

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ECOLOGY OF MINDS IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

It is remarkable how several workers writing from diverse interests and theoretical positions have converged on the notion of a divided self. In different ways they moved from a recognition and delineation of the “divided self” to formulations about cleavages in the collective experience or consciousness of large groups. (Manganyi, 1977, p. 97).

This chapter explores the ecology of indigenous helping and coping methods from the platform of observations made by the author in her roles as a counsellor and an academic working within a particular cultural environment, different from her own. This environment included the township, Mamelodi, where she ran a counselling unit for several years, although the boundaries were not restricted to this. However, all of the persons who contributed to Other Stories explored in chapter three and to The Story in chapter one, appertained to the local community in some way. What follows is a description of the township Mamelodi as a typical South African township, the local position of which is situated within a larger global context. Processes resulting from the interaction of these two positions are considered.

The Context of Practice: The Township

The research draws from narratives given by clients, counsellors, and students, presented in chapter three. Some of these people live in Mamelodi or other townships. Townships are a lingering legacy of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Mamelodi is a township outside Pretoria, the executive capital of South Africa. Townships are areas which were created artificially from the latter half of the 1940s by the government of the time, and in which the black

population was confined to reside. At the height of the apartheid era black people were often relocated from traditional areas of living and forced to live in such townships. Simplistically and superficially stated, these townships were usually located close to white towns and cities so that the black population could have access to their places of employment in the white areas. While forced township life frequently led to disconnectedness from traditional ways of life, over a period of about forty-five years, a rich, distinctive township culture has emerged among those who live there permanently. At the present time of writing, a large section of the population are also people who have relocated from rural areas to seek work and opportunity in the townships. Township culture typically blends traditional indigenous customs and rituals with modern western urban ways. This is the social context in which the research is set (Walker, van der Waal, Chiloane, Wentzel & Moraloki, 1991; <http://home.worldonline.co.za/~afribeat/archiveafrica.html>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/documentaries/storyville/sophiatown.shtml>; <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/classroom/pages/projects/grade9/lesson1/unit3.htm>).

Socio-Political Flux of the Context of Practice

1994 saw the official end of the apartheid regime of government in South Africa and the ushering in of a new freely elected democratic government. Since that time, South Africa has been undergoing a process of intense social transformation for several years with the changed political situation in the country. In addition to local political changes, processes of westernisation and globalised technology, which are world wide phenomena affecting societies (Maynard & Mehrrens, 1993; Oberholzer, Greyling, Moller & Munnik, 1989), have been making impressions on the social structures and dynamics of this country for some years. The dawning of democracy, South Africa's re-entrance into world politics and consequent upgrading of resources for the previously disadvantaged in South Africa have escalated this process for all, and especially for the previously disadvantaged (Bakker, Blokland,

Fouché, Korf, May, Pauw, Petersen, Ratnam, Vermaak & Viljoen, 2000). The younger generation particularly, who are the first generation of black students freely admitted into a unified education system supposedly equally available to all, feel compelled to achieve, given opportunities formerly denied to their parents. Different social and cultural groups manage the demands of the changes in varying ways and with varying effectiveness. For some groups it would appear as if the fabric of their culture is being rendered apart and they are thrown into a conflictual situation of feeling pressurised to abandon their ethnic traditions in favour of western ways (Donald, 1991; Eskell-Blokland, 2001; Evans, 1997; Fullinweder, 1996).

Culture

The term culture in this study refers to that which evolves in the relationships between people (Bateson, 1985; Capra, 1997). It subsumes phenomena such as religion, art, language and so on. Culture from this perspective consists of integrated and complex systems of values, beliefs and rules of conduct for human social behaviour as a result of networks of communication (Capra, 2003). Defined so, culture is an essentially human process outcome, socially constructed, and is not identified by single factors such as race, ethnicity or language groups.

Falling Through the Cracks in the Culture

In her encounters with clients in the township, the author identified a phenomenon that she came to refer to as *falling into the cracks in the culture* (Eskell-Blokland, 2001). This referred to the process identified in counselling/psychotherapy in which clients seemed to be trapped between their traditional belief systems and a modernising, westernising world (Moghaddam, 1987) for which they were unprepared.

Typically, in the author's experience in a community clinic within Mamelodi (Eskell-Blokland, 2002), and as reported by other mental health workers in similar settings (Bodibe, 1990; Henning, 1990; Lifschitz & van Niekerk, 1990; Rankin, 1999; Wittstock, Rosenthal, Shuda and Makgatho, 1990), clients present for counselling or helping of some kind due to complaints of psychosomatic symptoms (Henning, 1990), proclaimed spirit afflictions (Janzen, 1984), vague feelings of dis-ease or, alternatively, with accompanying social problems of such magnitude that the situation often initially appears to the counsellor/ health worker as completely hopeless and often ultimately overwhelms the counsellor/ health worker (Eskell-Blokland, 2002; Swartz & Gibson, 2001). The author, together with clients, has previously attempted to explore the context of the symptoms from a systems point of view and found some common issues in the background of the various presenting problems. The possibility of multiple descriptions of reality proposed by systemic thought (Duncan, Parks & Rusk, 1990) has been found useful in that many of the clients may have experienced internal conflict regarding their passing between two very different cultures - the traditional and the modernised western. In addition, the counsellor has found herself confronted with the different ways differing cultures (and thus sometimes differing epistemologies) have preferred to explain the problems of the clients, and thus offering different possibilities of dealing with them. The challenge became for the counsellor to integrate the differing perspectives into a framework for a way forward. This challenge is one that other practitioners have also acknowledged as a result of their work in South Africa among the economically underprivileged and in contexts other than western (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Freeman, 1988; Henning, 1990; Janzen, 1984; Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001; Peltzer, 1998; Rankin, 1999; Seedat, Cloete & Schochet, 1988; Swartz & Gibson, 2001).

Criticism of Psychology in Africa

This challenge to accommodate the cultures of communities outside of western mainstream contexts is one that extends beyond the borders of Africa. The criticism of the form, role and relevance of modern mainstream psychology in non-European or non-American countries has been a long on-going dialogue among psychologists worldwide (Atal, 1990; Azuma, 1984; Carr & MacLachlan, 1993; Davidson, 1993; Enriquez, 1989; Marsella, 1998; Moghaddam, 1993; Nixon, 1990; Nsamenang, 1995, 1997, 2000; Peltzer, 1998). This dialogue has been extensively documented and changes to ways of thinking and working in the discipline have been debated by writers in journals and published books, as well as being presented to the fraternity at conferences (Bakker et al., 2000; Enriquez, 1989; Fouché, 1996). Among others, Bakker (1999) concludes that in Africa "this transformation is essential and long overdue" (p. 162). She further reports that

the colonial heritage of psychology in Africa has been documented extensively (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Bakker, 1996; Ezeilo, 1992; Fanon, 1967; Nsamenang, 1993; Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998). Psychology has been accused of serving imperialist and colonial powers (Bulhan, 1993a, 1993b; Hickson & Kriegler, 1991), of having supported apartheid (Nicholas, 1990, 1993a; Nicholas & Cooper, 1990), of remaining an élitist profession (Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Seedat, Cloete & Shochet, 1988), and of exploiting rather than serving the needs of African communities (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Bulhan, 1993a). (p. 3)

Chief reasons for psychology's suggested failure to take hold in Africa and other non-European-American countries (Abdi, 1985; Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Butchart, 1993; Liddle & Kvalsig, 1990; Nell, 1992; Nsamenang, 1993,

1995, 2000) encompass arguments that academic psychology remains rigidly attached to the underpinning principles of its roots and thus, Eurocentric (Akhurst, 2001; Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Biesheuvel, 1991; Brownell, De Jager & Madlala, 1987; Dawes, 1986; Ezeilo, 1992; Fouché, 1996; Manganyi, 1991; Nell, 1990; Nsamenang, 1993, 2000); that psychology has pandered to the colonial philosophies and tenets upon which the colonial regime was built (Enriquez, 1989; Ezeilo, 1992; Fanon, 1967); and that the western scientific knowledge base is foreign and yields information often limited in use to the African world view (Abdi, 1985; Bassa & Schlebusch, 1984).

Just as the criticism of psychology in Africa is diverse in its views, remedies offered to construct a more relevant, appropriate and useful psychology are varying. This ranges from calls for indigenisation (Bodibe, 1993; Kottler, 1990; Mashegoane, 1998; Vogelmann, 1986); for Afrocentricism (Bulhan, 1990; Kriegler, 1993); for spiritual, holistic approaches to healing (Bodibe, 1993; Bührmann, 1981); for a community-strategies approach (Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998; Peltzer, 1998); and for a socio-political action position of the liberationists (Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat & Statman, 1990; Seedat, 1997) rather than the western individualistic focus (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001; Hamber, Masilela & Terre Blanche, 2001). Among the advocates of the varying solutions there exists disagreement and debate on which tactic could best be justified and operationalised with desirable effect. The common ground in all of these debates is the silence of the subjects under consideration. In chapter three, some voices from one of the communities in which these people live were presented.

Indigenisation as an Approach

The indigenisation of psychology is one approach that many non-western countries have adopted in their efforts to meet the challenges of bringing a more relevant psychology to their home contexts. This process has

gained ground in countries as far afield as the Philippines (Atal, 1981, 1990), China, Turkey and Mexico (Moghaddam, 1987).

In the Philippines a system of "cultural validation" attempts to replace western psychology theories and practice (Enriquez, 1989, p. 25). "Cultural validation" appears to be a radical form of indigenisation and overtly politicised, as South African liberatory and critical psychology researchers such as Derek Hook (2001) advocate. Enriquez (1989) in the Philippines refers disparagingly to uncritical Filipino students and practitioners of mainstream psychology (which is perceived as imperialistically western). He repeats the description of his colleague Bulatao (1979, in Enriquez, 1989, p. 25) who has referred to them as "pious pupils of Piaget"; "daring disciples of Drucker"; "fervent followers of Freud"; and "scientific students of Skinner". Furthermore, Bulatao calls for posted ministerial signs at tertiary institution libraries to warn students that when they read the 95% western published textbooks in psychology, they should be aware that "...the behavioural conclusions of these articles are true for the American population but not necessarily true for Filipinos" (p. 25). The Filipino's discomfort at using what they perceive as western dominated psychology is obvious when they refer to it as a "borrowed consciousness" (p. 24).

It is clear that in the Philippines the universality of western produced psychology is decidedly questioned (Enriquez, 1989), contrary to the views of some local South African psychologists such as Freeman (1991); Lifschitz and van Niekerk (1990); Lifschitz and Oosthuizen (2001); and Nell (1990), who still believe there to be some applicability of universal extractions from mainstream psychology. However, the debate in the Philippines is less centred on philosophical issues but is rather driven by the practical urgent needs of the underdeveloped and hungry community (Enriquez, 1989). Perhaps it would not be out of place to suggest that the ecology of the Philippines has determined this attitude in an evolutionary process taking psychology from the

luxury of philosophy to the hard and heard demands of empty bellies and hungry minds and hearts.

Perusing the literature on processes in psychology across the globe, it appears as if indigenisation takes stronger hold in those non-western countries where the population is largely culturally homogenous, such as Mexico, the Philippines, China and Turkey, for example. In these contexts academia emerges from the same cultural population as the common people. However, in countries such as South Africa, where the majority of the academic elite are of a markedly separate cultural group, indigenisation is not generally regarded as a viable solution to the problem of the ill fit of psychology as an applied discipline. It is also interesting to note that in South Africa the cultural group from which the academic elite emerge, is in the minority, yet dominant in the arena of formal knowledge. The major cultural group remains predominantly disadvantaged socio-economically, and also still silenced, waiting to be spoken for.

Indigenisation as a Polarising Process

Generally speaking, the search for indigenous psychologies beyond and within the borders of the African continent is a movement that has gripped especially third world developing countries where it is argued that the ill fit of the still dominant discourse of main-stream positivist psychology is most keenly felt (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Atal, 1981, 1990; Azuma, 1984; Dawes, 1998; Holdstock, 1982). In his address at the XXVII International Psychology Congress in Sweden in July 2000, John Adair (2000), in speaking on the subject of indigenous psychologies, discussed typical patterns of progress and development in this field. He identified four stages typical in the spread of psychology in the world. First, theories and practices of psychology are imported to lesser-developed countries intact from abroad. Second, returning scholars implant theories and practices of psychology. The third stage is the indigenisation process that is embarked upon by the developing countries. This

process originates in the recognition of the ill fit of mainstream positivist psychology from whence a discourse of critique emerges: - adaptation begins and a shift from textbook topics to culture specific topics is initiated. The final stage is when the indigenous psychology developed by a community becomes a mature, self-sustaining discipline through the development of a critical mass of research scholars and, it is here suggested, practitioners.

There is debate among local practitioners and researchers as to whether indigenisation is an appropriate or desirable direction to take in making psychology more relevant for the local South African context. If South Africa is to move towards indigenisation, it would appear as if it is chiefly somewhere between Adair's second and third stages of the development of indigenous psychologies. In South Africa, for some years, there have been marginal movements in the discipline of psychology as a whole towards indigenisation, evidenced by the criticism of psychology practice as it occurs generally in the country (Bakker, Blokland, Fouché, Korf, May, Pauw, Petersen, Vermaak & Viljoen, 2000; Foster, Nicholas & Dawes, 1993; Fouché, 1996; Gilbert, 1989; Jacobs, 1991; Nell, 1990).

Arguments for Indigenisation

The proponents of indigenisation in South Africa view the process as necessary for economically underdeveloped, non-western local cultural groups who up till now, have been deprived of psychological services (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Freeman, 1988; Peltzer, 1998; Seedat, Cloete & Schochet, 1988). Inaccessibility can be attributed to two major factors: the paradigm differences as discussed above, and economic differences. The South African government still fails to recognise the significant role to be played by psychology in primary health care and socio-economic development, and thus provides a dearth of posts for psychologists in public institutions. This in turn impacts negatively upon local research activities in psychology, setting up a cycle of further marginalisation of the discipline.

For some years the criticism has pointed out that the vast majority of South African practitioners in the field are white (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Peltzer, 1998). Up until the present (2004) the matter of the proportion of white to black trainee intakes at local universities remains an item of concern to the Professional Board for Psychology (Professional Board for Psychology, 1999, 2001, 2002). It is advocated that white, middle class and western practitioners are unable to meet the needs of other cultural and socio-economic groups within South Africa. This is attributed at times to a lack of understanding of the cultural differences between their own way of thinking and that of the local African communities (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Peltzer, 1998), and partly due to their inaccessibility to the underprivileged majority (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Peltzer, 1998; Seedat et al., 1988).

This has led to accusations of psychology being an elitist profession and a supporter and maintenance of the apartheid regime in at least a passive role (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Dawes, 1986; Seedat & Nell, 1992; Yen & Wilbraham, 2003). These critics suggest that identification with the local cultures is essential for effective practice (Vogelman, 1986) and that clients struggle to relate to practitioners of cultures other than their own (Swartz & Gibson, 2001).

Arguments for Universality

One of the problems posed by the indigenisation of psychology is the potential reification of an alternative paradigm. This would in effect be contrary to what much of indigenous psychology critique of mainstream positivist western psychology concerns itself with. The argument suggests that it would amount to the establishment of another form of imperialism in psychology, rendering practitioners immobilised by differences (Nell, 1990; Oosthuizen, 1995).

Thus some local practitioners are of the opinion that psychology as a discipline is based on ideas and universal skills which, used sensitively and skilfully, can be beneficial for all (Freeman, 1991; Lifschitz & van Niekerk, 1990; Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001; Nell, 1990). The general argument from this opinion is that psychology deals with a universal humanity and does not need to fragment its tenets to suit differing cultural views. To do so would be to reify culture into content bound factions of knowledge, setting up dogmatic, ethnocentric pockets of ethnopsychologies (Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001; Nell, 1990).

In an attempt to avoid the establishment of a conceptual dichotomy between *western* and *African* perspectives, Bakker (1999) advocates a search for multiple-knowledge in a process of evolving a healing art among African healers as opposed to scientific truth in psychological theory and practice. Similarly, Gilbert (1989, 2000) advocates diversity and multi-perspectives.

This research is an attempt to explore whether local processes of knowing about human psychology can be nurtured in a western academic context in order to evolve a useful dynamic knowledge for praxis.

Local Institutionalisation Processes: Alienation?

More recently, two particular processes have prompted the profession of psychology to engage in a self-reflection of its relevancy and position in a changing society.

Firstly, educationists in tertiary institutions are being required to engage in transformation processes also called for by the South African government's Higher Education Act of 1997. This Act is characterised by processes that include the call to make education and training more accessible to all sections of the South African society in a manner that redresses past

discriminations and responds to and promotes diversity of cultural values. Departments of psychology are being prompted to engage in self-reflexive processes for curricula and for the profession as a whole.

Secondly, and of particular concern at this point in time (2004) is the current revision and restructuring of the Professional Framework for Psychological Practice in South Africa (2001). This includes the setting of standards for the profession by the Standards Generating Body for Psychology.

These two processes are going ahead in leaps and bounds with little, if any, reference to the debates of relevancy and appropriate practice in a modernising, developing and non-western society. In fact, the profession would seem to be moving towards more conservatism in practice regulations, more control by the Professional Board and all of this in line with conventional western practice forms designed and used in Europe and the United States.

The new Professional Framework does speak of the need for primary health care and the particular needs of the country and a suitable service provision for South Africa. However, this seems to pertain to mode of service delivery, frequency and access for local and rural communities, all very necessary issues to be addressed (Professional Board for Psychology, 1999). It would seem as if the Professional Board and psychologists in general in South Africa are not talking in professional body circles about alternative ways of practising, ways that may integrate indigenous and local knowledges about healing. It has been debated, nevertheless, in academic circles, that psychologists and other health professionals could confer with traditional healers in offering a health care delivery service (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999; Freeman, 1988; Kottler, 1990).

Outside of the professional bodies and inside local professional journals and academic circles, a decades-long debate continues around the need for relevancy, indigenisation, social action and liberation in psychology

(Dawes, 1986; Foster et al., 1993; Fouché, 1996; Gilbert, 1989; Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Holdstock, 1981, 1982; Jacobs, 1991; Kriegler, 1988, 1990; Van der Ryst, 1995; Whittaker, 1993).

While it is true that in South Africa an urgency may have been imparted to the process by the dictates of new legislation, one can also view the present debates in the discipline of psychology as part of a larger, global movement questioning the usefulness of entrenched approaches, philosophies, epistemologies and content of the discipline of psychology (Durojaiye, 1993; Fukuhara, 1989; Kim & Berry, 1993; Marsella, 1998; Matarazzo, 1987; McNicol, 1988; Meade, 1994; Melseater, 1991; Moghaddam, 1993).

Globalisation- Particularisation

These movements of change in psychology, both locally and globally, occur as part of a larger globalisation movement in the world today. Juxtaposed against the globalisation movement is a debate on how small local communities fit into this picture. A concordance between local communities and globalisation may seem like a paradoxical notion especially if it is believed that the principles on which the Enlightenment was founded have shaped the globalisation movement (Giddens, 1999). These principles include prominent western notions of using technology and knowledge to control the world and thus direct the future and create a history based on rationality rather than the perceived irrational forces of dogma and superstition as previously. Global control was the driving idea that has pushed Western civilisation to become a global civilisation (Giddens, 1999). The Enlightenment movement thus does not promote the preservation of local and traditional cultures and globalisation conceives of a world without borders, referring not only to monetary economies but specifically also to knowledge and information economies. The globalisation process threatens to promote the disappearance of traditional systems (Giddens, 1999).

However, while globalisation threatens local traditional systems, it is also difficult to separate discussions on globalisation from considerations of sustainability. Now, sustainability concerns itself with preserving the planet, improving the quality of life for all and reaching the full potential of the planet and all human life (World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation, 2002.). Thus, sustainability must necessarily be a globalised effort but cannot be successful without careful consideration of and respect for local communities, as the many references, in the latest World Summit document, to local ecologies, environments and social systems testify. Thus, while a movement towards a globalised sharing of world resources, information and governance is afoot, a counter movement that acknowledges and legitimises local contexts and ecologies accompanies it. It is apparent that in a true ecology of sustainability these movements would find a harmonious accord. The tension between these two movements, calls for an attempt to discover a balance or an ecological fit between the two.

In the midst of globalisation pressure, paradoxically, the psychologist-practitioner is being drawn increasingly into local communities of developing countries where modern western psychology is being challenged to find a relevant message to bring to these communities in a diversity of voices. It is this dilemma which Gilbert (2000) refers to in his paper “Localizing the global and globalizing the local: Some insights out of Africa”. It is essentially these situations that typically prompt psychologists to recognise the ill fit of modern western psychologies to communities that are different from the contexts within which psychology has largely evolved. In an attempt to address this, some researchers in the field have focussed on the need for contextualisation in making the profession more relevant for local practice and theory (Gilbert, 1989; McAllister, 1998; Nell, 1990). The acknowledgment, understanding and addressing of the role of cultural variations in behaviour and experience within psychology has been viewed as a neat way of resolving the dilemma (Marsella, 1998) as simultaneously, the discipline is pressurised to maintain and/ or discover universal and global frameworks (Danziger, 1994; Dawes, 1998).

Similarly, Gilbert (2000) discusses the need to promote diversity, disjunctions and multi-perspectives in the “global connectedness along with the rootedness in local practices and contexts” (p. 3). Other scholars remind the discipline that the perspectives of black psychologists are non-unitary (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999).

The as yet western dominated globalisation movement on the other hand seeks to unify and thus control the world in common understandings and shared knowledge systems (Giddens, 1999). The effects of this are often to subvert local cultures in a homogenising process (Fals-Borda, 2000). Thus, although liberatory movements have begun in various parts of the world to free psychology (Said, 1978, 1989; Simone, 1990, 1993) from western hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991), it is questionable whether they can separately challenge and influence the global movement afoot. They find themselves faced with the dilemma of avoiding re-entrapment in a different paradigm and knowledge system due to their very nature, through some kind of collective movement, but needing to make themselves visible in the globalising force.

As has been mentioned in chapter two, there has begun a counter movement, much of it from the south (Capra, 2003; Fals-Borda, 2000) to recognise specific cultures and survival needs of human societies that may be different from unifying technological advances. Survival needs of specific cultures go beyond a need to simply survive and live, but imply a need to sustain identity through cultural beliefs, values and modes of living. All of these are communicated through social networks and are in response to particular environmental demands passed on through generations of local knowledge. Globalisation movements ignore this at the peril of alienating particular cultures from their very identities which give meaning to their existence as social beings (Capra, 2003; Fals-Borda, 2000; Giddens, 1999; Merry, 2000). The way forward may not necessarily be to stop globalising forces which may be unstoppable, but that “hands and minds should move in

tandem in a new world alliance to reconstruct societies through humane globalising initiatives” which would be accountable to diversity (Fals-Borda, 2000, p. 633).

The Local Position

This research attempts a penetration of these issues in the discipline at a critical time for local practitioners, trainers and researchers. Yet, while in present literature much discussion is engaged in around the merits or demerits of directly addressing specific cultural issues (possibly corresponding to Adair’s stage three mentioned above), relatively little literature is available detailing research which exposes local African cultural conceptualisations in the primary area of practice of the discipline: counselling/ helping and related forms of intervention. The inability, to date, of African psychologists to find a fit for psychology, as it exists in the mainstream, to the peculiar African context, may be the reason why psychology has failed to become established as a major service resource in Africa (Eze, 1991; Peltzer, 1998; Nsamenang, 1995, 2000). At the same time, apart from the specific cultural clashes that may occur, modernisation brings its own psychosocial disorders that are not always amenable to treatment by traditional healers. Such psychosocial disorders may require some form of psycho-intervention that combines modern psychology and the knowledge/ belief systems of the communities being healed.

Alienation Within the Community

Dick Auerswald, ecosystemic thinker and social scientist who devoted much of his working life to be among the less privileged of his own world, visited South Africa in 1990. He subsequently wrote on his impressions of what he observed and heard while he was in the country, during a time when apartheid was not yet dismantled. Auerswald commented on possible effects of apartheid at a community level according to his own interpretations.

Auerswald (1991) broadens the meaning of apartheid by redefining the concept to denote the states of apartness in the relational domain. He suggests that institutionalised apartness such as apartheid results in relational hunger, isolation, which, like somatic starvation, leads to intellectual constriction, emotional dulling, and dereistic thinking. He defines dereistic thinking as “private unshared thinking that is not subjected to consensual validation...(and is) usually associated with psychosis” (p. 39). Auerswald goes on to maintain, controversially, that the differences in language between blacks and whites, exacerbates the differences between these two racial groups. The language of whites is embedded in mechological thinking, as opposed to the languages of the blacks which is embedded in relational thinking: - a fundamental aspect of ‘African worldview’. Mechological processes could be defined as those that emphasise the lineal cause-effect dynamic, while relational processes give more focus to the circular, the rhythmic and the patterned nature of dynamics.

Essentially, however one defines or analyses the dynamics of the situation, a young black person leaving a traditional home for a western education enters a potentially isolated space of being with few resources for coping with the transition between cultures. Many young black people cope healthily with the transition, but others, in the author’s experience (Eskell-Blokland, 2001), are vulnerable and present at counselling centres and other health care centres for treatment, or display various ways of not coping with daily life. Sometimes clients display several signs of psychotic-like behaviour. At times, psychological interventions have shown a dissipation of the psychotic-like symptoms.

Eskell-Blokland (2001) has described how she explored alternative ways of conducting the counselling process with college students presenting at a community centre in Mamelodi. This included extended single sessions, extending the notion of “client” to include persons other than the individual, and a search for healing among cultural relational issues. As a number of practitioners have done previously (Bodibe, 1993; Buhrmann, 1981; Freeman,

1988; Rankin, 1999) she also suggests that the South African indigenous knowledge system be engaged to access healing for indigenous peoples.

Mainstream western treatments for problems in living (known in the discipline as psychological problems or psychopathology) focus on the individual and tend to view the problems as being located within the individual. This is especially true when the possibility of a psychiatric diagnosis arises. However, when the cultural context is carefully considered the counsellor is reminded that psychology (and psychiatry) is a western product associated with the concerns and interests of western colonisers, which are still predominantly individualistic. On deeper exploration of alternative meanings behind the symptoms, it is suggested that it is possible to co-discover empowering meanings enabling the clients to move forward. One of the major challenges for the therapist may be not so much to think about the problem ecologically, but to think about the solution ecologically.

Evolutionary Processes in South African Psychology

Psychology as a discipline today (2002) almost straddles the hard sciences and the humanities. Denzin and Lincoln (2000c) refer to the "blurring of disciplinary boundaries" between the social sciences and humanities in a "quiet methodological revolution" (p. ix) as social science leans more and more towards interpretive and constructionist knowledge and theories in new paradigms. The move has been away from a dominant position of acceptance of the hypothetico-deductive model of science that tends to disguise the paradigm from which it operates (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), unlike the newer paradigms that are more explicit about the stances in which they evolved. Similarly, psychology's development as a social science needs to be seen against the backdrop of contextual knowledges and social climates. These influence the paradigms in which new knowledge is evolved and in which observations are languaged - the nature of the discourses. "Background

knowledge tells us what exists, how to understand it, and - most concretely - how to study it" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 3).

Historical Development of the Context

The contexts within which the discipline of psychology developed intensely at critical stages of its evolution can give some clues as to how and why it took the forms and shapes it did with, up until recently and still widely so, emphases on normality-abnormality, and behaviour change (engineering) in the individual. Since the inception of psychology as a modern discipline some one hundred and twenty-five years ago, "contextual forces" (Schultz & Schultz, 1996, p. 9) influencing the development of psychology included the sudden need for applied psychology especially in education and wartime phenomena. Researchers indicate how *contexts of justification* yield very different knowledges from knowledges created by researchers working within *contexts of discovery* (Morris, 1989; Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). The former, characterised chiefly by use of hypothetico-deductive models of research, stay more passively within a paradigm. The latter, characterised chiefly by newer interpretive, constructionist paradigms, tend to explicitly account for values, belief systems and contextual histories.

Alienation Through Prejudice

The theoretical bases and practices of psychology emanate largely from academic studies and research. However, in the United States of America, where psychology was taking the lead, widespread prejudice excluded blacks, Jews and women from advanced academic studies until well into the 1960s (Schultz & Schultz, 1996). While the situation may have improved since then with regard to admission to postgraduate studies and possibly appointments to posts, research and focus in psychology had already developed and evolved within the discipline with little regard for these and other marginalized groups (Anonymous, 1986; Dawes, 1985; Lazarus, 1985).

Evidence of this prejudice is still to be found in mainstream psychology (Fouché, 1996; Seedat, 1997) and hinders progress in psychology studies in the developing world. Attempts at alternative viewpoints or approaches are sometimes regarded with suspicion and they remain generally under-funded, under-published and sit on the fringes of academic teaching programmes (Gergen, 1997; Gergen & Gergen, 2000a). It is precisely this context of recognised prejudice that has led directly to a context of discovery in which researchers seek to be explicit about their values, belief systems and contextual histories in order to discover knowledge that can continue to define and refine the paradigms from within which they are operating.

This standpoint approach has led to the development of a number of alternative methodologies in research (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999). And so it has come about that marginalised groups such as feminists, homosexuals and blacks have adopted and developed a still much marginalised research approach (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999). Thus, research and writing in the context of discovery of liberatory psychology everywhere, and also in South Africa, tends to take an alternative stance in its attempt to ‘discover’ its own paradigm and promote its beliefs overtly (Hook, 2001). In South Africa, the movement, in its search for relevancy, appropriateness, and cultural fit, also challenges what it perceives as the institutionalisation of psychology in the alienating ideological western scientific mode. Liberatory psychology openly seeks emancipation from what it perceives as its hegemonic predecessor (Enriquez, 1989,1997; Ka Sigogo, Hooper, Long, Lykes, Wilson & Zietkiewicz, 2004; Seedat, 1997; Seedat & Nell, 1992). Liberatory psychology research seeks to promote social action and transformation (Fals-Borda, 1997, 2000; Fals-Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2003) rather than personal promotion of the individual academic as has been conventional in mainstream academia. The researcher or practitioner may be expected to take a communal approach to the problems presented, rather than the role of the expert consultant holding privileged knowledge (Bakker, 1996; Eagle & Pillay, 1988; Van Vlaerenden, 2001).

Stories of Alienation Within the Profession

This section discusses what the author refers to as the institutionalisation of psychology. By this it is meant that the discipline has tended to avoid ecological evolvment, preferring to remain faithful to mainstream entrenched academic principles - resulting in some measure of stagnation and entropy. This has filtered through to the practice and resulted in a sense of alienation in practitioners especially.

Among those South African psychologists who have expressed this personal sense of alienation explicitly are Bodibe (1990), Manganyi (1973, 1977, 1981) and Seedat (1997). Mahommed Seedat, a psychologist of Asian origin, classified black in the previous government regime, working and living in South Africa, expresses his alienating experience in his studies in psychology at a major university of the country. His words display an acuteness of experience that would be lost in a summary and thus they are repeated here in full:

The crisis and sense of alienation relate to the lack of confidence among black and white progressive psychologists in Euro-American psychology's ability and potential to articulate the psychological experiences of those other than Euro-American. When I entered the discipline as a master's student, I felt estranged from the arsenal of psychological concepts that held the false promise of explaining familiar psychological experiences. In dialogue with other black students and psychologists, I discovered that they shared my scepticism in the ability of Euro-American psychological concepts to explain the psychological world of black and female South Africans and of those

other than Euro Americans the world over. During my training, the process of becoming acquainted and familiar with unfamiliar and 'foreign' psychological concepts proved to be an emotional and intellectual dislocating learning experience. This experience does not refer to the process of intellectually mastering the technical language and jargon of the discipline and their translation into an arsenal of clinical, conceptual or analytical skills per se, or to the emotional and cognitive self-reflection that a clinical psychology trainee in particular has to exercise during the intensive training period, as much as it speaks to the methodological and conceptual ethnocentrism inherent in psychology as a discipline. The process whereby eurocentric psychology endeavours to explicate and universalise its concepts in the rendering of psychological services, scholarship, research and training programmes in a culturally heterogeneous world, is an emotionally and intellectually estranging experience and a source of early disillusionment for black and women psychologists and those operating in low income contexts. (Seedat, 1997, p. 261)

While the institutionalisation of psychology may have served to isolate and thus alienate psychologists generally in non-Euro-American countries, the situation in South Africa has been particularly devastating. During the apartheid era, for more than forty years, people have been separated along racial and cultural lines. Any attempts at change or transformation have been regarded as dangerously dissident and have been suppressed. The overall effect has been one of extreme institutionalisation. It is no surprise then that sectors of society have become marginalised and psychologists, already in a

marginalised profession (Blokland, 1992; Seedat, 1997) have felt it keenly and many feel particularly alienated (Auerswald, 1991; Seedat, 1997).

It is this author's opinion that it is a South African characteristic to create rigid boundaries between itself and the rest of the world. This may be an effect of apartheid but it has also left itself feeling isolated, uncertain and suspicious of its own resources. Never having learned to find connections at home, South African people generally reach out to the outside world. This could go some way towards explaining why the profession, given the opportunity to transform, embarks on a process of replicating American and European models. A similar process can be seen when local tertiary institutions measure their worth through foreign recognition. This is the opposite from what is happening in countries such as the Philippines where internal "cultural validation" becomes their own benchmark (Enriquez, 1989). Probably either extreme has its drawbacks and can lead to alienation of different sorts, but it is suggested that a balance between the slick *globalisation* approach of South African psychology praxis as it currently generally exists, and the grass roots *particularisation* approach of the Philippines would yield a healthy ecological context for the development of a young discipline in a developing world.

Liberation from the Institution

In response to alienation processes, at various levels, of the institutionalisation of psychology, some psychologists have turned to a liberatory movement. This is occurring both outside (Enriquez, 1989) the borders of South Africa and within (Seedat, 1997). Liberatory movements occur with differing goals and in reaction to varying dominant discourses within psychology from social action movements, to queer, and critical race theorists (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). Within South Africa, a liberatory movement for the positioning of local knowledges and relevancy in psychology, for contextualisation and political freedom from oppression and

dominance by the colonisers, has been gaining ground as evidenced by literature on the topic (Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat & Statman, 1990; Gilbert, 2000; Manganyi, 1973; Nell, 1990; Nicholas, 1990; Seedat, 1993, 1997; Whittaker, 1990). Various groups and formal organisations have formed around the notion of a liberated and liberatory psychology, such as the Apartheid and Psychology Committee; the Organization for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) (Nicholas, 1990; Vogelmann, 1987); and the Research and Authorship Development Forum (Seedat, 1997). The agenda of such a liberatory psychology has been debated as writers consider ways and means psychologists could intervene both from a socio-political perspective and/or from a personal one (Seedat, 1997).

Generally in psychology, liberatory movements from political oppression tend to focus on local knowledge and cultural systems, pertinent to local communities (Enriquez, 1989; Seedat, 1997). A focus on local knowledge and culture is what is referred to as the "particularisation" approach of the social sciences (Maharashtra, 2001; Preyer, 2000). Some researchers and psychologists working within the field and acknowledging psychology as the "progeny of the Euro-American ethnosciences" (Seedat, 1997, p. 261) deem it essential to return to cultural philosophical roots in order to liberate psychology from the western dominance (Anonymous, 1986; Gobodo, 1990; Muller & Cloete, 1987; Nsamenang, 1997, 2000; Seedat, 1993; Seedat & Nell, 1990; Turton, 1986; Vogelmann, 1987).

Well-Being and Psychopathology in Context

Liberation from western hegemony necessitates an interrogation of major assumptions and claims of mainstream psychology especially with regard to western notions of well-being, psychopathology and psychological intervention. Earlier and positivistic approaches tend to follow a medical model of identification of pathology according to a classification system (diagnosis), prognosis and treatment plan. This is a reflection of the

hegemonic medical domination that influenced developments within psychology for several decades and still wields a powerful influence over the health professions (Nell, 1992). More recently, postmodernism has brought more approaches to the study of human behaviour and the helping professions with strong emphases on the context and text (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Richardson, 2000). Among these can be included critical hermeneutics (Habermas, 1971), radical hermeneutics (Caputo, 1987), deconstructionism (Derrida, 1987), hermeneutic and existential phenomenological approaches (Ricoeur, 1971; Schutz, 1967), narrative approaches (Sarbin, 1986) and social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Postmodernism arose post war and post cold war in a climate of disillusionment with perceived constraints of scientific claims of positivistic social scientists, from which personhood and existential reality seemed to be absent. In the context of this shift to the local, and the stretching of conventional mainstream boundaries regarding ideas about what constitutes legitimate knowledge, some writers have questioned mainstream conventions around psychopathology and well-being. This questioning will be taken up in the following section and also in chapter five of this document.

In a breakaway from the traditional medical model of psychopathology, there is now widespread recognition of the relational influences on human behaviour and therefore also psychopathology and well-being. These are views adopted by practitioners who advocate more interactional (Mischel, 1986) and systemic (Bateson, Jackson, Haley & Weakland, 1956; Bowen, 1978; Dell, 1982; Jackson, 1959; Jackson & Weakland, 1971) explanations for human behaviour.

Within the postmodern movement generally (Gergen, 2001; Kvale, 1992b), social constructionism in particular (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992; Fruggeri, 1992; Gergen, 1991; Kenwood, 1999; Parker, 1999d; Shotter, 1993), and the narrative psychology movement (Epston, White & Murray, 1992; Shotter, 1992; Shotter & Gergen, 1988) relational ideas about psychopathology

and therapy have been taken to the point where psychopathology and therapy are considered to exist as creations or constructs in human language and stories about lives and meanings. As such they become de-reified as stand alone concepts but are seen as descriptions of behaviour in a context.

From this position, Parker (1999d), in a critique of traditional mainstream views of psychopathology as being located within the individual, and in a call for a dialectic approach to this critique, maintains that psychopathology has been subject to a process of social mystification (p. 3):

Counselling, psychotherapy and even psycho-analysis sometimes can, in certain circumstances, provide settings for the deconstruction of psycho-pathology.... Instead of being located firmly inside the person as an enduring personality trait, the problem is situated as the product of the historical relationship the person has forged with others. Instead of being something discrete and distinctively abnormal, the problem is positioned in relation to the many varieties of action and experience that structure the 'normal' everyday world. And instead of being solely the property of the person who attends the session as client or patient, the problem is re-specified as being as much to do with the reactions of the designated professional and what goes on between the ordinary person and the expert.

Theoretical descriptions of family systems and narratives of deficit have each, in various ways, confirmed the idea that psychopathology lies on a continuum with what normal folks do and that those professionals who pretend to be free from psychopathology are likely to do most damage.

Knowledge Base and Psychopathology

Parker (1999d) further discusses how a mainstream approach perpetuates both the system of constructs of psychopathology itself and how the constructs in turn perpetuate the social values out of which they emerge (p. 7):

[What we read and write about psychoanalysis is] first, not only about psychoanalysis, but works within psychoanalytic reasoning, inhabiting it and turning it back into a form of cultural critique. Second, not taking psychoanalysis as a privileged system of knowledge which comes from the outside and unlocks the secrets of culture but embeds it in the culture. Third, not treating psychoanalysis as a mysterious metanarrative but treating it as an historically material product and resource, as the tool and result of critical inquiry. Fourth, not treating psychoanalysis as a disconnected expert system but as a form of narrative which is accessible to, and accessed by the subjects created by it. Fifth, not treating psychoanalysis simply as a clinical practice devoted to the amelioration of symptoms, but as a system of symptoms which is structured by and which structures culture.

Parker states his perspective strongly by referring to "abstract and concrete aspects of psychopathology which govern psychiatry as a culturally-located historically-specific regime of truth" (1999d, p. 6). Taking Parker's (1999d) definition of psychopathology as being located, not within the client as an independent discrete phenomenon, but as being a less-fixed manifestation of socio-historic events of inter-relationship tempered by power

and social control issues, then by extrapolation, the healing process must focus on relationship, cultural patterns and social dynamics of oppression. If one is to take such a view seriously, or certain aspects of it, it would seem to be inappropriate to use a discourse of sickness and health in such a discussion. Rather than refer to 'healing' perhaps it would be more appropriate to refer to emancipation, liberation, disentanglement etc. In this manner, a discourse of liberation from the oppressive nature of mainstream and largely biomedical psychology would be more appropriately adopted.

It is suggested here that such a socially contextually situated inter-relationship view of psychopathology may be viewed as an ecological process. Then healing, or change, would lie within the socio-ecological dynamic and the description of such change processes could be one of a sort of ecological intelligence.

However, generally in mainstream psychology, while psychotherapy and counselling have travelled a long road since its inception, with many by-roads being discovered along the way, the major focus remains a modernist enterprise of the healing of psychopathology. This is backed not only by the abundance of literature on the topic but also by the continuing heavy emphasis on psychopathology and psychodiagnostics in both undergraduate and graduate programmes (Fouché, 1996). The almost universal approach from this mainstream modernist position is one of classification using western scientific empirical knowledge to establish categories. Even the more recent shift to salutogenesis or psychofortology (Wissing & van Eeden, 1997) attempts to empirically "operationalise...models and constructs" (p. 3) along diverse dimensions.

In contrast to the western traditional reification of human problems presented as psychopathology, Parker (1999d, p. 4) refers to psychopathology as "a construct, storied into being". He goes on to attribute the traditional substantiation of psychopathology to "expert knowledge" and suggests that

such knowledge plays an “oppressive role” in the lives of modern people. The attempts of these same people to make sense of their lives and the problems which are inevitably experienced as part of the human condition, are dismissed as unfounded on any empirical ground or recognised theory - recognised by the experts of the discipline which has colonised the field. “Expert knowledge” within psychology becomes a driving force around which all conceptualisations of human behaviour, even difference, is centred (Parker, 1999d). However, according to Parker (1999d, p. 4):

But it is not. When we become experts upon our own lives, as reflexive self-conscious skilled practitioners of the discourse which bears us, as those who are paid to listen or pay to speak, we have also become theoreticians.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to deconstruct the whole field of psychopathology as Parker may appear to attempt to do in his various writings, but to show the possibility of viewing human problems and their solutions from alternative paradigms. It will also be useful here to highlight the paradigmatic constraints of any discussion of psychopathology for the purposes of showing how such discussions are both bound by and support the discourses from within which they emerge.

In order to achieve this it becomes necessary to critically examine knowledge bases around human behaviour, problems in living, healing/ change and conceptualisations of human behaviour, and the effects of these knowledge bases in cultural contexts. It is the usefulness of embedded knowledge bases within cultural diversities that could lead to alternative ways of conceptualising psychological healing/ change through processes of counselling. The healing/change processes of mainstream psychology, such as the kind of counselling which emerges from accredited professional training institutions within western oriented tertiary educational systems, can be seen as historically

material products and resources of a particular culture - the western modernist, scientific one. This suggests that western mainstream psychology can be universalised only within the paradigmatic constraints to the extent that these constraints can be imported, stretched, adapted or transported.

Parker's (2000) view that modern western persons are trapped into psychopathological discourse because modern western psychological theory is already intricately part of the texture of modern western culture, is supported by the social constructionist perspective which claims that the subject matters which psychologists study are created in the very process of identifying them (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999). Foucault (1980) in his search for understanding the origins of 'knowledge', criticises psychology for establishing "regimes of truth" through discourse identified as 'knowledge'. Bakker & Mokwena (2000) draw parallels between social constructionist ideas of the social origins of knowledge and the African perspective of knowledge as being created through community interaction. In fact, knowledge of self can change within African society, as the community changes and evolves in passing through various social stages (Bakker & Mokwena, 2000).

Psychologists have thus been variously criticised for espousing to an epistemology accused of allowing them to objectify clients with little regard to the "otherness" implied in any form of relationship. The question is what is it that is woven into "other" cultures and how does the trained psychologist enter the "other" discourse in order to effect a change process for problems which are manifestations of human interactions and the origins of which lie between living people?

Parker (1999d, p. 14) suggests "that discovery [of the change process] comes about through treating subjectivity as a resource rather than as the place where psychopathology lurks". A social constructionist approach accesses such resources by focussing on the narratives which occur between clients and psychotherapists/ counsellors, and uses the narratives to initiate a

change/healing process (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999). It is important to point out here that Parker and other producers of social constructionist ideas (and other theoreticians generally) refer to "individuals" and the "subjectivity" of individuals. It is suggested that it is possible to extrapolate and refer to *communities* in the place of individuals and the "subjectivity" of communities.

This is particularly important when it is considered that much of the African sense of self is achieved through community interaction such as occurs in, for example, the African churches. Traditional African churches carry a significance for the communities in which they are situated, which transcends being simply being places of worship. Traditional African churches serve as community gathering places, take on social leadership functions, become places of safety for women and children, are places of healing for the sick in body and soul (or mind) and provide resources for living (Bakker, 1989).

Seedat (1997), in advocating a liberatory psychology in South Africa, reminds us of Butchart's caution (1990, in Seedat, 1997, p. 8) that:

Because liberatory psychology may hold certain mainstream assumptions about psychic pain, its intervening formulations may well recreate biomedically dominated mainstream ideas of traumatising, patienthood and victimisation.

Seedat (1997) refers to a "growing body of literature" (p. 9) which recommends that the practitioner recognise that people using psychological services also consult indigenous traditional practitioners whose knowledge base, and thus discourse, of illness and problems of living, differ from western practitioners. In order to deliver an effective psychological service local indigenous knowledge bases must also be taken into account in offering treatment.

Conclusion

Processes with regard to the impact of globalisation on local positions having been considered in this chapter, the next chapter will turn to explorations of what might constitute traditional African cultures, some philosophical underpinnings of African perspectives as identified by various scholars, and some perspectives on the notion of 'African psychologies'. How such notions have evolved within the South African context in particular is discussed. These descriptions and discussions flow from issues that arose out of the narratives (Other Stories) in chapter three, and form a background to further discussions of The Flow in chapter seven.