with the texts in a way where I have no preconceived ideas of what I am wanting to 'find'. It also allows me to explore the meaning that the participants have attached to their experience.

I will have to be aware of the impact that my own narrative around emigration may have on the understanding that I construct out of their texts. My 'socially ascribed' characteristics of being a white female could also impact on the response that I get from my participants. It is of utmost importance to take into account that I am South African myself and how my citizenship influences the meaning that I make out of the texts. Macleod (2002) posits that researcher reflexivity should address the interactional, relational and power dynamics of the research at hand rather than focusing on a confession of emotional positionings of the individual researcher.

At this point I would like to introduce you to my research participants and how they came to be part of this research narrative. Peter* and Clare*, the authors of the two narratives in this study were recruited through contacts of the researcher, myself, out of convenience. Peter was in the process of emigrating and Clare had emigrated within a year of this research starting. I wanted to explore the freshest narratives circulating around emigration. Informed consent was received by them to use their narratives in this study.

My research question to them did not follow the traditional modernistic stance. Discourse analysis allows for the reformulation of traditional research questions. There is a change in emphasis from the position of researcher as 'expert', to one in which researchers are "experts not necessarily in answers but in the range of questions we can formulate, and interpretations we can access" (Billington in Macleod, 2002, p. 20).

In my research I am not engaged in a search for the causes of emigration, nor for a solution to the 'problem'. My aim is to elucidate the range of discursive events circulating in the South African narrative around emigration. I explore the construction of the category of emigration and the power relations emanating from the complex process of that construction. I explore the production, circulation and authorisation of 'truths' regarding emigration. Macleod (2002)

explains this procedure in Foucauldian terms; to elucidate the 'regimes of practice', the discursive and social practices surrounding the notion of emigration; and in Derridian terms, to inhabit the text, showing how what it says is systematically related to what it does not say.

Peter and Clare were asked questions concerning their experience around emigration. These questions are based on; what discourses inform their decision; what discourses keep them stuck; and how emigration is the possible start of an alternative narrative.

My questions to Peter and Clare included the following:

- How is it that you decided to emigrate;
- how did it come about, that you decided to emigrate;
- what influenced your decision to emigrate;
- what were the influencing factors in your decision to emigrate;
- what events contributed to your decision to emigrate;
- what stops you from being happy/successful/content/safe in South Africa;
- what will emigration offer you;
- what does emigration mean to you;
- what does it introduce and what does it discard;
- how will emigration or a new country be different for you?

The texts used in this study consist of two written documents. I chose this medium as discourse analysis can be done on virtually any set of materials that involve talk and text (Potter, 2003). Texts are a pervasive and naturally occurring feature of everyday life. I therefore felt that I would get a rich description from my two participants. Asking them to write their narratives also allows them to construct their experience as they would like it without the interference of the researcher (Botha, 2002).

The advantages for textual analysis according to Potter (2003) include the following:

- Texts are naturally occurring and tend to be available. Texts are designed for reproduction, storage and circulation.
- Texts do not require transcription. They already exist in words on paper, which is the central currency of analysis.
- Some material only comes in this form – for example novels and newspapers.

Some of the disadvantages in working with texts according to Potter (2003) include the following:

- Researchers often treat them in a decontextualised manner.
- Another temptation is to attempt to consider texts in terms of their relation to what they describe, as if what they describe can be simply and independently captured by the research.

As part of the reflexive process it is important to remember that these two texts are not constructed within a vacuum. My self and the participants are involved in a mutual process of constructing a version of social reality through the questions that I posed to them and their construction of their texts based on these questions.

Together with the textual interpretations I will try to present as much of the relevant text as possible (Coyle, 1995), demonstrating how conclusions are reached with reference to the text. This allows you the reader, to judge for yourself whether the interpretations are warranted and gives you the opportunity to construct alternative meanings or interpretations.

Discourse analysis may be used as a basis for a deconstruction of the discursive practices and the power/knowledge link surrounding “psychologised notions” (Macleod, 2002, p. 21). As I understand discourse analysis, it is not necessarily

deconstructive, but undertaking deconstructive work implies having in some way performed an analysis of discourses.

There are many different ways in which the texts can be analysed and many techniques and strategies for facilitating the process of finding meaning. My meaning of the texts will emerge through my drive to know and understand and through my active engagement with the texts. I will rely on Parker's seven basic criteria (Macleod, 2002), which will provide a basic structure and framework in the initial discourse analysis. I will also use grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss in McLeod, 2001) as a method of inquiry because of its flexible nature and adaptability to various circumstances. As opposed to the modernistic approach of objectivity, I will see myself, the researcher, as the main tool of inquiry.

Macleod (2002) writes about Parker's seven basic criteria for distinguishing discourses as follows: discourses are realized in text; are about objects; contain subjects; form a coherent system of meanings; refer to other discourses; reflect on their own way of speaking; and are historically located.

The first of Parker's (1992) criteria includes the idea that discourses are realized in text. Text does not only refer to the written or spoken language but includes any symbolic form where interpretations take place. The actual words or sentences do not themselves belong to any particular discourse, but the meaning attached is dependent on the discursive context (Burr, 1995), the general conceptual framework in which our words are embedded.

The second idea is that discourses are about objects. Parker (Macleod, 2002) explains this as, objects being constituted through discourse, where a noun gives an object reality, and as discourses referring to other discourses or referring to itself as if they were objects. Foucault explains the formation of objects as such (Macleod, 2002); one needs to identify when the objects first emerged by describing the authorities that languaged the object by contrasting it, relating it or

regrouping it. This would include amongst others looking at the construction of emigration and what authorities have contrasted it to, related it to and regrouped it with.

The third area that Parker (in Macleod, 2002) address is that discourses contain subjects. Discourses allow for the creation of a certain sense of self within various discourses. This leads to interactive positioning, where an individual positions another person within a certain discourse, and reflexive positioning, where the individual positions themselves. As I understand, this would allow the object to become subject and visa versa within the same discourse. Linking to Foucault (in Macleod, 2002) this would mean that the positions of the subject is specified by the situation the subject finds itself in, in relation to the groups of objects. The group of objects would include the authorities or institutions that are 'qualified' to define a particular reality. In other words, discourses are generated by those in power and in return discourses ensure that these regimes of practice are kept in place. It is a two-way street, where discourses present themselves in text (symbols) and the meaning attached is similarly determined by the discourse. It is the relationship of power (Burr, 1995) between the authorities and those being marginalised that keep these discourses in place.

The fourth criterion presents discourses as a coherent system of meanings. Discourse refers to a set of meanings that produces a particular version of events (Burr, 1995). There are many versions or meanings attached to events that are potentially available through language. There may be a variety of discourses each with a different story to tell about the object in question, a different way of representing it to the world. They map a picture of the world and include ways of dealing with objections to that view.

The fifth criteria relates to discourses referring to other discourses. Through discourses referring to each other it allows contradiction to become apparent within a discourse. This opens up questions as to what discourses are at work

within a particular regime of practice. Therefore within each discourse and alternative is stated. This emphasises the boundaries and limitations of discourses and, as I understand, the flexibility that is inherent in their construction.

The sixth idea is linked to the fifth as it also refers to the limitations of discourse in that they reflect on their own way of speaking. This becomes evident in statements such as 'for want of a better word' (Macleod, 2002). The link here is to Derrida's understanding of what is said and what is not said and, how A is based on the not-A. That the one does not exist without the other. The relationship between what is absent and what is present should form part of the analysis of the texts. Therefore in language we are always referring to what is not, to what is absent. These absences are repressed, we forget they are there, and Derrida (in Burr, 1995) suggests that we need a way of revealing their action in our language. His methodology for achieving this is called 'deconstruction', and involves reading a piece of text very closely with an eye to see how its construction relies upon such unstated absences.

The final criterion that Parker posits is that a discourse is historically located. A discourse does not simply appear out of nowhere but is created out of existing discourses. The discourses of the past help us to articulate and understand the discourses of the present (Larner, 1998). Discourses are dependent on sequences of events that take place throughout history. It is an ever changing set of meanings that cannot be analysed in isolation. Again this reveals the how realities can change over time and from culture to culture, rejecting the notion that there exists one reality or one meaning attached to an experience.

I will not use the above process in a linear fashion, but will engage with each of the ideas as they present themselves in the texts. Deconstruction forms one of the main components of my analysis. Parker (1992) posits three additional criteria when it comes to the deconstructive aspect of the process, together with

Derrida's deconstructive method (in Burr, 1995) and Foucault's understanding of power. Derrida's concept of deconstruction allows me to look at discourses as that which it is not, that which is absent from it. The construction of the discourse does not simply lie in that which it is but also in that which it is not, in absence as well as presence. This undermines the stability of the text and the possibility for alternative readings.

As I understand, within these binary oppositions one term is always given a more privileged position than its opposite. They 'trick' the reader into believing in the existence of greater value on the one side of the dichotomy rather than the other (Burr, 1995). This leads us to value reason over emotion, or to believe that the mind is superior to the body, as an example. As part of my analysis of the texts, I will identify an opposition, and show how one term is dominant in the truth stakes over the other. I will then have to demonstrate that the privileged discourse relies on historically specific taken-for-granted assumptions (Macleod, 2002) concerning the nature of the term.

Deconstruction is not about destroying the meaning of the text, as Johnson points out in Macleod (2002, p.23) deconstruction is not,

...textual vandalism designed to prove that meaning is impossible. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not meaning but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another...Deconstruction does not attempt to point out the weaknesses and stupidities of the author, but rather how what s/he does not write/speak is systematically related to what s/he does write/speak.

Linking the binary oppositions and the privileged position of one term to Foucault's aspect of deconstructionism will bring in the construct of power. Parker (in Macleod, 2002) states this as one of his criterion when he writes about

discourses supporting institutions, that discourses validate certain institutional discursive practices while marginalising others. Through deconstruction we begin to see that discourses are embedded in and reproduce power relations. Once I have identified the discourses, Parker suggests analysing which categories of people would gain and which would lose from invoking a particular discourse, who would want to promote the use of the discourse and who would want to discourage it. As Foucault (in Burr, 2002, p.65) points out, “Knowledge is a power over others, the power to define others”. I need to look at how certain forms of subjectivity are validated while others are marginalised. This type of analysis needs to focus on power in its multiplicity.

Throughout my discourse analysis I will not only be using Parker’s ‘method’ but will be focusing on the principles of grounded theory to analyse and present my analysis of the texts. Grounded theory is primarily a method for analysing data rather than a technique for data collection (McLeod, 2001). The core of grounded theory is to be sensitive to the potential multiple meanings of texts. As I have mentioned before, the need to immerse myself in the texts is of utmost importance and the function of reflexivity becomes even more prominent as I will be sensitive to my own biases and assumptions.

Grounded theory supports the position that the analysis should be done alone by the researcher. I have immersed myself in the texts for many months in order to obtain an adequate degree of ‘saturation’.

Grounded theory arose from the work of Glasser and Strauss (in McLeod, 2001). The reason for using grounded theory as part of my research narrative is that it has certain steps that one can use when doing a discourse analysis. This makes it somewhat different from other notions of discourse analysis because as I have discussed earlier there is no set way of doing a discourses analysis. Grounded theory gives me a sense of structure from which to work. I have found that, being a relatively new researcher and working from a position that I have only

emigrated to in the last few years, grounded theory offers me support in my explorations of text. What follows is an explanation of the steps I have used according to Strauss and Corbin (1990).

- The first step in this process was to identify a broad, open-ended and action-orientated research question. My broad question to the participants was “Tell me your story on how you decided to emigrate.” This question emphasises action and process. Peter and Clare are seen as purposeful agents, engaged in action, which results in, or is in response to, a process of change. The aim of grounded theory is to uncover the basic social processes that underlie behaviour.
- I did not consult or make any attempt to review the literature on emigration prior to collecting my texts. The aim in this is to approach the phenomenon with an open mind, so that the themes and categories ‘emerge’ from it rather than being imposed on it. Again this is in direct support of the position from which I am working. I am not trying to ‘prove’ something but rather ‘exploring’. Research dissertations often have the literature study as their second chapter, forming the base from which the thesis will be explained and written. In my thesis, I have chosen to explain my position first, allowing you, the reader, to interact with the text without any preconceived meanings on the topic. This also allows you to construct your own meanings rather than me prescribing to you what you should find.
- As I collected the texts, so I started my analysis of them. This allowed me to be sensitive to the types of themes that were emerging and to whether my research question was generating rich texts.
- The way in which I selected my participants was based on the basis of theoretical interest. I wanted to make sure that their texts would be rich

enough for me to explore the various discourses informing their decision to emigrate.

- Open coding forms the next part of the process. Coding is an integral part to most discourse analyses. In using grounded theory I am focused on open coding where I constantly am seeking alternative meanings from pieces of texts or meaning units. Open coding refers to the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data.
- I then developed a system by which my meaning units were categorised and the quote from the text to which it refers were filed together.
- After looking at the categorised meaning units, I examined them as an entirety to look for broader constructs, or discourses lending on to other discourses. Often smaller meaning units exist within bigger discourses and it is necessary to identify this process.
- The next step is to bring all these pieces together again to form a coherent picture. I start to link the categories together in a way that I have understood bigger discourses and the various meaning units incorporated.
- Throughout I used a process of 'constant comparison', where all the meanings of all the categories are compared and contrasted with each other. What happens is that certain meaning units that were originally in different categories are found to have a similar meaning and are then put into one category and similarly within one category, it may be discovered that there are slight differences in meaning and a new category is formed.
- As I was going through the texts forming the categories certain ideas would come to mind about how I wanted to represent the meanings in my chapters. I kept notes and drawings of these ideas so as not to distract me from my open

coding, in keeping me as involved with the texts as possible. Later I was able to look back on my notes, which I did not have to keep in memory.

- While categorising the meaning units, a main category started to emerge out of each text. These main categories start to reflect my emerging conceptualisation of the data. This serves its function in the ability to link my discoveries with other studies should I choose to do so.
- In writing up my analysis, the definition of the category is given, followed by a quote to exemplify the category and then, my interpretations or meaning making thereof.

As I discovered, coding is a matter of patience. It took me eight months to submerge myself in the texts and to allow myself sufficient time for the concepts and creative insights to emerge. This patience has resulted in the respect for the discoveries, and the shape they have come in, to take place. The categories or meaning units that I define are based on my own common-sense constructs, my position, and the language used by the participants. According to McLeod (2001) grounded theory model is partly a matter of how I the researcher, see things anyway. Partly a matter of the theoretical or professional community to which I belong and partly inspired by the everyday language of my participants. What matters in the end is whether the categories fit together and make sense and are congruent with the data.

I only started to read the relevant literature once I had already embedded myself in the texts and constructed meaning out of the categories. Literature is usually first read and then data gathered, especially in modernistic studies, however my process forms part of grounded theory. Through this approach I am encouraging both my voice as well as the participant's voice to be heard above or before the other voices of research and societal discourses.

As I carry on exploring this land of postmodernism and all its different facets, I came to realise that it has been very difficult to import the constructs of validity and reliability. These concepts are very 'modernistic' in their definition and function, being borne mainly out of quantitative studies. It pleased me to discover that yet again the citizens of my 'new country' have been very creative in deconstructing validity and reliability and have found local ways of finding the worth of a document or research project. What follows is my understanding of worth, through their research narratives.

The terms qualitative (or interpretive, naturalistic, constructivist, phenomenological, ethnographic, or hermeneutic) come with certain beliefs about reality, about the relationship between knower and known, and about how the inquirer should go about obtaining knowledge (Sparkes, 1998).

Often qualitative research is evaluated against criteria appropriate to quantitative research (Krefting, 1991). The evaluation of research generally focuses on concerns about validity and reliability. This position takes on the assumption of scientific objectivity, which assumes that the researcher and researched are independent of each other. However, with discourse analysis, this cannot be the case. A researcher, who looks at discourses and how they are socially constructed, cannot divorce themselves from their own discourses and the impact that this may have on their study. This form of reflexivity bridges the gap that is generally formed between researcher and researched. Potter and Wetherell (in Coyle, 1995) suggest an alternative criteria for evaluating the value of a research narrative, that the analysis should impart coherence to a text, showing how discourses fit together and that this should provide insights that may prove useful in the analysis of other discourses.

Qualitative researchers propose that the positions from which quantitative and qualitative studies are done, are different and it is a mistake to apply the same criteria of worthiness or merit used by one or the other (Krefting, 1991). Models

that are used to evaluate validity in quantitative studies are seldom relevant to qualitative research. Qualitative researches have also discovered that not all studies can be assessed using the same strategies even within qualitative research.

This has led to the re-evaluation of the terms validity, reliability and generalizability (Krefting, 1991; Kvale, 1995; Sparkes, 1998). Agar (in Krefting, 1991) suggests that a different language is needed to fit the qualitative view, one that would replace reliability and validity and the meanings associated with these terms. The meaning of the term validity in the quantitative sense, refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is designed to measure. The standard definitions of validity have been taken from the criteria developed for psychological tests (Kvale, 1996). One of the links was to predictive validity, which stemmed mainly from the intelligence tests. These tests were designed to predict success, but raises questions such as what should the criteria for success be – position in the occupational hierarchy, income, and contributions to the community?

The belief in the objective world has been the basis of the modernistic interpretation of validity and reliability. The issue of what is valid knowledge involves the philosophical question of what is truth. Knowledge became a reflection of reality. In the land of postmodernism the conception of knowledge as a mirror of reality is replaced by knowledge as a social construction of reality (Kvale, 1996). The citizens of my new country have chosen not to disregard the notion of validity but rather to reconceptualise it in relation to particular forms of qualitative inquiry, where coherence and pragmatic conceptions of truth, rather than true knowledge come forward. From this perspective, “any notion of validity is considered to be socially constructed within specific discourses and communities, at specific historical moments, for specific sets of purpose and interests” (Sparkes, 1998, p.375).

Validity reconceptualised lies in the skills and sensitivity of myself, the researcher, how well I use myself as knower and inquirer. It is not so much about me following a method but rather interacting in a more personal and interpersonal manner to the texts. Reissman (in Sparkes, 1998) points out that a personal narrative, such as Peter and Clare's is not meant to be read as an exact account of their experience or as a mirror of the world 'out there'. Therefore traditional notions of validity and reliability do not apply to narrative studies.

The social construction of the term validity implies that there are various meanings attached to this concept and that these meanings depend upon the work expected from this concept for any researcher or community. Kvale (1996) posits that a construct and its measurement are validated when the discourse about their relationship is persuasive to the community of researchers.

After visiting these postulations about validity and reliability I came to understand that they are conceptualised differently in qualitative and quantitative research designs. In quantitative research designs, reliability refers to the reliability of the measuring instrument, while validity refers to measuring what it intends to measure. In qualitative research "reliability refers to the trustworthiness of observations of data", whereas "validity refers to the trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions" (Stiles, 1993, p.601).

I will be concentrating my understanding on Guba's model (Krefting, 1991), Kvale's (1996) understanding and Stiles' (1993) interpretation of trustworthiness. Guba proposes a model for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative data of four aspects of trustworthiness, namely truth value; applicability; consistence; and neutrality.

Truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by participants. This is linked to what Kvale (1996) refers to as credibility. If internal validity is based on the assumption of one reality and

this assumption is replaced by the idea of multiple realities, then it becomes my work to represent these multiple realities as adequately as possible. In order to achieve this I need to compare my interpretations with other narratives on the phenomena being studied, that of emigration. Sandelowski (Krefting, 1991, p.216) suggests that a qualitative study is credible “when it presents such accurate descriptions or interpretations of human experience that people who also share that experience would immediately recognise the descriptions”. Validity comes to depend on the quality of craftsmanship during investigation, continually checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting the findings (Kvale, 1996). It is not just about the methods used but also the person of the researcher including one’s moral integrity.

According to Krefting (1991) truth value is probably one of the most important criteria for the assessment of qualitative inquiry. Credibility requires adequate submersion in the research texts in order for me to identify recurrent themes. There are, however, certain pitfalls that could threaten the credibility of a study. The research participants, Peter and Clare could threaten the credibility of my study if they were to respond with what they think is the preferred social response, rather than on personal experience. Another threat to the truth value would be if I were to develop a too close and intense relationship with Peter and Clare. I could become so enmeshed with their narratives that I may have difficulty separating my experiences from that of theirs. I have used reflexivity throughout to avoid this danger, assessing the influence of my own background, perceptions and interest on the process.

It is important to be aware of the fact that my background dictates the framework from which I will organise and analyse the findings. I am part of the research, not separate from it. I am a participant, not an observer and need to analyse myself in the context of the research.

Another means of ensuring credibility is to use peer examination. This involves discussing my research process and finding with impartial colleagues who have experience with qualitative research. Peer examination has given me the opportunity to present my working interpretations for reaction and to discuss the possible alternatives. I have invited three peers to join me on this journey.

Often qualitative researches are faced with the concept of generalisability. Guba (in Krefting, 1991) redefines this as applicability. Generalisability is the degree to which the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation (Kvale, 1996). However from the position of social constructionism, every situation is unique, which could infer that the ability to generalise is not really relevant to many qualitative studies. To explain this further, Sandelowski (in Krefting, 1991) is of the opinion that because of each situation being defined as unique, generalisation cannot function because every research situation is made up of a particular researcher in a particular interaction with particular informants.

Kvale (1996) mentions that there is a shift from generalisation to conceptualisation. Guba (in Krefting, 1991, p.216) calls it transferability when research meets this criteria and:

The findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness or fit between the two contexts...Transferability is more the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation or population than that of the researcher of the original study...as long as the original researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison, he or she has addressed the problem of applicability.

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research study (Krefting, 1991; Kvale, 1996). This implies whether the findings would be consistent if the study were repeated in exactly the same manner as originally done. The quantitative perspective on consistency is based on the assumption that there is one reality and therefore an unchanging set of phenomena that can be studied. If one assumes that there are multiple realities, the notion of reliability becomes invalid. As I have mentioned earlier, I am concerned with the uniqueness of the human situation, so that variation in experience rather than identical repetition is sought (Krefting, 1991).

Validation is built into the research process by those researchers, such as myself, who use the grounded theory approach throughout the grounding of interpretations with continual checks on the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Stiles, 1993).

Neutrality is another concept that is borne out of quantitative research, where the researcher is encouraged to distance themselves from the data taking on a position of objectivity, therefore not being influenced or influencing the study (Stiles, 1993). On the other hand qualitative researches try to increase the value of the findings by decreasing the distance between researcher and participants. Guba (in Krefting, 1991) rather looks at the neutrality of the data than the researcher.

The quality of the craftsmanship (Kvale, 1996) results in products with knowledge claims that are so powerful and convincing in their own right, that they carry the validation with them like a strong piece of art:

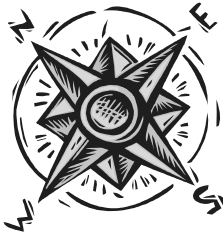
To assign believability, audiences must experience congruence with their own experiences of similar, parallel or analogous situations. They do not have to derive the same meanings as the artist's original meaning. This is what provides art (and

narrative inquiry) with its power of redescription of reality. Beyond such believability, the audience must be able to find that the artist's (or narrative enquirer's) version of reality can useful or meaningfully redescribe their situations. The audience members may think that the artist (narrative enquirer) is out of touch with reality or simply cannot see other contingencies in the situation. Believability and fidelity...need not be damaged by such a judgement ("I would have made a different interpretation of it") (Blumenfeld-Jones in Sparkes, 1998, p.379).

In looking back at this chapter I remember struggling with the idea of how I was going to represent the richness of my new understanding and the voices that have contributed to this understanding of qualitative inquiry. My struggle lay in, first of all, conveying a fledgling understanding to my audience and secondly, the task of writing for scientific publication using reflexive first-person writing.

When I started the journey through this chapter I had no idea that I would land up where I have. Often I have certain conclusions as to where my journey will take me. However, I have been surprised yet again by the process, and have enjoyed the conclusion that was reached through the process far more than the conclusion that I had at the start. I wonder if often we are too scared to make the journey because of our conclusions, instead of letting the journey make the conclusions for us. Never setting off to discover new oceans because we do not have the courage to lose sight of the shore. I left my shore of modernism and quantitative studies with great difficulty but have discovered oceans and shores more invigorating than I could ever have concluded.

*The names have been changed.



THE EXPLORATION

I would like to take you, the reader, and my two storytellers, Peter and Clare, on a journey with me through the land of discourses and the various interpretations I have constructed out of the texts. Please keep in mind that they are mere interpretations and not 'truth' statements. You may find yourselves constructing different meanings to my meanings. Please do not discard these different meanings just because they do not appear in my journey, but feel free to share them with me in order for us to construct multiple meanings.

The first discourse I would like to introduce you to is the discourse of crime. I came across this discourse in Peter's opening paragraph.

" We started thinking seriously about the move when the crime situation in our country affected our circle of friends, and ourselves personally late last year". It was also mentioned in Clare's third paragraph, "Other factors that contributed to our decision to emigrate included the fact that crime and violence were on the increase in South Africa".

I started to wonder what stories are being told about crime in South Africa. I asked myself questions such as 'What is different about the experiences that people are having with crime in South Africa as opposed to other countries?' I started to look at the texts and understand what about crime in South Africa is a contributing factor in the decision to emigrate. As Clare says, "Australia is not crime and problem-free", so I wondered what is different about South African crime? There appears to be a dominant cultural story about crime. This is how Peter and Clare constructed crime in their texts about South Africa. The severity of the crime, is what appears to inform their decision.

Peter used words such as “hijacked at gunpoint”, “shooting/armed incidents in our complex”, “narrowly missed a shoot out”. Clare uses words to describe crime in South Africa such as “armed robberies”, “hijacked” and “being raped...as the chances of catching a deadly disease [HIV/AIDS] were large.”

After living in Australia for a year this is how Clare describes crime in Australia, “two security guards collecting a safe from one of the banks...each had a small handgun in a holster, but I don’t think they ever contemplated using them”, “feel a lot more free and safe to do things and go places”, “there is crime, but it is more petty crime...very few people are actually attacked during a robbery”, “robbers who hold up shopkeepers...wielding a plank of wood or a knife (which they never use!)”, “car theft is by joy-riders who take the car for a spin and then dump it when they are done” and “rape is not very prevalent here and is not part of the Australian culture, as it is in South Africa”.

Crime in South Africa appears to be constructed in such a way where your life is endangered. There is a physical threat on your life and these discourses have been constructed from people’s actual experiences. I get a sense that people are afraid that they may lose their life to crime in South Africa, whereas in the other countries (UK and Australia), the chances of losing your life to crime are so much less. Clare even speaks about a ‘deadly’ disease as a consequence of rape. It is not that you can die from being raped per say, but by contracting HIV through being raped and ‘statistics’ tell the story of a large percentage of the population being infected. Emigration would appear to offer a means to protect one’s life.

This leads me to look at things a little broader. If crime in South Africa is experienced as potential death, then what are the bigger discourses around life and death? There are multiple meanings around life and death and these meanings can also be very culture specific. Clare describes her experience of

'life' in South Africa as 'cheap' whereas she describes her experience of life in Australia by saying 'people place a high value on life and longevity'. Here you can see how life has been constructed in the two experiences. Life in South Africa is cheap, of no value, and often short-lived, whereas in Australia life is valued and you can live longer. The discourse around longevity could be connected to the medical stories that have infiltrated our realities as the dominant way of thinking about life. The medical discourse encourages longer life by finding cures for illnesses, slowing down the aging process, replacing joints and organs with artificial equivalents and by promoting anti-wrinkle creams, to give a few examples. Death has been marginalised. In the times of the Greek myths death was experienced as a moving on into the next world, now it is seen as 'not life'. We can see how one discourse leads to the next. They never stand in isolation but are circular in nature and self-reflective in each other. It would be impossible to ignore the discourses that form a backcloth to other discourses.

In both Clare and Peter's narratives they mention having to "look over your shoulder every minute" and "always looking over their shoulders" in South Africa. This gave me a sense of living with constant 'anxiety' or 'paranoia'. This reminded me of another voice in the field of psychology, that of the DSM-IV and the criteria for being labeled a paranoid schizophrenic. In the DSM-IV it says that patients with paranoid schizophrenia are typically tense, suspicious, guarded and sometimes hostile (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998).

Peter explains it as "...every single person in South Africa is very wound up / stressed and at some stage during the day you will enter a conversation on the situation in South Africa. People are constantly wondering when they are next and always looking over their shoulders".

I had a little chuckle to myself as I wondered if South Africans as a society could be labeled 'paranoid schizophrenics' as they are starting to fit the criteria in the DSM-IV. Are we constructing a society of 'paranoid schizophrenics'?

What I also found interesting, is how we internalise discourses. Peter had first-hand experience with crime,

“affected...ourselves personally”, whereas Clare experienced it as a general situation, “crime and violence were on the increase in South Africa...we became tired of hearing only negative news”.

This is a good example of how we take other people’s stories and experiences and internalise or adopt them as our own. We make these narratives part of our dominant narrative and generalise them as the ‘truth’. The effects of internalising discourses are very clearly shown in Clare’s reaction to these stories,

“I began to feel unsafe in my own home, even taking my panic button with me into the garden when I was alone during the day”.

Here we can see how discourses around crime informed Clare’s behaviour. It told her that she is not safe in her own garden and that she should take the panic button with her when she was alone. This illustrates my original question as to what discourses inform the decision to emigrate. What narratives have Peter and Clare internalised that inform their behaviour to leave South Africa?

At this point I am wondering where these interpretations leave you, the reader, and the two storytellers? How do you understand the discourse of crime in South Africa and how the severity informs certain kinds of behaviour, one of which is to emigrate?

Our next stop is ‘good parenting’ and what constitutes Peter and Clare’s narrative of ‘good parenting’. There are certain discourses that circulate through our culture around children and how we should raise them. What I found interesting was that both Peter and Clare mentioned children and crime in the same sentence. Peter states that,

“Crime now started to affect ourselves and our kids”, Clare states, “...crime and violence were on the increase in South Africa. We decided that it wasn’t a place that we wanted to bring up children in...”

There is a discourse around protecting children from danger and I wonder if this forms part of Peter and Clare’s construction of what it means to be a good parent. Protection forms part of being a good parent and it would seem that Clare and Peter have decided in order to fulfill that story they need to take their children away from a potentially life-threatening situation. If we look at this statement of Peter’s,

“I am able to give them a British Passport”. What does it mean to have a British Passport for South Africans? Peter says, “I believe I have a tremendous gift to give to my kids that many people cannot give to theirs, a British Passport. This little book will make travels / moves in the future much easier for them, even when I am dead and gone.”

We see another narrative circulating in the discourse of ‘good parenting’, the one of ‘provision’. To be able to provide for your children makes you a good parent. I almost get the sense that this ‘little book’ is experienced as the gift of life. Clare, when talking about her child says,

“we would be affording him a better opportunity in life [in Australia].”

I am wondering if there is a link between ‘providing’ and ‘opportunity’. It would seem that being able to offer your children opportunities has become one of the fundamental constructs around good parenting in South Africa. A British Passport is a door to further opportunities, ‘travels and moves are made easier’. Is being able to provide your children with opportunities being equated to the discourses around love and support and care? Are we saying that by giving your children opportunities, it is saying that you love and care for them and if you are not able to give your child a British Passport, where does that leave you in terms of being

a 'good parent'? A gift "that many people cannot give to theirs". I wonder where this statement leaves those parents in South Africa that are unable to give the 'gift of life', who are unable to give their children this gift of opportunity. Does this discourse not then reflect the opposite too and constructs 'bad parents' as those who can't offer their children 'the gift'?

Are we constructing a discourse in South Africa where opportunities are experienced as greater than the family unit? Clare says, "We knew, on the one hand, that we would be affording him [their son] a better opportunity in life, but on the other hand, we were taking him away from his extended family". The discourses around family in South Africa are very ingrained. Extended families in especially the African and Afrikaans cultures form an integral part of a person's life. Often, through the religious discourse South Africans are taught to perceive family as the central support system within society, you may not disgrace your family, 'you uphold the family name', we look after our elders, respect the wisdom of our grandparents and ancestors (within the African culture), you can always lean on your family in times of trouble, families do things together or blood is thicker than water. These are just a few meanings that are connected to the word family. You will often hear comments such as 'how can you leave your family?' in South Africa. Somehow this strong discourse of family-ties has become a less powerful narrative and been replaced by the narrative of 'opportunities'. South Africans, are choosing 'opportunities' over 'family ties'. So where does the discourse of opportunity come from and how has it been linked with good parenting?

The South African narrative around 'good parenting' includes being able to provide or give your child a good education, financial stability and safety. It is about giving them the opportunity to go to a private school, to a university, being able to give them a car, an allowance, a flat. This is how good parenting has been constructed and the discourse comes out strongly in Peter's narrative, "We have chosen...safety and a country / economy that works and is healthy", "I also

want a safe environment for my family...I can raise my kids and in turn get them passports". Clare's narrative indicates financial and economic instability in South Africa by saying, "inflation rising dramatically, poverty and crime on the increase...government corruption, unemployment figures constantly rising, company strikes, businesses closing daily...", and links this with parenting when she states, "we decided that it wasn't a place that we wanted to bring up children in and the future began to look too uncertain to us". Parenting has been connected to being able to provide your children with external things. Again I ask the question as to where does it leave those parents in South Africa that are unable to provide their children with an education of choice "we wanted ...to be able to give them a Jewish education", financial stability, and the freedom to travel and move around the world? Does this construct them as 'bad parents'? Peter is even giving his children an "adventure". It would seem that there is a lot of 'giving' in being a 'good parent'. What I would like to get back to, is to illustrate how certain discourses around good parenting have been internalised by Clare and Peter and have been an influencing factor in their decision to emigrate.

"Safety" is something that comes up time and time again in both narratives. I became aware of the stories around safety in Peter and Clare's narratives. Peter says that he wants, "a safe environment for my family". If, we look at the historical voice of Maslow (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1989) and his Needs Hierarchy, we have read his material and reified his thoughts by calling it a theory and teaching it to students. Over and over again you will hear the voice of Maslow enter a conversation in such a way, 'the basic needs of humans are food, shelter and safety'. If, as parents we do not provide our children with these 'basic needs' we are not good parents. Do those parents who have chosen to remain in South Africa, exposing their children to potentially unsafe situation, feel that they are not good parents?

Next I would like to look at what meanings we have constructed around the word safety. For Peter and Clare safety means keeping their children safe from

danger, as well as financial safety and being able to provide. The materialistic discourse seems to be strongly linked to safety. The more I have in material assets the more secure and safe I am. We are not talking about safety from danger but a different kind of safety, which could probably be called security. I wonder if our material acquisitions are a reflection of our success? What I find interesting is how both Peter and Clare spent their first few weeks in their new country. They both acquired things such as renting a house, getting a bank account, purchasing a car, taking out life-insurance, looking into things such as the Internet and mobile phone contracts. Do we not search to construct a sense of security? Landing in a new country must be overwhelming and to create a sense of security we 'purchase' things that we rationalise as needs. We need a house, we need Internet, and we need life insurance. Is it not ironic that one of the discourses informing Clare's decision to emigrate is that her life is in danger, yet she finds the need to take out life-insurance in her new country of residence?

I wonder if our possessions do not construct who we are. Not any possessions but certain possessions. In South Africa if you drive a very expensive car you are constructed as a successful wealthy person. The identity that you create for yourself often comes from your assets. The discourses around success in South Africa include your career, the car you drive, whether you are a homeowner, the area in which you reside, your salary and whether you can afford a holiday once a year, to name a few. Clare says,

"it doesn't matter what your occupation is over here – everyone is paid a decent wage and treated with respect...There is far less class distinction and it is wonderful to be living in such a society."

I am wondering whether Clare has constructed a different meaning of success and perhaps feels she does not fit into this way of describing her success and found an alternative narrative in Australia. Perhaps success means something

different than career, salary or car, for her. I wonder what meaning she would attach to success now.

In our next area of exploration I look at how a country constructs your sense of worth, or the role your country plays in constructing your sense of worth. In Peter's narrative he writes,

“I have not even mentioned affirmative action up until now. It is alive and well in South Africa. I experienced this first hand with my company when we were blatantly excluded from the bigger companies because we ‘did not fit their profile.’”

After reading Peter's narrative I got a strong feeling that he does not experience being valued in South Africa. I wonder if the discourses around success have changed so much over the last decade in South Africa that it is being constructed out of different stories. I wonder if Peter has this experience when he writes about his struggle with his company and affirmative action. They are a small company and Peter felt that they were being excluded from the bigger companies because “we did not fit their profile”. It sounds as though ‘exclusion’ in Peter's experience limits the opportunity for success. He connects this exclusion to affirmative action in South Africa. There is a story circulating in South Africa that it is very difficult for white males to get work. They are last on the list of possible employees. I wonder how this story of being at the bottom of the list contributes to the construction of not being wanted in South Africa and how this affects the construction of one's sense of self worth. Affirmative action ‘excludes’ the white male, it has taken away job opportunities, which has in turn taken away financial security, which has in turn taken away the ability to be the ‘good parent’, which in turn has perhaps led to the construction of a low sense of worth. The bigger South African story that forms the backdrop for the affirmative action discourse is the discourse of Apartheid.

Twenty years ago, the white South African male had all the opportunity to experience success. The black cultures were suppressed and 'excluded' from equal opportunities. The white male had power and made decisions for the other 'less equal' culture groups. Since 1994, there is a 'New South Africa', with equal rights to all its citizens. However, it would appear that affirmative action is being experienced as reverse apartheid, with non-equal opportunities being experienced. Peter writes,

"I simply expect a fair chance to succeed in the UK for who and what I have to offer."

It would seem that this discourse of reversed apartheid and non-equal opportunities is encouraging South Africans to look abroad for those opportunities that they once had. I think that the emphasis in this context for Peter is 'fair'. Perhaps he feels that because of affirmative action he is not being treated fairly. He even states, "our small company created employment, yet this is how you get treated." You do not fit the profile to contribute and achieve success. He also says that he has something to offer, but is being turned down in South Africa,

"growth in the SA economy is only going to come from small to medium businesses. The sooner the government realises this and starts to support them, the better."

Here it would seem that Peter is experiencing the government as not giving him a fair chance to contribute to the SA economy and in turn to experience success and a sense of worth. Peter mentions success, sense of being and contribution in one sentence,

"...to succeed...for who I am and what I have to offer."

So perhaps the construction of worth is a story of contribution as well. If we cannot contribute, we are not worthy. If this is Peter's narrative that he has for himself and he is unable to experience it in South Africa, surely this could contribute to his decision to emigrate in search of a context that will allow him to live out these discourses that give him meaning.

"My experience in the UK market is sought after."

He has found a context where he experiences 'inclusion', here he writes about being wanted and not excluded. He also writes that after only being in the UK for a week he already has "...a job secured with a well known and respected medical company". So not only is he sought after but also a 'respected' and 'well known' company wants him. Here we can see the opposite experience taking place. In South Africa the "bigger companies" excluded him, but in the UK the respected and well known companies want him. I wonder how this influences the meaning he attaches to his worth. I would like to link this to his opening statement,

"To whom it may concern: In the following page or two, on my move to the UK and how we reached the decision, please feel free to contact (me) or rearrange any errors, etc but please do not alter the certain facts that I may state."

Opportunities, success, worth, have been taken away by the bigger South African narrative of affirmative action and apartheid and are reflected in the above statement. It would seem that Peter is perhaps experiencing feelings of powerlessness. Everything has been taken away and rendered him powerless, "we did not fit their profile." I wonder how this powerless experience affects Peter's construction of security. It would appear from his statement that Peter may feel that the government is taking away his opportunity for success because they are not supporting small to medium businesses. I wonder if individuals are powerless against a government. The government makes decisions, yet what

happens to the individual's voice? Governments give the community a voice through political parties. Political parties are really just another mini government where the individual struggles to get their voice heard. I wonder if Peter has had the experience that his voice is not being heard in South Africa.

My experience after reading his narrative was that it was a very angry text with a great sense of being betrayed. He starts his narrative with "To whom it may concern." Already one gets a feeling of distancing, it was not addressed to any particular individual but to whoever is concerned about my narrative, to whoever would like to hear my voice, to whoever this has any meaning. I wonder if this is because of his experience of not being allowed to contribute anything of value to South Africa. I wonder if his experience of exclusion and having things taken away from him has been so extensive, that in asking "please do not alter the certain facts that I may state", he is asking the readers of his narrative to please not take away his experience and his meaning attached to his South African narrative. He ends off his narrative with,

"A last word for all the people who called us "chicken runs", cowards etc. This type of move takes bigger!than you would ever know. It has bugger all to do with patriotism anymore, it is about safety and if you had half the guts and ability to leave SA, you would understand this..."

He seems angry at the labels attached to those who leave South Africa, such as "chicken runs" and "cowards." I wonder if this anger comes from a feeling of being powerless and having to leave his country. Perhaps by writing this narrative he has the opportunity for his voice to be heard. I wonder if this is a discourse that informs people's decision to emigrate, that as an individual in South Africa they have no voice but through their actions, leaving South Africa, they are finding a medium to express themselves. This makes me think of the discourse of 'actions speak louder than words'. Peter is taking action, he is not going to be passive. What is Peter saying about South Africa through his action?

He even says “Instead of moaning about things all the time, I did something about it.” This clearly shows that his experience of verbal expression was not changing things for him, that he remained stuck, he decided to ‘take action’. I wonder if the individual’s decision to take action allows their voice to be heard in a more powerful way. I say this because the narrative of the ‘brain drain’ in South Africa is a story that elicits concern. This is a collective narrative that individual’s can contribute to. Here the individual who has had things taken away has the opportunity ‘to take away’. There appears to be an on going ‘power struggle.’ Everybody wants their voices to be heard and one way that people seem to experience this is through contributing to their country. If a country is not allowing peoples voices and contributions, then they will seek another country or context in which they can restore their own power and meaning. He has even constructed emigration as an ability that you have. “Cowards” do not have guts and ability, they are powerless. He is reconstructing this experience in terms of an achievement and ability.

There is another discourse about the UK that Peter mentions. The narrative that circulates in South Africa is that you go to the UK to make money and come back to South Africa with pounds.

Peter says “nothing is cast in stone and it would give me great pleasure one day to return...with a few thousand pounds to convert.”

This discourse circulates especially in the group of people between twenty and thirty years of age. Often after finishing tertiary education young adults take a year or two, to go to the UK, to explore and make money. Perhaps this is a form of temporary emigration. I wonder which discourses inform the decision to go and if their experience is different to Peter and Clare’s who have made a decision to “leave South Africa for good” (Peter). South African’s have constructed a certain way of thought around the Pound / Rand exchange rate. They are able to use the previously perceived disadvantage of the Rand falling against the Pound to their

advantage, by going to the UK to earn Pounds and converting them to Rands on their return to South Africa. Even though Peter says that he has left South Africa “for good”, one can see how strong this discourse of ‘double your money’ or ‘gambling’ is by his expression of returning with a few thousand pounds to convert. This emphasises the concept that you cannot make money in South Africa but have to go outside it to make you wealth. I had another thought when reading the above statement. I almost get left with the feeling that if you come back with loads of money, it makes everything all right. I wonder how strong the discourse of money and success being equated to wealth is, in informing people’s decision to emigrate.

Another thought that I had while reading Peter’s narrative is that things seem to be a struggle in South Africa where as overseas things are much easier. He mentions the UK’s economy as being “healthy”. Which leaves me with the opposite thought for South Africa, that it is ‘sick’. He says that after one week of arriving in the UK he had a job secured, where as in South Africa he was being “excluded”. I wonder if this does not reflect on a larger discourse. During the apartheid years there were many boycotts against South Africa by the larger nations. South Africa has been regarded as a developing country and not a first world country. These are all concepts that could lead to possible constructs of meaning such as we are not on top, we are not as good as other nations, because we are rated as third world, we are behind, other powerful nations reject us, we will struggle on our own, we don’t need the support of the first world countries (especially during the apartheid years), we will prove to the world that we can make it on our own. I wonder if these meanings have not been internalised by the individual South African of today and now they are showing their own government, which they feel do not support them, have rejected them, that they can make it on their own, a discourse of success in isolation. Even though South Africa was isolated during the apartheid years, for example through sanctions, it proved that it could operate with success, as was reflected by its economy in those times. It is very difficult for me to write about the political

stance that South Africa took, as I am not able to write my thoughts down as 'facts' or 'truth' as other authors might. This is merely my interpretation, which cannot be seen in isolation from the discourses I myself have internalised.

If we look at Clare's narrative we see that apart from the shared discourses with Peter, she introduces different discourses that perhaps informed her decision to emigrate.

She begins her narrative with when she got "married six and a half years ago." At this time Clare and her husband "were not planning on leaving South Africa". They had made long term investments and never discussed the "prospect of emigration".

This leaves me with the thought that the emigration story already existed; they (Clare and her husband) just chose not to make it their story at that time. There seem to be bigger discourses informing smaller discourses.

In 1998, Clare and her husband decided to go to a talk on "emigration to the US by a company called Network Migration Services". At this talk they were presented with "statistics and information" on Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

This shows that already there are stories that exist in South Africa about other countries and what is on offer there. These stories about other countries have even been formalised into talks. Emigration is not a 'new story' for South Africans. It has been institutionalised into companies that offer emigration services, for example Network Migration Services, and reified by giving talks on various countries. These companies 'recruit' people for other countries. Clare writes,

“We established that we qualified on the point system...applying in the skilled migrants category...Both of us have university degrees and were the perfect age candidates and so it was not a problem getting in”

These companies inform you of the ‘criteria’ that is required to immigrate to another country. The categories for application to Australia are qualifications (intelligence) and age. They even have a “point system”, which determines whether you qualify for emigration or not. The criteria has become institutionalised through this point system. I wonder if this recruitment discourse informs the decision to emigrate.

What does this recruitment discourse tell us? If you are recruited, the possible meaning that could be attached is that you are wanted! We already know from Peter’s narrative that perhaps he did not feel wanted in South Africa. Clare and her husband became candidates for emigration based on the criteria of intelligence and age. I wonder what meaning is attached to being a candidate. Being a candidate could mean that you are in line for something special. Usually there is a ‘selection process’, which means that you get chosen out of a number of people making you extra special. Countries are looking for certain criteria in people, which makes them eligible for something good or special. If you fit these criteria you are acceptable. These criteria that determine whether you are good enough or not is intelligence and age. How does fitting this criteria contribute to a persons meaning attached to their worth or value? On the flip side, how does not fitting in construct the person’s idea of worth and value? It would seem that value is attached to you if you are intelligent, which is determined by your qualification of a university degree, and your age. The “perfect” age being based on ‘productivity’ shown by the category of “skilled migrants.” Other countries are telling South Africans a story of value and acceptance, based on how intelligent you are and how productive you are. If you fit these criteria, we value you and accept you. This discourse of value and acceptance in circulation with the

discourse of 'exclusion', work well together in informing people's decision to emigrate.

At this point I would like to introduce the discourse of religion that permeates through Clare's narrative. Clare is Jewish and tells certain stories of her experience of being a Jew in South Africa. I am going to list these experiences:

- She says that her "Jewish community in Port Elizabeth had dwindled to next to nothing"
- There was only "one other Jewish couple" that they were friendly with and that it "wasn't enough"
- They wanted to give their future children a "Jewish education" and bring them up in "more of a Jewish environment"
- Clare was "not afforded the opportunity of a Jewish education" when she was growing up
- She says that she had a great upbringing and wonderful friends but "always felt like something was missing"
- She had to explain to people about Judaism and was often "met with a lot of opposition"
- She experienced her schoolmates as accepting but says, "I think I was always seen as different"
- Politically, she experienced anti-Semitism as "very rife in South Africa"
- She goes on to express that the South African government is "100% behind the Palestinians in the whole Middle East crisis" and feels that the government would not choose to support the Jewish groups.

I would like to comment on her feeling of being different, which is mentioned twice in her narrative with specific reference to her religion. I wonder if this experience of being different is not a cultural story that goes all the way back to what happened in Europe during World War II. Again, this is my interpretation of

those political events, which are not constructed in isolation but against the discourses I have internalised. If we look at one of the Jewish narratives of that time, it was a story of 'criteria'. You had to fulfill a certain criteria to be accepted and valued. Hitler was in search of his 'perfect' race and the criteria included blond hair and blue eyes. If you did not fit these criteria, you had to literally flee for your life. This is not a South African narrative but a European narrative that has been imported in to South Africa by means of Jewish migration from Europe to South Africa.

Clare writes of a similar experience, of anti-Semitism, of feeling different, being met with opposition, of not being supported by her government and I wonder if she has internalised the European narrative of fleeing. Perhaps this time it is not necessarily about fleeing for her life, but about fleeing to save her religion. In her fleeing, it would seem that she is subjecting herself to yet another set of criteria, intelligence and age. I wonder what this set of criteria offers Clare that creates the opportunity for meaning making?

I wonder if Clare internalised the European story that was imported into South Africa, the story of not fitting in, of not meeting the criteria and constructs Australia as a place where the European narrative does not exist. She fits the Australian criteria, creating a new narrative, one where she experiences acceptance. Being accepted according to certain criteria means that there is an element of sameness, you are all accepted based on your intelligence and age. Other countries are constructing what it is to be the "perfect" race.

I wonder if Clare, instead of always experiencing herself as different in South Africa, now feels the same as everyone else. The way in which she constructs who she is could have changed because in her experience it is based on something different in Australia. With this new construction of how she perceives herself or her identity seems to allow her to tell a different religious story.

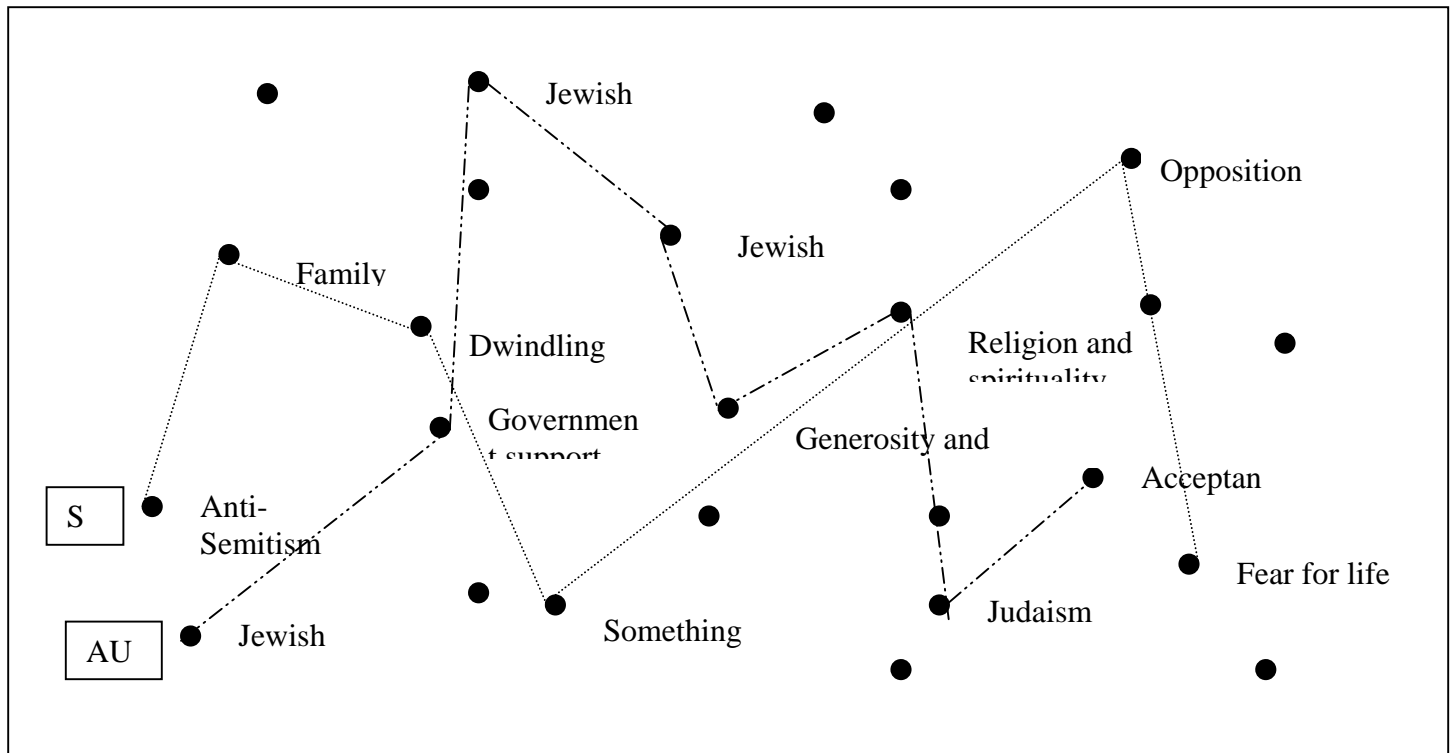
The way she constructs her Jewish story in Australia is different. Again I would like to list these:

- Her husband has family in Perth and this was important because she “didn’t want to live in a strange city without any family to get together with during Jewish holidays and on Shabbat”
- They kept on telling themselves “that the grass was really greener on the other side”
- When they arrived they stayed in a “Shalom House”, a fully furnished house for “new Jewish emigrants and is a wonderful facility offered by the Jewish community”
- Her husband’s cousin put them in touch with another couple and “it just took meeting them for our friends’ network to grow”
- She had the experience of “so many young, Jewish, ex-South Africans living in Perth...”
- She goes on to say that “our friends have become like our family here and we have an enormous circle of friends”
- The way that she experiences people is described as not being able “to keep up with reciprocating people’s generosity and kindness”

Clare's South African narrative has been constructed by her choosing to narrate certain events but not necessarily all events. This formed her dominant story about South Africa. Events that were always there, have now had the opportunity to be storied. I wonder if this need to narrate the other events, or the alternative story, informed Clare’s decision to emigrate.

I would like to demonstrate this by means of a diagram provided by Lourens Human (Personal communication, 18 October 2001).

CULTURAL NARRATIVES



● The Circles represent the lived experience or event

S Represents Clare’s South African narrative / Dominant personal narrative

AU Represents Clare’s Australian narrative / Alternative narrative

From the diagram we can see how Clare constructed certain events to tell a certain narrative. She chose which events to link. She chose which narrative she wanted to tell and attach certain meaning. Most of the events could appear in both narratives and I wonder if she chose not to link certain events. It is about “attitude and choices”. She says herself that,

“we have told ourselves that we have chosen to be here and that it is our choice to be happy or not.”

This makes me wonder whether they could then also choose to tell a different narrative about Australia. In her South African narrative she has chosen not to narrate certain events or experiences or, has not attached meaning to them. If they are able to do that then, surely they could tell another South African narrative. This illustrates how we choose to narrate certain events according to the dominant cultural narrative. What emphasises this point to me, is that she rationalises going to Australia to offer her future children a Jewish education, because there are no Jewish Schools in East London or Port Elizabeth as interpreted from her narrative. However, there are Jewish schools in South Africa. How is it that she is willing to relocate to another country but not to another South African city?

If we look at her statement about the South African government and its support for Jewish groups or Palestinian groups, I wonder if she is not again importing a Middle Eastern discourse into her South African narrative. This in relation to her European narrative, I wonder if the link between the two is that she constructs her identity not as a citizen of a country but as her religion. She does not construct herself as a South African or Australian, but as a Jew.

What enables the Jewish community to construct meaning for Clare in Australia but not in South Africa? Clare said that “life is cheap” in South Africa. She says “people place a high value on life...” in Australia, and I wonder if there is a link between a valued life and a valued religion. It sounds as if Clare feels that her religion is valued in Australia. This leads me to thoughts such as, perhaps it is not so much about the country for Clare, but about her religion. Thoughts that follow when Clare writes about feeling “free and safe” is that it is more about feeling free and safe within her religion than with reference to the crime in South Africa. I am wondering if this narrative is about emotional safety? Perhaps she experienced the “dwindling Jewish community” in South Africa as a threat to her religion. Her religious discourse comes across so strongly, it is even stronger than the discourse of family in South Africa. She says, “it broke my heart” to take

her son away from his grandparents. She has managed to construct a new family, “our friends have become like our family”. She was unable to reconstruct her experience of her religion in South Africa, she was unable to move away from the European story, yet she could reconstruct the South African discourses around family. I wonder if she experiences more meaning being part of a Jewish community than just being part of a family. Has she constructed family as the Jewish community?

Her internalisation of the European story is evident in her choice of language. She talks about being “stamped” into Australia. The Jews in World War II had a number ‘stamped’ into their skin, which identified them as being a Jew. This time being ‘stamped’ has a positive meaning attached to it. It means acceptance not exclusion. She also writes about feeling “imprisoned” in South Africa. She relates this to crime specifically but I wonder if again there is not a wider discourse that it reflects. During the apartheid years, with all the boycotts against South Africa by other nations, citizens were not allowed to leave South Africa, creating a feeling of imprisonment. Here we see a South African narrative as well as a Jewish narrative around imprisonment. The Jews were imprisoned in concentration camps, where if you did not flee you were sure to lose your life. At this point I would like to leave you with this thought, if fleeing is part of the Jewish discourse and if Clare has internalised this discourse, how long until she flees again? I wonder what will happen if, for example, the Jewish community starts to dwindle in Perth.

After reading and re-reading Clare and Peter’s narrative there are four dominant discourses that stand out for me. These discourses do not stand in isolation they are connected to each other and involve smaller discourses that inform their decision to emigrate. These discourses leave Peter and Clare stuck, they are either unable to live the discourses that they would like to live by in South Africa and have looked for alternate opportunities in which to live out these discourses. On the flip side there are discourses that do not work for them and they are able

to reconstruct a narrative that does work for them in another context. The context that they have chosen is another country and the discourses circulating about these countries.

Both Peter and Clare visited the prospective country before emigrating. Clare and her husband visited Australia for two weeks. Peter and his wife visited the UK for a week. This makes me wonder whether it is not so much about what they experience in that short period of time but rather the stories they have heard about those countries that inform their decision. It is the narratives about other countries rather than the experience on which Peter and Clare seem to base their decision. These narratives are generated by 'recruitment companies, by the media, and by people they know that tell of their experience in that country. Clare says that she "had a very close friend who migrated to Australia". This all contributes to the existing narratives of other countries in South Africa.

Both Peter and Clare speak about wanting something better for their children. The whole discourse around good parenting and what it means to be a good parent forms part of their decision to emigrate. They are unable to live the discourse in South Africa and so have searched for an alternative context in which to fulfill this discourse. A discourse, where they can experience good parenting and the meaning they attach to good parenting.

For Clare, her spiritual and religious discourse influenced her decision to emigrate. Even though the events might have taken place in South Africa she was unable to connect the circles or events, and searched for another context in which to link these events and to start an alternative narrative around her experience of her religion. I experienced Clare's narrative as a search for emotional safety.

For Peter, I feel it is more of an experience of being powerless. I wonder if he uses action to get his voice heard. It would seem that he has experienced having

his ability to provide taken away from him. There are multiple discourses around gender, the male narrative of providing for and protecting one's family and working to establish a future for one's children is very dominant in South Africa. Peter even states that his children are his life. In the UK he is able to live out this discourse as he feels he will be able to provide and protect, and most of all give. He is able to give them a British passport. He is able to give them a future.

I was also wondering what impact gender has in the way that Peter and Clare wrote their narratives. The fact that Clare's narrative is written by a female, who is a wife and mother, and Peter's narrative is written by a male, who is a husband and father. What discourses exist around these roles that could impact on the way in which they have written their texts and the way in which I have made meaning out of their texts. I experienced a different tone when reading each text. Peter's was more aggressive and Clare's had a sense of contentment. I am also wondering what influence time has on the narratives that each has written. Clare wrote the text after a year in Australia, whereas Peter wrote the text after one week in the UK. Does this time difference allow for different narratives to be told with different tones and different meanings? I wonder how Peter's narrative would sound now, I wonder if time would have allowed him to connect different circles.

If I reflect on my experience with Peter and Clare's texts and writing this chapter, I found it rather difficult to conceptualise all the thoughts and meanings that I had around their texts. It almost left me with a sense of frustration that I now had to take all these thoughts and meanings and put them into a coherent narrative. Almost as if I had to make it look pretty for you, the reader. I wonder if this is how Peter and Clare experienced emigration in the sense that they were sitting with many events, stories and reasons as to why they chose to emigrate and now they had to make it look all pretty and put it into a narrative for other people, they had to tell their narrative in a coherent manner. I wonder if this process of languaging our experience in a coherent manner is not a refining process. I

experienced going through a refining process when conceptualising my thoughts around Peter and Clare's texts. I felt confused and overwhelmed. Through the refining process I see now what has been left out. This leaves me with a feeling of not wanting to conceptualise my thoughts into a coherent narrative for other people but rather to write down my raw thoughts allowing for more possibilities. I would like to link my experience again to Clare and Peter's experience. I wonder if they have many raw thoughts that have not been shared with us because society asks them to explain and to rationalise as to why they have emigrated in a coherent manner, just as I have to explain and rationalise my constructs.

There are many more discourses that I could have introduced you to on our journey. Just like Clare who visited Perth, Sydney and Melbourne on their two week visit, I have taken you to the main cities on our brief visit through the land of discourses. There are many other smaller cities that exist within Peter and Clare's texts but I have chosen to visit the main cities. I have connected certain circles to tell a certain story. Unfortunately this leaves many untold narratives around Peter and Clare's text. This does not make the untold narratives less meaningful or less equal to the one that I have told. I am sure that you the reader, Peter and Clare are able to generate other meanings on this journey of meaning making.



THE DEPARTURE

We have reached the final stage of our journey and this gives time to reflect on the experience that has taken place as we sit in the departure terminal. In this reflection I will summarise the discourses that seem to inform people's decision to emigrate. I will also look at the value that this research narrative might have for psychologists and others who find themselves in conversation with individuals, who are in the process of making the decision or, who have made the decision to emigrate. The departure terminal also gives me a moment to reflect on possible destinations for further research exploration.

Our journey started with our arrival in the land of social constructionism. I shared with you my experience with social constructionism and how it came about that I emigrated from modernism to postmodernism. Through this sharing of my personal narrative, I introduced you to the idea of reality being constantly constructed and negotiated between individuals or different texts or events, how this meaning is constituted in language and how these meanings are organised into narratives about the world and the self. I also informed you of the guidebook, discourse exploration emanating from social constructionism, which would assist me in deconstructing the texts of Peter and Clare.

Critically looking at the discourse exploration that was used to deconstruct the co-researcher's texts, I am content with the way in which it guided me in eliciting the dominant discourses contained in the texts. I experienced discourse analysis as a guidebook and not a rulebook, which allowed me my creativity, my understanding and real voices to be heard in this text.

In the land of exploration a number of discourses were illuminated in Peter and Clare's experience of emigration. In what follows, I will link these discourses to the existing literature that was discussed at the very beginning stages of our journey. This allows us to look at discourses that inform people's decision to emigrate from *personal texts* as well as discourses that inform people's decision to emigrate from *existing literature* and the possible similarities and differences between the two. What follows is my interpretation and understanding of the various texts I have encountered throughout my journey.

The first discourse, which was very dominant in both the co-researchers' texts and existing literature, is that of 'crime'. Crime appears to be one of the major influencing narratives that informs people's decision to emigrate. In Clare's text she writes about crime existing in both South Africa and Australia and so I asked myself the question, 'what is different between the crime in South Africa and the crime in Australia?' Through the texts I discovered that crime in South Africa is life threatening, where as in other countries it is not. This leads to the bigger discourse of 'life and death' and how we have negotiated the construct of survival and how we privilege life over death.

Crime in South Africa has the potential to take away our lives whereas, in Clare's Australian experience, it merely takes away possession or things. It would seem that emigrants have negotiated this narrative of taking away possessions as being acceptable and tolerable. Perhaps in other countries where the discourse of your life being threatened is not the dominant story, and having your possessions taken from you is the dominant story, could inform their emigration narrative. When our lives are endangered and we seek survival, the narrative we have found, to protect and sustain our lives, is the narrative of emigration.

It is not just the statistics of crime in South Africa that people are basing their decision on, but rather their personal experiences with this life threatening occurrence that is informing their decision. This is evident in Peter's text, where

he writes about the experiences as being just too close to home, and in existing literature where it is mentioned that the reason why 60% of South African emigrants leave is because of crime.

In both my co-researchers texts and popular literature I discovered that it is not necessarily a personal encounter with life-threatening crime that encourages them to leave, but a shared meaning with those close to them, be it family or friends, who have experienced life-threatening crime, that contributes to the emigration narrative. Even though Peter, Clare and others, have not had life threatening experiences with crime themselves, we can see how South Africans have adopted meanings from other people's experiences with crime and how they have incorporated other people's narratives as their own.

The next discourse I would like to reflect on is that of 'self-worth' and 'value'. There seems to be a narrative circulating in South Africa that informs our identity and our self-worth. This narrative encourages South Africans to feel that the country does not want what they have to offer and that the country does not value them. In Peter's text we saw how his sense of self-worth was being eroded by the government and what he experienced as restrictions and limitations laid down by the government. These personal narratives could be a shared meaning with the economic discourse in South Africa. This discourse goes on to state that people are valued in monetary terms and their potential economic contribution and value to the country. In most of the existing literature I came across the link between 'skills' and 'value' and how these two constructs appear to be dependent on each other. Economists and others write about the loss of 'skills' when speaking about emigration, not the loss of 'people'. This makes me wonder as to where it leaves South Africans when their country speaks of them as 'skills' and not 'people'. That the primary criterion for inclusion and worthiness is based on the skills you have to offer.

In Peter's narrative he mentions the ability he has to contribute to the South African economy, yet he has experienced the government as restricting him from achieving this. There appears to be a contradiction of narratives here. The country privileges 'skills' not necessarily 'people', yet it is the 'people' who own the 'skills'. I wonder what would happen if the country started to privilege 'people' instead of 'skills', if it were able to value people, by valuing their lives and potential contributions. One of the debates in existing literature revolves around whether the government, which subsidises education, owns the skills, or if it is the individuals who own the skills. Here we see how power has the potential to marginalise. The individuals experience marginalisation by being forced, for example, to do community work in certain health professions. The government might feel that they own the skills and therefore, have the right to demand that these skills be used in South Africa. Reflecting on my research study it would appear that emigration offers these marginalised individuals an opportunity to get their voice heard. They have discovered that the one thing that is of extreme value to the country is their skills and they have taken it away.

There is a strong political discourse circulating around emigration. In deconstructing this discourse, in Peter and Clare's texts and personal narratives in popular literature, I discovered that throughout the recent South African history there exists a narrative of what I like to call 'taking away'. A 'taking away' of people's identity, rights possessions, skills, opportunities, self-worth, and life. This has been especially illuminated through apartheid and affirmative action. This discourse also becomes evident in both Peter and Clare's texts and existing literature where there is a sense of ones' ability of being a 'good parent' taken away.

'Taking away' can only be constructed against 'giving'. Where are these silent stories of 'giving' in South Africa? What would happen if South Africa were to look for these alternative stories of 'giving' and what would happen to the

dominant discourse of 'taking away' and how this would impact on the discourses informing people's decision to emigrate.

In Clare's text specifically, the discourse of religion is one that could possibly have played a role in her decision to emigrate. The literature that exists in Jewish migration is mainly concentrated in the European and American narratives. It is not a very popular published narrative in South Africa. Perhaps there is a link between South Africa not being immigrant friendly or xenophobic, and individuals such as Clare whose religion is historically imported into South Africa. It would seem that South Africa not only makes it difficult for immigrants to settle in South Africa but also makes it difficult for historically foreign religions to have South African citizenship.

These are just some of the discourses that I have explored around emigration. I would like to encourage you, the reader, not to privilege only these discourses but to carry on discovering those that I have not mentioned and to allow them equal space in the emigration narrative.

In our reflection, it is important to consider those cities or towns that we did not get to visit this time round. We need to acknowledge their existence as they form part of the narrative of the land we are exploring and have an impact on the experience, perhaps even without our awareness. In my next research journey I would like to visit the 'gender' discourse and how this impacts on the personal emigration narratives that are being told. Perhaps looking at how the emigration stories are constructed when looking through male and female lenses.

I would also like to reflect on the discourses of 'time' and the influence it has on the narrative being told. Perhaps 'time' allows for the altering of emigration narratives and I would like to explore the possible meanings created after, for example, one month, one year, or three years after emigrating. I would like to visit and revisit these developing narratives.

It is also important to reflect on the position from which my co-researchers and myself are writing. Peter and Clare are white South African emigrants and have attributed meaning to their experience from the position of their cultural background, their community, their social context, their personal experiences and their time in history. Further research could include gathering emigration narratives from other cultures, communities and social contexts within South Africa.

I trust that this research narrative offers psychologists an alternative way in understanding the emigration stories, which clients may share with them. In linking this research narrative and the value it might offer to the profession of psychology, I would like to encourage psychologists who are working with emigration narratives that are 'stuck', to keep in mind that everybody has their own personal story. It is important to reflect on the impact it would have on your client should you approach these personal stories from your own discourses on emigration and the labels you might have attached to this process.

I would like to illustrate through the journey that we have been on that as psychologists we cannot take the expert position on people's lives and the meanings they have attached to their experiences and make assumptions as to the discourses informing people's decision to emigrate. We need to visit all the towns and cities and the in-between places of our clients' narrative and together with them draw a map of the narrative they have constructed. It is only then that together with our clients we are able to discover cities and towns and in-between places that have not yet been explored or, that have been visited but forgotten. Through this journey new meanings will be discovered and a possible alternative emigration narrative constructed.

I can only hope that you have had many meaningful moments along this journey with me. It is with great excitement that I sit here in the departure terminal wondering what my next adventure will be. I sit with the same excitement that I

had when returning to South Africa from New Zealand. Even though I was returning to the same physical place I had left, I was returning with an alternative story. My alternative story has grown in South Africa and has allowed me new experiences and meaning of who and what and how I am. Perhaps having had the opportunity to go on the adventure to New Zealand and my emigration to the land of social constructionism I hold a unique and personal understanding of my country and of South African emigration.

As I loose sight of the shore, it is again that I go out with courage to discover new oceans. I leave you with a saying that was told to me by a friend and has been my traveling companion over the last few years:

A genuine odyssey is not about piling up experiences. It is a deeply felt, risky, unpredictability of the soul.

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