University of Cape Town
Faculty of Education
Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies

Living without "gelerendheid": a study of the discourses and literacy practices of literacy class learners and "resisters" in Ocean View

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Adult Education

by

Mignonne Breier

Supervisor: Mastin Prinsloo

March 1994

University of Cape Town

The University of Cape Town has been given the right to reproduce this thesis in whole or in part. Copyright is held by the author.

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

University of Cape Town

DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Adult Education. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed by candidate

Mignonne Breier

15 March 1994

A NOTE ABOUT THE TITLE

The title of this thesis reflects the circuitous path of this research. At the start of my study I envisaged a title that would make use of the word "illiterate" or "illiteracy", but I found that the only people in Ocean View who use these terms are professionals, like myself, who have been exposed to the discourses of the education or health professions.

"Gelerendheid" is a term that was not in my vocabulary at the start of my study but it is commonly used in Ocean View to distinguish between persons who have had basic schooling and those who have not. It refers to the skills, qualities and status a person might acquire after a (socially acceptable and variable) period of formal schooling. In opting to speak about people without "gelerendheid" rather than people who are "illiterate" "semi-literate" or people "without basic schooling" I am attempting to reflect the discourses of the main subjects of my study.

The word "learners" is one I would not normally use to describe people who attend literacy classes. Again, I use it because it features in the discourses of the Ocean View literacy class, as does its Afrikaans equivalent, "leerders".

The term "resisters" does not come from Ocean View. It reflects the use of the term by American educationalists Quigley (1990) and Davis (1991) to refer to adults who could participate in adult basic education programmes but have chosen to resist. The term as they use it has its origins in theories about reproduction and resistance in schooling (Wilis, 1977; Giroux 1983). However, I do not make us of this term in order to invoke these theories. I choose it, rather than the term "nonparticipant", which is also used in adult education literature, in an effort to reflect the concern of this thesis with the concept of resistance put forward by Michel Foucault (1982: 210 – 211) as a means to study power relations. My use of the terms "resistance" and "resisters" is discussed in greater depth in 3.4.

ABSTRACT

This research attempted to find out why certain adults in Ocean View, who could be regarded as illiterate, attended literacy classes and others, who could also be regarded as illiterate or semi-literate, did not. It made use of the ethnographic research methods of life history interviews and participant observation to develop an account of the discourses of five literacy teachers and the discourses and literacy practices of seven adults who attended their classes (called the learners) and six who could have attended basic education classes but did not (called the resisters).

The research revealed a certain compatibility between the discourses of the teachers and learners which would probably not have existed between the discourses of the teachers and resisters. This was despite the fact that there were aspects of primary Discourse that were common to all. The compatibility had to do with the teachers and learners' desire and ability to separate primary and secondary Discourses at times, for the purposes of church attendance and literacy class participation. The resisters discourses and practices showed no such separation. In general they appeared to have a more integrated approach to the acquisition of secondary Discourse than the learners.

There was also a discourse about retardation which was prevalent among health professionals in the community which contributed to the stigmatization of the literacy class and resistance to it.

CAPE TOWN

Hout Bay

Noordhoek

Sun Valley

Sunnydale

Site 5

Kommetjie

Ocean View

Muizenberg

Fish Hoek

FALSE BAY

Glencairn

Simon's Town

Red Hill

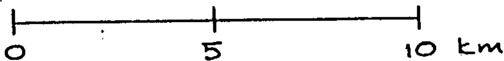
Scarborough

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Bordjiesdrif

Cape Point

SCALE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank certain people who helped to make this thesis a reality:

- My supervisor, Mastin Prinsloo, for introducing me to the new literacy studies and for his ongoing encouragement, guidance and interest.
- Clive Millar and Cathy Kell for some really useful conversations.
- Dave, Matthew and Daniel Breier and Princess Lizo for their patience and support.
- Jenny Still for doing the proofreading
- Heather Jacklin, Cornelia Bullen-Smith and other friends, for believing I would get there in the end.
- the people of Ocean View for their co-operation and hospitality.

This thesis is dedicated to two people who cannot read it, who inspired me to do this research in the first place.

CONTENTS

DECLARATION i

A NOTE ABOUT THE TITLE ii

ABSTRACT iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

CHAPTER ONE:
MOTIVATIONS AND METHODOLOGIES 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEW LITERACY STUDIES 3
1.2.1 The new literacy studies approach to "literacies 4
1.2.1 New literacy studies research 9
1.3 A PERSONAL MOTIVATION 15
1.4 METHODOLOGICAL INFLUENCES 16
1.4.1 Methodology of new literacy studies research 16
1.4.2 Some post-modern influences 19
1.5 METHODOLOGY OF THIS STUDY 27
1.5.1 Life history interviews and participant observation 27
1.5.2 Field notes and reflexivity 29
1.5.3 Scope, location and duration of the research 30
1.5.4 A brief account of the research process 30
1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 34

CHAPTER TWO:
OCEAN VIEW AND ITS DISCOURSES ON LITERACY, ILLITERACY AND "GELERENDHEID" 35
2.1 OCEAN VIEW: A BRIEF NARRATIVE ABOUT GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHY 35
2.2 DISCOURSES ABOUT LITERACY, ILLITERACY AND "GELERENDHEID" IN OCEAN VIEW 39
2.2.1 Use of the words "literate" and "illiterate" in Ocean View 40
2.2.2 Gelerendheid 44
2.2.3 Gelerendheid in time and place 45
2.2.4 Gelerendheid and common sense 47
2.2.5 Summary 52
2.3 THE OCEAN VIEW LIBRARY AND ITS LITERACY CLASS 53
2.3.1 The Ocean View Library 53
2.3.2 The Literacy Class 54
2.3.3 Joan Basson's Reading and Writing Programme 55
2.3.4 The Literacy Teachers 66
2.3.5 Summary 75

CHAPTER THREE:
LIVING WITHOUT "GELERENDHEID": THE LEARNERS 77
3.1 ORALITY AND LITERACY AMONG THE LEARNERS 77
3.2 AGE, EMPLOYMENT, STATUS IN THE LITERACY CLASS, MARITAL STATUS, RELIGION, SCHOOLING 78
3.2.1 Age and employment 79
3.2.2 Status in the Literacy Class 79
3.2.3 Marital Status 79
3.2.4 Religion 80
3.2.5 Schooling 81
3.3. INCENTIVES TO ATTEND LITERACY CLASSES 83
3.4 POWER AND RESISTANCE IN THE LITERACY CLASSES 86
3.4.1 The Power of Privacy 88
3.4.2 Power in the Home 92
3.5 LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES AMONG THE LEARNERS 97
3.5.1 Literacy events and practices at work 98
3.5.2 Literacy events and practices in the commercial world 99
3.5.3 Literacy events and practices in the home 101
3.5.4 Literacy events and practices in the church 105
3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 108

CHAPTER FOUR:
LIVING WITHOUT "GELERENDHEID": THE RESISTERS 109
4.1 USE OF THE TERM "RESISTER" IN THIS STUDY 109
4.1.1 My separation of learners and resisters 110
4.2 AGE, EMPLOYMENT, MARITAL STATUS, RELIGION AND SCHOOLING 111
4.2.1 Age and Employment 111
4.2.2 Marital status 113
4.2.3 Religion 114
4.2.4 Schooling 115
4.3 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN THE LIVES OF THE RESISTERS .. 117
4.4 RESISTANCE TO LITERACY CLASSES 122
4.5 LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES AMONG THE RESISTERS 125
4.5.1 Literacy events and practices at work 126
4.5.2 Literacy events and practices in the commercial world 129
4.5.3 Literacy events and practices in the home 133
4.5.4 Literacy events and practices in religion 136
4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 139

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE ROLE OF THE CENTRE FOR MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED 141
5.1 THE DISCOURSE ABOUT MENTAL RETARDATION 141
5.2 THE EFFECT OF THE DISCOURSE ABOUT RETARDATION ON THE LITERACY CLASS 147

CHAPTER SIX:
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS 150
6.1 CONCLUSIONS 151
6.3 IMPLICATIONS 161

BIBLIOGRAPHY 163

APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF SEVEN LITERACY CLASS LEARNERS

APPENDIX B: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF SIX LITERACY CLASS RESISTERS

APPENDIX C: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE LITERACY TEACHERS

APPENDIX D: TWO LIFE HISTORIES

CHAPTER ONE:

MOTIVATIONS AND METHODOLOGIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"Millions of South Africans live frustrated, difficult lives because they can't read."

This was the message of the main article in a recent edition of the South African version of Readers' Digest magazine (Simon, 1993). Illiteracy was described as "an affliction that affects some five million South African adults who have had no contact with school."

> "They can't decipher a street sign or fill in a bank form or a job application," the article said. "They can't read a love letter or sign for their wages. They can't even buy a packet of meat in a supermarket without asking someone how much it costs. They are totally illiterate, unable to function fully in any modern society. Added to this, another ten million are functionally illiterate.
>
> "If they are lucky enough to be employed, they are restricted to manual jobs and manage to adapt to their affliction. Yet South Africa pays dearly for their handicap. Illiteracy costs businesses and taxpayers millions of rands each year in errors, accidents, delays and cost overruns."

The article then proceeded to describe the lives of three illiterate individuals who had "had the courage to get help".

Not long after the publication of this article, in the Cape Peninsula township of Ocean View, teachers of the local literacy class set up a display in the Ocean View civic centre, along with other local organisations, in an effort to publicise their work and attract new learners.

A poster, positioned behind the literacy group's information table, read:

> "Illiteracy is a life sentence.
> Help free those who cannot read or write by telling of our classes at the library."

A group of curious children milled around the information table and a few professionals from the other organisations on display that day made polite enquiries.

Outside groups of adults lounged around the shabby courtyards of neigbouring flats, apparently with little to do.

In the several hours I spent at that exhibition, I did not see a single one of those adults enter the civic centre and not a single new learner was enrolled that day.

If illiteracy is the "affliction", the "life sentence" that certain discourses will have us believe, why are more people not clamouring at the doors of literacy organisations, demanding to be taught to read and write?

The Ocean View scenario described above is not unique. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report on Adult Basic Education in South Africa puts the number of adults learning literacy and adult basic education in South Africa at 100 000 (NEPI, 1992: 9). This is less than 1 % of the number who are illiterate or semi-literate – NEPI, like the Readers' Digest article, also estimates there are about 15 million people in this country without basic schooling.

Although current levels of literacy provision are extremely low, the providers are not being inundated with prospective learners. The "unusually low level of developmental pressure", as the University of Cape Town's Adult Education Department has put it, is a matter of concern in the adult education field (Morphet, Millar, Prinsloo, 1992: 6). Classes are not full and literacy organisations struggle to attract and retain learners (Prinsloo,1993: 3).

Why is this so?

The research which is reported in this thesis is a small step towards an answer to this question. It focused on one particular community (Ocean View) and tried to find reasons for the "low level of developmental pressure" on the literacy providers operating in that area. In doing so, it asked the following specific questions:

- Why do the few people who do attend literacy classes in Ocean View do so and why do other people in the community, also identified as illiterate, stay away?

- How do the people regarded as illiterate deal with written materials?

I tried to answer the above questions by exploring the discourses and literacy practices of some of Ocean View's illiterate residents, including some within the ambit of the local literacy class and some beyond it.

I then compared their discourses with those of people in Ocean View who attempt to "free those who cannot read and write" and I analysed the overlaps and gaps.

In this thesis, I discuss the theoretical and methodological influences on the study before attempting to develop an account of discourses and literacy practices among "illiterate" people in Ocean View. In the concluding section I attempt to answer my research questions and I discuss possible implications of the research.

1.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEW LITERACY STUDIES

In framing my research questions, and in deciding on methodology I was informed, mainly, by a body of research and theory which has been called "the new literacy studies" and has led to some drastic revisions of the notions of "literacy" and "illiteracy" over the past decade and a half.

In this section I consider the new literacy studies approach to literacy as an ideological, socially embedded practice. I also consider some of the research that contributed to this focus.

1.2.1 The new literacy studies approach to "literacies

The new literacy studies invite one to rethink the terms "literacy" and "illiteracy" and how they are socially constructed, to consider the social practices in which they are embedded and to identify and analyse the ideologies and interests that give rise to these practices.

Research in the new literacy studies makes use of methods from anthropology and linguistics and has led to some surprising findings that challenge many of the traditional stereotypes associated with adult basic education.

Literacy used to be regarded predominantly as an individual's ability to read and write. Full stop. The social context of the reading and writing was not taken into consideration. Nor was the text itself considered important.

Literacy as an independent variable was accorded numerous good effects ranging from logical and analytical modes of thought to lower birth rates and economic development (Graff, 1987; Gee, 1990).

Proponents of the new literacy studies believe otherwise. They say literacy cannot be viewed independently of the social practices in which it is embedded or of the texts which are read or written. Literacy is always about reading or writing something (specific texts of specific types in specific ways in specific contexts).

Literacy is therefore not a neutral technology but intimately connected with the ideologies and power arrangements of society.
And there are many different types of literacies.

And the numerous good effects traditionally accorded literacy are nothing but a myth. (Graff, 1979, calls it the "literacy myth".) Research has shown that many of the effects traditionally ascribed to literacy alone are in fact due to the trappings of literacy and schooling – "what literacy comes wrapped up in, namely the attitudes, values, norms and

beliefs (at once social, cultural, political) that always accompany literacy and schooling..." (Gee 1990: 42).

The body of theory and research that constitutes the new literacy studies has emanated mainly from the fields of anthropology, linguistics, psychology, history and semiotics. In this thesis, I pay particular attention to the work of social anthropologist Brian Street and socio-linguist Brian Gee.

Street argues there are two main approaches to literacy:

- The "autonomous" model of literacy, (embodied in the writings of Jack Goody, Walter Ong and David Olson among others) conceptualises literacy "in technical terms, treating it as independent of social context, an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character" (Street, 1993:5). This model is based on the "essay-text" form of literacy and generalises broadly from what is, in fact, a narrow, culture-specific literacy practice. It also associates literacy with progress, civilisation, individual liberty and social mobility and attempts to distinguish it from schooling (Street, 1984:2).

- The "ideological" model of literacy, of which Street himself is a major proponent, views literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power relations in society and recognises the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts (Street, 1993:7). The term "ideological" here does not refer to the Marxist sense of "false consciousness" but, as Street puts it, to the "sense employed within contemporary anthropology, socio-linguistics and cultural studies, where ideology is the site of tension between authority and power on the one hand and resistance and creativity on the other.... This tension operates through the medium of a variety of cultural practices, including particularly language and, of course, literacy" (page 8).

The ideological model rejects the notion of a great divide between orality and literacy, which has been projected by traditional anthropologists, in favour of an oral/literate mix dependent on context.

It does not attempt to deny technical skills or the cognitive aspects of reading and writing but rather understands them as they are "encapsulated within cultural wholes and within structures of power" (page 9).

Brian Gee (1990) presents an ideological view of literacy from a socio-linguistic perspective influenced by post-structuralism.

Gee says the traditional conception of literacy as the ability to read and write (independent of context) is "deeply problematic".

> "It rips literacy out of any social context and treats it as an autonomous, asocial cognitive skill with little or nothing to do with human relationships. It cloaks literacy's connection to political power, to social identity and to ideologies... often in the service of privileging certain types of literacies and certain types of people" (page 49).

Like Street, Gee argues that the focus of literacy studies should be on social practices and literacy should not be seen as a singular thing. Discourse (which he refers to with a capital D) is a key concept in Gee's definition of literacies.[1]

Gee defines Discourse as:

> "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network' or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful role" (page 43).

Gee sees Discourse as being "intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society" and for this reason "inherently ideological". Control over

---

[1] In this thesis I use a capital "D" when speaking of "Discourse" in the context of Gee's work. In all other references to discourse, I use the lower case.

certain Discourses can lead to the acquisition of social goods (money, power, status) in a society.

Gee distinguishes between two types of Discourse:

- Primary Discourse (the discourse one acquires "free" in our communication with family and intimates)

- Secondary Discourses (which we acquire in our interaction with people with whom we are not intimate or where one is being "formal")

Gee defines literacy as "mastery of, or fluent control over, a secondary Discourse involving print" and adds that literacy is "always plural" since there are many secondary Discourses. Gee talks of "multiple literacies" and says types of literacies include "community-based literacies" and "public sphere literacies" (depending on whether they involve mastery of community-based or public sphere discourses). One can also talk of "dominant literacies" and "non-dominant literacies" depending on whether they involve mastery over dominant or non-dominant discourses (page 153).

The main aim of discourse analysis, in Gee's terms, is to explicate the ideologies that are behind Discourses.

The perspective on discourse provided by French philospher Michel Foucault is an often-quoted influence on some new literacy theorists. It is also an important influence in this study.

Foucault, in a series of historical analyses of various institutions and professions, found that knowledge and power were inseparable and inextricably linked with discourse. Discourses were about unwritten rules of what could be said and thought, and also who could speak, in certain situations. Knowledge was that of which one could speak in a discursive practice. And discourse was "not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse

is the power which is to be seized." (Foucault, 1970). Any system of education, according to Foucault, was a "political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry " (page 123).

Discourse analysis, in Foucault's terms, is concerned with specifying the socio-historically variable "discursive formations" or systems of rules which make it possible for certain statements but not others to occur at particular times, places and institutional locations.

Foucault's later work on the formation of subjectivity and on the "form of power which makes individuals subjects" (Foucault, 1982: 212) is another important influence on this work.

In "The Subject and Power" (1982:208) Foucault said the goal of his work over the previous 20 years had been to "create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects". Cousins and Hussain (1984:251) sum up this aspect of Foucault's work:

> "... for Foucault, the processes of subjectification are the obverse of discursive and non-discursive practices which objectify humans. Among the diverse 'modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects', he identifies three which have been the concern of his works... The first is the emergence of the discourses on Man (philology, biology and economics) around the turn of the 19th Century which attributed to humans the identities of the speaking subject, the labouring subject and a living subject. The second refers to 'dividing practices' which classified humans into the sane – insane, the healthy – sick and the law-abiding – criminals. ... The third concerns how discourses and practices came to construct the artefact 'sexuality' and endow it to humans."

Another perspective on discourse which has influenced this study is that provided by Cleo Cherryholmes (1988:1-15). He refers to "discourse-practice" as the regularities in what is said and done in a profession and says these regularities are the result of choices made for ideological reasons and because of power arrangements that support certain social practices above others. He urges one to think of educational discourses-practices, not only in terms of what is said and done, but also in terms of what structures those choices.

1.2.1 New literacy studies research

Some major psychological, anthropological and sociolinguistic research efforts have contributed to the ideological focus of the new literacy studies.

The work of psychologists Sylvia Scriber and Michael Cole among the Vai in Liberia is one example. Their five-year study, reported in "The Psychology of Literacy" (Scribner and Cole, 1980) brought them to the conclusion that the cognitive effects often associated with literacy are not an outcome of literacy as such but of schooling and "literacy is not a surrogate for schooling with respect to its intellectual consequences" (page 252). Gee (1990:59) comments that this study had important implications for the autonomous model of literacy and those who believed that literacy, regardless of context, led to substantial cognitive skills.

Scribner and Cole (1990: 236) developed a "practice account of literacy" as a framework for interpreting their findings. Practice, in their terms, consists of three components: technology, knowledge and skills.

> "Instead of focusing exclusively on the technology of a writing system and its reputed consequences ... we approach literacy as a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use" (page 236).

They say they discovered all Vai literacy practices, even the most rudimentary (keeping a family album) involved many different types of knowledge and multiple sets of skills (page 237).

Scribner and Cole's work also challenges the traditional notion of a great divide between literate and non-literate populations.

> "Our results are in direct conflict with persistent claims that 'deep psychological differences' divide literate and nonliterate populations... On no task – logic, abstraction, memory, communication – did we find all nonliterates performing at lower levels than all literates. Even on tasks closely related to script activities, such as reading or writing with pictures, some nonliterates did as well as those with school or literacy experiences. We can and do claim that literacy promotes skills among the

> Vai, but we cannot and do not claim that literacy is a necessary and sufficient condition for any of the skills we assessed" (page 251).

In seeking to explain this phenomenon, Scribner and Cole introduce some new variables besides literacy and schooling: town living and multilingualism.

> "One explanation for the variegated pattern of nonliterate performance is that other life experiences besides school and literacy were potent influences on some of our tasks. Principal among these was urban residency.... Multilingualism also influenced performance...
>
> "Nonliterate populations are not a homogeneous mass, nor are they likely to require explicit tutelage in literacy to acquire some of the skills demonstrated by those who 'know book'" (page 252).

Shirley Brice Heath's "Ways with Words" (Heath,1983) records "the natural flow of community and classroom life over nearly a decade" in two small working-class communities (Roadville and Trackton) in the Piedmont Carolinas, USA. Heath concentrates on the ways in which children acquire language and literacy in these communities and then compares these processses with those of middle-class residents of a nearby town.

Important findings were that neither the Trackton nor Roadville communities could be described as either "oral" or "literate" – in both communities there were "multiple uses of written and oral language, and members had access to and used both" (page 230).

Residents of the two communities had a variety of literate traditions and in each community these were "interwoven in different ways with oral usages of language, ways of negotiating meaning, deciding on action and achieving status." However, neither community's "ways with the written word" prepared it for school's ways (in the way that the middle-class townspeople's ways prepared their children).

Roadville adults read books to their children, but did not help their children to draw connections between the events in their books and events in the real world. Trackton children were surrounded by talk and had constant verbal interaction with peers and

adults, but there were practically no reading materials in their homes and adults did not sit and read to children.

Children from both were unsuccessful in school – despite the fact that both communities placed a high value on success in school.

The major message from Heath's work is that children need to be socialised into mainstream, school-based literacies (preferably at home) if they are ever to acquire them. Children from non-mainstream homes are unlikely to acquire these literacies in school. Schools are good places to practice these literacies once one has their foundations, but not good places to acquire them. (Gee's summary, 1990:66).

Ronald and Suzanne Scollon's "Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication" (1981) reports on almost 10 years of study of interethnic communication between Athabaskans and the dominant English-speaking population in Alaska and northern Canada.

The Scollons say that although languages use grammar as the system of expressing ideas, in interethnic communication it is the discourse system which produces the greatest difficulty.

> "It is the way the ideas are put together into an argument, the way some ideas are selected for special emphasis, or the way emotional information about the ideas is presented that causes miscommunication. The grammatical system gives the message while the discourse system tells how to interpret the message. The greatest cause of interethnic problems lies in the area of understanding not what someone says but why he is saying it. This information about why people are speaking is not signalled in the same way in all ethnic groups and so some misunderstandings can result even where the grammatical systems are nearly identical" (page 12).

Differences in discourse systems may produce conflict and confusion in interethnic communication and it is because of these confusions that much ethnic stereotyping develops. However, the Scollons warn that stereotyping works in two directions.

> "A speaker not only decides what another person is like on the basis of how he carries on in discourse; he also makes important decisions about what he himself is like from the same discourse. We believe discourse patterns are among the strongest

> expressions of personal and cultural identity. To a great extent a person feels he is what he is because of the way he talks with others...." (page 37).
>
> "If we suggest change we have to be very aware that we are not only suggesting change in discourse patterns. We are suggesting change in a person's identity. If someone says that an English speaker should be less talkative, less self-assertive, less interested in the future, he is saying at the same time that he should become a different person. He is saying that he should identify less with his own culture and more with another..." (page 37).

The Scollons describe the Athabaskans' set of discourse patterns and world view (they call it "reality set") as "bush consciousness" and contrast it with the world view of the dominant Euro-Canadian and American population which they call "modern consciousness".

They argue that literacy as it is practised in European-based education is intimately related to modern consciousness. The essayist prose style which is highly valued in such education is to a large extent defined by discourse patterns that are highly compatible with modern consciousness but not bush consciousness.
They define the "ideal essayist text" as "an explicit, decontextualized presentation of a view of the world that fictionalizes both author and audience" (page 52).

For an Athabaskan to produce such an essay would require him or her to produce a major display. In terms of Athabaskan discourse patterns and world view, this display would be appropriate only if the person was in a position of dominance in relation to the audience. But in essayist prose the audience and author are fictionalized. In Athabaskan discourse patterns, where the relationship of the communicants is unknown, the Athabaskan prefers silence.

The Scollons conclude: "The Athabaskan set of discourse patterns are to a large extent mutually exclusive of the discourse patterns of essayist prose". In order to write, the Athabaskan must adopt discourse patterns that are identified with the dominant English-speaking population. "... it is this internal conflict that explains much of the problem of native literacy programs as well as problems with English literacy in the public school systems of Alaska and Canada" (page 53).

The three major works described have had profound influence in the new literacy studies, but there have been many more recent and smaller-scale studies that have also provided fascinating accounts of literacy practices in specific contexts. Details of some of these studies (in particular Brian Street's 1993 anthology "Cross Cultural Approaches to Literacy" and Barton and Ivanic's 'Writing in the Community' of 1991) will be referred to later in this thesis as similarities between social practices in their studies and in mine become obvious.

At this stage I need to mention one particular study, however, as it had a major influence on the focus of my research as well as a major influence on approaches to literacy generally, both in this country and overseas. The study, by Arlene Fingeret, challenges the stereotypical picture of illiterates presented in traditional approaches to literacy. Such approaches are illustrated, for example,in the Reader's Digest article at the start of this thesis and in the vignette of the Ocean View literacy group's exhibition. They have also been well-described by Stephen Reder (1985:5). Illiteracy, he says, is all too often, referred to as a "social ill", something to be "combatted", "eradicated", "wiped out" – as one would talk of a contagious disease.

But Fingeret in her 1983 study of 43 adults in an American urban setting found "many illiterate adults are far from the stereotypical dependent, incompetent individuals associated with the term 'illiterate'".

> "I entered into fieldwork informed by the adult education literature, expecting to find illiterate poor adults cut off from the social world, perhaps connected to the umbilical of television... When people shared their primarily negative perceptions of their physical environments and discussed their fears of violence in initial interviews, I thought they were supporting the descriptions of isolation and alienation. As I spent more time with many of the adults in this study, however, I began to observe a rich, highly interactive social world, co-existing with the harsh reality of the streets" (Fingeret, 1983:135)

Fingeret found these adults participated in elaborate social networks in which they received the help they needed to handle written materials in exchange for other types of expertise which they possessed. Only four of the adults in the survey could be identified as dependent. In general, the adults in the survey did not present a homogeneous picture – a fact that has important implications for literacy provision.

Reder (1985:5) argues that seeing illiterates as powerless, non-contributing members of society not only does them "a crippling disservice", it may also complicate efforts to provide literacy training for them.

Fingeret (1983:142) commented that "as long as literacy programmes continue to publicise a homogeneous image of inadequate, dependent illiterate adults we will continue to attract only a small number of potential program participants".

Present literacy programmes met the needs of those illiterate adults who were willing and able to separate themselves from their social networks for a variety of reasons, she said. Program models needed to expand to include illiterate adults as "individuals in network" (page 144). (Unfortunately, this pioneering article did not include descriptions of factors that motivated and enabled illiterate adults to separate themselves from their networks.)

In South Africa, the University of Cape Town's Department of Adult Education and Extra-mural studies presented arguments similar to Fingeret's in a report to the Independent Development Trust (Morphet, Millar and Prinsloo, 1992).

This is where the department argued that the 100 000 people receiving literacy training in South Africa (out of a potential 15 million) revealed "an unusually low level of 'developmental pressure'" and indicated two a priori conditions:

> "The first is that existing training 'systems' do not connect with the actual conditions they are meant to address. The second, we hypothesize, is that this failure rests on a false set of assumptions about the ways in which illiteracy/literacy actually works out as social practice in the lives of people" (page 40).

Morphet et al (1992) said ABE planners and policy makers in South Africa

> "(all of whom are literate not to say well educated) tend to assume that the ways in which they understand and define illiteracy are shared (fully or in part) by the illiterates themselves ... We believe on the evidence of international research... "(and here they refer to Fingeret and Reder) "... that illiteracy forms a component part of a particular kind of social action system which is very positively valued by the people who participate in it" (page 42).

Illiteracy in such a system is experienced as a component of a 'horizontal' network system of social relations which are based on mutual reciprocity, are very deeply entrenched and hold powerfully constructed positive meanings for the participants.

> "...it is risky for individuals to leave their relatively secure and familiar place in the horizontal system in order to try to find a foothold in the vertical system of formal jobs, housing, schooling, etc. Literacy, in other words, may at best be seen as irrelevant or at worst as a part of a risky venture. In any event movement towards literacy will not be felt as the relief of need" (page 42).

At the time of these claims, the type of research which led to Fingeret's and Reder's conclusions, had not yet been undertaken in South Africa.

In a subsequent paper, Prinsloo, Millar, Morphet (1993) argued for the "demythologizing of literacy discourse" and for projects of study and re-interpretation, closely grounded in sites of social practice.

> "... the arguments of the 'new literacy studies', as well as our own claims, that the social demand for adult literacy provision is limited, need to be tested" (page 22).

It was mainly in response to this challenge that I decided to undertake this particular piece of research, but there was another, more personal, factor which was an important motivation.

1.3 A PERSONAL MOTIVATION

About a year before commencing this research, I was elected onto an executive committee of a branch of the African National Congress (ANC). Here I came to meet and work with two persons who in conventional terms could be descibed (and were described) as illiterate. They could not read the kind of scripts that the rest of the committee took for granted and could barely write their names. But they were both prominent, successful members of their communities. As Fingeret might have put it, they were "far from the stereotypical dependent, incompetent individuals associated with the term 'illiterate'". They also had a profound influence on my ideas about the concept of

literacy and made me see the need for research in South Africa that would explore the way "illiterate" people *really* live.

1.4 METHODOLOGICAL INFLUENCES

I have considered the contribution of the new literacy studies to an ideological approach to literacy which takes into account the social and cultural practices in which literacy is embedded. I have discussed some of the findings of research efforts which contributed to the body of theory associated with the new literacy studies. In this section I focus briefly on some of the methods used in those studies. I then consider the influence of postmodernism and poststructuralism on more recent ethnographic studies, in particular the trends toward discourse analysis and reflexivity. Finally I present an account of the methods used in this study.

1.4.1 Methodology of new literacy studies research

The research that has contributed to the body of theory known as the new literacy studies emanates mainly from the fields of anthropology, linguistics, and education. The research methods of ethnography (from social anthropology) and discourse analysis (from socio-linguistics) feature prominently. Studies range from 10-year ethnographies to much briefer research that relies mainly on unstructured interviews.

In speaking of ethnography I am influenced by the work of Clifford Geertz (1973) in which it is seen as being concerned with the interpretation of cultures. He says:

> "The concept of culture which I espouse ... is essentially a semiotic one. Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical...." (page 5).

Later in the same text, Geertz describes ethonography as "thick description".

> "What the ethnographer is in fact faced with – except when (as of course, he must do, he is pursuing the more automatized routines of data collection – is the mutlitplicity of complex structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular and inexplicit and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render" (page 10).

Geertz also speaks about the role of theory in ethnography:

> "Our double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the 'said' of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against other determinants of human behaviour. In ethnography, the office of theory is to povide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself – that is about the role of culture in human life – can be expressed" (page 27).

John and Jean Comaroff (1992) speak of ethnography in terms of contexts and power relations:

> ".... in order to construe the gestures of others, their words and winks and more besides, we have to situate them within the systems of signs and relations, of power and meaning, that animate them. Our concern ultimately is with the interplay of such systems – often relatively open systems – with the persons and events they spawn; a process that need privilege neither the sovereign self nor stifling structures... But they must always give texts contexts and assign values to the equations of power and meaning they express. Nor are the contexts just there. They, too, have to be constructed analytically in the light of our assumptions about the social world" (page 11).

Speaking less abstractly, ethnography is also about fieldwork. Classical ethnographers spent years living living amongst the people they were studying and, although some anthropologists today recognise that long term, continuous periods in a field is not always necessary or desirable (Fetterman, 1989: 19), fieldwork is still an essential component of ethnography.

The aim of being in the field is to observe and to write down what one sees, but usually one needs to do more than that. Participant observation – where one actually participates in the lives of the people under study while maintaining a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data – is crucial in most fieldwork. Formal and informal interviews are important techniques for gathering

information about a community. Life history interviews are regarded as valuable but time-consuming (Fetterman, 1989: 61).

Of all the studies that influenced the focus of this particular research, only two (Scribner and Cole's and Heath's) could be described as pure ethnography.

Scribner and Cole's study of the Vai in Liberia combined ethnographic observations over a five-year period with a comprehensive interview survey (Scribner and Cole, 1981). Heath says she "lived, worked and played with the children and their families and friends in Roadville and Trackton" for nearly a decade, compiling "ethnographies of communication" in the process (1983:5,6). But her book is not intended as a model for future ethnographic studies, she says, as it is unlikely other researchers will be able to enjoy an on-going relationship with a community for such a long time, for various reasons, including deadlines, demands from funders and so on (page 7).

The Scollons study (Scollon and Scollon,1981) was also a lengthy one – they say they were involved in various aspects of it for ten years – but it is not, strictly speaking, an ethnography. As consultants to school districts and other educational, medical, legal and planning institutions, they "had the oportunity to gain insights, test hypotheses and gather new insights..." So their ethnographic observations were interspersed with workshops and consultations. They say this limited the scope of their observations, on the one hand, but also presented the immediate necessity to test ideas as they developed.

The studies reported in "Writing in the Community" (Barton and Ivanic, 1991) are based mainly on interviews. So is Fingeret's study of 43 illiterate adults (Fingeret, 1983) and numerous other studies from the adult education field which I read in the course of my own research.

Brian Street (1988, 1993) has argued that it is at the interface between sociolinguistic and anthropological theories, on the one hand, and between discourse and ethnographic method on the other that he envisages future research in the field of literacy studies being conducted. Studies reported in his "Cross-cultural approaches to Literacy" (Street,

1993) are all at this disciplinary crossroads. Participant observation, life history interviews and ethnographic observations are combined with discourse analysis to provide in-depth accounts of the social practices associated with literacy in various communities.

In his introduction to the study, Street says there has been a shift in linguistics recently towards discourse analysis "which takes as the object of study larger units of language than the word or sentence." Some of the key terms in the new literacy studies derive from a merging of the disciplines and methodologies of anthropology and linguistics. These include Heath's term "literacy events" which she defines as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" and Street's own term "literacy practices". He uses this term "as a broader concept pitched at a higher level of abstraction and referring to both behaviour and conceptualisations related to the use of reading and/or writing." It incorporates not only "'literacy events' as empirical occasions to which literacy is integral, but also 'folk models' of those events and the ideological preconceptions that underpin them'" (pages 12-13).

1.4.2 Some post-modern influences

Postmodernism and poststructuralism have had important influences on a range of disciplines, from linguistics (where they originated) to literary criticism and fine art. Anthropology has not escaped the influence (some say the "infection", according to Marcus, 1993) of postmodern ideas and the new literacy studies, with its combination of anthropological and linguistic theories and methods, has been particularly susceptible.

In order to understand both postmodernism and poststructuralism one needs to understand the structuralist theories of Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913) from which they can be said to originate.

He distinguished between a concept (the signified) and its associated speech sound (the signifier) and called the combination of the two the linguistic sign. The two components of the sign are related to each other in an arbitrary way, with no natural connection between the sound image and the concept it identifies. Each sign derives its meaning

from its difference from all the other signs in the language chain or system. As a result, using a language is not a kind of naming process, whereby one uses a list of words each corresponding to the thing that it names. Instead it is always dependent on a system of relationships. The study of the relationship between particular meanings and an underlying system of differences is the science of semiology.

Poststructuralism takes from Saussure the notion that meaning is produced within language rather than reflected by language and that individual signs do not have intrinsic meaning but acquire meaning through the language chain and their difference within it from other signs (Weedon, 1987). So the word "illiterate", for example, is not fixed but socially produced within language, plural and subject to change.

However, poststructuralism moves beyond Saussure at the point at which, after locating meaning in the language system itself, he sees it as single, as "fixed".

> "A linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with differences of ideas, but the pairing of a certain number of acoustical signs with as many cuts made from the mass of thought engenders a system of values, and this system serves as the effective link between the phonic and the psychological elements within each sign. Although both the signified and the signifier are purely differential and negative when considered separately, their combination is a positive fact." (Saussure, 1974, p 120, quoted in Weedon, 1987).

Poststructuralism speaks of signifiers in which the signified is never fixed once and for all but is constantly deferred.

"Signifiers are always located in a discursive context and the temporary fixing of meaning in a specific reading of a signifier depends on this discursive context" (Weedon, 1987).

Weedon has drawn attention to the various forms of poststructuralism:

> "It includes, for example, the apparently 'apolitical' deconstructive criticism, practiced by American literary critics in which they are concerned with the free play of meaning in literary texts, the radical-feminist rewriting of the meanings of gender and language in the work of some French feminist writers and the detailed historical analysis of discourse and power in the work of Foucault" (p. 20).

It is Foucault's version of poststructuralism which is of the greatest importance to this study, in particular his assertion that significatory processes can be more than merely

playful: they actually form subjects. As Philip Wexler (1987:140) has put it: "It is through discourse, 'the power to be seized', that the central object of the prevailing humanism, man, is formed, stratified, and regulated".

Wexler says the object of criticism for post-structuralism, in philosophy, literature, history and sociology, is humanism.

> "Whether against a 'metaphysics of presence' or 'man', or any centred, essentialized, transcendental signifier, the aim is always to differentiate from the language and thought of European humanism. Rather the desire of post-structuralism is to assert instead terms for describing the decomposition of those historic fixed centres; to oppose to them, as Foucault writes ... 'movement, spontaneity and internal dynamism'".

The term "postmodernism" has been used to juxtapose these notions of movement, spontaneity, internal dynamism and lack of fixed centres against the term "modernism" which is sometimes used to characterize works of literature, art, architecture as well as science and social philosophy (Cherryholmes, 1988: 10). Jean-Francois Lyotard uses the term "modern" to "designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse... making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative..." He defines postmodern as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv).

Cherryholmes offers the following distinction between modern and postmodern:

> "Modern, analytic, and structural thought seek rationality, linearity, progress and control by discovering, developing, and inventing metanarratives, metadiscourses, and metacritiques that define rationality, linearity, progress and control. Postmodern, postanalytic and poststructural thought are sceptical and incredulous about the possibility of such metanarratives" (page 11).

In the new literacy studies the influence of postmodernism and poststructuralism is felt in the trend towards discourse analysis.

Definitions of the term are many and varied. In this study I am influenced firstly by Foucault's use of the term in his exploration of the " 'rules of formation' which define the possible 'objects', 'enunciative modalities', 'subjects', 'concepts' and 'strategies' of a particular type of discourse " (Fairclough,1992). In considering Foucault's use of the

term, one also has to consider the shifting emphases of his work. Fairclough has summarised the shifts in this way:

> "In his earlier 'archaeological' work, the focus was on types of discourse.... as rules for constituting areas of knowledge. In his later 'genealogical studies', the emphasis shifted to relationships between knowledge and power. And in the work of Foucault's last years, the concern was 'ethics', 'how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions'...." (Fairclough, 1992:39).

Whereas the analysis of spoken and written language texts was not a part of Foucault's discourse analysis, it is a central part of "textually- (and therefore linguistically-) oriented" discourse analysis (TODA) which is advocated by Fairclough.

Discourse analysis, in Foucault's terms, says Fairclough, is concerned "not with specifying what sentences are possible or 'grammatical' but with specifying sociohistorically variable 'discursive formations' (sometimes referred to as discourses), systems of rules which make it possible for certain statements but not others to occur at particular times, places and institutional locations".

Fairclough says a major contrast betwen Foucault and TODA is that Foucault's analysis of discourse does not include discursive and linguistic analysis of real texts. "Yet the inclusion of such analysis may be a means of overcoming certain weaknesses which commentators have found in Foucault's work."

Brian Gee offers a definition of discourse analysis which permits (indeed encourages) the analysis of real texts while going beyond purely linguistic considerations in taking into account the Foucauldian concern with the unwritten rules of discursive formations. It is a major influence on this study. For this reason I offer his definition in some depth.

Discourse analysis in Gee's terms is a branch of linguistics which tries to explicate the ideologies behind people's words. Gee defines ideology as " a social theory (tacit or overt, primary, removed or deferred) which involves generalizations (beliefs, claims) about the way in which goods are distributed in society."

Whether a theory is tacit or overt depends on the extent to which one can express the generalizations grounding it. These generalizations can be based on "primary research" which is research we have either done ourselves or thoughtfully considered. Gee calls social theories that result from such research "primary theories". "Removed theories" are based on generalizations which come from less direct sources, usually "reports" from people or books at some remove from the people who actually did the research. "Deferred theories" are based on theory even if the person holding the theory has no idea what those generalizations might be.

Discourse analysis should aim to explicate tacit and removed or deferred theories, especially tacit and removed/deferred ideologies (1990:20).

When making use of Gee's definition of discourse analysis one also has to consider his distinction between primary Discourse and secondary Discourse and one needs to develop ways of identifying these discourses. Gee gives one little idea how to access primary Discourse, apart from saying:

> "... I believe that we can most clearly see people's primary Discourses when they are interacting with 'intimates' (people with whom they share a great deal of common knowledge and experience) in a completely comfortable 'informal' way. On these occasions, their primary Discourse is least influenced by other Discourses they control, and they display the identity most intimately connected to their primary socialization and their membership in an initially acculturating group" (page 151).

He does warn, however, that there are many complexities around the notion and many problems in tracing the fate of primary Discourse through individual lives due to factors like mobility, diffuse class and (sub)cultural borders, class ambiguity and attempts to deny, change or otherwise hide one's initial socialization if it was not "mainstream enough".

He says secondary Discourses involve social institutions beyond the family (such as schools, workplaces, stores, government offices, businesses and churches) and require one to communicate with non-intimates (or to treat intimates as if they were not intimates). Secondary Discourses can be local, community-based Discourses (such as those associated

with membership of commmunity-based churches) or they can more "globally oriented ('public-sphere') Discourses".

In anthropology, postmodernism and poststructuralism have put the "critique of objectivity and the scrutiny of ethnographic authority onto the disciplinary agenda" (Bell, 1993) and have led to the appearance of reflexivity as an aspect of ethnographic method. Reflexivity is usually associated with self-critique, personal quest, subjective interpretations, experiential methods, empathy and positioning (whereby the ethnographer provides relevant personal details) (Marcus, 1993).

In the new literacy studies I can cite only one study where reflexivity is an element. A telling phrase, rather buried in the text of Rockhill (1987:169) positions the author as a woman who empathises deeply with the struggles of the subjects of her research.

She speaks about the need to know more about "what it means to live in the face of male rage and violence". Then she quotes her own experience:

> "In my case, where I lived daily in the face of threat, never knowing what act would be interpreted as a transgression, an attack upon MALE RIGHT or power, I did all I could not to set off that rage and withdrew into the safety of a kind of death. While not all of the women talked of violence, several of those to whom I became closer over the course of my research talked, painfully, angrily, of similar experiences of violence, sometimes explicitly directed against their going to school."

What Rockhill doesn't confront – at least in this article – is the relationship between her own position and the direction of the research process. I am not saying she is wrong to have a position and to state it, I just believe it needs to be dealt with more directly and with greater introspection, if it is going to add to the strength of the work, rather than detract from it.

As it is, subjectivity and positioning has a fairly long and distinguished tradition in feminist writings, and ethnographies written by women, if not in mainstream anthropology itself.

In feminism it was pioneered in the form of autobiography and has been carried over into ethnography. "As such ethnography is fully integrated into an arena of discourse in which subjectivist reflexivity is not only fully legitimated but has a special power and function" (Marcus, 1993).

Says Diane Bell in "Gendered Fields" (Bell, Kaplan and Karim, 1993):

> "Women have been conspicuous for their consideration of the impact of their presence in the field as an element in their ethnography. Theirs is the gender-inflected voice, which cannot masquerade as universal: they have a standpoint and cannot pretend otherwise" (page 2).
>
> "There is a long and honourable tradition of ethnographic writing in which the voice of the ethnographer pondering her situation, the impact of her presence on the people with whom she is working, and the problematic nature of being both observer and participant is audible. In short, there is a reflexive tradition in which the voices of women are critical. It is summed up well by Margaret Mead's comment that as an ethnographer, one must first 'know thyself'" (4).

In mainstream anthropology, the arrival of reflexivity has not been met with unqualified approval. Responses have ranged from outright disapproval (in favour of a return to old-fashioned objectivity) to urges for more and more experimentation on stylistic and ethical issues.

Marcus has commented that in anthropology, unlike in feminism where the tradition of autobiography has a cushioning influence, subjectivist reflexivity has "challenged the sacred boundaries of identity differentiating scientific ethnography from travel accounts, memoires, missionary reports and the like. It had nothing like the pre-existing legitimacy or purpose in anthropology that it had in feminism."

The apocryphal exchange ..."But as the Fijian said to the New Ethnographer, "That's enough talking about you; let's talk about me" ... warns of some of the pitfalls of reflexivity and of the focus of its critics (Marcus, 1993).

Positioning has also been taken to extremes which have made it the subject of humourous attack. Marcus warns that it can be reduced to a "formulaic incantation at the beginning of ethnographic papers in which one "boldly 'comes clean' and pronounces

a positioned identity (eg I am a white, Jewish, middle-class, heterosexual female)". He does admit, however, that it is potentially a practice of key importance and is "most powerful when done as a critique of a writer's monologic authority" (page 31).

In the end the major influence of postmodernism and reflexivity has been on ethnographic texts themselves.

In "The Ethnographic Imagination" (Atkinson,1990) which is specifically concerned with the texts produced from ethnographic work in sociology, Paul Atkinson concludes:

> "The ethnography ... cannot inhabit a world of texts where conventionality is taken for granted, or where language is treated as unproblematic. The fully mature ethnography requires a reflexive awareness of its own writing, the possibilities and limits of its own language, and a principled exploration of its modes of representation. Not only do we need to cultivate a self-conscious construction of ethnographic texts, but also a readiness to read texts from a more 'literary-critical' perspective..." (page 180).

Marcus (1993:14-17) identifies "messy" texts as "the most interesting current form that postmodernism specifically takes in ethnographic writing.

He says such texts "refuse to assimilate too easily or by foreclosure the object of study, thus committing a kind of academic colonialism whereby the deep assumption seeps into a work that the interests of the ethnographer and those of her subjects are somehow aligned."

They arise from confronting "the remarkable space/time compression that defines the conditions of people and culture globally.

They "wrestle with the loss of a credible holism". "The territory that defines the object of study is mapped by the ethnographer who is within its landscape, moving and acting within it, rather than drawn from a transcendant, detached point."

They insist on an open-endedness, an incompleteness and an uncertainty about how to draw a text/analysis to a close. Such open-endedness often marks a concern with an ethics

of dialogue and partial knowledge, that a work is incomplete without critical, and differently positioned responses to it by its (hopefully) varied readers.

While I cannot pretend that this thesis counts as a "messy text" in all Marcus's senses of the term – essay-text literacy and the conventions of thesis writing are too deeply ingrained in my psyche – I have found the idea that such incompleteness and subjectivity can be acceptable, even desirable, extremely comforting. There have been numerous times, throughout this research, when I have felt compelled to reflect on my position in the field and the partiality of my vision. Very often, ironically, this reflection has been a kind of epistemological turning point – leading to new modes of enquiry and new understandings.

1.5 METHODOLOGY OF THIS STUDY

I have described the theoretical and methodological influences on this study. In this section I attempt to show how those influences translated into specific methods and practices in my research: the use of life history interviews and participant observation and of reflexive analysis of texts produced in the course of the research. I then discuss the ambit of the research and give a brief account of the research process.

1.5.1 Life history interviews and participant observation

I tried to answer my research questions by exploring the primary and secondary Discourses and the literacy practices of people from Ocean View who have had little or no formal schooling and could be described as "illiterate" or "semi-literate".

I made use of structured and unstructured interviews and participant observation to develop an account of literacy practices. I found it more difficult to develop an account of discourse, or, more specifically, to distinguish between primary and secondary Discourse.

Gee says primary Discourse is most clearly seen when people are interacting with intimates in a completely comfortable, informal way while secondary Discourses involve institutions such as schools, workplaces, stores, churches etc where one is required to communicate with non-intimates. Further than this he gives little practical advice as to how one can access such Discourses or attempt to develop an account of them. And he warns there are many complexities around the notion of primary Discourse and problems in tracing its fate in individual lives.

I experimented with life history interviews and participant observation (both ethnographic methods) to develop an account of primary Discourses and some secondary Discourses. I regarded biographical details from the learner's life histories as discursive clues and I analysed the texts produced by the interviews and observations in order to "to explicate the ideologies behind people's words" (the main aim of Discourse analysis, according to Gee). I made careful note of non-verbal factors such as dress, furnishings and ornaments which could be regarded as discursive affirmations of ideologies. And I paid particular attention to social conversation, as well as social exclusion and inclusion, to try to establish the unwritten rules of prevailing discourses.

In my employment of Gee's definition of primary Discourse I ran into problems. There seem to be two conflicting interpretations of the term. On the one hand Gee indicates a mechanistic kind of interpretation whereby primary Discourse is associated with (and can be accessed through) language between intimates. On the other hand, Gee also indicates a far more complex interpretation in terms of which primary Discourse should also be evident, to some extent, in secondary Discourse. This is indicated in his comment:

> "A person's primary Discourse serves as a 'framework' or 'base' for their acquisition and learning of other Discourses later in life. It also shapes, in part, the form this acquisition and learning will take and the final result" (Gee,1990: 151).

In terms of this, one should be able to discern primary Discourse by observing the way in which different people have appropriated the same secondary Discourses.

If one employs the first interpretation of primary Discourse, one finds it almost impossible to access. Participant observation brings one fairly close to observing primary

Discourse defined as language between intimates, but not close enough. The ethnographer, unless he or she has spent years in the field and has become fully accepted by the people being studied, must always count as a non-intimate, leading to secondary rather than primary discourse. Gee seems to imply one should try to be a fly on the wall but this, of course, is impossible.

In my own research I found it difficult to access primary Discourse defined as discourse between intimates. I think I came closest to such primary Discourse in situations where the interviewee was drunk and boundaries between the proper and the improper, the formal and the informal had collapsed. I think I also came reasonably close to it during social occasions when my presence was virtually unfelt and I could observe without interacting.

I was usually not able to do more than search for clues to primary Discourse in secondary Discourse (for example, the informal chat during literacy classes took place in an environment of secondary Discourse but gave important clues to primary Discourses). Often I was forced to speak merely of discourse without attempting to draw a distinction between primary and secondary Discourse.

1.5.2 Field notes and reflexivity

I made extensive field notes after every trip to Ocean View, recording both what happened in the course of my visit and also my feelings about the event. In this way I attempted to keep track of personal influences on the research process and to remind myself of the partiality and subjectivity of my vision. The reflexive process also contributed, I think, to increasing my understanding of discourses and practices. For example, reflexive consideration of the way in which I had failed to complete certain life histories provided important clues to the discourses and literacy practices of those people. In all cases these were people who, for various reasons, were beyond the ambit of the literacy class and the essay-text literacy it was attempting to teach. It was not surprising, on second thoughts, that they were also beyond the ambit of the essayistic biography I was attempting to compile.

1.5.3 Scope, location and duration of the research

In this research I focussed on the discourses and literacy practices of 13 adults who had had little or no formal schooling and could be described as illiterate or semi-literate. All but one of these adults was living in Ocean View. One came from Ocean View but was in Pollsmoor Prison in Tokai at the time of my research. Seven of the 13 were attending literacy classes at the Ocean View Library. Five had never heard of the classes and had never attempted literacy tuition. One had attended classes for a few months and had dropped out.

Although these 13 adults formed the core of my research, I also gained information and limited biographical details about numerous other illiterate adults in the course of my study. This information forms part of the overall picture which I attempt to create in this dissertation.

The field work of the study was conducted between mid-June, 1993, and mid-February, 1994 (a period of eight months). I began by attending literacy classes at the library and by having preliminary conversations with the literacy teachers involved. I stopped attending these classes on a regular basis once I had got to know the general process of the literacy classes, and had identified the learners I was going to interview. (I interviewed learners from each of the four different groups within the overall class as these groups represented different stages). I continued to keep in touch with the classes throughout the research period by dropping in to speak to the teachers or learners as the need arose in my research and by attending the class's social functions.

1.5.4 A brief account of the research process

The research was conducted in roughly three stages although there were periods of overlap. First I concentrated on learners from the literacy class, then I interviewed the literacy teachers and other professionals in the area. Finally I interviewed people who had had little or no schoooling but were not attending classes.

I visited each of the seven learners from the literacy classes at least twice and spent a total of about five hours with each but in some cases the period was longer, in others shorter. In each case I conducted an initial life history interview which usually lasted one and a half to two hours. After transcribing the tape recording of this interview (or having this done for me) I then attempted to compile a brief life history or biography for the interviewee. In most cases I had two more sessions with the interviewee before the life history was complete. I used these sessions to clarify doubts, check facts, to extend the interviewing process, to observe literacy events and to ask questions about literacy practices. Interviews were conducted in English or Afrikaans, depending on the interviewee's home language, and the life histories were written in their language of choice.

I attempted to follow, for each of the illiterate people whom I met beyond the ambit of the class, the same procedure that I followed with the learners. However, I found this was not always possible. One of these people, Moegamat, was in prison serving a six year sentence for receiving stolen goods. I managed to spend half an hour with him, along with his mother, three sisters, his four-year-old daughter and a baby nephew. He was distressed to find his daughter had a severe burn on her shoulder and was clearly not well. She vomited over his uniform in the course of the visit and much of the time was spent trying to clean him up. The visit was also interrupted by other inmates of the prison who were receiving visitors alongside him and were keen to join in the conversation. Needless to say I was not able to conduct an extensive interview. I would have attempted further visits but I only gained access to him in mid-February, a month before my thesis deadline. Some of the information about his life and literacy practices was obtained from his mother and a sister.

Two others, Tossie and Pieter, proved difficult to interview because of their drinking habits. In Oom Piet's case, however, the problem lay with the sheer wealth of information which I had to cope with in compiling his biography. To understand this person's life, I found myself doing historical research into old-fashioned farming methods, making enquiries about the Anglo-Boer War and other aspects of South African history, just to mention a few of the learning experiences it subjected me to.

By mid-February when I finally abandoned further fieldwork I had completed seven biographies and presented copies to the interviewees. The life histories of Oom Piet, Lionel and Anna were still in progress and I had given up trying to compile biographies for the remaining three interviewees.

The life histories that I did complete served several purposes. They helped me to order and clarify my thoughts about a particular person's life – and to check my facts and perceptions. They also served as gifts, an important gesture, I think, both for myself and for the interviewees. I entered their lives as an obviously well-to-do person (at least in relation to their own lives). There was not a single family that I visited that was not struggling to make ends meet. The temptation to ask me for help, financial or otherwise, must have been strong and some of the people did appeal for aid. But none of the people for whom I completed a life history ever asked me for anything. This was partly to do with the types of persons they were (which made it easier to complete the interview process) but also, I think, because those biographies served as valued gifts in return for the time and angst of the interview process.

In the interviews I did not only ask for biographical details, I also looked for indications of secondary discourses by asking about religion and work and encouraging conversations about life in general. I enquired about literacy practices and attitudes to literacy and I used the opportunity to observe literacy events. In every home that I entered, I made notes of written materials that were kept or used and also looked for discursive affirmations of ideologies (eg photographs on walls, television programmes being viewed). Wherever possible I tried to discuss the interviewee with at least one other person who knew him or her. In some cases this was his or her literacy teacher. In some cases a member of family. I did this to check my own perceptions of the interviewee and the interviewee's own perception of him/herself as presented to me in the interview.

To gain an understanding of professional discourses about literacy in Ocean View, I conducted life history interviews with each of the literacy teachers. I tried to establish the teachers' theories about the work they were doing to gain an understanding of their ideologies. I also had a lengthy interview with the nursing sisters in charge of the local

clinic (which had identified illiterates in the community when the class first began) and with the managers of the Ocean View Centre for the Handicapped where four members of the literacy class were in sheltered employment.

Participant observation included attending church services at the Methodist, Anglican, NGSending and New Apostolic churches in Ocean View, spending a day with the teachers in Paarl where we visited Mrs Basson, who wrote and produces the programmes they use. I also attended various functions organised by the literacy class: the end of year party which was held at the library, the Christmas picnic, which involved a day in the sun at Bortjiesrif in the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, the literacy class's exhibition in the local civic centre. Other community events which I attended included a peace day demonstration (in which some of the teachers took part) and the march to Simonstown to commemorate the forced removals to Ocean View twenty-five years before (in which one of the teachers took part).

I found myself reading more widely as the research progressed. As I tried to understand and theorise about the discourses and social practices which I was encountering, I started to search for other works on Ocean View, on the coloured population in general, on issues such as alcoholism and mental health. I also found myself searching for other educational research work and theories that might have relevance to what I was finding.

A considerable – but unquantified – amount of time was spent analysing the conversations which I recorded on tape and transcribed. This was done partly in order to gain a greater understanding of discourses – both primary and secondary – but also to help "explicate the ideologies behind the words", as Gee suggests. I also analysed the texts of the literacy programme being used at the Ocean View class in this way.

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research is a small attempt towards an answer to a question that appears to be of major concern in the adult eduction field: why are literacy providers not attracting and retaining more illiterate adults? It focuses on a particular area and asks why the literacy providers there are not attracting and retaining more learners.

In this chapter I considered the specific research questions with which I entered this research and the various influences, theoretical, methodological and personal, on the study. I note that the new literacy studies has not only influenced the theoretical approach of this research (in its approach to literacy as a social practice, embedded in social, cultural and power relations), it has also influenced its research methods.

This study draws on the fields of anthropology and linguistics in its methodology in ways similar to those employed by researchers whose work is regarded as part of the new literacy studies. Its ethnographic approach (life history interviews and participant observation) and its view of ethnography as interpretation, rather than description, comes from anthropology. It's focus on resistance as a means to explicate power relations has its origins in the work of a philosopher, Foucault. It's concern with discourses also stems from the work of Foucault, which recognises the role of discourse as a powerful includer/excluder, and sees discourse analysis as being concerned with specifiying the unwritten rules of what may or may not be said or done within certain discourses. But this study is also influenced by the socio-linguistic approach of Gee who says it is the role of discourse analysis to explicate the ideologies behind people's words. In its concern with the role of the researcher in the research process, and the subjectivity of the text as a whole, in its hesitance to close off the argument at the end, it mirrors the anxieties of postmodernists. Even some of its key terms – literacy practices and literacy events, for example – reflect an interdisciplinary mix of linguistics and anthropology. In drawing on a range of disciplines and understandings, this research attempts to explicate the complex "webs of significance" (Weber quoted in Geertz, 1973: 5) around literacy practices and discourses in Ocean View.

CHAPTER TWO:

OCEAN VIEW AND ITS DISCOURSES ON LITERACY, ILLITERACY AND "GELERENDHEID"

In this chapter I offer background which I consider useful for a reading of the major findings of the research (reported in Chapters 3, 4 and 5). I present a brief geographical, historical and demographic narrative of Ocean View, the Cape Peninsula township where this study is situated. I discuss prevailing discourses about literacy and illiteracy in Ocean View and introduce the term "gelerendheid", which is more commonly used there. Finally, I consider the discourses of those in Ocean View who attempt to "free those who cannot read and write".

2.1 OCEAN VIEW: A BRIEF NARRATIVE ABOUT GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHY

The details about the geography, history and demography of Ocean View which are presented in this section should be read as an incomplete text. They are drawn mainly from secondary rather than primary sources and reflect the paucity of academic work on the area.

Ocean View is situated in the southern Cape Peninsula, 5 km from Fish Hoek, 3 km from Kommetjie and about 12 km from the South African naval base at Simonstown. It began as a product of the apartheid policies of the National Party government. In August 1967 the Simonstown area was declared "white" in terms of the Group Areas Act. Slangkop township (Ocean View's original name) was established the same year to house persons classified Coloured from Noordhoek, Sunnydale, Sun Valley, the Ou Kaapse Weg area, Kommetjie, Kalk Bay, Glencairn, Red Hill and Simonstown. Only those who could afford to buy in areas such as Grassy Park moved elsewhere.

For the people who moved from Sunnydale and Noordhoek and surrounding areas, Ocean View's houses, with their laid-on water and sanitation, were an improvement (Maralack and Kriel, 1985). But the people who were moved from Simonstown felt a distinct drop in their standard of living. They found themselves far from public transport, living alongside people with whom they had little in common, and with a bleak, wind-blown landscape as their vista, instead of a spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean. (Despite the name, which was adopted later, most of the township did not have a view of the sea. It was only from the flats in the higher parts that Noordhoek beach could be seen. More recent developments in Ocean View do have a view.)

Liberal white academics attempted to document the feelings of people who were forcibly removed. Martin Whisson (1972:29)
wrote of the sense of rejection experienced by those who were moved:

> "The removal of thousands of people from their homes and their resettlement well away from the White residential area is, regardless of the quality of the housing and the amenities provided, an action of rejection of the weaker group by the stronger group. Henceforward the Coloured person leaves the township primarily for the benefit of the Whites – to work for them, to buy from their shops. Otherwise he (sic) is expected or directed to develop in 'his own area'. Where once a hundred square miles of country were shared between all the people – inequitably on an individual basis but with the same economic rules applicable to all – now the land is divided on the basis of 'race'. Half the people may develop in about one square mile, half may develop in the rest. Rejection is the one experience shared by all who have moved or will have to move to the new township".

Duncan Innes (1975:26) concluded: "The over-riding impression one gets when talking to the inhabitants of the township is that they deeply resent the changes which have been forced on them. Their statements reflect the aimlessness that they feel in their present surroundings and there is a constant tendency to refer back to the past, to romanticise it often beyond what it really was."

He said forced removals in general involved "not only a physical upheaval: they involve a major social upheaval as well – an upheaval that destroys established patterns of economic, social and family life; an upheaval that tends to shatter the group cultural identities that have emerged in these communities; an upheaval that leads to social

distress, to feelings of depression and despair and to a deep and burning anger. All these are evident among the people of Ocean View."

The perspectives of Whisson and Innes reflect anti-apartheid dismay at the effects of forced removals. But even then Innes noted there were a growing number of people who were "coping with the situation by attempting to create wihin Ocean View a feeling of community spirit and identity that will help towards uniting the township, to pick up the ragged strands of social life and weld these into a cohesive unit."

Eighteen years down the track it seems that, to some extent, these attempts have succeeded.

Although the Group Areas Act has been scrapped and people are now free to move where they like, few seem to be leaving Ocean View.
There are many (like the young literacy teachers I met in this research) who were born into the area and regard it unequivocally as home. Others, even though they fiercely resented the removals at the time, have grown used to living in the township.

Gladys Thomas, a celebrated author and playwright, who was moved from Simonstown to Ocean View 25 years ago, is an example. She lives with her husband and large dog in a tiny two-bedroom house but its garden is lush and lovingly cared-for. During my interview with her we ate preserves made from her own fig tree.
She told me she did not want to leave and spoke, in personal terms, of the hegemony which the Nationalist government had achieved in Ocean View:

> "I think apartheid's really won, by putting people in pockets like this. Because now I wouldn't want to move out of here. I wouldn't want to sell this house to live next to you.... Because we don't know each other, and my children don't know your children and first of all we'd start building walls... and here the kids play when they come from school. Go through Fish Hoek on an afternoon after school. You don't see one kid in the road. You hear no music. When the teenagers come home here, you just hear blaring of music, township vibes and children fighting and playing. I'd never, never give up this place...."

The township today has a population that is unofficially estimated at over 20 000[2] – compared with an original population estimated at 5 000 (Chotia, undated).

The increase in population is reflected in the physical expansion of the township. The Mountain View settlement, popularly known as "Khayelitsha" because of its pre-fab accommodation and pit toilets (after the huge "site and service" resettlement area for Africans that sprawls across the Cape Flats 15 km from Cape Town), was built in 1986 as a temporary measure to re-house 119 squatter families from areas surrounding Ocean View. This "emergency" settlement is still standing and fully occupied.

There is a waiting list for housing with about 600 names on the list, each representing a family or at least a couple. The housing development on the Fish Hoek side of Ocean View (the area known officially as Imhoff's Gift, where 750 erven have been developed) is an attempt to accommodate some of the overflow. Here serviced plots are "sold" for R300, the cost of transfer fees, to families where the breadwinner earns less than R1 000 a month.

There are many who hope the scheme will improve living standards in Ocean View but the situation is complex, as Stuart Douglas has pointed out in "The Politics of Improvement". He says:

---

[2] Figures on Ocean View's population are extremely confusing. The only certainty is that the population has increased substantially since the township's inception. The report on Ocean View prepared for the Carnegie Investigation into Poverty (Maralack and Kriel, 1985) put the 1983 population at 23 000. The report said these were the official estimates of the Divisional Council under which Ocean View fell but the de facto population was probably much higher due to the presence of illegal tenants.

The Western Cape Regional Services Council annual report of the Department of Health Services for 1991, however, puts Ocean View's population at December 1991 at 14 500. The following year's report, not yet released at the time of my enquiry, puts Ocean View's population at 14 880, according to a council spokesperson. When I asked her why there was such a vast difference between these figures and those of the Divisional Council 10 years before she said the previous figures had been "overestimated". The 1991 census shrinks Ocean View even more, giving a total of 12 252!

Meanwhile a Western Cape Regional Services Council housing official who is based in Ocean View told me there are about 2 400 housing units in Ocean View. If each provided accommodation for seven persons, the population figure would be 16 800.

> "... the scheme provides for serviced sites and security of tenure but no dwelling unit. Houses and "formal" accommodation are simply not provided per se. The assumption is that some "self-help" construction programme, loans from financial insitutions or further donor funding will intervene in order to assist in the provision of adequate ('formal') shelter for people resident on serviced sites. Such an assumption may be erroneous, with neither 'self-help' housing, loans or external funding necesarily materialising." (Douglas, 1994:6)

In my research I interviewed in depth two couples from this area. Neither had been "bush people". Both couples had moved to the area to escape overcrowded conditions in Ocean View flats. One couple was living in a tiny wooden "wendy house", the other in a draughty shack made of corrugated iron and scrap wood. Neither couple had a toilet. They had to make use of a neighbour's some distance away. None had been able to get loans to build formal accommodation.

One of these people told me the Imhoff's Gift area is now called Lap-land (this could be translated as Patch-land) because of its patchy appearance as plot owners erect whatever structure they can afford: here a zinc house, there a wooden house, here a brick house, there a shack...

In the rest of the township accommodation ranges from small, dank flats in three-storey blocks of the type of one sees in coloured townships throughout the Cape Peninsula to modern, free-standing, typically middle-class homes that appear modest but comfortable.

2.2 DISCOURSES ABOUT LITERACY, ILLITERACY AND "GELERENDHEID" IN OCEAN VIEW

In the course of my research I found myself having to discard the terms "literate" and "illiterate" as instruments of categorisation and identification. In this section, I describe the process and the term which I adopted as a substitute.

2.2.1 Use of the words "literate" and "illiterate" in Ocean View

When I drew up the proposal for this research, I used the term "illiterate" to describe the category of person whom I hoped to reach. I put the term in inverted commas because I did not see illiteracy as being a clear, easily identifiable condition in line with the New Literacy Studies notion that there is no clear divide between literacy on the one hand and illiteracy on the other, but a complex set of multiple literacies. I hoped, nonetheless, that the term would still be helpful in identifying those persons who would be useful to my study and those who would not.

I had not been long in the field, however, before I began to realise that the terms "literate" and "illiterate", while common in my own discourses, were practically non-existent in those of most of the people I was encountering.

On only one occasion did I find a person whom I had classifed as illiterate, using the term either for him/herself or for others. (In about seven hours of interviewing, this person used the Afrikaans version of the term, "gelettered", precisely once.) In practically every case, people spoke of being able to "read and write" ("lees en skrywe") or not. The only people who I interviewed who used the terms "literate" or "illiterate" were people who had been exposed in one way or another to the secondary discourses of literacy teaching, school education or the health profession. (The "illiterate" person who used the term did so in the context of the church and religion, an important secondary discourse.)

Jeremy, the newest literacy teacher at the Ocean View Library, who had been teaching for only two months when I spoke to him, only once used the term "literacy" in my interview with him – and that was in the context of a computer class! He said he had "started a computer literacy course there at Ocean View High".

When I asked him what he thought of the term "illiterate", he gave a reply that indicated a tacit theory that the term was offensive because it branded people as being in a state where they'd be unable to read and write (forever).

Jeremy: The word illiterate.... that's not for people (who) talk to each other. The other one tells like you illiterate, you feel very offended. For me it's like I don't believe there's a word as illiterate. Someone can always read or write if they just try. Like even in the class, Auntie Bettie, she likes to say, I'm dom (stupid). I tell her daar is nie iemand wat dom is nie. Die enigste mense wat dom is is die mense wat nie vorentoe wil gehelp word nie. (I tell her there is no one who is stupid. The only person who is stupid is the person who does not want to be helped.)

MB: So dink jy dat die woord "illiterate" beteken dat 'n mens nie gehelp kan word nie? (So do you think the word "illiterate" means that a person can't be helped?) Does it mean that the person is like that and can't be changed?

Jeremy: Ja.

MB: ... And in Afrikaans ... do people never talk about "geletterdheid"?

Jeremy: Never ... they always talk about we want to read and write.

MB: So what do they call these classes then?

Jeremy: For the time I've been here now, if somebody say, if they get me at home or somewhere and they not coming, they tell me they not coming to class tonight. They use the term class.

MB: They don't say literacy class?

Jeremy: No.

I had a similar conversation with Jeremy's girlfriend, Shahieda, who is in charge of the class. Her reply indicated a tacit theory that the term "illiterate" referred to someone who was unable to perform even the simplest of reading or writing tasks. I told her I had noticed that although I used the terms "literacy" and "illiteracy" frequently, no one else I had spoken to, used them.

MB: Does anybody speak about people being literate or illiterate? And in Afrikaans: geletterd of geletterdheid?

Shahieda: No, they don't. It's maybe now that our class is becoming known to the people they are talking about it. Otherwise nobody spoke about it. Nobody wanted to be actually classified as illiterate.

MB: Well, how do you understand the meaning of the word illiterate?

Shahieda: For me, that is someone that can't read and write at all.

MB: Mm. Because .... I've noticed that there's nobody like that. Even the people who are ... in the beginning stage, they come here with some skills. You know, like they can add, or subtract and that sort of thing.

Shahieda: I think of all our (learners) Mr J was the only one that couldn't write his name...

These teachers appeared to be thinking in terms of the basic mechanics of reading and writing when using the term "literate" or "illiterate" and were seeing a very sharp divide between the state of being literate and that of being illiterate. And quite consistently, they were finding no use for the term. Most of the learners had acquired some skill or other before entering the literacy class. Some could sign their names. Some could read numbers and prices. Many were able to add and subtract. There was no one, in their terms, who fitted the term "illiterate" – unless one wanted to level the term at someone in anger or contempt as a kind of swearword.

Carla was the only literacy teacher who used either of the terms with any frequency: the word "illiterate" featured three times in my interview with her and then, I must admit, it was in a context where I first used the term, unproblematically.

> MB: ... before you started teaching literacy, had you ever thought about people who are illiterate?
>
> Carla: No, no
>
> MB: Never occurred to you?
>
> Carla: No
>
> MB: And did you know any people?
>
> Carla: Yes, ja. But I mean, I didn't know the number was that big, here in Ocean View.
>
> MB: Do you think there are a lot of people, more so than you see in the class?
>
> Carla: Ja... definitely. But what they, the problem is, they scared to admit, they don't want their families or, you know, outsiders to know that they illiterate, that's the problem. And I mean they've been coping with it now for so long, why do they have to admit now that they illiterate.

Later Carla told me of a neighbour who could not read or write. She knew because his daughter went to school with her and she told Carla how she had to help him. But, when representatives from the library "confronted" this man and "asked him if he doesn't want to come to classes, he said, no, he's not illiterate..."

I did not get to know Carla well enough in the course of my research to be able to explain with any certainty why the term was more common in her discourse than in the

other teachers'. I did find it significant, however, that even in her case the terms only appeared in the context of the secondary discourses of literacy teaching (introduced in the first case by myself in the wording of my question and secondly by the library staff). She was a bright young woman and I wondered whether she had just absorbed more quickly than others the discourse of the literacy teacher or literacy academic.

On one occasion an interviewee used the term "geletterd". This was in the sixth hour I spent with the man and he used the term while speaking in religious terms. As the term had not presented itself in our conversations before I presumed that its emergence now was either to do with my influence at that stage or with the intrusion into our conversation of the important secondary discourse of religion. At this stage the man (Oom Piet) was telling me that God had helped him because he was "illiterate" and had given him the ability to understand road signs even if he could not read the words on them.

There was one other case of use of this term by an interviewee. In a strange, almost Freudian slip, Esther described the literacy classses as "ongeletterdheidsklasse" (illiteracy classes) in a passage she wrote for the library's 21st birthday celebrations.

> "Ek het as kind nie die voorreg gehad om skool toe te gaan nie ... Maar hier is ek nou besig om te leer, ek woon ongeletterdheidsklasse by, hierby die Biblioteek."
>
> (As a child I did not have the privilege of going to school.... But here I am studying at illiteracy classes, in the library.)
> (For full text see Esther's life history in Appendix D).

Esther's slip is further proof, I think, of the distance between these terms and the concepts of illiteracy and literacy from the primary discourses of those whom it seeks to make literate.

In Ocean View, to sum up, the word "illiterate" does not usually enter primary discourses except as a term of contempt or to refer to some (hypothetical) person who is completely unable to perform even one of the simplest functions associated with reading and writing. The term "literate" seems to have no place at all in primary discourse. However,

"literacy" is sometimes used to refer to the teaching of reading and writing and the classes that are held to facilitate this process. (For example: Nazeema spoke of the library "opening the literacy again" meaning opening the classes.) It is only in the secondary discourses of education (particularly literacy teaching) and religion that the terms appear.

2.2.2 Gelerendheid

But Ocean View has a term which was not in my vocabulary at the start of my research: the word "gelerendheid". It comes from the formal word "geleerdheid" which, according to my dictionary (Kritzinger, Schoonees, Cronje and Eksteen, 1986) means learning or erudition. When I asked Ocean View people to explain the term "gelerendheid" to me they usually used the English word "education" or "edukasie", but "gelerendheid", I found, means something more specific than that which the word "education" would normally imply. It refers to a package of skills, qualities and status which a person might obtain after several years' schooling. The number of years' schooling necessary to qualify as a person with "gelerendheid" varies according to time and place.

Minnie, a fisherwoman, spoke of herself, with a Standard Eight education, as a person with "gelerendheid". Which was not to say that she had enormously high respect for the skills and qualities which went along with it. This is what she told me in a conversation I had with her and her illiterate boyfriend.

> Minnie: "Ek kan dit nie verstaan nie, maar almal die mense wat ek ken wat nie kan lees en skryf nie, hulle is vinniger en beter met telling en daardie aspek as ons wat gelerendheid het" (I can"t understand it but all the people I know that can't read and write, are faster and better with adding and those things than us that have "gelerendheid".)
>
> MB: Want hulle doen dit almal in die kop? (Because they do it all in their head?)
>
> Minnie: In die kop in. (In the head.)

(At this stage, I set a small sum – how much was ten rand, twenty rand and fifty rand together? Minnie's boyfriend, Oom Piet, who had never been to school, says he cannot read at all and can only write his name, gave me the answer immediately.)

Minnie: Nou daai kan ek nie verstaan nie. In kleingeld ek nog sukkel. Hier's 'n vyftig sent, hier's 'n twintig sent, sukkel, sukkel, sukkel, nou moet hy nog sê dus suffel. .. Ek wat gelerendheid het. (Now this I can't understand. I struggle with change. Here's a fifty cent piece, here's a twenty cent piece, struggle, struggle, struggle. And then he tells me how much it is. And it's I who has "gelerendheid"!)

That Minnie associates "gelerendheid" with decontextualised sometimes useless skills, is obvious from this remark which came straight after the previous comment:

"En byvoorbeeld ek kan vir hom sê hoeveel is twintig maal twaalf. Dan kan hy nie daar vir my sê nie wat ek vir hom kan sê maar met geld kan hy beterer as ek. ("But then, for example, I can say to him twenty times twelve. He won't be able to give me the answer but I will. But with money he is much better than I.)

Jane, a middle-aged woman with Std 4, had similar ideas. She told me of her mother-in-law who was unable to sign her name on an official document and concluded:

"Lees en skrywe kan hulle nie maar met geld kan jy hulle nie kort nie. Hulle is number one in daardie. Sy ken nie figures nie maar sy ken die figure van haar pension." (They can't read and write but with money you can't catch them out. They are first class in that regard. She doesn't know figures but she knows the figure of her pension.)

She told me of another woman, working as a cleaner at False Bay Hospital:

"Sy het niks, niks, sy kon nie haar naam geskrywe nie, sy kon niks, maar met haar wage kan jy haar nie kort nie. As daar 'n sent kort is in haar pay, dan weet sy." (She's got nothing, nothing, she can't even write her name but you can't cheat her on her pay. If there's a cent short, she'll know.)

Oom Piet summed it all up when I asked him if he felt there was a difference between people who could read and write and those who couldn't. He said he had noticed that people who could read and write could not calculate or add without writing down the sum first.

"Maar met my is dit somnmer uit die kop uit ... My heelal is in myself." (But with me it all comes from my head ... My universe is in myself.)

2.2.3 Gelerendheid in time and place

"Gelerendheid", I gathered, is also not a static concept. It varies according to time and place. What constituted gelerendheid in Minnie's youth was not the same as what

constituted gelerendheid in 1993. This is despite the fact that she has always lived in the Ocean View area. She told me she was 45 years old and in her day Std 8 was good enough.

> "Ek is nie baie hoog nie, maar daardie tyd, in my jare was dit baie hoog". (I did not reach a very high standard but at that time, in my day, it was very high.)

Jane said that in her day and in the environment in which she grew up, Std 4 was sufficient.

> "In daai'ie jare het dit niemand gebother nie want ons het nie rekening en sukke goeters gekry nie. Maar ... nou dis rates wat kom, dis water wat kom, nou moet jy jou rekeninge na ander mense toe neem dat hulle kan vir jou nog voorlees wat is dit. Daai jare wat ons gebly het in Sunnydale daar wat Site 5 nou is, ons het daar gebly, baie lekker huise gehad daar ... Std 4 het my nie gepla daa'ie jare nie, maar dit pla my nou. As iemand my vra watter standard ek gegaan het ek voel so self-bewus dan maak ek dit nog 'n twee jaar meer."
>
> (In those days no one bothered because we didn't get bills and things like that. But now we get rates bills, water bills and you have to take these bills to other people to read. In those days we stayed in Sunnydale which is now Site 5 and we had very nice houses and Std 4 didn't worry me, but it worries me now. If someone asks me what standard I reached I feel so self-conscious, I just add on two more years.)

Jane's concern about her low level of "gelerendheid" is despite the fact that she can now read and write fluently, mainly because of the example set by her mother who also had only Std 4 but loved reading. She was secretary of the Women's Auxiliary in the Methodist Church and "number one" in the taking of minutes and notes. If Jane got stuck while trying to complete a letter, then she would go to her mother and "my ma haal die grootste woorde uit om in daardie brief te plaas" (she would find the longest words to put in that letter).

Jane said of her family:

> "Ons het self geleer, verder geleer, ek het altyd gesit met 'n boek en 'n pen, gelees en so... Ons het maar onsself ge-educate. (We taught ourselves, we studied further, I would always sit with a book and pen, reading and so on ... We educated ourselves).

I concluded from Jane and Winnie's remarks that "gelerendheid" constituted something more than the concrete skills that came with the package. It had to do with status and social norms, and measures of "gelerendheid" changed with time and place, often without

a corresponding change in usefulness as the following conversation illustrates. Minnie and Oom Piet and I were discussing the fact that there are many Ocean View youngsters today with Std 10.

> Minnie: Hulle kan niks doen nie. (They can do nothing)
>
> Oom Piet: Hulle kan niks doen nie. (They can do nothing)
>
> Minnie: Hulle wat Sub A gehad het, hulle kry werk wat ons nie kan kry nie. (Those that have Sub A get work that we can't get).... Kyk in my jare toe ek Std 8 gehad het, kon ek geleer het vir 'n onderwyseres, ek kan geleer het vir 'n verpleegster en verder tot 'n verpleegsuster. (Look, in my days, when I had Std 8 I could have studied to be a teacher or a nurse or even further to a nursing sister.)

The fact that Minnie did none of these things but fell pregnant at the age of 14 – something she bitterly regrets to this day – seemed to endorse the uselessness of "gelerendheid".

The literacy teachers themselves provided further proof. They had all passed Std 10 but when I started my research not one of them had a full-time job and two of them were completely out of work. Shahieda was working at the library on a 20-hours a week (plus overtime) basis (in the course of my research period her job was upgraded to a permanent, full-time position). Carla was working 10 1/4 hours a week at the library (upgraded in the course of my research period to 16 3/4 hours). Anita was casualling at a ladies' clothing store in Wynberg. Nazeema and Jeremy were unemployed. In fact, in the two years since completing his matric, Jeremy's only paid employment had been a few months contract work at a nearby fish-oil refinery. His position? Labourer. At the time of writing, Jeremy is still out of work but Nazeema is working as a receptionist at a budget accommodation establishment in Muizenberg.

2.2.4 Gelerendheid and common sense

The notion of "gelerendheid" which abounds in primary discourses in Ocean View bears a strong resemblance to the concept of "schoolwise" knowledge described by Wendy Luttrell (1989) in her report of a study of women attending basic education programmes in the US. Luttrell describes the way in which two women from different backgrounds,

distinguish between "knowledge produced in school or in textbooks by authorities and knowledge produced through experience." She said the women "also have some similar ideas about their 'commonsense' capabilities to take care of others. Their ways of knowing are embedded in community, family and work relationships and cannot be judged by dominant academic standards. Most important, their commonsense knowledge cannot be dismisssed, minimized or 'taken away'".

The men and women in my study did not speak specifically of commonsense, but they did offer as an alternative to "gelerendheid" a strength of mind born of hard experience or God-given talent rather than years of study.

In some this strength of mind was also associated with a bygone era when values were different and life was grounded in the soil.

Oom Piet spoke nostalgically of a life without mechanisation in the Clanwilliam district and the skills and labours that were necessary then to survive.

> Oom Piet: ... as jy kyk daardie tyd se mense en jy kyk nou sê mense, sjoe, nou sê mense gly eintlik, maal hy nie, alles wat hy moet eet, stap net winkel toe, haal die kos, kom sit en eet en dis klaar. Maar daai tyd se mense nie, jy moet kos maal om hom volmaak te kry. (If you look at the people of that time and the people of nowadays, today's people are so smooth and slippery, they don't grind anything, everything they eat, they just walk to the shop, fetch the food, sit and eat and it's finished. But the people of those times, they ground their food to get it perfectly smooth.)

Oom Piet spoke a great deal in the course of our conversations of grinding. He spoke with obvious pleasure of home-ground coffee and flour and horse fodder and potbroodjies (bread cooked over a fire in a pot). He showed me with pride the meat mincer which was given to his mother when she married and which he uses, still, to make boerewors which he claims is far tastier than that available at local butcheries. He still regrets the day he gave his coffee grinder to a man he described as a Jew in return for the option to buy the man's Volkswagen Beetle for R1 000.

When I asked Oom Piet if he knew other people who could not read or write, he responded with an anecdote that emphasised the importance he attaches to rural, grounded knowledges.

He said he knew many people who did not read or write in the Namaqualand area including an old man of 102 who once challenged him and a group of friends (in their early thirties) to catch one of the young sheep on his farm. One of Oom Piet's friends took up the challenge confidently, boasting "Vanaand gaan ons lekker slag" (Tonight we are going to have a good slaughter), but he was unable to catch a sheep. And then the old man got up and showed him how to do it.

I asked Oom Piet if the friend who had been unable to catch the sheep was someone who could read and write. He replied: "Hy kan lees (maar).. niks maak nie". (He can read but he can do nothing.)

Another story of Oom Piet's illustrates his respect for unschooled, rural-based knowledges, as well as the ambivalent tensions of this dichotomous narrative.

Oom Piet was raised by his mother and grandfather (both illiterate) on a farm in the Clanwilliam district. Here they had fruit trees cultivated in a way which Oom Piet regards as evidence of the intelligence of his rural forebears. ("Hulle was dom maar hulle was slim ook" – They were stupid but they were intelligent too.) He recalled how he was required to heat water in a large drum and to throw a jug of boiling water against the stem of each tree. When they left the farm the white owners were unable to sustain the trees and they all died except for one, a Melkboom tree which his grandfather had dosed with two jugs of boiling water instead of one.

Oom Piet's nostalgia about the past is reminiscent of the "Golden Age" which MG Whisson writes about in "The Fairest Cape" which is an account of the Coloured people in the district of Simonstown. (Whisson, 1972).

Whisson says student researchers in various parts of the Western Cape, from Port Nolloth to Simonstown, "have been told of a 'Golden Age' located in the memories of the older people or in the stories told to them by their parents and by them to their children.

> "Events in the 'Golden Age' are culled from a selective memory and presented as if they occurred fairly close together, either in the first decade of the present century or simply 'before the war'..."

It was an age when there was no apartheid and fishing catches were larger than they've ever been, when life was hard, but good.
This was despite the fact that "historical record does not confirm the opposition between the myth of the 'Golden Age' and the current 'yoke of oppression'".

Oom Piet speaks of the close association between his family and their white neighbours. He talks of abundances of fruit and delicious, home-ground foods. But he also admits the work involved in grinding the flour was so hard that it caused his brother and himself to leave home. And when you question him more deeply, you discover the fragile basis on which his family was allowed to fraternise with those white neighbours and the devastating effects of the Immorality Act. Yet he insists:
"Dit was 'n swaar lewe maar dit was 'n lekker lewe" (It was a hard life, but a good life.)

While Oom Piet situated his strengths in a long-gone past, many other people whom I encountered, attributed their skills to God-given talents. Jane, for example:

> "... my man is ook St 4 uit maar hy is 'n bestuurder op die Council en ... vir twintig jare werk hy nou daar. Maar God gee elkeen 'n talent. Sonder gelerendheid gee God jou daardie talent en hy straf jy as jy nie gebruik maak daarvan nie. Daar is baie mense wat hom weggooi.... Ek kan nie eintlik in 'n kantoor sit, wage opmaak, sulke dinge nie, maar op my eie het ek my breins, die dingetjies wat ek wil doen wat my vorentoe laat gaan in die lewe, kan ek doen. Ek kan nie by 'n tikmasjien sit of so nie, maar daar is dinge wat ek kan doen, gawe wat God my gegee dat ek kan doen om vorentoe te gaan in die lewe."

> (My husband also left school at Std 4 but he is a driver with the council and he has worked there for 20 years. But God gives everyone a talent. God gives you a talent irrespective of gelerendheid and he punishes you if you don't make us of it. There are many people who throw away (their talents). I can't sit in an office, make up wages and things like that but in my own way I have brains and I can do little things

that will get me ahead in life. I can't sit at a typewriter but there are things I can do, talents that God has given me that will get me ahead in life.)

Jane then went on to tell me how she had worked in the canteen of the Pick 'n Pay in Sun Valley, making "five-star hotel" – quality meals each day for 70 people. She gave up this work because it left her with hardly any time and energy to deal with her young children and she felt they needed her love and attention more than the money. Now she has converted her garage and a bedroom into a small shop where she sells mainly chips and cold-drinks.

Minnie also spoke about God-given talents.

> "..God het vir elke mens 'n gawe gegee.... As jy jou gawe misbruik is dit 'n sonde voor God. Kyk God het ons mense geskaap in sy beeld. Nou hy't miskien Oom Pietie nie gelerendheid gegee nie, hy het Oom Piet 'n bietjie verstand gegee." (God gives everyone a talent... If you abuse your talent it is a sin before God. Look God created us in his image. Now he didn't give Oom Pietie gelerendheid but he gave him intelligence.)

Minnie also used the word "intelligence" to describe Oom Pietie's talent and said he had not abused it. I found it difficult at first to find out what she meant by abuse of intelligence. I later learned that she associated it with abuse of alcohol, a habit which she herself was struggling to quit. She also told me she had one child who was mentally affected by a pregnancy in which she drank throughout. This child was now in the "Tatie-school" (the Centre for Mentally and Physically Handicapped in Ocean View).

Esther also had a story to tell about a God-given mental strength. It concerns the time when she was studying to be a lidmaat (member) of the local NG Sendingkerk. On the last Saturday before confirmation, all those to be confirmed came together before the church council to answer questions to see if they had learned all they had been required to learn. Those who could read and write were together with those (such as Esther) who could not, even though the latter group had had different, easier lessons to learn. Questions were put to the group as a whole. After a particular question, there was silence from the group. Elizabeth recalled:

> "... Ek dink dit was mos seker die heilige gees wat daardie woord laat sê het ... want ek het glad nie geleer nie, en toe sê ek die woord en dit is die regte woord. Dis die

woorde wat ander geleer het wat kan lees en skrywe en toe sê ek daardie woord. Toe sê hul vir my: 'Dis reg, Elizabeth'. Ek dink die Here het seker die woord vir my gegee om te sê."

(I think the holy spirit was with me because I hadn't learned anything of this but I said the right word. It was the words that the others who could read and write had learned. And they said to me: "That's right, Elizabeth." I think the Lord gave me the word to say.)

That each person has a talent which can be used – and must be used – to compensate for a lack of "gelerendheid" – is a notion that clearly emanates from religious discourses. This is obvious from the religious terminology in which it is discussed. It became even more obvious to me when I attended a church service at the NG Sendingkerk, Ocean View. Here the minister told the congregation that God gives everyone a talent. Not everyone can preach, not everyone can sing, he said, but everyone has something they can do for God.

As he spoke I thought of the five members of his congregation whom I knew from my research – they include Oom Piet and Esther. I realised where their discourses of acceptance came from and I wondered what interests and power arrangements lay behind them.

2.2.5 Summary

I entered my research in Ocean View with the terms "literate', "illiterate" and their Afrikaans equivalents, tucked under my arm, as it were, as instruments of categorisation and identification. I knew that the new literacy studies were challenging conventional understandings of these terms, but I was sufficiently influenced by the discourses of literacy teaching and my own primary discourse to believe that they would still have value in helping me to seek out certain persons who would be useful to the study and exclude others. And so, for example, the title which I originally planned for this thesis used the term "illliterate" to identify the persons who would be the focus of the study. I just put it in inverted commas to indicate it was not to be considered unproblematically. In the course of my research I began to realise that if I was going to reflect adequately the primary discourses of those I was encountering, I would have to throw the term out. In

Ocean View, people use the term "gelerendheid" to classify themselves according to educational experience. It refers to the skills (including reading and writing), qualities and status which a person might acquire after a (socially acceptable and variable) period of schooling.

In some uses of the term it also reflects a widespread social narrative which people seem to believe in despite it's shaky historical foundations. It is a narrative of a relatively recent, rural past, a "Golden Age" when things were hard but good and generally the direct opposite of the present. It is also a narrative about the value of "folk knowledge" as against "schooled knowledge". As Whisson (1972:16) has said, "the mythology of the Golden Age is based on a selective memory of past events which help give meaning (and I would add value) to the present situation." People believe in it because of the status it affords them and the psychological comfort it brings. At a time when they find themselves with little status, in a society that values "gelerendheid" rather than practical usefulness, they recount incidents that confirm the value of unschooled knowledge. At a time when they are aging and without land, they recount stories of the prowess of their youth and of fruit trees laden with fruit and sheep waiting to be slaughtered.

2.3 THE OCEAN VIEW LIBRARY AND ITS LITERACY CLASS

In this section I develop an account of the contribution of the Ocean View library and its literacy class to discourses about literacy, illiteracy and "gelerendheid" in Ocean View. My interest in these is as institutional sites for shaping these discourses. I give a brief description of the library and the origins of its literacy class before considering in some detail the literacy programme that is used there. I then discuss the literacy teachers and the relationship between their discourses and those of the programme they teach.

2.3.1 The Ocean View Library

Visitors to Ocean View have only two entrances to choose from: a "back" entrance via Slangkop Road or the "front" entrance via the Main Road which runs from Fish Hoek

to Kommetjie. Kommetjie Main Road entrance used to be the only one and remains the most commonly used. I find it interesting and significant therefore that, as one turns into this entrance, the first sign to meet one's eyes points one in the direction of the "Library/Biblioteek".

The library is situated in the centre of the township, in a building which also houses a small hall and the Ocean View rent office. Just a few paces behind it is the Ocean View clinic.

I began my research in Ocean View with a visit to this library, because I had been told that literacy classes were held there. I found it a bright and busy place which never seemed to empty completely – there was always someone browsing through the videos or the magazines or the books or working at a jigsaw. During term-time afternoons it would seethe with small children looking for information for school projects. There were aerobics classes in the hall in the mornings, meetings of various kinds in the evenings. Paintings by local artist Peter Clarke lined the walls and a toy library of games and puzzles for children to borrow added a homely touch. It appeared to be a centre of cultural and community activity. It offered all the affirmations of a discourse of hope and upliftment. But I cannot say it was a focus of the entire township.

Throughout my research I was never able to lose sight of the other focal points: the churches, the mosque, the Centre for the Mentally and Physically Handicapped, the soccer clubs, the gangs, the streets and courtyards (where people lounged by day and night to escape overcrowded flats), the backyard shebeens, the Oak Cellars bottle store diagonally opposite the library and Pollsmoor Prison in Tokai, where, in a brief, single visit, I met three inmates from Ocean View.

2.3.2 The Literacy Class

The literacy class which is held at the Ocean View library every Monday and Thursday night had its origins in the Kleinberg Primary School with a teacher from the National Literacy Project.

She moved the class to the library premises to avoid paying rent. Library staff became involved in the teaching when the NLP teacher, who lived some distance from Ocean View, had transport difficulties. In becoming involved in the teaching, the library was also responding to an appeal to libraries to determine whether there was a need in their communities for literacy classes (Williams, 1991).

In 1992, the Ocean View librarian took over the running of the literacy class and the part-time staff at the library and other volunteers gradually became involved. Training consisted of sitting in on the NLP teacher's classes, a week-long course at Maryland Literacy Centre and later, when they decided to make use of her programme, a visit to Mrs Joan Basson in Paarl. Here they purchased copies of the learners' and teachers' kits which Mrs Basson has written and were given a brief explanation how to use them.

In August 1993 I took four of the teachers to Mrs Basson in Paarl. For two of them this was a second visit. The others were having their first dose of literacy teacher training. It turned out to be a morning's introduction to Mrs Basson's packages which I describe in full in the following section.

2.3.3 Joan Basson's Reading and Writing Programme

Joan Basson offers a Kursus 1 (Course 1) called "Basiese Lees en Skryf vir Volwassenes" (Basic Reading and Writing for Adults) and a Kursus 2 (Course 2), called "Funksionele Geletterdheid" (Functional Literacy). Both contain detailed instructions for teachers and are accompanied by a separate teachers' instruction book called "Handleiding vir kursusleier" (Guide for course leader). In addition she offers a revision book called "Hersiening en Vaslegging" (Revision and Consolidation) to follow Kursus 1, a "Toetsboek" (Test Book) to follow Kursus 2 and two biblical books for early reading, called "Ontdek die Nuwe Testament" (Discover the New Testament) and "Ontdek die Ou Testament" (Discover the Old Testament).

The books remind me of children's activity books – they require a lot of written effort but not much reading aloud. If the teacher reads out the instructions at the start of each

lesson, the teacher and learner will know what is required. In a report to her superiors, Mrs Jean Williams, the Ocean View librarian, summed up the comments which I heard repeatedly from individual teachers:

> "Die kursusleier kry 'n boek waar elke les stap vir stap uitgewerk is en ooreenstem met dieselfde les in die leerder se boek. Ons hier by Ocean View wat nog na werk moet klasse aanbied vind dit 'n groot help. Voorbereiding vir 'n les is steeds nodig maar jy hoef nie rond te soek vir paslike materiaal en of die leerder dit nou al sal verstaan of nie. Die les lei, maar jy kan nog steeds uitbrei om dit interessanter te maak. Elke leerder vorder op sy eie spoed."
>
> (The course leader gets a book in which each lesson is worked out step by step and corresponds with the same lesson in the learner's book. We at Ocean View who must offer classes after work find this a great help. Preparation for a lesson is still necessary but you don't have to look around for suitable material and (decide) whether the learner will understand it or not. The lesson leads, but you can still elaborate on it to make it more interesting. Every learner progresses at his own speed.)

Reading through Mrs Basson's books, I am struck by the discourse of enlightened feudalism which pervades its pages and the "deficit" image of the learner which she creates.

In the "Handleiding vir Kursusleier" for Kursus 1 the "volwasse leerder" (adult learner) is described as follows:

> "Algemene kenmerke van die ongeletterde volwasssene
>
> 1. Hy het 'n baie lae selfbeeld.
> 2. Hy voel minderwaardig.
> 3. Hy is oorbewus van sy onvermoe en dit bring vrese vir die vreemde en die onbekende.
> 4. Hy het ook 'n mate van wantroue in sy naaste, bv. vraelyste, vorms, papier, wat hy nie verstaan nie.
> 5. Hy is teruggetrokke en skaam.
>
> "Die positiewe eienskappe van die volwassene
>
> 1. Hy het reeds lewenservaring.
> 2. Hy het met die jare deursettingsvermoe ontwikkel.
> 3. Hy het geduld met homself aangeleer.

4. Meeste volwassenes kan met geld werk, en moet soms nog net syfers reg leer skryf.
5. Die leerder het aangemeld vir die kursus, dit is die eerste positiewe stap tot sukses! Hy wil leer, (beklemtoon dit).
6. Baie volwassenes van 30-40 jaar lewer dan die beste werk!"

(General characteristics of the illiterate adult

1. He has a low self-image.
2. He feels inferior.
3. He is over-conscious of his inabilities and this causes fear of the strange and unknown.
4. He distrusts to some extent those close to him (with), for example, questionnaires, forms, paper(s) that he can't understand.
5. He is withdrawn and shy.

The positive characteristics of the adult

1. He has experience of life.
2. He has developed perseverance over the years.
3. He has learned to be patient with himself.
4. Most adults can work with money and must just learn to write figures.
5. The learner reported for the course, this is the first positive step to success. He wants to learn (emphasise this).
6. Many adults of 30 to 40 years produce the best work.)

The picture of the learner created by this text is reminiscent of the "deficit" perspective which writers such as Fingeret (1983), Reder (1985) and Luttrell (1989) have attempted to dispel.

Fingeret summarised a reason for the perspective when she wrote: "it is difficult for us to conceptualize life without reading and writing as anything other than a limited, dull, dependent existence. As a result adult educators continue to define their student populations in terms of incompetence, inability, and illiteracy ..." (1983: 133)

In this country there have been powerful ideological reasons for this perspective, as two health officials in Ocean View reminded me when they spoke of the "illiteracy" they had

discovered on farms. (They were among the few who used the term.) Children were not encouraged or allowed to study beyond a certain level, they said, because the farmer needed their labour. The farmer would help with "upgrading and regrading and education" but only to a certain extent.

"They even offer to transport the children while they are at primary school level but if that parents want their child to further their education the child has got to leave the farm (and) go to relatives..." said one of the Ocean View Clinic's nursing sisters.

It appears that farmers have powerful economic reasons for limiting the educational opportunities of farm labourers' children. It is not doubt useful and comforting for such farmers to maintain a deficit image of the people concerned.

I am reminded of Bill Nasson's account of the farm as a total or greedy institution (Nasson, 1988). He says schooling fits into the "localism" of the farm and the "disciplinary social order" which farm life reproduces. He refers to the term "total institution" coined by Erving Goffman to describe all forms of institution in which dominant authority exercises a "total" regulation of inmates' daily lives. He also makes use of the term "greedy institutions" coined by Lewis Coser to describe "isolated, small-scale and total social structures" which "isolate the individual from competing claims, engrossing as much of his or her life as possible. The dominance exerted is over the ordinary business of people's lives, inside and outside the sphere of work" (page 14).

Whereas Goffman focuses on the physical walls separating the institutional members from the outside world, greedy institutions rely mainly on non-physical mechanisms. They tend to rely on voluntary compliance and to evolve means of activating loyalty and commitment. Nasson says the farm has become a "classic greedy institution" and education is one means by which the farmer attempts to activate loyalty and commitment..

"The farmer's influence as a 'big man' is generated not simply on his land and in his claim on cheap labour in the locality but is mediated through a range of social practices

and institutions, running from religion to schooling to family life. Much personal influence is exercised in a structured way, through a dense web of giving and receiving" (page 14-15).

Referring to research which he did for the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, Nasson says farmers interviewed "almost to a man agreed that education is a positive social good". But this did "not entail any acceptance by farmers of the notion that education should entitle workers to enhanced status and greater income".

Mrs Basson's texts appear to be an example of the totalising ideology of the farm as a greedy institution.

Mrs Basson herself is a former farmer and the books which she has put together are rooted in her perceptions of farm life and farm labour. I found it difficult to get her to speak about her motivations for her work. In my interview, she refused to let me use a tape recorder and spoke almost without a break, making it difficult for one to direct the conversation or ask questions. She did tell me, however, that she married a farmer from Noorder-Paarl in 1960, that he was killed in a car accident in 1973 and that she continued with the farm for 16 years after his death. She said she did not get involved with farming methods but concentrated rather on her relationship with the workers.

She became involved in literacy teaching when one man told her he wanted to learn to read and write. She gained numerous learners over the years and tried numerous methods. In 1987 she started to work on her own material. She said she began her work "in die geloof" (in faith) and provided much of the necessary finance from her own pocket. She said most of the income from the books had come from actual sales but there had also been small contributions from sponsors. She said she made no profits.

The first page of Kursus 2 acknowledges the contributions of the Landelike Stigting (Rural Foundation) "vir ondersteuning in die ontwikkeling van Kursus 1 en die beskikbaarstelling van 'n kopiermasjien vir Kursus 2. Die drukkoste van die Bybelboeke

is ook deur Landelike Stigting gedra." (for support in the development of Kursus 1 and for making a copier available for Kursus 2. The printing costs of the Bible books were also carried by the Rural Foundation.)

She also acknowledges the input – of finances and content – of other organisations.

> "Verskeie afdelings van die boek is geborg deur instansies wat die inhoud van die afdeling gekeur en van illustrasies voorsien het. Hierdie finansiele steun het dit moontlik gemaak om die boek teen 'n meer bekostigbare prys te bemark. Borgskap word by die betrokke afdeling erken en die embleem van die instansie verskyn op die laaste bladsy van hierdie boek."
>
> (Various sections of the book were financed by organisations that chose the content of the section and provided the illustrations. Their financial support made it posible to market the book at a more affordable price. Sponsorship is acknowledged at the relevant section and the emblem of the organisation appears on the last page of this book.)

Organisations acknowledged for their contributions to the text of the book include the South African Police, the Department of National Health, the Department of Population Development, a Pretoria company called PVM that produces maize products and a Paarl bottle store (Boland Kelder). At the back of the book the following organisations are acknowledged as sponsors with the reproduction of their emblems:

Eskom, Sharp, Boland Bank, Nasou Beperk, Die Nasionale Veiligheidsraad, P.V.M., Noorder Paarl Gemeenskapontwikkelingsvereniging, Telkom, Marine Products Beperk and Die Afrikaanse Taalfonds.

At first glance it would appear to be religious rather than economic considerations that are the driving force behind the book. Religious themes permeate the pages of the texts for learners and the instructions for course leaders contain repeated exhortations to "Bid met die leerder" (Pray with the learner). The opening page of Kursus 1 (mentioned earlier) also contains verses from Psalm 121.

> "Ek kyk op na die berge, waarvandaan sal daar vir my hulp kom? My hulp kom van die Here wat hemel en aarde gemaak het". (I look up to the mountains, from where will my help come? My help will come from the Lord who made heaven and earth.)

The practical lessons of this book are interspersed with exercises derived from Biblical texts. These exercises carry a logo showing an open book, strewn with flowers, and a burning candle behind. Below, words and letters are given in dots and the learner is asked to write over the dots to complete the word and then sound out and read the words. On page 98 for example the learner is required to complete the words "sonde", "ons" and "God". On page 206, the words to be completed are "Die Here God" and "Die Here is lief vir my".

Kursus 2 opens with a picture of praying hands and the injunction to the course leader: "Bid saam met u leerder en vra die Here om u albei te help." (Pray with your learner and ask the Lord to help you both.) The specifically religious exercises in this book are concentrated into four pages headed "Wat beteken my kerk vir my?", "Wat glo ek?", "My dankoffer" and a page containing the words and music of a hymn (pages 91 to 94). The sentences which the learner is required to copy under "Wat beteken my kerk vir my?" all presume (or impose) an uncritical commitment to a Christian God.

"Wat beteken my kerk vir my?

Skryf weer die sinne:

- Dit is my lewensanker!
- Dit gee my geloof in iemand wat sterker en groter as ekself is.
- Ek kan by die Here vergewing kry van my sonde en skuldgevoel!
- Dit is goed om saam met ander die Here te loof.
- Ek leer meer van die GENADE en LIEFDE van God.

Vul nou self nog 'n paar dinge in wat jou kerk vir jou beteken..."

(What does my church mean for me?

Copy these sentences:

- It is the anchor of my life!
- It makes me believe in someone stronger and bigger than myself.
- It is good to praise the Lord along with other people.
- I learn more about the mercy and love of God.

Now fill in a few things that the church means for you....)

The section entitled "My dankoffer" discusses the offerings which churchgoers are required to make to their churches. It speaks about the tythe and mentions that much has been preached, written and spoken about this.

> "Die belangrikste is dat ek die geld eenkant moet sit en nie daarvan moet leen vir my eie behoeftes nie.
>
> As dit nie vooruit beplan word nie, is daar aan die einde van die maand niks vir die Here oor nie!"
>
> (The most important is that I must put the money to one side and must not take any for my own needs.
>
> If this is not planned ahead, there will be nothing at the end of the month for the Lord!)

Religious themes and values enter the text again in lessons on "Die Huwelik en die Gesin – Bybelse siening" (Marriage and the family – the Bible's view" and "Seks buite die Huwelik" (Extra-marital Sex). In the latter section, learners are warned against TV soap operas in which heroes tend to end up in bed with a woman, often a different woman each time.

> "Volgens die Bybel is dit baie duidelik dat God seks buite die huwelik afkeer en ernstig straf. In die tyd van die Ou Testament is mense met klippe doodgegooi as hulle met iemand anders se vrou betrap is" (p 217).
>
> (According to the Bible, it is very clear that God loathes extra marital sex and punishes one severely for it. In the time of the Old Testament men were stoned to death if they were found with someone else's wife.)

There can be no doubt that a kind of fundamentalist religious ideology is at work in Mrs Basson's texts. It is not, however, the only ideology at work, nor the most powerful, as the following discussion attempts to show.

The photographs of learners that are dotted throughout the books provide clues to other theories about the ways in which goods are distributed in society (to paraphrase Gee's definition of ideology). They do so by endorsing the image of the learner as a person with feelings of inferiority, which Mrs Basson creates in her "Characteristics of the

Illiterate Adult", and by projecting a powerful visual image of the learner as subordinate to the teacher.

Of the eight photographs that I noticed, six show the learners in positions of subservience to the teachers in the pictures. Usually the learner is seated, poring laboriously over a book, while the teacher stands behind. In four of these photographs the teachers concerned are white women. Two photos depict Coloured teachers. In one of these, however, the teacher creates an exceptionally authoritarian-looking image. He is standing behind his learners, one hand on a hip, the other holding a large stick (presumably a blackboard pointer). The remaining photographs show a group of learners singing and a female learner writing on a blackboard.

The inferior position of the learner is also entrenched in the overall "activity book" approach of Mrs Basson's texts which positions the learner, teacher and text in a kind of hierarchy with the learner at the bottom and the text at the top. As the Ocean View librarian summed it up, "the lesson leads". There are few opportunities for learner input or even for teacher input.

Other ideological clues are provided by the subjects of the exercises in Kursus 2 particularly. Apart from the religious and sexual discussions I have already mentioned, one also finds information on:

- **Planning and cultivating a vegetable garden** (page 57). Mrs Basson provides general information about vegetable *farms* but learners are given instructions on how to cultivate their own vegetable *gardens*. The interests and power arrangements here, to use the words of Cherryholmes (1988:5), are obvious.

- **Physical health.** One section (page 170) discusses dangers to one's health.

"Alles wat ek verkeerd gebruik, kan skade aan my gesondheid doen!
Te veel eet!
Te veel drink,

Te min rus,
Te min werk."

(Everything that I misuse can damage my health.
Eating too much
Drinking too much
Resting too little
Working too little.)

If one considers how a farmworkers' union might rewrite such a text, the ideology behind Mrs Basson's words becomes obvious. The fact that a worker might suffer from overwork is clearly not a dimension.

The importance of productivity in Mrs Basson's ideology is highlighted in one of the opening pages of Kursus 2:

"Die doel van my studie is:

- Om my werk beter te kan doen.
- Om my leefwereld beter te verstaan.
- Om my selfbeeld te verbeter.
- Om my Bybel te kan verstaan.
- Om my vrye tyd beter te gebruik.
- Om my verhouding met ander te verbeter" (p 4).

(The aim of my studies are:

- To work better.
- To understand my environment better.
- To improve my self-image.
- To understand my Bible.
- To use my free time better.
- To improve my relationships with others.)

- **Alcohol.** This section endorses the power relations with which Mrs Basson must have been familiar as a farmer in wine country. There are four pages on alcohol:

three pages on the effects of alcohol misuse preceded by a first page (sponsored by a Paarl bottle store) devoted to a discussion of good wine. The text is reminiscent of the public relations brochures that emanate from the wine or tobacco industries, that emphasise the quality of their products and their value when used in moderation. This section asks various questions about good wine such as:

> "Wat gebeur met rooiwyn wat vir 'n paar jaar gebere word?
>
> Se in jou eie woorde wat "verouder" beteken?
>
> Vir watter groot geleentheid sal jy graag wyn wil bere sodat jy goeie wyn aan familie en vriende kan voorsit?
>
> Hoe bedien jy goeie wyn?
>
> - Gesels hieroor met die kursusleier en mede-leerders tydens die lesuur.
> - Voer 'n positiewe gesprek oor wyn, nie net altyd negatief nie."
>
> (What happens to red wine that is stored for a couple of years?
>
> Say in your own words what the word "matures" means?
>
> For what big occasion would you like to store some wine so you can offer good wine to your family and friends?
>
> How do you serve good wine?
>
> - Discuss this with your course leader and fellow learners during the lesson time.
> - Let the discussion be positive, not always negative.)

It is intriguing that this apparent social pragmatism about alcohol can co-exist in Mrs Basson's texts along with conservative moral fundamentalism about religion and sex, despite empirical significance about the role of alcohol as the base of "immoral behaviour" in "coloured" communities. (This is discussed also in 4.3). I can only conclude that as a farmer in wine country, there are overriding economic interests which she is considering.

Gee maintains the choice in any literacy program will always be: "what sort of social group do I intend to apprentice the learner into?" The social group that I envisage after reading Mrs Basson's texts is a poor but contented group of "Kleurling mense" who practise birth control, don't have extra marital sex, drink sufficient wine to satisfy the

industry that requires their labour, but not so much their productivity is affected. They can read and write well enough to decipher biblical texts and bomb warnings in Post Offices, but not enough to propel them beyond the station in which they find themselves. What frustrations they might feel from time to time, are comforted away each Sunday by religious texts and hymns and promises of salvation in another world.

Her texts reflect the white power of the Western Cape farmlands and the interests of white farmers in a stable, productive rural underclass. Despite this, or possibly because of this, Mrs Basson's programme must be regarded as a success. In her lounge she keeps a large map of South Africa and Nambia, with pins in it to illustrate the areas where her books are being used. The impression is created of nationwide penetration. How did she achieve this hegemony?

It is obvious that she has discovered a gap in the ABE market. Her texts are in Afrikaans, home language of most of the learners, and they were clearly written with a Coloured audience in mind. The photographs might show learners in positions of subservience to teachers, but the learners depicted are Coloured people. And this is what Coloured learners want, the Ocean View literacy teachers told me. They don't want books with African names, faces and examples in them.

But her books have another strength, which I will discuss in greater detail in the following section. In the rigid structuring of the lessons and the domination of text over learner and teacher, they mirror a discourse of authority and formality which both learners and teachers have experienced in other contexts of their lives: in the formal schooling they have experienced and in the churches they attend. In the following section I will discuss how learners and teachers follow the rituals prescribed by the texts in the same way they follow the rituals of their churches, while the content of those texts remains, to a large extent, removed and separate from their everyday discourses and practices.

2.3.4 The Literacy Teachers

The five teachers responsible for the literacy classes at the Ocean View library during my research period represent Ocean View's first generation. All but one had been born in Ocean View. They were all brought up in the township and were all products of Ocean View High School where they had all had passed Std 10.

However, only one had a permanent, full time job (and this only from the middle of my research period). She was Shahieda, who at 27 was the oldest of the teachers and the one in charge of the literacy group. She obtained a full-time permanent post at the Ocean View library in October 1993. Nazeema,20, was unemployed at the start of my research period but found a job as receptionist at an accommodation establishment in Muizenberg towards the end of 1993. Anita, 19, was "casualling" on a daily basis at a ladies clothing store in Wynberg. Carla, 20, was working 10 1/4 hours a week at the library when I met her. This was upgraded in October to 16 3/4 hours. Jeremy, 22, remained unemployed throughout the research period, although he was trying to find work in the Navy. The only paid work he had done since leaving school was a few months as a labourer for a fish oil refinery. (Fuller details of their lives are presented in Appendix C.)

Three of the five teachers were planning to study further. Carla and Shahieda said they would start studying librarianship by correspondence in 1994. Nazeema had done a year of social work at Rhodes University in Grahamstown but had obtained only two credits so her father did not send her back. An attempt to study through Unisa had also been unsuccessful and at the end of 1993 she was planning to do a course in travel consultancy.

None of the teachers were receiving payment for the literacy teaching they were doing. There had been the possibility of some payment at one stage when the class was linked briefly to the Peninsula Technikon. However, the link was severed because of the red tape involved (forms had to be completed after each class) and the minimum number of learners required each week to qualify for payment (15 per teacher). In the Ocean View

literacy class the ratio of teachers to learners (at least during the times I visited the class) averaged about 1:3.

All five teachers had become involved in the literacy teaching by chance rather than choice: they had been asked to help out when a teacher was absent and had taken up the challenge because they had spare time on their hands.

I found them a bright and cheerful group of people whose strength lay in an easy familiarity with the popular discourses of the community in which they were teaching. I would not say that they were exceptionally dedicated to the task. Classes tended to get off to a slow but cheerful start as the teachers caught up on gossip and township news. They all seemed to appreciate the pre-prepared "activity book" approach of Mrs Basson because it relieved them of the task of preparation. Nazeema, who taught the English group, told me she wished there was an English equivalent for her group because she had to search for material for her two learners.

Having said this, I did detect an increasing interest in their teaching work in the course of my research period. Shahieda and Jeremy started speaking of advertising campaigns in the community. Shahieda requested copies of all the life histories I had compiled. (In each case I left it to the learners to choose whether they wished to hand over their life histories. Only one decided not to do so.) Shahieda told me the teachers had decided to compile similar life histories for each of their learners to facilitate their teaching. Nazeema telephoned me at home to ask for help in designing classes for the learner who had requested confidentiality and I tried to help within the bounds of my agreement with that woman. The teachers seemed to find it helpful to know more about the personal lives of their learners.

As it was, the discourses of these teachers were remarkably similar to those of their learners: they spoke the same Cape Afrikaans dialect, they could enjoy the same jokes and could tell the same hair-raising stories about violent deaths and sexual abuses in the community. But they were generally not as religiously committed as their learners and,

simply because they were at least half their ages, there was a whole range of experience (mainly to do with marriage, children and work) which they did not share.

One learner mentioned the teachers' relative youthfulness as a disadvantage – he described them as "kinders" (children) and said they had not had the patience to deal adequately with a slow learner like Oom Piet. Another learner was being given private lessons in the library on a Thursday morning because he did not want to be seen attending the general class. Yet he still complained to me that the teachers did not understand sufficiently his need for privacy. His comments, I think, said more about the stigmatization of the class and lack of "gelerendheid" than they did about the teachers.

Three of the teachers were from Christian backgrounds – Carla described herself as a devout Catholic, Anita said she was an Anglican. Jeremy said he was an Anglican but didn't attend church and hoped to "turn Moslem". This was because Shahieda, his girlfriend of nearly seven years, is Moslem. Nazeema also told me she was Moslem but added immediately that she had a wide and tolerant attitude to all religions. At the end of each class the teachers and learners stand in a circle and a teacher, usually Shahieda, says a prayer. She told me she did not experience any "clash" between her Moslem beliefs and the Christian bias of Mrs Basson's programme and of her learners.

In the classes and beforehand, when the teachers chatted in their tearoom, I was struck by the absence of any political discussions. When a march into Simonstown was held in December 1993 to commemmorate the removals 25 years before, only one teacher, Nazeema, took part. I began to think that politics was not an aspect of their discourse.

But in January 1994 I sat in on a voter education workshop, presented by Shahieda for the learners, and I began to wonder if I was wrong. She urged the learners to participate in the election because it was the first time that blacks and coloureds could do so. She spoke passionately of the way in which blacks had suffered under apartheid. She carefully avoided recommending any particular party but made it obvious that the National Party was not her choice.

Nazeema, usually the least involved of the teachers, came into her own in this workshop as she urged the learners to familiarise themselves with the parties taking part and listed the names of some of their leaders.

It was at this stage that I began to wonder if my presence, as a white person, had inhibited their political discussions until then. Throughout most of my research I was at pains to conceal my involvement with the ANC lest this influence people's discourse unduly. The voter education workshop took place after I had emerged in the Simonstown march as a supporter of the ANC. I began to wonder then what directions the teachers' tearoom talk might have taken had they known of this allegiance earlier.

All the teachers except for Nazeema, who taught in English, made use of Mrs Basson's programmes and followed the lessons very closely. Did this mean that the learners were socialised into accepting the values and interests evident in Mrs Basson's texts?

To answer this question it is useful, I think, to make use of the concepts of classification, framing and educational codes put forward by Basil Bernstein in an article called "On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge" (Bernstein,1971).

Here he uses the term "classification" to refer to the relationship between contents in a curriculum and to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents. He uses the term "frame" to refer to the pedagogical relationship of teacher and taught and the strength of the boundary between what may be transmitted and what may not be transmitted in the pedagogical relationship.

Frame also refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over "the selection, organization and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship."

Strong frames reduce the power of the pupil over what, when and how he/she receives knowledge and increases the teacher's power in the pedagogical relationship. Weak frames increase the pupil's power and decrease the teacher's.

In "The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse" (1990) Bernstein redefines these concepts in terms that take account of power, control and resistance.

He says classification refers to the relationship between "categories" and framing to the "location of control over the rules of communciation".

> "Framing is the means of socialization into the classificatory principle... Power and control are transformed into rules of legitimate communication and interpretation, through the acquisition of classification and framing values."

> "The classification and framing rules translate power and control relations into interactional practices and their communicative principles, together with modes of resistance and opposition.
>
> The concepts of classification (structural relations) and framing (interactional practices) were developed to translate external power/control relations into power/control relations with and between agencies of cultural reproduction and social production. The concepts create linkage between macro structures and micro interactional communicative practices. From this point of view ideological positioning and oppositioning are realized in, transmitted, and legitimated by classification and framing rules" (page 101)

I will concentrate on Bernstein's earlier discussion of the concepts because it is here that he considers an aspect of framing which has particular bearing on the argument of this thesis. It concerns the relationship between the "non-school everyday community knowledge of the teacher or taught, and the educational knowledge transmitted in the pedagogical relationship."

When considering framing, Bernstein says, one can raise the question of "the strength of the boundary, the degree of insulation between the everyday community knowledge of teacher and taught and educational knowledge" and we can consider "variations in the strength of frames".

What, then, is the strength of the boundary between the everyday knowledges of Ocean View's literacy teachers, the Ocean View literacy learners and the knowledge which Mrs Basson's programme seeks to impart?

To answer this question, and ultimately the one with which this discussion began, one needs to consider another concept of Bernstein's – that of educational knowledge codes. He distinguishes two types:

- The collection code which involves strong classification, meaning that the boundaries between the contents of curricula are clear-cut and the contents themselves are well-insulated from each other

- the integrated code where classification is weak, meaning that the boundaries between contents are weak and blurred.

Integrated codes increase the discretion of the teachers (within the limits of existing classification and frames) while integrated codes reduce the discretion of the teacher in direct relation to the strength of the integrated code.

The underlying theory of learning of collection codes is likely to be didactic whilst the underlying theory of learning of integrated codes may well be more group or self-regulated.

Bernstein makes use of these concepts to answer the question:
"... how strong are the frames of educational knowledge in relation to experiential, community-based non-school knowledge?"

He suggests that

> "the frames of the collection code, very early in the child's life, socialize him into knowledge frames which discourage connections with everyday realities, or that there is a highly selective screening of the connection. Through such socialization, the pupils soon learn what of the outside may be brought into the pedagogical frame. Such framing also makes of educational knowledge something not ordinary or mundane, but something esoteric which gives a special significance to those who possess it" (58).

> "Whilst it is usually the case that collection codes, relative to integrated codes, create strong frames between the uncommonsense knowledge of the school and the everyday community-based knowledge of teacher and taught, it is also the case that such insulation creates areas of privacy. For, inasmuch as community-based experience is irrelevant to the pedagogical frame, these aspects of the self informed by such

experiences are also irrelevant. These areas of privacy reduce the penetration of the socializing process, for it is possible to distance oneself from it" (64).

Mrs Basson's texts, because of their activity book approach, could be regarded as examples of strong framing which limits the control of both teacher and pupil over the "selection, organisation and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship". There is little opportunity for discussion, let alone decisions on the directions and contents of the lessons and the teachers do not attempt to deviate from the pre-constructed activities designed by Mrs Basson.

But this is not to say that teacher and learner are automatically socialized into the world of complacent workers which Mrs Basson seems to envisage. Even as their heads are bent over her texts, they laugh and joke with each other in a way that suggests a certain immunity to the morals she prescribes.

In the classes I attended there was one learner, Hendrina, who usually assumed the role of joker and tension-reliever. At the time of my most frequent visits, she was about to get married and men and marriage were common topics of across-table chatter.

In the conversation of the social gatherings which I attended I did not find learners' making a single reference to their literacy work, the programme or any of the subjects it raised. Primary discourse was the order of the day and I found myself abandoning plans to make use of the occasions to discuss aspects of my research.

The dichotomy between community-based knowledges and that of Mrs Basson's programme was also made clear to me during my visit to Mrs Basson in Paarl in which I was accompanied by four of the teachers. They seemed impressed by her large Cape Dutch-style home. They listened without interruption to her constant flow of words, showed her a scrapbook of photographs of learners on outings (which Mrs Basson enthused about). In the car going home they described her as "sweet" and said her enthusiasm motivated them to keep on with the literacy work. Then they switched the

conversation to affairs of love and sex (the main topic, I discovered, of most of their conversations) and I did not hear her name raised again.

In considering the effect of the strong framing of Mrs Basson's programmes, it it useful to examine the way in which Nazeema, the one English literacy teacher, operated without her books. (An English version had not yet been published. If it had been, she would have used it.)

Her lessons, in theory at least, provided opportunities for weak framing and weak classification. But, in practice, this was not the case. Nazeema complained to me of the way in which her two learners failed to voice their needs.

> "... like I tell Anne, read over the work from the beginning. Read through it. Where you have a problem, come back to me. Now then she won't say anything all the time now. Now I'll say: Now did you go over it?'. She'll say 'Yes'. Do you understand everything? Then she'll say 'Yes' and then she'll come around and then she'll say 'This word?' ...."

Nazeema said she felt insecure not knowing whether her learners understood the work or not because they would not say anything to her. At the same time she was "not prepared to stand in front of the class, and pound it and repeat things and repeat things and repeat things". She wanted her learners to ask when they were not sure of something, but they did not do this.

Nazeema's difficulties reflect in practice what Bernstein envisaged in theory when he said:

"The collection code is capable of working when staffed by mediocre teachers, whereas integrated codes call for much greater powers of synthesis and analogy, and for more ability to both tolerate and enjoy ambiguity at the level of knowledge and social relationships" (page 65)

He also envisaged that working with integrated codes may involve resocialization of the teacher if his/her previous educational experience had been formed by the collection code. That Nazeema's previous educational experience was formed in this way is obvious from her comments about the way in which she floundered in her first year at university.

She described Rhodes as "totally different to school". Explaining why she had failed all but two subjects, she said:

> "... because you're left alone, you're going to get lost ... I found it very difficult to change to university because ... it was all up to you... to study.:

It was interesting to observe, too, that while Nazeema aspired to a kind of integrated code in her classes, there was in fact strong framing. This was partly because of the way in which the learners failed to participate more actively in the pedagogical process, and partly because of the strength of Nazeema's personality, opinions and primary discourse.

2.3.5 Summary

The Ocean View literacy teachers bring to their classes a care-free and confident discourse born out of youthful experiences in relatively secure homes. They are sufficiently familiar with the primary discourses of their learners to know their patois, to share their humour. In their struggles to find employment, they are beginning to experience a few of the frustrations which are features of their learners' lives.

Into what social group are they attempting to apprentice their learners? From initial observations of their classes, the answer appears to be: the same social group that Mrs Basson envisages. Because, for four out of five of these teachers, her methods are theirs, her words are theirs. There is practically no attempt to deviate from her pre-constructed workbooks.

Yet there is evidence too that the socialization process apparently intended by Mrs Basson's texts does not take place.
While there are some learners and teachers whose quiet and studious approach to the classes mirrors the tones of her texts, there are others who seem immune to their moral messages even as they perform their practical exercises. This is evident in the jokes and banter and gossip and fun of the classroom chatter and during the literacy group's social functions.

In Bernstein's terms, Mrs Basson's programme can be seen as an example of collection code in which strong frames keep apart the uncommonsense knowledge of the school and the everyday community-based knowledge of teacher and taught. In the process, despite the tacit ideologies of the texts, the learners and teachers are able to make use of the workbooks without experiencing any effect on their own ideologies and primary discourses.

Personal ideologies and primary discourses are most threatened, in fact, in the one group where an integrated code operates. Here, because Mrs Basson's texts are not available in English, the teacher makes use of a range of different materials and her own ideas to construct classes for her learners. But neither the teacher nor the learners are able to operate comfortably in this environment – possibly because of the strength of the collection code experience (or expectations) of formal schooling. The shift in the balance of power from teacher to learner, which Bernstein predicts in integrated codes, does not take place.

So Mrs Basson's programmes have achieved a kind of hegemony among a certain group of learners and teachers because, despite the strong but tacit ideologies of her texts, the formal structuring of her programmes enables learners to participate in ways which make them feel comfortable and, in an ideological sense, unthreatened. The programmes mirror their experiences or expectations of formal schooling, which they regard as the source of the "gelerendheid" they either acquired or missed. They also mirror the formalities and rituals which they experience in church on Sundays. And if the programmes fail to make space for their everyday community-based knowledges, they also fail to ensure that learner and teacher are socialized into accepting the attitudes, values, interests and power arrangments of Mrs Basson.

CHAPTER THREE:

LIVING WITHOUT "GELERENDHEID": THE LEARNERS

In this chapter I explore the discourses and literacy practices of seven adults enrolled in the Ocean View literacy class. I search for discursive clues in factors such as age, employment, status in the class, marital status, schooling and religion and in the reasons given for attending class or staying away. Then I consider in some detail the literacy practices of these people, in the home, workplace, commercial world and religion. But before I do any of this I try to convey some of the flavour of the discourse of the literacy class, by recounting my perspective of a particular scene...

3.1 ORALITY AND LITERACY AMONG THE LEARNERS

Of all my memories of the Ocean View literacy class, there is one that stands out in my mind as a kind of symbol of what it came to represent for me. This is how I recorded the event in my field notes dated 25 November 1993.

> "It is the last Thursday of November and the last session of the Ocean View literacy class for 1993. Instead of a class, the teachers have laid on a surprise party of cake, biscuits, chips and Oros. We eat and chat and then Shahieda, the group leader, asks us all to stand in a circle and hold hands for the closing prayers which are customary in this class. This time she asks each one of us to say something and opens herself with an articulate prayer of thanks in both Afrikaans and English. Jeremy (another teacher, who told me in an interview that he seldom went to church), follows with an equally fluent and spontaneous Afrikaans prayer. Now it's my turn. I thank the group for letting me attend their classes and enter their homes. I thank God "for these wonderful people". That's all I can say on the spur of the moment. Two precise, fairly well-formed sentences. Neither a prayer nor a speech. Nothing to write home about (to use an inappropriate expression for a literacy class.)
> But the learners who follow astound me with their offerings. One by one they offer their thanks and appreciation for the year's classes and the teachers that gave them in words that flow unstoppingly from their mouths and tones that express great depth of feeling. Diana, classified retarded and regarded as unteachable by the centre that employs her, speaks clearly and coherently of her teacher, Carla, and asks God to keep her and the other teachers safe until next year. Hendrina, also in sheltered employment because of "emotional unstability", speaks so rapidly and softly that I can't make out her words. But I know they flow more fluently than my own. Even Sanetta who barely ever says a word under the easiest of circumstances manages a

> "dankie". Mr Oewies, in sonorous tones, mutters "Ja" and "Dis waar" repeatedly and when it comes to his turn composes a prayer about "sweet Jesus" that would do any preacher proud.
>
> When they have all spoken in turn and the remaining teachers have had their say, I cannot help asking myself: What is this literacy-thing that I value so highly? Here I am, the most literate of this group by far, and in this situation, words escape me. In an oral sense, I am illiterate."

Several discursive themes were thrown into relief for me by this event: the oral discourses-practices (Cherryholmes, 1988:8) of a group of people who have yet to acquire the skills of reading and writing regarded as essential to the mastery of most secondary discourses (Gee, 1990: 153); the importance in their lives of the secondary discourse of religion; the oral discourses-practices which they have developed within this secondary discourse; and the discourses about mental retardation in Ocean View which have constructed numerous people in the community as "mentally handicapped", including four of the literacy class learners. These themes emerged again and again in my encounters with the literacy class learners. I deal with all but the last one in this chapter. Discourses about mental retardation are discussed in Chapter 5 because of their relevance to people beyond the ambit of the literacy class as well as those within it.

3.2 AGE, EMPLOYMENT, STATUS IN THE LITERACY CLASS, MARITAL STATUS, RELIGION, SCHOOLING

In the course of my research I met about 15 learners at the Ocean View literacy class although there were seldom that many at any one class or occasion. On one occasion only seven learners arrived for a class – and there were five teachers! The majority of the learners are women. I met only three men and of the seven people I interviewed in depth only one is a man.

I will call the learners the "interviewees" although some of them became much more than this as I spent time in their homes, accompanied them on social outings and watched their progress in the literacy classes.

In this section I present what I regard as their most relevant biographical details. Fuller biographical details are presented in Appendix A.

3.2.1 Age and employment

My interviewees ranged in age from 31 to 57 years. All were employed. Two of them, sisters Diana,40, and Sanetta, 33, were in sheltered employment at the Ocean View Protective Workshop. A third sister, Elizabeth, 31, worked four days a week as a char in Fish Hoek. Mary, 57, was a teagirl at the Navy in Simonstown, Colleen, 38, was a housekeeper for a Fish Hoek lawyer. Anne, 43, worked as a char in the Kommetjie home of a medical doctor. Karel, 35, was a foreman of cleaning staff in the Navy, he also worked as a barman and waiter in a Navy canteen and did private catering in his spare time.

It might seem that I chose an inordinately high proportion of interviewees from the Protective Workshop in Ocean View, but, in fact, my proportion is only slightly higher than that for the class as a whole where four out of 15 learners receive disability pensions for mental handicaps and are attached to the Protective Workshop.

3.2.2 Status in the Literacy Class

Two of the learners whom I interviewed had been classed by the literacy teachers as advanced learners. This meant they were working on Kursus 2 of Mrs Basson's programme. These learners were Mary and Karel. Colleen moved into the advanced group in the course of my research period. Esther was in an intermediate group. Diana and Sanetta were both still working on Kursus 1 and Anne was in the only English group where she was regarded, even after several months of teaching, as a beginner.

3.2.3 Marital Status

Two of my interviewees were married. Anne is married to a blacksmith assistant at the dockyards and has five sons aged between 8 and 21 years. Colleen's husband was

unemployed at the time of my research, having been retrenched by the nearby kaolin mine. She has two children, a son aged 9 and a baby. Mary is divorced and lives with her daughter and two grandchildren. The other interviewees were unmarried, although Karel became engaged in the course of my research period, and Diana has a son aged 23.

3.2.4 Religion

Not one of the learners in the Ocean View literacy class during my research period was Muslim. The learners I interviewed all belong to Protestant Christian religions and they all described themselves as regular churchgoers. However, none could be said to hold positions of importance in their churches (as did Mr Oewies, another learner whom I did not interview). Sisters Esther, Diana and Sanetta O are all "lidmate" (confirmed members) of the NG Sending Kerk in Ocean View. So is Mary. Colleen is a member of the New Apostolic Church and Karel a member of the Full Gospel Church. Anne belongs to the Anglican church, commonly known in Ocean View as "die Engelse kerk" (the English church).

In their homes the learners gave the appearance that the church played an important role in their lives. Pride of place on the walls of the lounge of the O family, for example, are framed copies of the "lidmaatsertifikate" (confirmation certificates) of the various members of the family. Anne keeps a photograph of an Anglican priest and his family in her lounge, in a frame which also contains the certificates she was given after her baptism and confirmation (together) three years before. A photograph of another priest is next to this one, and on another wall a framed page of religious tracts, apparently put up by her husband.

The church also provided important incentives to learn to read and write.

3.2.5 Schooling

Educational experiences ranged from no schooling at all to Std 2. Esther, the last child in the O. family, was never sent to school. She told me that this was because her mother had something wrong with her leg and needed her help in her home. Her five siblings had been sent to school however and only two had managed to "vorder" (progress). They reached Std 4 while the others dropped out after Sub B or Std 1. Two of them, Diana, who went to Std 1 and Aletta who went to Sub B, are now in the Protective Workshop. Karel went as far as Std 2 and then dropped out because of "family difficulties". (He was the most reticent of all my interviewees and so I had difficulty establishing the exact reasons for his leaving school.) He did tell me, however, that he left his home in Franschhoek after leaving school and went to live with a cousin in Red Hill.

Mary said she left school at Std 1 because her father died and she needed to go to work to help her mother. Alice was kept at home as a young child to look after her brother while her mother worked as a hotel chambermaid. She was only sent to school at the age of 13 when her mother stopped working. The school was Arsenal School in Simonstown and Anne does not have pleasant memories of the experience.

"I was quite big built and felt awkward to start school at that age." She said the other children laughed at her and teased her because of her size. In addition she did not understand what was going on in the classroom. "The teacher would put letters on the board and say read and things like that and I didn't know what it was about." After one week, she told her mother she was not going back and would rather work. Soon after she found a job as a "nursegirl" in Glencairn.

Sanetta was another learner with painful memories of school. I found hers particularly interesting because they were practically the only information about herself (or anything else) that she volunteered to me in all my contact with her. Regarded as retarded by the centre that employs her, she is an exceptionally silent woman. When you ask her a question, her lips tremble and you are lucky if you get a "ja" (yes) or "nee" (no). Usually she turns to her sister, Esther, to reply on her behalf.

On this occasion I asked Sanetta if she could remember her schoolteacher. She indicated that she could.

MB: Het jy van daardie juffrou gehou? (Did you like that teacher?)

Sanetta (laughing loudly): Nee (No)

MB: Wat het sy gedoen? (What did she do?)

Sanetta: Sy het pakkes gegee. (She gave hidings.)

MB: ....met 'n stok of wat? (With a stick or what?)

Sanetta: 'n Stok (A stick)

MB: Maar wat was die rede dat sy daardie pakkes gegee het?

Sanetta: Nie gewerk. (Not working)

At this stage, Sanetta's sister, Esther, interrupted with the information that Sanetta's wrists had swelled up because she was hit so often.

The third sister, Diana, also regarded as retarded, did not seem to have had the same kind of experience at school. She told me her teacher was "oraait" (allright) and she left school to look after her grandmother who was "siekerig" (sickly).

Colleen spoke of her sadness at being taken out of school in Std 1 so she could go to work to help support her mother, a widow.

> "Ek wil graag geleer het... ek wil graag geleer het... want almal het gelees en ek kan nie... Dit was hartseer gewees om my van skool uit te gaan haal ... ek het gehuil, want ek wil geleer het van 'n nurse maar ek het geen keuse gehad nie..."
>
> (I wanted to learn... I wanted to learn ... because everyone else could read and I couldn't... I was sad at being taken out of school ... I cried because I wanted to study to be a nurse but I had no choice...")

When Colleen recalled her schooldays, she spoke of the clothes she wore (a gymslip with a belt and big pleats and a white blouse) and the way she plaited her hair and kept herself "ordentlik" (decent) and was always "tidy". Her ambitions were also expressed in images of clothing: "Ek wil nou geleer het vir 'n nurse en ek wil nog spierwit aangetrek het..." (I wanted to study to be a nurse and I wanted to wear snow-white).

Today she attends class looking as neat and tidy and "ordentlik" as she ever could have done at school.

3.3. INCENTIVES TO ATTEND LITERACY CLASSES

Karel was the only learner who believed that by learning to read and write he would improve his chances at work. He was also the only one whose work required substantial reading and writing skills. He had started working for the Navy in 1973 as a cleaner. Later he started working in the bar and the canteen as well. Here he had to work with money and complete stock sheets. He said he learned to read and write numbers at school. Someone showed him how to fill in the stock sheets and thereafter he could complete them on his own. At the time of my research he was foreman of the cleaning staff of a particular Navy unit. In this job he was required to fill in leave forms, a task which presented some difficulties at first but had become easier. According to Karel's literacy teacher, Shahieda, Karel was attending literacy classes with the knowledge of his immediate superior but his fellow workers had been told he was attending computer literacy classes.

In general, Karel's motivations were very much connected with personal and material improvement. He said it was his goal to improve himself in his work situation and to achieve something in life ("om iets te bekom in die lewe"). He said he also wanted to teach others in the community to read and write. He said there were important people in his church, including the pastor himself, who could not read and write.

Colleen wanted to be able to take telephone messages more easily but she did not see this as a means to improved work opportunities. She said she could take simple messages but couldn't manage long names. What she usually did was write the first two letters and then try to remember the full name. She said she had no problems with numbers. She said she had known numbers "van ek begin 'n verstand gekry het".

(This means, literally: "from the time I began to acquire intelligence". However, "verstand", like "gelerendheid" has its own particular meaning in the kind of Afrikaans that is spoken in Ocean View. It refers to a stage in a child's development – in Colleen's case she was about eight or nine years old – when the child begins to show some kind of understanding, maturity and responsibility). Colleen's main aim in attending classes was to learn to read fluently and to be able to write a letter in cursive script.

I got the impression her motivations had more to do with outward appearances than a belief that reading and writing would improve her material position in life. She kept assuring me she was not an "onnoselike" (stupid) person and that there were many things she could do. She said she felt *embarassed* when her Sub B child came to her for help with his homework and she was unable to read his work. She didn't want to join the church choir until she could read better. "Ek is bang ek gaan vasstiek" (I am afraid I will get stuck).

Esther also has to take telephone messages at work at times. She said she was able to write down telephone numbers after attending classes at the high school when she was 14 or 15 (her first attempt to learn to read and write). Now she could also take down names if the callers spelled them out. However, Esther is also not motivated to attend literacy classes because of her work. I asked her what motivated her to attend night classes originally:

> Esther: Ek wou net geleer het om te kan lees en skryf, veral my naam te kan teken en so aan. (I just wanted to learn to read and write, especially to sign my name and so on.)
>
> MB: En wat wil jy kan lees en skryf? Watter soort boek wil jy lees en skryf? (And what do you want to read and write? What sort of book do you want to read and write?)
>
> Esther: Ek het gedink as ek enige boek kan lees. (I thought if I could read any book.)
>
> MB: Enige boek? (Any book?)
>
> Esther: Ja. Veral die Bybel. (Yes. Especially the Bible.)

Esther's current motivation to attend classes concerns a desire to be either a literacy teacher herself or a Sunday school teacher. She expects to do these on a voluntary basis only and does not see herself acquiring better or more lucrative work once she can read and write more fluently. She said she had no plans to change her paid employment.

The other learners whom I interviewed were not required to do any reading or writing in the course of their work, although Sanetta and Diana attended another literacy class once a week at the Handicapped Centre in which their Protective Workshop is situated. I was unable to establish what their motivations are for attending classes (Diana speaks very little and Sanetta barely at all). Diana seems to enjoy the proceedings but Sanetta remains still and silent and usually unsmiling. I suspected that they came for social reasons and because their sister, Esther, and others in the community had encouraged them.

Anne seems to have two main motivations to learn to read and write: she wants to be able to read a passage in the prayer group at her church and she wants to be able to serve on the committees of certain organisations she has dealings with. She told me that before she started attending literacy classes, she used to attend a prayer group at the Anglican church every Thursday night. Here everybody except her got a "chance" to read a passage. The minister would always "skip" over her.

She also wanted to be able to read because she had to attend meetings at her children's schools and parents' meetings of the Boys Brigade, an Anglican organisation for boys, which tries to teach them "godliness" and how to help others and how to play musical instruments in a band.

She said the Boys Brigade often asked for volunteers to be secretary or treasurer on the committee. They did not say it was necessary to read and write for the positions, but she knew that for that type of work one had to be able to read and write. She said she would like to be able to be on the committee if she could read and write. She would also be prepared to serve on the school PTA committee if she could read and write.

I asked Anne if she had functioned well without reading and writing. She replied:

> "I think so far I have but it's a very big miss if you can't. You recognise how much education means, how rich people are with education than people who haven't got."

She regarded the fact that she could now open the prayer or hymn books at church at the correct page without her husband's help, as an important achievement. Esther and Mary also expressed relief that, after several years of classes, they could now cope adequately with prayer and hymn books.

When I asked Mary what her aim was in attending classes, she said she wanted to be able to write letters to friends in England. The one friend was the son of a couple for whom she used to work. He emigrated to England but she met him again that year at his father's funeral. "He said I must write to him even if I just say hello in the card." She said this man was now married and he and his wife wanted her to come to England for a holiday. She also had another friend in England, a "Coloured girl" originally from Ocean View.

Conclusion

Incentives to attend classes had more to do with symbolic fulfillment than with material betterment. Only one learner hoped to improve his work chances by learning to read and write better. For the rest, literacy played little or no part in their working environment. They were attending classes for purely symbolic reasons and seemed to see them in terms of self-actualisation rather than survival. The symbolic function of reading and writing in their lives is discussed further in the section on literary practices.

3.4 POWER AND RESISTANCE IN THE LITERACY CLASSES

I have spoken so far of the reasons why certain learners attend classes. At this stage I want to look at the reasons why, at times, they resisted the classes. I do so for two reasons:

- The phenomenon of resistance provides important clues to the power relations in the classes and, through them, to the discourses that prevail. In assuming this roundabout route, I am following the suggestion of Michel Foucault that the best way to analyse power is by looking at the forms of resistance to it. In "The Subject and Power" (Foucault, 1982: 210 – 211) he says:

  > "I would like to suggest another way to go further towards a new economy of power relations, a way which is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice. It consists of taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists of using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies.
  >
  > "For example, to find out what our society means by sanity, perhaps we should investigate what is happening in the field of insanity. And what we mean by legality in the field of illegality. And in order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations."

- The phenomenon of resistance to adult education classes has become a significant issue in the field (see Fingeret, 1983; Quigley, 1990; Davis 1991). Quigley (1990:103) says nonparticipation in literacy and ABE programs is traditionally conceptualized "either in psychological terms as a motivational issue, or as a 'barriers' issue wherein problems are seen to be located within delivery institutions or within the social, cultural and economic environments which surround nonparticipants."

  > "Such explanations are not fully satisfactory in the study of adult undereducation since they frequently are derived from classroom-based participant data and they assume that both participants and nonparticipants are part of a vast homogeneous grouping. Such assumptions effectively diminish perceived capacity for human agency among nonparticipants and tend to reinforce stereotypes of illiterate adults as fearful, suspicious victims of socioeconomic circumstances who are incapable of utilizing the educational opportunities extended them."

In his own study, Quigley looks at the phenomenon of resistance to schooling by applying a phenomenological method to selected works of literary fiction. He concludes that it is apparent from his investigation that nonparticipants differ from participants in ABE.

> "Thus programs designed on the participant minority cannot be assumed to be fully appropriate for the nonparticipant majority" (page 113).

He also found that none of the resisters in his literary study "resisted objectified knowledge or learning." Each was "a very capable learner" but each was resisting normative values and cultural systems.

In the following chapter I examine the discourses and practices of nonparticipants in the Ocean View literacy class, people without "gelerendheid" who could be regarded as true resisters in that they have nothing to do with the classes. I introduce the concept at this stage, however, because even within the class, there is resistance. Learners dropped out of the programme during my research period. Others made it clear they were having difficulty attending.

The two main reasons given for resistance were: the lack of privacy in the classes and home-life responsibilities or disturbances.

3.4.1 The Power of Privacy

The two learners who wanted more privacy were both people who were trying to hide their inability to read and write from other members of their community. Anne said her husband was the only one in her home who knew that she could not read and write. She had not even told her five sons! When they asked her to help them with their homework, she would make an excuse. "I always have to tell them I'm busy, things like that. Always think of an excuse," she said. I usually visited her about lunch time -- after her morning's work and before her children came home from school. On one occasion they returned unexpectedly early. Rather than tell them what I was doing there or let them hear our conversation, she locked them out of the flat. We continued talking while the children banged on the door shouting: "Mammie, Mammie."

Anne heard about the classes at Ocean View library through her employer, Dr C. She said it took her about three weeks to phone the number which Dr C gave her. When she did phone she asked for private classes.

> "They said that wouldn't be possible but I must come to the class and I will find it is not that difficult and when I went the first night I asked for this certain person (Carla), she said come in and meet everybody. I was the first person there and then when everybody comes in you get introduced. I knew most of the people. The one looked at the other as if to say I didn't know you couldn't read and write. But no one said anything about it."

When I asked Anne if she still wished for a private class she said:

> "No, I feel happy with all of them. But if you are on your own you can go faster. Now I am sitting with someone who is quite ahead of me. We are not learning the same thing."

(Anne has experienced private tuition in her employer's home. Dr C's mother and Dr C herself have given her lessons.)

Karel, on the other hand, remained concerned about the lack of privacy even after joining in the classes. He started off with private classes with the librarian, Mrs W, and then was asked to join the general class. When I first met him he had stopped attending the general evening classes and was having private lessons with Shahieda at the library in the morning. He had told her he needed this because of work commitments but I sensed that he was really concerned with maintaining privacy.

I had difficulty extracting from him the exact reasons why he did not want to be seen attending the classes or even to be seen in the library in the morning. (I noticed that he concealed himself behind a cupboard.) He spoke of a difference between people, like himself, who could read and write a little and those who could read and write absolutely nothing. Then he spoke about those who could understand things and those who couldn't.

> "Nou kry jy die persoon hy kan glad nie weet wat aangaan in die wêreld nie. Hy is die persoon wat nie kan verstaan nie. Jy kan vir hom wys hier en hy kan dit nie verstaan nie." (Now you get the kind of person who just does not know what is going on around him in the world. He is the person who cannot understand. You can show him something and he will not understand it.)

Later he added that there were people in the class like this and "their mind is just one way, they will never be able to, they will never be able to."

At the time of this interview with Karel I had no idea that there were people in the literacy class who were regarded as mentally handicapped. I had already had an initial interview with Esther. She had told me her sisters were at the Handicapped Club as she calls the Centre for Mentally and Physically Handicapped people. But she had not told me her sisters were in the literacy class. Nor had the literacy teachers volunteered any information. It was only after I had interviewed two nursing sisters at the Ocean View clinic and had been introduced to the Discourse of Retardation which prevails there, that I discovered that four of the 15 learners were in the "Handicapped Club" or "Tatie Centre" as the Centre for Mentally and Physically Handicapped People is known in Ocean View.

By this time Karel was no longer attending classes – not even Shahieda's private sessions – and I did not want to try to contact him at his home because I felt I might expose him in this way as a person who is learning to read and write. Shahieda told me he had said he was not attending because people were being retrenched from the Navy and he was having to watch his job. However, his withdrawal also coincided with his engagement to be married. Shahieda told me she asked him if he had told his fiancée that he attended literacy classes. He had said he had not.

What forms of power were Anne and Karel resisting when they asked for private sessions? When Karel dropped out of the classes entirely?

From the knowledge about their lives and values which I gained in my research, I believe they were resisting, not the forms of power expressed in the programmes designed by Mrs Basson (although there are indeed obvious forms of power to be found there), but the forms of power exercised by the literacy teachers (indeed by any teachers of adults). In doing so they were also resisting the particular kind of power (of attraction as well as repulsion) that is wielded by middle-class people with middle- class values over those in the working class who seek to climb the social ladder. Anne and Karel were the two

learners with the greatest aspirations to middle-class lifestyles. In Anne's church and in Karel's work they were very close to achieving the kind of acceptance that would position themselves, in their minds, in this social position. Yet, through their inability to read and write (fluently or at all) they were also perilously close to losing it all. In danger of being revealed finally as people without "gelerendheid" and without the kind of middle-class experiences that are seen to go with it.

I was never able to get out of Karel the exact details of his start in life. He spoke only of family difficulties, of leaving his home to live with a cousin. But Anne told me of her own illegitimate birth, of being kept out of school to look after six siblings while her mother worked as a chambermaid, of her stepfather's precarious living as a fisherman, of the baby that she herself gave birth to while still unmarried...

Details like this indicated areas of discursive conflict for Anne: between the respectable, church-going, middle-class discourses of her current life and the less reputable discourses of her past, and, possibly, between current primary and secondary discourses.

It is interesting in this regard that she and Karel were the only learners who did not want their identities revealed in this study and did not want their life histories to reach the hands of the literacy teachers. It is largely because they requested anonymity that I have changed the names of all the interviewees in this study.

I think the literacy teachers were largely unaware of the power which they held in relation to their learners, a power that was augmented in inverse proportion to their youthfulness. They had clearly been taught to show respect to their learners. Learners were addressed as "Oom Oewies" and "Auntie Mienie", for example, (The terms "oom", "tannie" and "auntie" are a sign of respect in Afrikaans.) What they did not show respect for was the large body of experience and knowledge which each of those learners brought to the class with them and the position of those learners in the community outside. Oom Oewies, for example, was a pastor in his church – and described by Karel as a very important man in that church – but the teachers spoke irritably of his frequent interjections and contributions. They found him "difficult". Anne was raising five sons

– and a grandchild – when I met her but when she appeared slow to grasp new concepts after a morning's charwork and an afternoon of personal housekeeping, her teacher described her as someone who needed to "apply herself", who was "scatterbrained" and "loose".

The teachers were also following a programme that gave learners little opportunity to demonstrate their own knowledges. In its pre-prepared worksheets, its vision of the learner as a person with an inferiority complex and its chastisement of many of the practices associated with working-class life, Mrs Basson's package merely reinforced the power which the teachers, as teachers, and as young people with "gelerendheid", already had.

The fact that in South Africa, under apartheid, middle-class living was associated largely with the white population group, only compounded the frustrations of people like Anne. In my interviews with her she told me of the British grandmother after whom she was named and her grandfather from St Helena. It is interesting that although her husband and children speak Afrikaans, she prefers to learn to read and write in English and says English (the language of her grandparents) is also her language. Her ties to white, English culture emerged on another occasion, when I was sitting in on her literacy class. Nazeema, her teacher, asked her to cut a picture out of a magazine and then call out sentences about it so Nazeema could write them on a board for her to copy. Anne cut out a picture of Princess Diana and then offered the following sentences:

> "She looks loving and caring.
> She has got power and riches.
> She has got everything."

3.4.2 Power in the Home

The second major reason for resistance has its roots in the homelives of the learners concerned, in the power relations that exist there.

- Hendrina was not one of my interviewees but I got to know her by observing her in literacy classes and speaking to her during the social functions which the group

held. The literacy teachers and professionals at the Centre for Mentally and Physically Handicapped People in Ocean View told me she was "emotionally unstable" and receiving a disability grant on these grounds. She worked at the centre's Protective Workshop. The literacy teachers also described her as "bright" and "intelligent" and they clearly enjoyed her quick wit and sense of fun. In classes and in social outings, Hendrina played the clown, the joker.

When she decided to marry one of her fellow workers at the Protective Workshop, the wedding plans were discussed at length in literacy classes and teachers and members of the class attended her wedding. When she stopped attending classes after her marriage, her absence was noted and discussed. Hendrina, the class was told, was unable to attend any more because her husband was jealous. He feared she might meet another man at the classes or might indeed be seeing another man instead of going to classes. There were arguments, recriminations and, I was told, violence. It was only after her husband left her and Ocean View, (only a few months after the marriage), that Hendrina started attending again.

- Mary told me she had wanted to attend night school for a long time before she actually started classes at Kleinberg Primary School (these classes preceded those at the Ocean View Library). She had heard about classes at the High School but did not attend, she said, because she was afraid the work would be too difficult. She did not mention her home circumstances as a reason for resistance but in fact she only started attending night classes after divorcing her husband. The divorce followed a traumatic incident in which her husband stabbed and killed their younger son, then aged 21, and was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. Mary told me she felt much happier since her divorce.

Mary's attendance of classes was interrupted after about a year when her mother became bedridden. She said she had to be at home in the evenings to look after her. It was only after her mother's death towards the end of 1992 that she started attending classes again, this time at the library.

- Colleen started attending private classes at the library in the mornings shortly after the birth of her second child. She took her baby along with her but did not find this satisfactory:

"Een kant huil die kind en een kant moet jy bottel gee en een kant moet jy konsentreer .... dit is swaar man!" (On the one hand the child is crying, on the other you must give it a bottle and then again you must concentrate .... it is difficult, man!)

When she returned to work when the baby was two months old, Colleen tried to continue her studies by attending night classes. But this did not work out. Sometimes her husband did not want to look after the child, sometimes he had to go out. She didn't want that kind of "hassle" and she couldn't study with the child alongside her. She could not learn while she had to say "Moenie so maak nie, moenie so maak nie" all the time.

> "Dit vat jou aandag terug. Jy kan nie so leer nie!"

However, after my first interview with her, Colleen did return to classes. Her baby was now about 18 months old. She left him with her husband and took her seven-year-old boy to class with her because he was having difficulties at school. At the class he was also given work to do.

- During one of my visits to Esther and her family, I found Esther tearful and depressed. She said her mother was in a bad way and she felt this might not have been the case had she spent less time on her books.

> "Ek voel skuldig. Ek het nou seker te veel met boeke gedoen ... en nie genoeg met my man nie. Nou Susan (her sister-in-law) sê ek het nie opgelet na Ma se hande nie." (I feel guilty. I have obviously spent too much time with books and not enough with my mother. Now Susan says I have not looked after Mother's hands.)

That these women are not alone in their experiences is obvious from a reading of feminist writing on literacy and on the way in which women experience class and gender in their everyday lives. (Radway, 1984; Rockhill, 1987).

Rockhill, reporting on a study of 50 working-class Spanish- speaking adults in Los Angeles, describes a woman whose husband stopped her from attending English classes because, she says, he was jealous that she was going to meet someone else. Rockhill says this woman's yearning to study "stands in stark contrast to the professional discourse of adult education which points to a 'lack of motivation' as a major explanation for adult non-participation in literacy programs."

She considers how literacy "has been constructed as power in discourses of power (ie professional, social science, government) and contrasts those frames with the ways in which women who cannot read and write English well, live literacy and power in their everyday lives."

To study how power operates to maintain domination, she says, one must take into consideration "the concrete, everyday material practices and social relations which regulate our subjectivities, as well as the symbolic and ideological meaning structure through which we interpret our experience."

She says her study in Los Angeles "points to gender differences in everyday literacy practices, as well as the integral relationship between the sexual oppression of women and literacy. The most striking pattern is that the women we interviewed tend to use and to depend more upon the written word, whereas men acquire and use more spoken English. This has a great deal to do with the silencing of women, their confinement to the domestic sphere, and the structure of work available to people who speak little English." She found the men interviewed felt at ease in "the public" in a way that women did not. (The public being either a male ethnic grouping or a public world where English is spoken.)

There are both differences and similarities here with what I found in Ocean View. In Rockhill's article the word "literacy" appears to refer to reading and writing in English. It is unclear whether the people she speaks about are able to read and write in Spanish. With the exception of Anne, all the learners interviewed in this study are learning the technicalities of reading and writing in their home language, Afrikaans.

The fact that Rockhill can say the women in her study "tend to use and to depend more upon the written word..." indicates a level of education in her sample which is way above that of the Ocean View people interviewed. The silencing of women in Ocean View has to do with the fact that they have little or no education or "gelerendheid" at all, that they cannot read a written word – no matter what the language. It has to do with the fact that they were kept at home to look after siblings or parents or grandparents (as Anne was, and Esther, and Diana) when other children were being sent to school. And it has to do with general poverty that affected male and female – Colleen was taken out of school and sent to work for the family, but so were several men in this study.

In Ocean View, the written word has as many associations with the public world as does the spoken word (in church, for example) but it does not have the power. In all the church services I attended, for example, it was the person who could stand up in front of the congregation and speak, usually without any written notes, who held sway. The written word was important, too – in order to sing hymns or say prayers – but it was not as powerful or as public.

But both aspects of this public world hold dangers and threats for women who are new to them, particularly if they are involved in relationships with men (as Hendrina's story and Mary's indicate). And entry into this world, with all the pleasures it affords, can cause feelings of guilt (as Esther found).

As Rockhill concluded:

> "The construction of literacy is embedded in the discursive practices and power relationships of everyday life – it is socially constructed, materially produced, morally regulated, and carries a symbolic significance which cannot be captured by its reduction to any one of these. Literacy is caught up in the material, racial and sexual oppression of women and it embodies their hope for escape. For women it is experienced as both a threat and a desire ...'

Horsman (1987: 373) says of her research among 20 Maritime women:

> "The complexity of literacy and illiteracy in women's lives is lost in frameworks for literacy which concentrate on motivation and see illiteracy as a simple set of skills a woman needs to acquire in order to function adequately in society.

"For the women I spoke, with attending a literacy program was not simply a matter of motivation. Whether they were able to attend or wished to attend was bound up with the relationships in their lives: social agencies required it of them; men were opposed to their attendance or supported them; and the needs of children might either provide a barrier to attendance or be the main focus for their desire to improve their literacy skills. The women did not attend literacy classes to learn 'functional' skills but sought to find meaning in their lives and often to pursue a dream for their children's lives."

Conclusion

An examination of the way in which the literacy classes are resisted in Ocean View, even by the learners themselves, helps to reveal the forms of power which are exercised in those classes and in the lives of those learners: the power of "gelerendheid" in a classroom situation; the power of the middle class over the working class; the power of men over women.

3.5 LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES AMONG THE LEARNERS

In considering the learners' literacy events and practices, I make use of definitions of the terms put forward by Heath (1983), Street (1993) and Barton (1991). Literacy events (a term coined by Shirley Brice Heath, 1983) refers to any event in which reading and/or writing has a role. Literacy practices refers "not only to the event itself but to the conceptions of the reading and writing process that people hold when they're engaged in the event" (Street,1993: 3). Put another way, literacy practices are the "general cultural ways of utilizing literacy that people draw upon in a literacy event" (Barton, 1991: 5).

So, for example, when the dominee in the NGKerk in Ocean View asks his congregation to take out their hymn books to sing a certain hymn he is signalling a literacy event. The way in which congregants respond to his appeal is a reflection of their individual and community literacy practices. Several of the learners in this study told me that before they learned to read and write, they would share a hymn book with a friend or relative, leaving it to them to find the right page. They would then sing from memory if they

knew the tune, or mouth what they thought to be the correct words, picking up the tune from the congregants around them as they went along.

In turning my attention to literacy events and practices at this stage, I am attempting to answer, in the case of the learners in this study, my second research question: How do they deal with written materials? The change in terminology represents my own personal shift in discourse as I make more and more use of the concepts and theories of the new literacy studies to help me answer my original research questions.

I distinguish here between several different domains of social life, each supported by particular institutions, because each involve identifiably different types and uses of literacy. (I am indebted here to Barton's discussion of the term "domain" in Barton, 1991: 5). I consider literacy events and practices in the workplace, in the world of commerce, in the home and in religion.

3.5.1 Literacy events and practices at work

Only one of the learners felt a pressing need to develop reading and writing skills for work purposes. This was Karel who needed to complete stock sheets in the Navy canteen and bar and later when he became a supervisor of the cleaning staff, was required to fill in cleaners' leave forms. He said a superior showed him how to do these tasks. All the women learners, except for Diana and Sanetta, were in domestic service. Two felt it might be useful to be able to take a telephone message more efficiently. The rest felt they did not need reading and writing in the workplace at all. Diana and Sanetta worked in the Protective Workshop in Ocean View where they did repetitive, manual tasks, that did not involve reading or writing. When I visited them at work they were helping to assemble shock absorbers. Before that they assembled ponytail holders made out of elastic and plastic bobbles. This work required them to make reef knots.

In fact Sanetta and Diana's only literacy practices are the work they are given in the literacy classes which they attend at the library twice a week and at the Handicapped

Centre once a week. In one year Sanetta had reached page 167 of Kursus 1 and Diana page 170. Their handwriting looked surprisingly neat and competent.

3.5.2 Literacy events and practices in the commercial world

All the women learners, except Diana and Sanetta, assumed responsibility for shopping for their families and claimed to be able to read prices with no difficulty. They all said numbers were the first written figures which they had learned to decipher. (It is interesting and appropriate, therefore, that Mrs Basson's programme starts with exercises concerning numbers.) Karel's ability to fill in stock sheets with numbers and to complete cleaners' leave forms before he could read and write letters with proficiency is another example of the way in which numeracy seemed to precede literacy for most of the learners.

Anne shops in Fish Hoek every week, usually on a Saturday and usually accompanied by one of her small sons who helps her carry the parcels. She keeps up with the supermarket specials in an unusual way:

> Anne: My friend will sit with the newspaper and she will perhaps tell me oh there are some specials in the paper. Then I say to her: what is in the paper what is special and then, while she's reading I'll look whatever she's reading.
>
> MB: In this way you'll get an idea what (the product) looks like?
>
> Anne: Yes.
>
> MB: Is there just one friend who works like that with you?
>
> Anne: No there is quite a few.

Anne believes her friends do not know she cannot read and write and persists in trying to hide the fact. However, it is likely they do know. One of the unwritten rules of Ocean View Discourse, I came to realise, is that one should never openly draw attention to a person's inability to read or write.

Diana occasionally visits an Ocean View shop to buy one or two items as instructed by her sister, Esther, but she does not attempt to read prices. She merely asks for the item,

hands over the money Esther has given her and takes home whatever change she is given. Sanetta seldom goes into a shop and then only if accompanied by a relative who can read or write.

Sanetta never goes to the shops on her own, in fact she does not participate in any literacy events unaccompanied by someone who can read and write. She was the one truly "dependent" learner, to use Fingeret's terms (1983).

Esther said she did not do any shopping until about four years ago when she learned to read a few words and prices at the literacy classes held at Kleinberg Primary School. Now she does the family's grocery shopping every Friday in Fish Hoek and also pays the rent and any other accounts, such as the TV licence.

Mary was the only learner who kept her own personal banking account. When she started using an NBS card a "Coloured lady" who works for the NBS showed her how to use the card – "how to press my secret number and how to press the different things to withdraw and the amount that I want and then afterwards I knew how to work it but the other things, like if you got money to put in your bank, I don't know how to do that, they must still show me." She said she also had an NBS savings book and had been shown how to fill in a deposit form:

> "She showed me how to put my number in on the slip and the amount you are going to save and then you just write your name at the top in block letters and then you just sign for it."

Mary said that before she started attending literacy classes, she did not keep any accounts and would avoid filling in forms. If she had to fill in a form at a shop, she would ask the staff to do it for her and she would just sign. Since starting literacy classes, she had opened an Edgars account. It presented no problems because it did not involve the filling in of forms. She only had to read the amount owed.

Colleen said she could always sign her name and had no problems signing documents (she said she had done so at the Post Office and bank and when paying the electricity account). Her husband had to complete any forms, however. For example, before her

husband was retrenched they had a savings account with the Allied. Her husband completed the necessary forms to open the account. Now they no longer had money to save.

3.5.3 Literacy events and practices in the home

Accounts and advertising brochures

Written materials entered the learners' homes mainly in the form of accounts and advertising brochures and were dealt with by relatives who could read such things. In doing so the learners were participating in networks similar to those described by Fingeret (1983) but also substantially different. Whereas the adults in Fingeret's study would call on friends and neighbours for help with reading and writing and offer other services in exchange, the learners in this study usually made use of family members only even if this limited their scope of assistance.
This was largely, because of the intense need to appear educated (as in Anne's case) or not to appear stupid, as in Colleen's case. It was also because family members were usually available either by virtue of the sheer size and presence of an extended family (as in Esther's case) or because the learners had children who had received much more schooling than they had (as in Mary's case). Only Karel did not have a family to resort to. In his situation a superior at work played an important role while he maintained absolute privacy from colleagues and friends.

Esther said one of her brothers with a Std 4 education usually dealt with her family's accounts. She paid the bills but he explained them to her. Since being at the classes she can read accounts if they are in Afrikaans but needs his help with documentation that has been written in English.

Anne said her husband dealt with anything in the home that involved reading and writing. She paid the accounts but he signed anything that needed a signature. She was not able to sign her name until recently – "most of the time I did put a cross".

Learners did not see the need to reciprocate consciously for the help they received with reading and writing, mainly because it was contained within the family network. In fact, they did reciprocate unconsciously. For example, during one visit to Esther and her family, her young niece returned a TV licence which had been sent to her father (Esther's brother) for perusal. On another occasion, I found Esther about to take this niece on a trip to the beach.

Romance reading

As learners progress with their studies at the library, the literacy teachers encourage them to borrow books. Karel and Esther were both borrowing books at the time of my interviews with them and both had chosen Afrikaans romance stories. Esther also had a book on jealousy which she said she had chosen because one of her friend's brothers is very jealous. This book was written by Dr Paul Hauck and she had also read another book of his called "Hou op Skuldig Voel" (Stop Feeling Guilty).

Karel and Esther, at 35 and 31 respectively, were among the youngest learners in the class. Both were unmarried, although Karel became engaged in the course of my research period. It is significant therefore that the books they chose concerned a dimension of their lives which seemed to be lacking.

Rockhill speaks of similar longings in Gender, Politics and Literacy. She said the Hispanic women in her study spoke about going to school "in terms of desire, not rights".

> "Women in their late teens and early twenties and/or women who are living alone, have the desire to learn enough English to go to school and find 'office work'. The dream is to be a secretary or a receptionist – but it is more than this – it is to enter the world of middle class America, to wear dresses and high heels, to look and be the female image they see smiling back at them in magazines, on their TV screens and billboards. That these jobs are highly literacy dependent is part of the dream – and the 'reality' they live" (p 165).

Janet Radway (1984:212) in "Reading the Romance" (an ethnographic study of the way in which women read romances) says romance reading

> "supplements the avenues traditionally open to women for emotional gratification by supplying them vicariously with the attention and nurturance they do not get enough

of in the round of day-to-day existence. It counter-valuates because the story opposes the female values of love and personal interaction to the male values of competition and public achievement and, at least in ideal romances, demonstrates the triumph of the former over the latter. Romance reading and writing might be seen therefore as a collectively elaborated female ritual through which women explore the consequences of their common social condition as the appendages of men and attempt to imagine a more perfect state where all the needs they so intensely feel and accept as given would be adequately addressed.

"... when the act of romance reading is viewed as it is by the readers themselves, from within a belief system that accepts as given the institutions of heterosexuality and monogamous marriage, it can be conceived as an activity of mild protest and longing for reform necessitated by those institutions' failure to satisfy the emotional needs of women. Reading therefore functions for them as an act of recognition and contestation whereby that failure is first admitted and then partially reversed.

"At the same time, however, when viewed from the vantage point of a feminism that would like to see the women's oppositional impulse lead to real social change, romance reading can also be seen as an activity that could potentially disarm that impulse. It might do so because it supplies vicariously those very needs and requirements that might otherwise be formulated as demands in the real world and lead to the potential restructuring of sexual relations."

Radway deals specifically with women's reading of romances. Why a man such as Karel should resort to romance reading is not addressed. Unfortunately, I did not spend enough time with Karel – largely because of his desire for privacy – to be able to draw firm conclusions in this regard. Whereas Esther assured me that romances were her choice, Karel insisted that he preferred stories about nature – he just happened to have chosen a romance that week – and I had to entertain the possibility that the book was, for him, an aberration.

Patterns and recipes

Several of the women learners enjoyed knitting and crocheting in their leisure time, activities which usually involve reading a pattern. They had been taught simple methods which they had memorised.

For example Esther, Diana and Sanetta could all knit straight but required help with increasing and decreasing. Anne compensated for her inability to read patterns by listening to other people and watching them do things. For example, she made the doilies in her lounge by watching someone else make a doily and then trying it out herself at

home. She learned to sew and knit in this way and also learned new recipes by watching others. She would watch people making pastries and other food and then come home and make her own from memory. "Maybe the first time I won't be a success, but the second time I will."

Radio and television

The significance of radio and television as sources of literacy events and practices only occurred to me very late in my research. In my interviews with the learners and even during the social functions on which I accompanied them, I gradually became aware of the importance of radio and television in their lives. When I visited Esther in the morning, for example, our conversation took place against a background of radio music and messages. If I visited her in the evening, I would find her and her family glued to one or other soap opera on their colour television set. Every home that I visited had a television set and radio and learners and their families could handle them proficiently.

Learners made it clear in their conversations with me that these media provided learning as well as entertainment experiences. Esther told me she had heard of the new domestic workers' legislation on the radio. Anne told me she started smoking when she was 13 and gave up 13 years ago (she is now 43) after watching "Jo's Lungs" on TV. In general, though, these media were used for entertainment. On our picnic to Bortjiesrif, the learners brought an enormous "ghetto-blaster" and the teachers a tape recorder and cassettes to provide music. At home TV soap operas were favoured, particularly Egoli, a South African-made series about life across the colour and class spectrum in Johannesburg.

These media appeared to play a role in the learners' lives very similar to that discussed by Radway in relation to the reading of romances: they provided opportunities for vicarious enjoyment of pleasures denied them in their everyday lives and in the process probably obviated the need to "demand satisfaction in the real world because it can be so successfully met in fantasy". (Radway, 1984: 212).

Because the significance of these media only occurred to me late in my research, I did not attempt to explore in depth the literacy events and practices which they involved but I did get the impression they could be a useful focus for future research. Learners needed elementary proficiency with numbers to change channels. They learned to recognise products advertised on television and the titles of programmes – this involved recognising advertising jingles, colours, and shapes as well as brand and programme names. How this impacted on their literacy studies and the implications of this for literacy programmes could be a valuable area of study.

Personal letters

Personal letters formed a very small part of the learners' literacy practices. Colleen said she had received only one personal letter in her life. It was from her brother's daughter but she could not read it and had to ask her husband to read it for her. Esther said she had written a few letters to a male friend in prison in Paarl – and had received several from him –but had stopped writing recently because her family did not approve. She also showed me a letter which she had received from Mrs Basson, obviously a treasured possession. Mary said it was her ambition to write letters to friends in England. She said she kept on asking her daughter, who has Std 7, to help her write the letters but she "just says yes yes yes she going to help me" but they never got round to it. Karel showed me a letter which he had received from Intec College after having made inquiries there. It was written at a level that was clearly above his capabilities and he did not seem to understand it all.

3.6 Literacy events and practices in the church

The church played an important role in every one of the learners' lives and most of them regarded the fact that they could now read hymn and prayer books or, at least, open them in the correct place as an important achievement of the literacy classes.

Until shortly before I met her, Anne was not able to go to church without her husband, who would open the books for her and act as her "guideline".

> "Now I can go to church on my own and I can open the prayers where it should be because I know the number of the page so nobody will notice it (the fact that she can't read and write much) when I am in church."

Mary said she could now open the Bible at the right page and find her place but there were some long words with which she still struggled.

Esther laughed when I asked her how she coped in church before attending literacy classes.

> "Toe ek nou daaraan dink dan lag ek vir myself... want ek het die boeke kon glad nie read nie. Ek het nooit die woorde opgevat wat die mense sing." (When I think about it now I have to laugh at myself because I couldn't read the books at all and I never caught the words the people were singing.)

The importance of the church in Esther's life, as a social outlet and also as a source of literacy events, is obvious from the collection of "begrafnisblaadjies" which she showed me. A "begrafnisblaadjie" is a leaflet produced for a funeral on which the name, birth and death date of the deceased appears, as well as the names of the pall bearers, the dominee's name and the names of other officiaries in the service (prayer readers, etc). The words of the various hymns to be sung during the occasion are also given. Esther had 17 "begrafnisblaadjies" in her possession – from 15 funerals which she had attended in the last two years. She had kept three copies of one "blaadjie", a particularly fancy one printed on pink paper with a sketch of praying hands on the front.

Esther and her family also keep a collection of "lidmaatsertifikate" (confirmation certificates) of the various members of the family which hang, framed, on the wall of their lounge, along with snapshots of family members.

Diana and Sanetta still can't read well enough to open a hymn book at the correct page but Diana at least seems to cope with the situation regardless, as I saw in the NG Sendingkerk in Ocean View one Sunday when the pastor called all the women in the congregation to come to the front and sing in a group. Diana looked down at her hymn

book and appeared to be singing. A stranger would never have known that she probably could not read the words in front of her.

Colleen attends the New Apostolic Church where she is hoping she won't be asked to sing in the choir until she has studied further. "Ek is bang ek gaan vasstiek," she said. (I am afraid I will get stuck.) When I visited this church I understood what she meant. The choir is situated right in the middle of the congregation with wonderful accoustic effects, but the singers are much more exposed than in other churches.

Karel was the one learner who did not seem to regard reading and writing skills as absolutely essential for church participation. He told me of "important" people in the church who could not read and write. They included the pastor of his own Full Gospel Church and Oom Oewies, one of the literacy group's learners, who is a pastor in another church.

For the others the church provided an important incentive to continue with literacy classes: Anne wanted to be able to read a passage in the prayer group, Esther wanted to be a Sunday school teacher.

Conclusion

Events in the learners' lives which involve reading and writing occur mainly in the home and in the church. Literacy events in the workplace are rare – or avoided – because of the largely menial nature of the work they do. Learners cope with these events either by making use of the rudiments of reading and writing which they have learned in literacy classes or by making use of relatives who have received more schooling than they have. In some cases their coping mechanisms involve considerable pretence as they try to maintain an image of "gelerendheid" against all odds.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I searched, in the biographical details and other discursive affirmations of seven literacy class learners, for clues to their discourses. I found evidence of primary discourses associated with lower-class realities, in conflict with secondary discourses associated with middle-class practices. I found adults constructed as "mentally handicapped" by discourses of retardation and as "children" by discourses of power in the literacy class. I found women silenced by discourses of male authority in the home. And in virtually every learner I found an ideology of respectability at odds with a culture of disreputability – a conflict which also affected literacy practices and the pedagogical process in the literacy class. The conflict was evident in the way in which the learners used only family members to help them deal with written materials, thereby restricting their coping network in a way which has not been reported in studies of literacy networks overseas (Fingeret, 1983). It was also evident in the dichotomy between the formal processes of the literacy class and Mrs Basson's programme and the nature of off-duty chatter and gossip, as well as some of the details of the learners' lives. (This is discussed in the previous chapter).

In an exploration of the literacy practices of the learners I found that written materials entered their lives mainly via the home (in the form of accounts) or via the church, where they provided an important incentive to learn to read and write. Only one learner needed to read and write in his work. It is significant that this learner was also the only male in the group and the only learner who was not in domestic service.

CHAPTER FOUR:

LIVING WITHOUT "GELERENDHEID": THE RESISTERS

In this section I attempt to develop an account of the discourses and literacy practices of six adults from Ocean View who have little or no basic schooling but, for various reasons, are beyond the ambit of the local literacy class. I discuss the term "resister" which I use to refer to these adults and explain why I have separated my account of this group from that of the literacy class learners, even though there are areas of overlap. Biographical details of the resisters are presented and an account of their literacy practices is given before I attempt to develop an account of their discourses and of the reasons for their resistance. I end the chapter with a discussion of the resisters' literacy practices.

4.1 USE OF THE TERM "RESISTER" IN THIS STUDY

I use the term "resisters" when referring to the adults whom I encountered in this section of my research in the same way that Quigley uses the term to refer to nonparticipants in adult literacy and basic education programmes in the US (Quigley, 1990). His use of the term implies that the adults concerned are aware of ABE programmes and could participate, but have chosen to resist. In my study, Oom Piet actually attended some classes at the Ocean View library but had dropped out. Pieter had been told about the classes (according to the library staff) but neither he nor his wife had joined. Moegamat was aware of an ABE programme in the prison where he is serving six years but had chosen to study a trade instead. Lionel and Anna said they had not heard of the literacy classes so I supplied them with details of class times and venue, etc. They have not joined.

4.1.1 My separation of learners and resisters

In presenting separate accounts of literacy class learners and resisters, I do not want to create the impression that it is easy to draw a sharp dichotomy between the two. There are many areas of commonality and overlap between those unschooled adults who attend the classes and those who, for various reasons, do not. However, there are also discourses and practices which are not common to both and have important implications for an answer to my research questions. It is in order to highlight these spheres of difference that I make the distinction.

My research proceeded in three distinct stages. First, I explored the discourses and practices of the literacy class learners. Then I turned my attention to the literacy class teachers and other relevant professionals. Finally, I moved away from the class entirely and began to seek out people without "gelerendheid" who were beyond the ambit of the class.

In moving from one stage of the research to another I gained the feeling of moving outwards, away from the warm and comfortable centre which the library and its literacy classes provided into a world that was far less predictable and far less comfortable (for me, at least).

My exploration of the discourses and practices of the literacy class learners took me into homes that were small and poor and overcrowded, but there was something safe and predictable about the daily routines of the persons who lived in them.

The houses of the "resisters" in this study were sometimes very similar but the tentative equilibrium, so carefully preserved in the homes of people like Anne and Esther and Mary, was often absent. In this section of my research I experienced things falling apart, to make use of the words of Yeats. I found adults at home in the middle of a weekday morning drunk or nursing hangovers or in bed with depression. I heard stories about rejection, unwanted babies, wasted lives. About drugs, alcohol and other abuses. I found people without faith – in religion, in life, in themselves.

But I also encountered people who appeared to have enormous strengths and ingenuity, who appeared to be leaders in their own right. Only one of the "resisters" whom I interviewed was religious and churchgoing – but he was a leader in that sphere, an elder in the NG Kerk. Most importantly, my research at this stage took me beyond the world of the legal and the respectable and let me glimpse, briefly, that other side of Ocean View where money is made in the dead of the night, by sleight of hand or mind. I met this side of Ocean View, not in houses or libraries or churches, but on the streets – and in Pollsmoor prison.

Many of the discourses and practices I encountered in this stage of my research were present (to a different extent) in the lives of the literacy class learners. Esther had a friend in prison in Paarl, Mary had a husband who had killed their son and been jailed for the murder. Anne had had a baby out of wedlock before marrying her present husband. There was an alleged case of incest, the details of which I do not want to mention to protect the identity of the persons concerned.

The difference lay in the sense of equilibrium which I mentioned earlier which was present in some of the homes and missing in others, in the scaffolding of respectability, made out of predictable, middle-class practices, which the learners had managed to impose on their lives and on which they were balancing, precariously perhaps, but balancing nonetheless.

4.2 AGE, EMPLOYMENT, MARITAL STATUS, RELIGION AND SCHOOLING

In this section I present biographical details which I regard as relevant to the study. I see these details as affirmations of the discourses in the resisters' lives.

4.2.1 Age and Employment

The resisters in my study ranged in age from 28 to 68 years. Only two of the six were in fairly settled employment. Tossie, 48, charred in Kommetjie and had always been in

domestic service. Her husband, Pieter, 44, worked as a handyman for the Navy. He had previously worked as a farm labourer and a builder's "handlanger" (assistant).

Oom Piet, 68, had recently retired after a long working life which included work as a farm labourer, motor mechanic's "handlanger" (assistant), heavy duty truck driver and, finally, a cleaner in the Council's toilets in Kommetjie. He recounts his work experience with pride. He told me how he was kept out of school to help his grandfather on his farm. Here he and a brother used to get up at 4 in the morning to grind wheat on an old-fashioned handgrinder known as a "gatskuurmeul" because of the way it chafed one's backside.[3] Piet and his brother left their grandfather's farm and went to work for a white neighbour when his brother could not stand the "gatskuurmeul" any longer. Piet married and had his first children here and became virtually the foreman of the farm, but he had to leave after an argument with the farmer's son. He moved to Vredendal where he worked in a garage as a mechanic's assistant for R5 a week. He moved to the Cape Peninsula after a friend told him "daarso is die lewe!" (there is the life!). In Fish Hoek he worked on a chicken farm for nearly ten times more than his previous salary.

He got a job as a truck driver for Much Asphalt in Darling shortly after obtaining his driver's licence. Oom Piet worked for this company for nine years and speaks of the time he transported diesel from Johannesburg to Rhodesia (as it was then called) as the highlight of his career. He said he had to give up the job
because of back pain. His last job was with Regional Services Council as a cleaner in Kommetjie toilets. Here he just had to sit and do practically nothing ("net sit daarso, doen mos niks nie").

Lionel, 38, worked as a painter but his work was unpredictable and erratic. He had previously worked as a cleaner at the OK Bazaars, Fish Hoek, at the dockyards in Simonstown and at Soetwater holiday camp near Redhill. His employment record was

---

[3] I found one of these in Kleinplasie Museum in Worcester: it consists of two flat, circular stones, positioned one on top of the other on a goatskin. The top stone has a round hole in the middle in which a thick stick or handle is wedged. The miller has to turn the top stone round and round by means of this stick. His bottom and torso have to move back and forth in the process, leading to the chafing for which this type of mill is renowned.

not "good". He was fired from the OK for being "cheeky", he left the dockyards after a fight with a fellow worker who didn't like the jokes he told and hit him in the throat. He left the job at Soetwater because he couldn't get to work on time. He had to get up at 7 each morning to make work by 8 am but found this difficult because he was drinking and partying heavily at the time.

Lionel's wife, Anna, 31, had lost her job as a cleaner in the Kommetjie Hotel about two years before and had not found work since. Before that she worked as an egg packer on a chicken farm.

Moegamat, 28, was in Pollsmoor Prison serving a six-year sentence for possession of stolen goods. (He had previously served a two- year sentence for possession of a stolen firearm.) In jail Moegamat had chosen to do plumbing work rather than to continue his schooling. He said he hoped to get his papers in this way and to be able to start his own business eventually. I also gathered that such work meant trips out of the prison – he was currently working in Monte Vista – which must have been an additional incentive.

4.2.2 Marital status

All were married except for Oom Piet and Moegamat. Oom Piet's wife died about seven months before I met him. At the time of our meeting, he was living with Mienie, a fisherwoman aged 45. Oom Piet had 10 children, now adults. Moegamat had a daughter, aged 4, by a girlfriend he had known before going into prison. She had since left him for someone else.

Pieter and Tossie, together, had 11 children, although one was stabbed to death outside their house at the age of 21, two had been raised by Pieter's mother in Middelburg, Cape, and one was in a home for the mentally handicapped. One was married and another was awaiting trial in Pollsmoor Prison at the time of my visits, so there five children living with them in their maisonette at the time of my research.

Lionel and Anna both had children by previous partners. Anna had a daughter of nearly 11 who was about to enter Std 4 when I met her. Lionel had had one previous marriage to a woman from Beaufort West. He had no children by this marriage but one child (now aged seven) with a subsequent girlfriend. He and Anna did not have children.

4.2.3 Religion

Religion impacted on the lives of the resisters but generally not in the same way as it did on lives of the learners. The learners were all regular *church*goers. None were Muslim.

However, two of the six resisters were Muslim and only one of the resisters could be described as a regular churchgoer. He was an elder in his church and therefore in a position of power in the institution, whereas the learners were ordinary congregants or members of their churches.

Moegamat was a practising Muslim – when I visited him in jail he was about to enter the fast of Ramadan. Lionel came from a Muslim family but had not been to a Mosque for many years. At first he seemed reluctant to say why.

> "... ek wil nou eerste agtermekaar wees, mevrou, voor ek weer soontoe kan gaan." (I must get myself in order before I can go there again.)

I asked him what he meant by this. Eventually he told me that he could not go to the Mosque because he had not been circumcised. His father had tried to take him to the Imam to have him circumcised when he was about 17 or 18 but Lionel was afraid of the process and had refused to go.

As I got to know Lionel better, I began to wonder whether some of the directions of his life (there was a time when he drank heavily and smoked dagga and mandrax pipes) could be attributed to his exclusion from the religion to which the rest of his family belonged and which he clearly hankered after. For example, a photograph of a Muslim friend's Muslim wedding, cut from a newspaper, is displayed in his shack – one of the few adornments there.

Lionel's wife, Anna, is not Muslim. She described herself as a "handeklopper" (hand-clapper) and said this referred to the church that used to be held in a big blue and white tent in Ocean View and is now held in the "kreupelsaal" (the cripple hall, presumably the Handicapped Centre). She said she used to go to this church but did not attend anymore. Her first marriage was in the Anglican Church.

Tossie and Pieter described themselves as New Apostolics but neither were churchgoers. Although they did not offer this as a reason, it seemed to me that their drinking habits would make it difficult for them to attend.

Oom Piet was the one really devout churchgoer. He was an elder in the NG Sendingkerk, and, as such, one of its leaders. The elders, all men, dress in dark suits and white shirts and ties and sit at the front of the church during the service. They are called upon by the minister during the service to say prayers or make announcements. They also have a say in the running of the church. He said his religious involvement began after a conversion experience while he was in Vredendal.

4.2.4 Schooling

Educational experiences ranged from no schooling at all to Std 2. (In this respect the resisters of my study were very similar to the learners.) Oom Piet said his grandfather prevented him and his three brothers from going to school so they could work on the farm. (He said his grandfather actually fetched him from school when he tried to attend). At that stage his mother was unmarried and he was being raised, in effect, by his grandfather. Later his mother married a man from the Kalahari and the four daughters and two sons which they produced were all sent to school. Neither Piet's mother nor his grandfather had been to school and neither could read or write.

Pieter K said he was taken out of school in Std 1 so he could help support the family. Neither of his parents had been to school and neither could read or write. His wife, Tossie, went only to Sub B before she was removed from school in Paarl to look after her younger sister and brother while her mother went to work.

Lionel says he has a sister who obtained Std 9 and another with a Std 8, but he himself left school after Std 1 and it took him seven years to get there from Sub A. "Ek was baie, baie dom gewees op die skool," he told me. (I was very very stupid at school.) He offered various reasons for his inability to progress at school:

> "Ek kan nie goed gedink het nie want ek het baie dinge deurgegaan, Mevrou, wat ek klein gewees het ... My ouers het my baie geslat." (I couldn't think because I went through a lot of things when I was small... My parents hit me a lot.)
>
> "... ek was nooit by my volle verstand gewies nie... Ek was al jonk gewies". (By this he means he was not yet at his full intellectual capacity, he was still young.)
> "... ek was baie onnoselik gewies. Oppie skool gewies. Daar was baie tyde dat ek sommer op die skoolbank slaap, mevrou."
>
> (... I was very silly. At school. There were times when I just slept on the school bench.)

Whatever the reason, Lionel spent five years in Sub A at a school in what is now called Sun Valley.

> "Daarna het hulle my maar net so oorgesit na Sub B toe." (Then they just put me into Sub B.)

He left this school during this Sub B year and moved to a primary school in Ocean View. Here he says he completed Std 1 and then left school for good. At that stage, he says, he was "vyftien of sewentien" (fifteen or seventeen) and "fed up" with school.

Anna W said she passed Std 1 at a school in Red Hill and then was removed from school because her father had been fired from the place where he worked and the family had to move. Although her father managed to get new work and their new home was not far from the school, Anna was sent to work at this stage.

> "... toe sê my pa ek kan nie so aangaan nie, ek moet al werk kry." (My father said I could not go on like this, I must get work.)

In contrast, Anna's siblings, who were all older than her, went to school to at least Std 5 and some to Std 8.

Moegamat was removed from school while in Std 2, his mother told me, because his father did not want him to have a non-Muslim education. When she left this man some

years later and moved to Ocean View, Moegamat was put into Std 2 again at Marine Primary. But he was 15 years old by now and felt far too big for the class so his mother took him out and he started working.

Moegamat did not, however, abandon education entirely. According to a sister, he practised reading and writing skills at home by doing his younger brothers' and sisters' homework. She showed me a letter he had written her. It had been printed in block capitals but was clearly and articulately written, with only a few spelling mistakes.

Moegamat's mother has Std 7 and her ex-husband, who is now also in jail for a bank robbery, obtained Std 8.

4.3 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN THE LIVES OF THE RESISTERS

Four out of the six resisters admitted they had (or used to have) drinking problems and one said he had also smoked dagga and mandrax pipes.

Tossie and Pieter K were clearly still consuming socially unacceptable quantities of alcohol regularly. I met Pieter on a weekday morning but he was at home, nursing a hangover. The next two occasions I came to visit him he was out drinking, with friends. Tossie complained of the way in which she often had to bale him out of "wynskuld" (wine debt) yet she also had a drinking problem. When I first met her she smelled of alcohol and behaved in a strange, unpredictable fashion, shrieking from time to time at her dog and brother-in-law who sat in the lounge during our conversation. She was also complaining of a violent headache. Our conversation was punctuated from time to time by the sound of breaking glasses in a room overhead where her children were watching television and, according to a visitor, drinking "Virginia" (white wine) out of "papsakkies" (the cheapest form of packaging available). A 12 year-old schoolboy and a pregnant daughter of 18 were among those drinking that day.

Lionel said he drank heavily and also smoked dagga and mandrax pipes while married to his previous wife whom he described as a country person, from Beaufort West. It was at this stage that he had been unable to get to work at Soetwater on time. He said he had given up drink and drugs because they made him too sick.

Oom Piet said he began to drink some time after the birth of his second child. I asked him what the reason was. He replied there was no reason ("Nee, daar was nie rede nie") but he then proceeded to tell me how the white farmer for whom he worked at the time used to give him a "dop", a two-pound jam tin full of "vaalwyn", a kind of reject wine usually reserved for labourers' tots. Slowly he began to drink more and more, but only at weekends.

> "Deur die week sal 'n man nie 'n beter mens kry nie, maar as Vrydag aangebreek het...." (During the week you couldn't get a better person, but come Friday ...)

Oom Piet said there was a time, when he was working in Vredendal, when he drank 18 bottles of wine over a weekend, keeping himself drunk from Friday afternoon until Sunday night, while his wife wept. He gave up drinking after an experience, at the end of a long weekend's drinking, in which he thought he saw God enter his room, through a door that was bolted from the inside. He felt he had witnessed a miracle.

> "Toe het ek begin kerk toe gaan en daarvandaan het ek geprobeer om die Here te dien en toe ek hier kom, ek was nou nie, nog nie ses maande hier nie, toe kies hulle my vir ouderling in Noordhoek". (Then I began to go to church and I tried to serve the Lord and when I came here, I wasn't here six months before I was elected an elder in the church in Noordhoek.)

Oom Piet said he served as an elder in this church for 16 years before moving to Darling to work for Much Asphalt as a truck driver. Here he had a disagreement with the local minister of the NG Sendingkerk over the minister's use of church finances. To his great disappointment Oom Piet was not made an elder.

It was here, too, that he started to drink again although not as heavily as before. Although Oom Piet denies any direct connection between his return to drinking and his fall-out with the church, he speaks of the two events one after the other, in almost the

same breath. And back in Ocean View some years later, when he was once again an elder, he gave up drinking again.

Although Oom Piet's first wife never drank, the girlfriend whom he acquired three months after her death is clearly a drinker. During my visits to his bungalow, Oom Piet would remark on the empty bottles stacked in the corner and tell me of her drinking. Mienie described herself as "iemand wat 'n dop vat" (someone who takes a tot) and told me of her plans to quit in 1994 (but only after Tweede Nuwejaarsdag because she *had* to drink at New Year).

Alcohol abuse among the coloured population in the Cape Peninsula has been the subject of extensive research.

In 1965 the Department of Psychiatry at Groote Schuur Hospital and the University of Cape Town conducted an extensive survey into psychiatric disturbance and alcoholism among the coloured people of the Cape Peninsula (Gillis, Lewis, Slabbert, 1965). They reported that the situation with regard to alcoholism was "alarming". At a conservative estimate four percent of the coloured population over the age of 20 in the Cape Peninsula were addictive alcoholics. These were mostly men (85 percent) of whom only a few were Malays (five percent). "In all 22 percent of coloured men could be called excessive drinkers, and of these about a third were addictive alcoholics." At the same time there was a high abstention rate, with 60 percent of the population not drinking at all, and 73,8 percent of adult coloured women abstaining.

The report said the causes of excessive drinking appeared to be several and complexly interrelated. "Amongst them are the easy availability and relative cheapness of wine and spirits, the tot system which tends to give encouragement to the regular use of alcohol particularly amongst those who have migrated from country areas, and social factors such as poverty and adverse social circumstances. Sociological factors are also important, particularly the role of men and women in the family and the integration of individuals in society. Those with few sustaining or close ties with the larger community or recent migrants with little experience of urban life appear to be specially prone to alcoholism,

as is the man in the lower class family who often bears a diminished responsibility for its status and maintenance and can therefore slide off more easily into excessive drinking" (Gillis, 1965: 6).

All the factors mentioned here were prevalent in the lives of the resisters for whom alcohol was or had been a problem. Wine is readily available in Ocean View and at just over R3 for a liter in a "papsakkie" (plastic bag) it is barely more expensive than unfermented fruit juice or mineral water. Oom Piet, Pieter and Tossie had been exposed to the tot system on farms and in moving to the Cape Peninsula had lost important ties with their rural origins. Pieter could be described as a man in a lower-class family with "diminished responsibility". (He told me, for example, that he had asked his wife permission to stay at home from work. She told me he had to hand his full salary to her each month.) All were experiencing poverty and "adverse social circumstances".

The resisters who had given up alcohol tended to assume responsibility for their own drinking (those who were still abusing alcohol tended not to speak about it) but the tot system in the Western Cape is renowned for having produced a "rural class of alcoholics" (Scully, 1992:58). The system, whereby labourers are given reject wine in lieu of pay or in addition to pay, abounded in the 19th and early 20th century and persists on some Western Cape farms to this day.

Scully says the system turned labourers into "both the instruments and the victims of their own oppression". It reproduced and entrenched "relations of power" on farms and "reached into the social experience and practice of the farmworkers' world, helping to make alcohol consumption a feature of rural underclass culture". But it also provided workers with with a space – in time and place – to meet and interact and "fashion a rural working class identity".

> "Every day of the working year, three times a day, laborers met at a corner of the vineyard to drink their tot. The ritual of daily drinking may have constituted a site for the production of a laboring culture. In the very act of meeting and drinking the tot, workers created a social moment in which farmers could not share" (page 59).

Canteens came to provide an important venue for social interaction between members of the rural underclass, "an environment potentially subversive of the farmer's authority", she said.

I think it is romantic and unrealistic to think that a positive working-class identity can be forged out of a practice so excessive it could only produce alcoholism. (Scully herself says that for most of the 19th Century workers were given up to two quarts of wine a day during the week and a bottle per day on the weekends!) However, I do believe there is something to be said for the way in which "rural class" drinking habits became, to some extent, an expression of opposition to the very system in which they were encouraged.

When Pieter K is at home on a Monday, nursing a hangover, is he acting only in accordance with an uncontrollable compulsion to drink? Is he not at the same time putting out an unconscious message about the Navy that employs him, the wife that dominates him, the family that irritates him and the society that continues to go about its business, even as he slouches in the lounge cradling an aching head?

What was Lionel saying about his job as a cleaner at Sonderwater Holiday Camp when he failed to get to work in time because he partied so late the night before? Lionel, after all, was someone who wanted to be a "meneer" (a schoolteacher) or a "prinsipaal" (school principal) or a doctor. Instead he had taken seven years to get from Sub A to Std 1 and had ended up a cleaner.

Oom Piet seemed to recognise the oppositional function of his drinking when he said of his drinking weekends:

> "...van Vrydag af kan jy van my vergeet... as die blanke man nou kom van die plaas waar ek werk, hy moenie Vrydagmiddag vir my sê namiddag jy moet nog dit doen en dit...kan jy met my niks maak nie..."
>
> (...from Friday on you could forget about me... the white man from the farm where I worked could not come on a Friday afternoon and say to me I must still do this and that... you could do nothing with me...)

Conclusion

Whereas alcohol was not a significant factor in the lives of the learners, it played – or had played – a major role in the lives of most of the resisters. Three of the four resisters who were either drinking excessively or had done so in the past (Tossie, Pieter and Oom Piet) had moved to the Cape Peninsula from country areas, a factor linked with alcohol abuse according to Gillis et al (1965). These three people had also been exposed to the tot system which is renowned for having produced a "rural class of alcoholics" (Scully, 1992).

The oppositional function of alcohol abuse has been discussed by Scully. It also emerges in the discourse of some of the resisters who work or worked at menial jobs day in and day out. Staying at home to sleep off a hangover, or working unproductively because of the effects of alcohol, is as much a form of resistance as that expressed by Moegamat in his illegal activities or by Anna when she lies in bed until late in the day.

4.4 RESISTANCE TO LITERACY CLASSES

The resisters offered various reasons for deciding not to attend the literacy classes in Ocean View but some of the reasons they gave did not seem valid on closer investigation.

The resisters complained it was difficult not to be able to read and write – they usually said "dis swaar" – but when I questioned them more closely they would either change the subject or give replies that indicated they did not know if there would be any practical and immediate benefits to them to learn.

Oom Piet did attend for a few months but gave up, he said, because of problems with his eyesight. He said his doctor had recommended that he give up the classes. It would have been allright to attend, the doctor said, had the classes been in the daytime. However, Mr Oewies, who does attend the literacy classes and knows Oom Piet, told me the teachers had been too young and inexperienced and impatient to deal with a man

like Oom Piet, who needed to have everything explained to him very carefully, with much repetition. At the same time Oom Piet declined several offers of mine to take him to a hospital where I knew he could be fitted with new spectacles.

When I questioned Oom Piet about his reasons for attending classes in the first place, he said he did not want to learn much at this stage of his life. He just wanted to know the letters of his name. In fact he did learn to sign his name in the classes.

My contact with Pieter came about because his name and address was on top of a list of 12 names which Shahieda gave me. They were names of people whom the library knew were not able to read and write. Shahieda told me she had told Pieter about the classes when he enquired at the library once about a flower show and she noticed he was not able to read and write. But Pieter, when I visited him, denied any knowledge of the library's classes. He told me however that he and a friend had made enquiries at the high school about their night classes for adults. This was about October 1993 and they were informed that they would have to enquire again in January 1994 when new classes began.

I told both Pieter and his wife, Tossie, about the classes at the library and suggested they enrol. However, neither did so. This was not surprising as, on every occasion that I visited them, there was evidence of extensive alcohol abuse and also dagga smoking in their home. Both would have had to change their drinking habits at least in order to get to the classes and be able to concentrate during them.

Lionel and Anna said they had never heard of the classes so I gave them details about starting times, contact persons, etc. Neither made any attempt to join. Again it was not surprising as Lionel had already offered reasons why he would not be able to attend. He said he often had to look for work at that time and, contradictorily, he also said it was unsafe to walk to the library at that time because there were no lights in the Imhoff's Gift area and there were "baie volke wat onbeskof is, wat miskien gedrink het en gerook het en soek hulle sommer moeilikheid" (many rude people who have perhaps been drinking

and smoking dagga and are just looking for trouble). He also said it would be unsafe for Anna to attend classes in the evening.

Lionel's incentives to improve his very limited reading and writing skills seemed very weak. I asked him if there were times when he wished he could read and write better. (He was only able to write for example if he could copy the letters directly from someone else's script. He was not able to write from his head.)
He replied:

> "Ek sal Mevrou sê ek sal 'n chance vat om 'n bietjie te leer ook, maar daar is tyde wat ek miskien wil werk ook, Mevrou. Wat ek besig is."
>
> (I can say to you, Missus, that I would take a chance to learn a little bit more but there are times when I want to work too. When I am busy.)

I asked him if his life would change in any way if he could read and write better. His reply indicated the rather unrealistic, symbolic nature of his aspirations:

> Lionel: Ek dink so, ja Mevrou. Dit sal 'n bietjie verander.
>
> MB: In watter opsigte?
>
> Lionel: Ek het my altyd gedink ek wil miskien 'n meneer eendag gewees het.
>
> MB: Ekskuus.
>
> Lionel: 'n Meneer. Om die kinders te geleer het. 'n Prinsipaal eintlik.

> (Lionel: I think so, Missus. It will change a little.
>
> MB: In what ways?
>
> Lionel: I always thought I would like one day to be a sir.
>
> MB: Sorry.
>
> Lionel: A sir. To teach the children. A principal, actually.)

Anna appeared to have practically no interest in improving her reading and writing skills. But she said she wanted to learn English. It would be better for her to learn to speak English, she said, than to read and write because this would help her to get work.

Moegamat said he had chosen to do plumbing work rather than the adult basic education course which is offered in the prison because he felt the plumbing experience would

enable him to get his "papers" eventually and start is own business. Another Ocean View man in the prison who happened to be receiving a visitor next to Moegamat during my visit, said he had made a similar decision and had chosen to do plastering work.

Conclusion

The resisters, for various reasons, seemed to think it would be more inconvenient than beneficial to attempt to improve their reading and writing skills. Pieter was motivated to study to improve his lot at work but weighed down by his drinking habits. Oom Piet felt he was past help and had managed well without literacy anyway. The others seemed to see no concrete benefits to attending literacy classes. Anna, for example, knew it was oral English, not reading and writing, that would improve her chances of domestic employment. And Moegamat and a fellow prisoner knew that skills in a trade were more likely to keep them in work than the certificate they might obtain after several years' "schoolwork" in prison.

Religion was not a motivating factor as it was in the lives of the learners. Oom Piet was the only resister who could be regarded as a regular worshipper and his oral skills had ensured him a position of authority in the church even though he could not read and write.

The general feeling was that gelerendheid was something you had to get at a young age, via the school, or not at all. It was not very beneficial at the best of times and beyond a certain age there was no value in seeking it at all.

4.5 LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES AMONG THE RESISTERS

In this section I consider the resisters' literacy events and practices, making use of the same terms that I used to examine the learners'. I distinguish between literacy events (referring to any event in which reading and/or writing has a role) and literacy practices (which refers not only to the event itself but to the conceptions which people hold when

they're engaged in the event or, to put it another way, the general cultural ways of utilizing literacy that people draw upon in a literacy event). (Heath, 1983; Street, 1993 and Barton, 1991).

I distinguish between the following four domains of social life because each involve identifiably different types and uses of literacy: the workplace, the world of commerce, the home and religion (Barton, 1991).

It should be noted that my discussion of literacy events and practices will mainly concern only five of the six resisters.

This was because of the limited time which I had to speak to Moegamat. In the half hour I spent with him and his family in Pollsmoor Prison, I only managed to establish that he had chosen to do plumbing work in preference to schoolwork in the hope he would be able to obtain "papers" at the end of it and be able to start his own business once out of jail. I also established that he writes letters regularly. This is discussed in the section on literacy practices and events in the home.

I think an understanding of the role of reading and writing in Moegamat's working world – both in and out of prison – has important implications for a study like this, but needs more time to research than I had available for this project.

4.5.1 Literacy events and practices at work

Of the six resisters whom I interviewed, four needed to deal with written materials in the course of their work. Interestingly, they were all men and the two who did not need to deal with written materials were both women and both domestic servants.

Both Tossie, who works as a char in Kommetjie, and Angela, who had worked as a cleaner at Kommetjie Hotel, said they did not need to read or write for their work.

Angela's previous employment had been on a chicken farm where she packed eggs into crates. She was not even required to count for this job.

Tossie's husband, Pieter, who works for the navy as a handyman said he sometimes received "papers" from Pretoria (where the Navy has its headquarters). He had to ask his "chief" to read these for him. His previous employment – as a builder's "handlanger" and as a farm labourer – did not require reading and writing skills.

Angela's husband, Lionel, was working as a house painter when I met him. He said the white people for whom he worked sometimes wrote out notes for him to take to the hardware store and he was once asked to write a quotation for a big job which he did in Kommetjie. When the people realised he couldn't write, they wrote out the quotation for him and he just signed his name. In his previous work, as a cleaner in the OK Bazaars, Fish Hoek, in the dockyards in Simonstown and at Sonderwater Holiday Camp, he did not need reading or writing skills at all.

Oom Piet's jobs as a farm labourer, motor mechanic's "handlanger" and cleaner in the Kommetjie toilets did not require him to read or write at all. But when he tried to obtain a driver's licence he found his inability to read and write was a severe disadvantage, even though he was a skilled driver and knew a great deal about cars because he had worked for a garage. His first attempt at a licence was in Cape Town and he failed. The traffic officials said they could not give him a licence if he could not read traffic signs.

He then approached an official in Fish Hoek who said Oom Piet drove so well he could not see why Oom Piet should not get a licence. The official then gave Oom Piet a book of questions and answers on traffic rules and three days in which to learn them. At home, Oom Piet's children helped him to learn the answers by rote. When he returned to the traffic department, he was able to answer correctly and was granted a licence.

He immediately started looking for work as a driver and obtained a job with Much Asphalt in Darling. Here it took him a week to learn to drive a lorry. At one stage he

wanted to give up the attempt as he was finding it so difficult. Then he remembered what his grandfather had often told him: "Wat 'n ander man kan doen, kan jy ook doen". (If another man can do it, you can too.) He persevered and remained in this job for nine years. The work involved driving day and night at times and as far as Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where he delivered asphalt and, at one stage, diesel.

I asked Oom Piet how he coped if he was not able to read traffic signs. He said he relied on the signs that were painted on the road and gave as an example, the four-way stop near Fish Hoek.

> ".. voordat hy die stop kry, gee hulle mos vir jou die bane... jy kan sien op die pad, wys hulle vir jou die afdraaipad, wys hulle vir jou die pyle reguit, nou dit is eintlik my ry versekering daai. In die Kaap oral waar jy gaan, kry jy tekens op die pad. Daai borde ek verstaan hulle niks".
>
> (... before you get to the stop, they give you the lanes, you can see on the road, they show you the turn-off, the arrows (pointing) straight, now this is my insurance. In Cape Town, wherever you go you get signs on the road. Those boards, I understand nothing of them.)

Oom Piet recounts with pride the way he managed to negotiate Johannesburg's freeways when driving to Rhodesia, using a map (without any words on it) drawn for him in the Cape. He also says he did not have a single accident after obtaining his licence. His only accident occurred while he was driving a Volkswagen Beetle near Darling (this was before he obtained a licence). He said the sun blinded his eyes and he left the road. Neither he nor the friend accompanying him were injured.

An official letter from the Receiver of Revenue dated 26 November 1992, which is a precious possession of Oom Piet's, states that a driver's licence was issued to him on 22 November 1977. The class of vehicle was "HMV" (presumably heavy motor vehicle). Restrictions were "with glasses". There were no endorsements.

He also showed me a certified photocopy of his driver's licence and the driver's permit he was issued in Darling which was valid from 24 May 1982 until 25 May 1983.

4.5.2 Literacy events and practices in the commercial world

The resisters' literacy practices in the commercial domain varied from complete dependence on family members for help to complete independence. It was a difficult domain to discuss, however, because it highlighted the financial difficulties of the people concerned. Shopping was difficult, firstly, because prices were too high and salaries too low or non-existent. The fact that one might have difficulty reading the prices seemed to be a secondary consideration. Because of limited resources, shopping was also a source of conflict in the home.

Tossie and Pieter, for example, told me separately that they always buy for cash. But Tossie on her own denied that her husband did this and complained to me about his "wynskuld" (debts for wine he'd bought). She said she had to pay R170 recently to get him out of trouble over a music centre he had bought on credit. The sheriff of the court had come to their flat with papers telling him to appear in court. She had settled the debt but was now having to borrow money to feed her children.

I asked her how she coped with prices. With her characteristic sense of humour she responded:

> "... ek kan... mos sien, want ek dra brille, ek kan dan sien wat is duur en wat is duur" (I wear glasses so I can see what is expensive and what is expensive).

She said she had no problems with prices or money.

> "Niemand kan my inloop met geld nie. Ek kan baie goed count, ek kan nie lees en skrywe nie, maar niemand gaan my rob nie." (No one can catch me with money. I can count very well. I can't read and write, but no one is going to rob me.)
>
> "Somtyds is dit so... ek gaan sonder die brille winkel toe dan praat ek met iemand anders want dan kan ek nie sien nie. Vra net: 'Hoorie. Help my net gou. Hoeveel is dit?' (Sometimes I go to the shops without my glasses. Then I talk to someone else because I can't see. I say. 'Listen here. Help me quickly. How much is this?')

Tossie said she also did this if there was a name she couldn't read.

> "As ek nou miskien sien daar's 'n naam wat ek nou nie kan lees nie, dan vra ek vir iemand wat hier naaste is, 'Hoor hierso, kan jy vir my sê wat staan daar geskrywe?'" (If I see there is a name that I can't read, I say: "Listen here, can you tell me what is written there?")

I asked Tossie how she felt about asking for help in this way.

MB: Hoe voel jy om vir mense te vra?

Tossie: Ek vra nooit vir 'n bruin mens. Ek vra net vir 'n wit mens.

MB: O, waarom?

Tossie: Want ek weet hy sal my nooit teleurstel nie. Maar ons Gams vra nie die ene ander nie. That's why.

MB: Sal hulle jou miskien nie wil help nie? Of sal hulle lag?

Tossie: Nee, hulle gaan miskien vir my verkeerd lei want jy wiet die Gams kan nou nie lees nie. Verstaan? Ek moet either vir Mevrou vra of vir Meneer vra om vir my te sê want ek weet die sal my die regte prys gee.

(MB: How do you feel about asking people?

Tossie: I never ask a brown person. I only ask a white person.

MB: O, why?

Tossie: Because I know they will never disappoint me. We Gams don't ask each other. That's why.

MB: Will they perhaps not help you? Or will they laugh?

Tossie: No, they will perhaps mislead me because you know the Gams can't read. Understand? I must either ask Mister or Missus to tell me because I know they will give me the right price.)

Tossie's responses not only provided information about her literacy practices, they also provided an insight into her sense of identity and the nature of her primary discourse. Of particular interest, I think, is her use of the word "Gams" to describe fellow Coloured people. She also has a son called Gamse. The term "Gam" comes from the Biblical

name "Ham" and a Biblical story[4] which has been quoted for centuries as a justification for the enslavement of blacks (Stone, 1972).

In a paper presented to the second workshop on Coloured Citizenship in South Africa in 1972, Gerald Stone says lower class Cape coloureds frequently apply the time Ham or "Gam" to themselves although they are often unaware of the biblical origin.

> "The Ham appellation is regarded as offensive when used by an unknown outsider, such as a strange white, or a middle-class coloured, but is accepted from a lower-class coloured or outsider regarded as loyal. It is always perjorative and mocking, but is often used humourously rather than critically. Being Ham implies both a particular social position and unique character. Being in the position of being both brown and poor, one characterizes oneself a Ham...
>
> "The term indicates particularly an underdog position in terms of race or class, whichever is more immediate. Thus some middle-class coloureds characterize themselves as Ham. Lower-class coloureds perceive them as being of higher status and therefore non-ham.
>
> "The term is used mostly with reference to males, and the character is appropriately embedded more in the context of community rather than familial, and public rather than private, relations" (pages 34-35).

Stone says a person referred to as Ham is regarded as manifesting a variety of characteristics. He is unfortunate, repulsive, a fool, stupid, ignorant, disreputable (because he "violates the canons of respectability and good manners") and a "rebel against the

---

[4] The story concerns the degradation of Noah by a son called Ham and the consequent curse of Ham. I recount it here in full because I believe that an understanding of the connotations and use of this word is essential to an understanding of the primary discourse of Tossie and her family. This is how the Good News Bible (1977) recounts the incident which took place after the great flood:

> *"The sons of Noah who went out of the boat were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These three sons of Noah were the ancestors of all the people on earth.*
> *Noah who was a farmer, was the first man to plant a vineyard. After he drank some of the wine, he became drunk, took off his clothes, and lay naked in his tent. When Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked, he went out and told his two brothers. Then Shem and Japheth took a robe and held it behind them on their shoulders. They walked backwards into the tent and covered their father, keeping their faces turned away so as not to see him naked. When Noah was sober again and learnt what his youngest son had done to him, he said:*
> *"A curse on Canaan!*
> *He will be a slave to his brothers.*
> *Give praise to the Lord, the God of Shem!*
> *Canaan will be the slave of Shem.*
> *May God cause Japheth to increase!*
> *May his descendants live with the people of Shem!*
> *Canaan will be the slave of Japheth."* (Genesis 9, 18 - 28).

moral order". This is indicated, says Stone, by his lack of self-restraint and in violent crime by younger men.

The character of Ham, Stone concludes, "is not purposefully lived and played out, but is a stereotype utilized by commentators who identify with lower-class coloured people, simultaneously mocking and condoning their disreputability" (page 37).

It is interesting that the discourse of Gam, which speaks through people like Tossie, affects not only their sense of identity but also their literacy practices. This is evident in the way in which Tossie speaks of " ons Gams" (we Hams) as people who can't read and will mislead, and the way in which she only asks white persons for help with reading and writing. It is also evident in the resigned fashion with which she accepts her status as someone who can't read or write, in her resistance to the literacy class which I told her about and in some of the other practices of her life, such as her excessive consumption of alcohol.

On the other hand, Tossie was, in some ways, less restricted by her discourse than those who, in striving to be middle class and respectable, spent time and effort trying to hide the fact that they could not read or write. Tossie did not mind asking people for help because she was not trying to maintain appearances of respectability.

Oom Piet also did not mind asking strangers for help while shopping. He said he could read a low price "like R2,50 or R3,50" but had to ask for help with higher prices. He would ask anybody around him in the shop or would take one of his children, his girlfriend or a friend's wife with him to read the prices.

He prided himself, however, on his ability to work with figures – entirely in his head. He said that even though he could not read or write, his employers were unable to cheat him on his pay. He would demand to know at the end of each month or week how much had been taken off for tax, how much for unemployment insurance and so on. He would then work out (in his head) whether he had been paid correctly.

His girlfriend, Minnie, confirmed his skill with numbers – she said all the people she knew who could not read and write were better at "telling en daardie aspek" (adding and such things) than she who had "gelerendheid".

Whereas she would struggle to work out the change while shopping, Oom Piet would tell her immediately how much she was owed, she said. But she also identified the contextualised non-school nature of Oom Piet's skills when she said that, on the other hand, she could do calculations like "twenty times twelve", whereas he couldn't.

There was one type of commercial transaction in which they felt his lack of reading and writing skills were a distinct disadvantage. This was where he was required to sign for something. They were both afraid he might be tricked into signing something to his disadvantage because of his inability to read the text. Legal documents because of their long words were a particular fear. Minnie felt that even she, with her Std 8 education, would not be able to help him with such documents.

Anna was the one resister who could not shop without help. At the time of my research her husband, Lionel, was doing all the shopping for both of them, usually from the shops in Ocean View. Although neither were specific about the reasons for this, it did appear that Anna's depression – brought about, Lionel said, by her lack of employment – was a factor. Anna told me she used to shop, usually in Fish Hoek and always took her sister's daughter along with her to read the prices.

4.5.3 Literacy events and practices in the home

Written materials entered the homelives of the resisters mainly in the form of accounts, "skuldbriewe" (debt-letters) as they called them, reports on their children's progress at school and, to a limited extent, personal letters.

I did not find as many examples of religious literacies in the resisters' homes as I did in the learners, although they were present, to a limited degree.

- Tossie said she avoided "skuldbriewe" by buying for cash wherever possible. However, if such letters did arrive, because of her husband's practice of acquiring debt, she would ask her brother, who has a Std 3 education, to read them for her and she would have to settle the account. This was because she had the responsibility of disposing of the family income. Her husband handed over his earnings to her each month.

Tossie's brother, James, also reads her children's school reports: during one of my visits the school report of her 9-year-old daughter who had just completed Std 1 was a major topic of conversation. Tossie said she was waiting for the report of her grandchild, Gamse, also 9, who was due to go into Std 1, having previously failed Sub B.

Tossie told me of only one personal letter which she and her husband had received about five or six years ago. It came from Pieter's mother who lives in Middelburg, Cape, and gave her address. Tossie said her husband still had the letter. She had asked him about it recently.

Two of Tossie and Pieter's children stay in Middelburg, Cape, having been sent there in 1970 at the ages of 3 years and 11 months to stay with Pieter's mother. Tossie and Pieter used to get news of them through an aunt who regularly wrote to Middelburg and received letters in reply. But this aunt had died and Pieter and Tossie had not had word of these children for years.

I asked if she would try to find her mother-in-law's letter, then I would help her write a letter to her children via the address given there.

Tossie initially agreed to the suggestion but then added, laughingly, that she didn't want these children, now adults, to come and live with her as a result of the letter and anyway they wouldn't know her or her husband since they had been sent away at such a young age.

The only written materials I noticed in Tossie and Pieter's lounge were the sheets of newspaper used to line some shelves. A border of triangular points had been carefully cut as a kind of decoration. Three religious pictures hung on the walls. One (which Tossie and Pieter bought) was of the last supper and there are also two pictures of Jesus which Tossie had inherited from her family. In another frame were several "kiekies" (snapshots) of family and friends, a sketch of a Cape Town slum area (looked like District Six, an area demolished by the National party government in terms of Group Areas legislation) and a fancier print of an English-looking landscape.

- When I asked Lionel and Anna whether they ever received accounts, Lionel produced from under his bed a small suitcase stuffed full of official papers, accounts and family photographs. He showed me an old television licence and said he could read the amount owed and his mother's address at the top. He said he always asked his mother or sisters to read for him. Lionel also showed me with some pride a small piece of paper on which he had written his sister's phone number. She had written it elsewhere first, he said, and then he had copied it.

Lionel and Anna had recently moved out of his mother's flat into their own shack when I met them. They had acquired a piece of land on Imhoff's Gift and had built a tiny one-room wood-and-iron shack. Despite the makeshift nature of their home, they had managed to prop two small adornments against the wall. The one was a faded newspaper cutting showing a picture of a Muslim bridal couple (the groom was a friend of Lionel's and the wedding took place a couple of years before, Lionel said). The other was a framed plaque showing a suggestive cartoon-type drawing of a man and his secretary. Below the picture the following words were inscribed: "I want a perfect secretary, one who types fast and runs slow." Lionel told me he bought the plaque at a second-hand shop in Fish Hoek several years before, when he was still unmarried.

- Oom Piet said the only accounts he received since his wife's death were electricity and rates bills. He seems proud of the way he handles them. He says he always asks one of his children to read them for him and then he goes to the shop personally to settle payment:

> "As ek 'n pampier kry, dan vra ek vir een van my kinders: Nou wat is dit die? Nou sê hulle vir my. As dit nou nie 'n hoer bedrag is nie, dan gaan ek die mense nou sien en okay kan ek dit afbetaal of moet dit kontant wees. Sommer. In een hoop. So doen ek al my goeters. Mevrou, ek is rerig waar, ek sê nou eendag hier vir die predikant ook, ek het die Here dank vir die bietjie – ek kan nie lees en skrywe – maar die verstand wat Hy my gegee het..."
>
> (If I get a paper, I ask one of my children: What is this? Then they tell me. If it is not a high amount, I go to the people and say okay can I pay it off or must it be cash. Like that. In one go. This is how I do all my things. Missus, I am telling the truth, I said to the minister once I can't read or write but I must thank the Lord for the intelligence He has given me...)

Oom Piet was living in a tiny wendy house on a plot of land on Imhoff's Gift when I met him. It was exceptionally tidy and well-organised inside – he even had an arrangement whereby the bed folded up against the wall during the day. However, it was clearly a temporary arrangement – he said he went back to his old flat during the day – and he had not put up any decorations.

- Moegamat was the only resister who wrote and received personal letters regularly. His sister showed me one of them. It was written on a prison lettergram in block capitals but was surprisingly coherent and articulate for someone who only went as far as Std 2 at school. The letter was almost entirely about his young daughter who was in the care of his former girlfriend and, in his opinion, neglected. He believed the child's mother had another man and was using money that should be spent on the child on him. In the letter, Moegamat asked his sister to ask his mother to fetch the child and to show his letter to the police if his former girlfriend telephoned them.

Moegamat's sister also told me that he often read books while at home, usually comic books, westerns and romance stories.

4.5.4 Literacy events and practices in religion

I can speak only of Oom Piet in this context because, apart from Moegamat who was in prison, he was the only resister who regularly visited a place of worship.

Religious discourses were affirmed, faintly, in the home of Tossie and Pieter in the pictures on their walls but they appeared to be secondary to more powerful discourses affirmed in the practices of excessive drinking and dagga smoking which took place in their home.

Lionel's hankering after the Muslim discourse from which he had been excluded because of his failure to be circumcised, is poignantly obvious from the precious picture of a Muslim wedding on his wall.

Oom Piet had no such affirmations of religious discourses in his tiny wendy-house, but he was a devout member of the NG Sendingkerk in Ocean View and an elder in that church. This meant that the minister sometimes called on him to say a prayer in church or to speak on some or other text or topic. He said he would get his children – and recently his girlfriend, Minnie – to read the text for him and then he would think hard about it and how he could expand on the topic. He said he was never asked to read in church because that he could not do, but he was often able to supply information which others, who could read or write, were not able to.

> "... baie kere nou vra hy (die dominee) onder die lidmate wat kan lees en skrywe wat het Paulus daar gemaak or Timotheus of Johannes of Lukas. Nou niemand kan antwoord gee nie of iemand gee antwoord maar hy's die verkeerde woord. Nou vra hy vir my: Oom Piet, wat dink Oom Piet? ... Dan antwoord ek vir hom en sê (die regte antwoord)...En as ons agter kom in die pastorie dan sê hy vir my: Oom Piet, ek kan nie verstaan nie. Onse mense wat kan lees en skrywe dat hulle nie die dinge van die Here kan verstaan nie. Ek sê vir hom: Dominee, onthou Sondagmöre voor dat ek kerk toe gaan... dan praat ek vir die Here dat hy moet tog al hierdie dinge van my weggewyder dat ek net konsentreer op Sy woord. En dit is wonderlik."
>
> (... often the minister asks the church members that can read and write what Paul did there or Timothy of John or Luke. Now no one can answer or someone gives an answer and it is incorrect. Then he asks me: Oom Piet, what do you think? And I answer him correctly. Later in the rectory he says to me: Oom Piet, I can't understand how the people in the church who can read and write do not understand the things of the Lord. I say to him: Dominee, remember that every Sunday morning before I go to church, I talk to God and ask Him to remove all the things in my mind so I can just concentrate on his word. And it is wonderful.)

In Ocean View's NG Sendingkerk one Sunday, I observed Oom Piet sitting in front of the church with the other elders. He appeared to be singing the hymns and saying the prayers from memory. Or else he was mouthing the words very convincingly.

I noticed in that church that day, the power of the spoken word in comparison with that of the written word. The minister spoke at length without once referring to notes. So did the elder who was called upon to say a prayer in honour of someone's birthday. The written word played a role – in the prayers and hymns – but it was not as public as the spoken word and did not carry as much status and power.

Conclusion

Written materials entered the lives of the resisters mainly in the workplace and in the home in the form of accounts.

Reading and writing played a greater role in the working lives of the resisters than in the lives of the learners only because I met more male resisters than I did women. The increase in workplace literacies was in direct proportion to the number of males interviewed. If one looks at the learners and resisters together, as one group, it becomes obvious that the women in my study, all in domestic service, find little or no need for reading and writing skills at work. The men felt no need for such skills either while they worked as cleaners or labourers but once they moved above this stratum of employment, the need was felt.

I find it difficult to accept, however, that the women's work is as independent of literacies as they say. Speaking from my own experience as a woman and houseworker, and not from research, I know that the average middle-class home (where they find employment) contains many hidden responsibilities requiring skills and talents that are not recognised by the public world and barely visible even in the home. (Even setting the temperature on an iron requires a certain kind of literacy. So does switching an appliance on or off.)

Rockhill (1987) said it was very difficult to get accounts of the literacy work that women did in maintaining their homes and families. "They don't notice it; literacy is another piece of the invisibility of women's work."

Like the literacy learners, the resisters tended to make use of family members to help them with written materials, but the need to maintain privacy was generally not as strong as with the learners and some did make use of outsiders. One resister, Oom Piet, had spoken openly in a church meeting about his inability to read and write and seemed proud of the way in which he coped without these skills.

In the case of one resister, a lower-middle-class woman, there was a strong link between her primary discourse (which I call a discourse of Gam because of its stereotyping of coloured people as inferior) and her literacy practices. She would only ask white people for help.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I explored the biographical details and other discursive affirmations of six non-learners for clues to discourse. I found discourses of opposition, of difference and of resistance wherever I looked. They were expressed in practices of excessive drinking, dagga smoking or drug abuse and in the illegal activities of those whom I met in Pollsmoor Prison. The discourse of respectability, associated with church-going, settled employment and socially acceptable behaviour was virtually absent. Oom Piet was a regular churchgoer but not in the same way that the learners were churchgoers. Whereas they participated shyly in the rituals of the institution, often hiding their inability to keep up with the standards of literacy which it demands, he made it clear to all and sundry that he could not read and write and used his skills as a public speaker to ensure himself a position of power. The sense of responsibility and integration which he demonstrated in the church was mirrored also in his approach to learning. When he had needed to learn something in his life, he had gone ahead and done so. He had not needed to acquire the knowledge in a formal, school-type environment. This same sense of responsibility was evident in the discourses and literacy practices of Moegamat (who appeared to have developed reading and writing skills on his own) and of other resisters, such as Jane, whom I met briefly.

In my exploration of the resisters' literacy practices, I found written materials entered their lives mainly in the workplace and in the home in the form of accounts. Reading and writing played a greater role in the working lives of the resisters than in the lives of learners because I met more male resisters than I did women. The women were all in domestic service where they found little or no need for writing skills. Religion did not provide the incentive to learn to read and write that it did for learners.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE ROLE OF THE CENTRE FOR MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

A discussion of the discourses and literacy practices of literacy class learners and resisters in Ocean View cannot be complete without some exploration of the role of the Centre for Mentally and Physically Handicapped in Ocean View and the discourses which surround this institution. Four out of the 15 or so learners who came to classes during my research period were attached to the Protective Workshop at the Centre and were receiving disability grants for mental handicaps. They were all women. Two (Sanetta and Diana) were interviewees in my research. I also got to know Hendrina, who is regarded by the centre as "emotionally unstable".

In this chapter I develop an account of the discourse of retardation to which I was introduced in Ocean View. I examine the ideologies, interests and power arrangements behind it and consider its implications for the literacy class in Ocean View.

5.1 THE DISCOURSE ABOUT MENTAL RETARDATION

Through my discussions with professionals associated with the Centre for Mentally and Physically Handicapped and the clinic in Ocean View, I was introduced to a discourse about mental retardation in poverty-stricken areas like Ocean View which has huge implications for adult basic education if it is grounded in fact and not merely the expression of the interests and ideologies of those who make their money out of caring for or teaching the mentally handicapped.

The gist of the discourse, put forward mainly by medical professionals, goes like this: because of apartheid, mainly, and the socio-economic conditions that were the result of apartheid, there are people in Ocean View who do not have the mental capacity to learn

to read and write. Their brains do not functionally "normally" either because their mothers drank too much alcohol or ate too little food during pregnancy, or because they were the products of sex between relatives.

The nursing sister in charge of the Ocean View Clinic told me there were "a lot of psychiatric cases and children that's got a very low IQ " in Ocean View. She attributed this to the rate of intermarriage in Ocean View.

She said the people in Ocean View had been "thrown together" and isolated in the township as a result of apartheid and this could be a cause of the intermarriage and high incidence of mental retardation. Another possible cause was alcohol and drug abuse. The foetal alcohol syndrome, in which a baby in utero is physically and mentally affected by its mother's excessive drinking, was well known.

The syndrome was prevalent in Ocean View, she said, because of its isolation. "We are actually encapsulated here, you understand, and people tend to mix only with themselves. It's only recently now that you find people coming in from other areas ...

> "You can see that we are surrounded by these mountains, the only entrance to Ocean View is there (pointing to Kommetjie Main Road). The other entrance, from the Soetwater Road, goes out along the coast. So you could see we are actually isolated ... And then we've got lots of people that can't find work, that don't want to work. How do they get the alcohol, how do they get the drugs. Most of the money goes into those things. They make babies, the babies are not provided for, in utero the mother hasn't got sufficient food to eat, what happens you have a child with a syndrome and, automatically, if the child doesn't get enough food or oxygen, it retards the brain and then you get your form of retardation."

This sister said the clinic staff came across people who were "dense" and "lacked the ability even to think for themselves – we have to think for them". For example, she said, they found women who at the age of 26 or so were into their fourth pregnancies by their third boyfriends. They did not think how they were going to get food for the babies. They just expected the clinic to "sort them out".

Sister M said sex was "the main thing" in Ocean View because there was nothing else for young people to do.

> "There is nothing else. Like for instance with the Christmas holidays. Then all the staff go off and we work skeleton staff. Now I am on in the clinic ... Then these youngsters come in, the matriculants, the Std 9s and Std 10s. The parents are forced to go and work so they sit and watch videos at home with their boyfriends and they come to me and say: 'Sister, we just had sex now.'..."

She said the majority of the "skollies" hanging around the streets in Ocean View had done matric but could not get jobs.

> "So what do they do? They sit on the street corners, they start with the Mandrax, they start with the dagga, alcohol and they lekker highey-fi and you know what they do they get hold of a girl and then you just have sex. Sex is the main thing in this Ocean View. I say some people should make a bomb that makes everybody sterile in this Ocean View ... And they are so illiterate these people."

Incest was also a problem in Ocean View, she said. "We even have a father who has fathered children by two daughters.." And prostitution by young Ocean View girls at the Simonstown dockyard was another issue.

Sister M said it had been her project to prevent the high pregnancy rate in Ocean View so as to prevent the high retardation rate but she did not feel she was successful.

> "Sometimes I say I am looking at a wall and I can't see the wall moving. I want to do something and I can't ... because you can teach them, you can teach them, you can teach them and you still get no response."

In considering the significance of this nursing sister's discourse, it is useful to bear in mind Cleo Cherryholmes' concept of critical pragmatism.

Critical pragmatism, he says, invites one to consider "not only what we choose to say and do, along with their effects, but also what structures those choices" (Cherryholmes, 1988:14). And in considering the structuring of choices, he says, one needs to consider ideologies and power arrangements.

So far I have considered what this nursing sister said. I will now try to consider the ideologies and power arrangements behind her words.

Firstly, I should mention that Sister M's discourse was the closest to anti-apartheid struggle-discourse that I experienced in Ocean View. She attributed the social problems of Ocean View to apartheid – to the way it had isolated people in an out-of-the-way valley, to the inferior education system it had produced for those classified coloured, to the way in which farmworkers had been prevented from going beyond limited primary education because the white farmers wanted their labour, and to the poverty, malnutrition and anti-social behaviours such as drinking and drugging which it had caused. She said she would have left the country as other coloured people did years ago if she had had the money. Instead she stayed and "slogged" and "went on", educating herself in the process. In both educational and social senses, Sister M could be described as a survivor of apartheid.

Secondly, it is clear that this woman has vested interests in the medical model, just as an educationist might have vested interests in a deficit-education model. So any reasons she might give for ignorance and lack of education in Ocean View are likely to be related to physical causes. And if her project of reducing the birth rate in Ocean View is not succeeding, she needs to come up with an explanation.

Finally, because this woman is herself not from Ocean View anything she says about the township is not directly threatening to her own identity. A former teacher from Ocean View High School, when I told her of this nursing sister's views, commented: "Is she an up-the-liner? " I had to say she was. "Well, that's how up-the-liners would see Ocean View people", this teacher said (referring to people who live closer to Cape Town).

However, it must be said that Sister M's discourse about retardation was, to some extent, personally threatening because she herself had a Downs Syndrome child who was in the Ocean View Training Centre.

And the teacher I spoke to confirmed much of what Sister M told me, even if she commented on her outsider status. This teacher, who was also not from Ocean View, said she gave up her job at the school because she could no longer bear the "emotional battering" she was having to endure on a daily basis because of it. Ocean View was a

"hotbed' of alcohol, drug and sex abuse, she said. She was vocational guidance counsellor at the school and would be approached daily by children with severe family problems including incest.

Sister M's words were also confirmed, to some extent, in the discourse of the learners and resisters and their families whom I interviewed.

- Minnie, girlfriend of Oom Piet, told me she had a child in the "Tatie skool" (as she called the Training Centre) that was mentally retarded because she had drunk throughout the pregnancy.

- Tossie, who also had a severe drinking problem, said one of her eleven children was in a "home". (She could not remember the name of the place.)

- Mary had a son who had been receiving treatment at Lentegeur Hospital for psychiatric illness before he was stabbed to death by his father in a drunken rage.

- Four of the resisters admitted they had abused alcohol and/or drugs in their past. Two were still doing so. I did not specifically ask resisters about their parents' drinking habits but the two who raised the subject on their own appeared to come from homes where alcohol abuse was common.

- I did come across an alleged case of incest even among the 13 people whom I interviewed.

At the same time a curious economic factor complicates the picture created by these discourses. The people who are labelled "mentally handicapped" and work at the Protective Workshop in Ocean View receive state disability grants each month. At the time of my research they were paid R370 a month. This is in addition to the small amounts (usually between R10 and R20 a month) which they receive for work that they do in the workshop.

In contrast, there are people (usually women) in domestic service in the white suburbs surrounding Ocean View who receive little more. For example, Colleen, who works from 8.30 am to 4 pm five days a week as housekeeper for a wealthy Fish Hoek lawyer, told me she earned R450 a month. And Esther, for four days' charring a week, earned less in a short month than each of her sisters at the Protective Workshop. Her status as someone who was not mentally handicapped also meant that she assumed most of the responsibility for her own household, while her sisters assumed a dependent role.

At the Handicapped Centre I was told that of the 54 people in the workgroup, all but 11 came from Ocean View. Here the prevailing discourse is similar to Sister M's. Diana and Sanetta, in the opinion of the supervisor, manager and social worker, were the way they were for genetic reasons. Apartheid education had nothing to do with it. They would not have done better if they had been educated in Bishopscourt, the social worker said, who estimated their IQs at below 50.

Labelling theory was clearly not an aspect of their discourse. This theory suggests that deviance (including mental "illness") is not the responsibility of the actor alone but more the responsibility of agents of social control who make rules and deem their infraction deviance. People who do not follow these rules are "caught, defined, segregated, labelled and stigmatized" as deviant (Broadhead, 1974, quoted in Van der Burgh, 1983:11). The social identity as a deviant which a person can acquire in this way, then proceeds to guide future action. (Eaton, 1980, quoted in Van der Burgh, 1983:11).

The theory resonates with the notion of subjectivity which Foucault developed and linked, inextricably, with questions of power. In "The Subject and Power" (Foucault, 1982), Foucault says it is not power, but the subject that is the general theme of his research. He refers, by way of example, to a "series of oppositions", many of which are relevant to this research. They include "opposition to the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine over the population, of administration over the ways people live" (page 211).

> "... the main objective of these struggles is to attack not so much 'such and such' an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class, but rather a technique, a form of power. This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes

> the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects" (page 212).

I have not attempted to explore in this research the way in which people in Ocean View get labelled "retarded" or "mentally unstable" but I do think this is an important area for future research because the discourse of retardation has implications for pedagogical methods and theory in South Africa. Is retardation merely a product of the self-interested discourse of medical professionals, or is it a social phenomenon that can cut across a range of discourses providing new understandings of illiteracy that could lead to new approaches to literacy teaching? To what extent have people been labelled inappropriately in this way?

In motivating for such research, I think I should mention that
the discourse of retardation which I encountered in Ocean View is not unique. In an article on "Adult Literacy in Nicaragua 1979-90", Colin Lankshear says that during the 1980 National Literacy Crusade in Nicaragua, "it emerged that some 9 percent of the population suffered severe learning difficulties which prevented them from studying" (Lankshear, 1990: 119). Lankshear says this also reflected poverty and he quotes Miller (1985) (he does not give the full source), as saying: "Poor health was the principal cause. Extensive malnutrition (handicapped) many Nicaraguans, impairing sight and hearing, limiting memory and often causing early senility."

5.2 THE EFFECT OF THE DISCOURSE ABOUT RETARDATION ON THE LITERACY CLASS

The important question for the purposes of this thesis is: What was the impact of the discourse about retardation on the literacy class?

Generally, I found the teachers far more accepting of the "retarded" learners and far more hopeful for their future progress than the professionals. In this way, they were reflecting once again the difference between their own community-based discourses and

those of the professionals who operate in Ocean View. Where they did make comments that mirrored those of the professionals, they were actually quoting the professionals.

For example, Carla, who was Sanetta and Diana's teacher, spoke of their need for constant help:

> "You explain something to them, they understand. They'll be able to do it with you in the class, but if you give them something to do at home they won't be able to do it on their own. They constantly need your help... But they write well... and very neatly and everything ... they just don't remember."

Carla said this "memory problem" had been confirmed by teachers at the Handicapped Centre.

> "They say they are like that. I mean they teach them something that day but if you come back tomorrow, they don't know anything, they can't remember..."

Shahieda said Diana appeared to be coping "in her way" and to be progressing and both sisters seemed to want to come to classes. For this reason:

> "... we know their thinking and their abilities is different to the others' but we still feel that even if we going to work on a slower pace with them, even if we have to do it over and over, we going to let them (keep coming to classes)..."

Hendrina was regarded as different to these women, as someone with "a nervous problem" (Shahieda) or as "emotionally erratic" (the opinion of her literacy teacher at the centre) but the teachers described her as "bright" and "funny" and clearly enjoyed her presence in the class.. I found she had a sharp and witty sense of humour and brought laughter to the classes whenever she attended.

The major impact of the professional discourses, I think, was one of stigmatization of the class. This had an affect on those members of the group with middle-class aspirations. Karel clearly did not want to be seen attending the classes and had managed to organise private sessions for himself in the morning. When I asked him why he wanted such privacy, he gave a reply that indicated he did not want to be associated with people who could read and write absolutely nothing and would never be able to.

The association of the literacy class with the Handicapped Centre was compounded when the literacy class put up a display in the Ocean View Civic Centre along with the Handicapped Centre, the local clinic and other health-related organisations whose primary aim was to promote AIDS awareness. The people manning the literacy table were Shahieda, Jeremy, Esther and Esther's two sisters from the Handicapped Centre, Diana and Sanetta.

Conclusion

A high proportion of people in the Ocean View literacy class are receiving disability grants for mental handicaps and are in sheltered employment at the Protective Workshop. There is also, among certain professionals who work in the area, a discourse that connects "illiteracy" with mental retardation.

This discourse, which is based on a medical rather than labelling model of mental illness, has important implications for adult basic education methods and theory in this country and its origins and effects should be researched.

In the meantime the discourse has implications for this research because the Ocean View literacy class appears to be somewhat stigmatized for having included "mentally handicapped" people in its classes.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

It is tempting at the end of a study like this to try to round it off or seal it up with a few neat conclusions in authoritative-sounding language that will impart to the research and its text a kind of universal stamp. But if postmodernism has taught us one useful thing, it is to recognise and accept the partiality of a single vision and the danger of closure.

This research and this text is the product of one person's perspective. A white, heterosexual, middle-class woman's perspective, to parody Marcus (1993:31). It is also a product that was produced in a particular, limited time frame, with all the implications for holism that that must inevitably bear. If it is to have any value it will be because of the "critical and differently positioned responses to it by its (hopefully) varied readers", to quote Marcus (1993:16) again.

An additional cause of caution in this regard lies with the analytical tools with which I conducted this research. Gee's concepts of primary and secondary Discourse are central to my method and the argument of this thesis yet, in the course of my research, I began to feel uncomfortable about the way in which primary Discourse is defined by Gee. It seemed to me that if one interpreted his definition in a mechanistic way as language between intimates then it was virtually impossible to access primary Discourse because, as a researcher, one always counted as a non-intimate and forced the situation into one of secondary Discourse. Usually I was only able to look for clues to primary Discourse in secondary Discourses, believing that different people would cope with different secondary Discourses in different ways depending on their primary Discourses.

Despite these concerns it would be a mistake, I think, to end this text without leaving the reader with some sense of the vision which remains with me now that I have left the field and can reflect on what I saw and experienced. I entered the research with certain clear questions in mind. I leave it with the feeling that I have, if not the answers to those

questions, then at least a sense of the direction in which they might be found. I offer my conclusions tentatively, after a brief summary of the work done, and hope they lead to further conclusions, based on other visions and other ethnographic research.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

I began this research with the aim of finding out why there is a "low level of developmental pressure" (Morphet et al, 1992) on the literacy providers in Ocean View. I hoped in this way to make a small contribution towards an answer to the much bigger question of why there is such a low level of developmental pressure on literacy providers nationwide.

I had two specific questions in mind:

- Why do the few people who do attend literacy classes in Ocean View, do so and why do other people in the community, also identified as illiterate, stay away?

- How do the people regarded as illiterate deal with written materials?

In this section, I present the conclusions which contribute to the way in which I attempt to answer my research questions. I then attempt to answer my main research questions.

(1) It is "gelerendheid" rather than literacy which is valued in Ocean View.

In Ocean View, the terms "literate" and "illiterate" and their Afrikaans equivalents are used only by professionals who have acquired the terms through a secondary discourse, usually to do with education or the health profession. In the primary discourse of the learners and resisters and their friends and relatives and even of the literacy teachers

themselves, the terms have no place; except that the term "illiterate" may be levelled against someone as a kind of swearword.

Instead Ocean View has a term "gelerendheid" which is used to distinguish between those people who have been fortunate enough to receive a socially acceptable level of education and those who have not. The term comes from the Afrikaans word "geleerdheid" meaning learning or erudition and people who use it tend to use the word "education" when asked to translate it into English. However, the term is used to indicate something more specific than that which the word "education" would normally imply.

"Gelerendheid" refers to a package of skills, qualities and status which a person might obtain after several years' formal schooling. The number of years' schooling necessary to qualify as a person with "gelerendheid" varies with time (a Std 10 is the going rate whereas St 8 sufficed a few years ago and Std 5 was good enough before that). It also varies with place (for example, a Std 2 might have given one "gelerendheid" in the country areas at a time when Std 5 was the norm in the Cape).

It is "gelerendheid" rather than "literacy" which people feel they have missed in life. Is it this that they are trying to achieve when they enrol in a literacy class? The answer would appear to be no.

(2) *Most of the learners in my study were not attending literacy classes to gain "gelerendheid".*

Most of the learners' were attending classes in search of some kind of symbolic fulfillment. There was only one learner, and he was the only male in the class, who sought from the classes the same kind of material effects that a fuller school education might have given him. He wanted to read and write because he wanted "to get on in life".

The resisters seemed to think that trying to learn to read and write at this stage of their lives was more trouble than it was worth. The only resister who had seriously considered the possibility of seeking school knowledge as a means towards a better material future

was a prisoner who had been given the option, in prison, of learning a trade or doing schoolwork. He had decided experience in a trade would be more valuable.

(3) There was a marked discrepancy between the discourses of learners and those of resisters, although there are also areas of overlap. The discourses of the learners were characterised by a dichotomy between the formal and the informal, the respectable and the disreputable, middle class aspirations and lower class realities. The discourses of the resisters showed greater integration between primary and secondary discourses.

A secondary discourse of respectability, associated with settled employment, church-going on Sunday, and limited or no use of alcohol, spoke through the learners in the relatively formal encounters I had with them. But the chatter and gossip that I listened to in off-moments and social functions, and some of the details which emerged in their life histories, indicated primary discourses that were either in conflict with those secondary discourses or somehow kept completely separate from them.

The resisters, however, spoke a discourse that could be called neither primary nor secondary. It had many of the elements of a primary discourse but it emerged in conversations with me, a stranger, where a secondary discourse would usually prevail. It had its origins in some cases in practices of excessive drinking which eroded senses of formality and confused the polite and the impolite or where a sense of desperate lassitude was more powerful than a sense of propriety. But it also emerged in the deep inner confidence and pride of those who had got on in life despite their lack of "gelerendheid". It seemed to reflect a far greater integration of the formal and the informal, the public and the private than I observed in the learners.

It was evident, for example, in the way in which the resisters did not try to conceal their inability to read and write from people outside of the family circle while most of the learners did so and two of the learners even hid this fact about themselves from close relatives.

It was reflected, also, in religious practices. Whereas the learners attended church in a fairly formal, removed way, going through the rituals of the occasion, without the

appearance of (or indeed the necessity for) deep involvement, the resisters appeared to be either integrally involved in religion or not involved at all. The one resister who attended church had made use of his oral skills to reach a position of authority which enabled him to participate fully in the rituals and powers of the institution.

(The difference here was also to do with the status of men over women in the learners' churches. In the Methodist church in Ocean View, I did see women integrally involved in the service. In the NG and New Apostolic churches to which five of the learners belonged, only men played such a role.) Another resister felt banished from the mosque because of his failure to be circumcised, yet many aspects of his self image, many details of his life, and certainly the discursive affirmations in his tiny house, indicated that the Muslim religion was still deeply entwined in the fabric of his life.

The oppositional aspects of the resisters' discourse was reflected mainly in their practices of alcohol or drug abuse which they either admitted openly (in the case of those who had given up the habits) or were unable to conceal. The practices appeared to have become habitual through factors largely beyond their control – mainly the tot system, whereby farm labourers are given cheap wine in lieu of pay or in addition to it. But once established the practice provided the one means of resistance and opposition to a life that was far from ideal.

In one resister, resistance and opposition was expressed not by means of alcohol but in the illegal activities which had landed him in prison twice. In another, I sensed a kind of passive resistance, a general sense of hopelessness and lassitude.

It was in the area of resistance, too, that there was an overlap between learners' and resisters' discourses. While some learners resisted the classes because they wanted more privacy than the classes afforded, others dropped out or had difficulties coming to classes because of power relations and role expectations in their homes. Several of the women experienced conflict between themselves and their husbands or other members of their families when they tried to attend classes. This was sometimes because of practical considerations – who would do their housework while they were away two evenings a

week? – and sometimes because their success at the classes threatened the status and authority of their husbands.

(4) The literacy practices of learners and resisters reflected the dichotomy or integration that was characteristic of learners and resisters' lives respectively.

The learners rarely experienced literacy events in the workplace, mainly because of the menial nature of their work. The literacy events they did experience occurred mainly in the home and in the church and were dealt with either by making use of the rudiments of reading anad writing which they learned in literacy classes, or by making use of relatives who had received more schooling than they had. In some cases they resorted to considerable pretence to try to maintain an image of "gelerendheid".

In contrast, reading and writing played a fairly substantial role in the working lives of the resisters. This was largely because most of them were men and there does seem to be a direct correlation between the sex of the "illiterate" person and the extent of his/her workplace literacies. If one looks at the learners and resisters together, as one group, it becomes obvious that the women in the study, all in domestic service, find little or no need for reading and writing skills at work. The men felt no need for such skills either while they worked as cleaners or labourers but once they moved into higher, more lucrative levels of employment, the need was felt.

The resisters' coping practices also differed from the learners', again reflecting a more integrated approach to the acquisition of secondary discourse than was evident among the learners. Several of the resisters had taken responsibility for their own learning, sometimes asking family members to help them.

One woman's coping practices reflected a discourse of inferiority, and mocking acceptance of that status, for which some lower class coloureds are renowned. (She would only ask white people to help her because "Gams" would mislead her.) It is the discourse of the Coon, the poor and stupid but comical and entertaining coloured man, symbolised every new year in the Coon Carnival in Cape Town when "the lower class coloured man

reaffirms his identity as a stigmatized, infantilized male, subordinated, excluded, and alienated from the world of worthy, wealthy, white authority" (Stone, 1972). This discouse of Gam, as I call it, resonates with aspects of the discourses of some of the other resisters, in their love of entertaining others and, in its more sinister aspects, in the illegal practices of those in prison.

(5) It was not class which separated the discourses of resisters from those of the learners, but the aspirations towards class mobility that were reflected in the learners' discourses and absent from the resisters'.

In my research both groups could be described as lower class. The difference lay in the aspirations of the learners to be elevated – if only in a symbolic sense – from the realities of their class and in their ability to maintain the two elements of their lives – the symbolic and the material – at some distance from each other. The resisters wanted more money in their lives but they were not aspiring towards the respectability which is often associated with improved material conditions and they certainly did not want the respectability without any money (as some of the women learners did). At the same time the learners were not without the elements of disreputability that characterised the lives of the resisters. The difference lay in the learners' ability to elevate themselves from time to time from such details (by singing in the church choir, attending a prayer group etc) and in the fragile equilibrium which they managed to preserve in their homes.

(6) There were significant areas of compatibility between the discourses of the teachers and those of the learners.

The similarity between the primary discourses of the teachers and those of the learners was reflected in the way in which they were able to share jokes and gossip. There were similarities of secondary discourses too, evidenced in the saying of prayers at the end of classes and in the way in which they all seemed happy to participate in the formal routines associated with Mrs Basson's programmes.

(7) *There were significant areas of incompatibility between the discourses/practices of the teachers and those of the resisters.*

While the community patois might have provided a link between the primary discourses of the teachers and those of the resisters, there were oppositional aspects in some of the resisters' discourses, associated with alcohol and drug abuse and criminal activities, which were definitely not present in the teachers'.

(8) *Incompatibility between the discourses of the teachers and resisters could not have been the only reason for resistance.*

This is because of the areas of overlap. There were some resisters whose discourses, at least at this particular stage of their life, did seem compatible with those of the teachers and there were some learners whose primary discourses were founded on experiences which were very distant from those of the teachers'.

(9) *It is likely that the resisters' resistance also had something to do with their more integrated approach to life and the acquisition of knowledge.*

Here Gee's distinction between acquisition and learning is useful.

"Any Discourse (primary or secondary) is for most people most of the time only mastered through *acquisition*, not learning. Thus literacy (fluent control or mastery of a secondary Discourse is a product of acquisition, not learning; that is it requires exposure to models in natural, meaningful and functional settings, and (overt) teaching is not liable to be very successful – it may even initally get in the way. Time spent on learning and not acquisition is time not well spent if the goal is mastery in performance" (Gee, 1990: 154).

On the other hand, meta-level knowledge about Discourse (necessary in order to critique Discourse) is best developed through *learning* (involving explanation and analysis usually associated with the teaching process), Gee says.

In these terms the literacy class attempted to develop through *learning* a secondary discourse that was best developed through acquisition. This was partly because Mrs Basson's materials prescribed such a learning process and partly because the teachers and learners expected such a process, probably as a result of their church and school experiences. This was also, probably, the reason for the limited success of the classes. There was a strict separation between the learning process and home discourses-practices where acquisition might more successfully have taken place.

In Bernstein's terms, most of the sub-groups of the literacy class could be seen as examples of collection code because of the way in which strong frames kept apart the uncommonsense knowledge of the school and the everyday community knowledge of teacher and taught. In the process the learners and teachers were able to participate in the programme while remaining immune to whatever ideologies it wished to impart. This echoed the way in which some of them appeared to participate in church and might have participated in a conventional school – formally and distantly.

The details of the resisters' lives, however, did not provide evidence of similar styles of participation. They appeared to participate in events and institutions either fully or not at all. One of the resisters belonged to the same church as four of the learners but showed far greater involvement than they did. Sometimes non-participation was as much a reflection of involvement as it was of resistance (in the case of the resister who could not go to mosque because he had not been circumcised, but demonstrated intense attachment to the Muslim religion in numerous facets of his life).

The resisters also demonstrated in their lives and literacy practices, a tendency towards *acquisition* of secondary Discourse, to use the term acquisition in Gee's sense. This was evident in the way in which two of them had acquired certain skills associated with reading and writing in their homes (one had passed a driver's licence test by getting his children to coach him in the rules of the road, another had taught himself to read books and write letters by doing his younger siblings' homework). This acqusition process reflected a spirit of integration which was evident in other aspects of their lives (most noticeably, in their religious practices).

There was one group within the literacy class where an integrated code was aspired to. Here the teacher made use of a range of different materials and her own ideas to construct classes for the learners and tried to get them into dialogue with her. But neither the teacher nor the learner whom I interviewed were able to operate comfortably in this environment – possibly because of the strength of the collection code experience (or expectations) of formal schooling. The shift in the balance of power from teacher to learner, which Bernstein associates with integrated codes, did not take place. The learner resented the teacher's intrusions and the teacher felt dismayed at the learner's unwillingness to participate.

The resisters appeared to be in a double bind where the classes were concerned. If they were to attend them (unlikely in the case of some because of their drinking habits), they would either be asked to participate in a formal structured (strongly framed way) that would be at odds with other social practices in their life, and they would be required to *learn* rather than *acquire* the secondary Discourse associated with Mrs Basson's progrmme. Or they would be exposed to an integrated code which had closer links with the acquisition processes in other areas of their life, but held the possibility of exposing their oppositional discourses and practices.

(10) The discourse about retardation which is prevalent in Ocean View contributed to resistance to the literacy classes.

There is a final possible cause of resistance which I did not explore in any depth, but I feel should be mentioned. It was expressed in the refusal of one learner to attend group sessions and his insistence on private lessons in the morning. When I questioned him about this it appeared he did not want to be associated with people who were never going to be able to learn. It would seem from his answer – and perhaps the low enrolment figures are another indication – that the class has been stigmatized by the presence of people from the Handicapped Centre, even while it has managed to achieve important results with some of these people.

Summary

The research I have done and the conclusions which I drew as a result of it seems to indicate that literacy class learners in Ocean View attend classes mainly because they are seeking symbolic or social fulfillment. Where they remain in the classes it is because they experience a certain compatibility between their discourses and those of the teachers, and in the formal processes of the class, they find they are able to enjoy the same kind of separation of secondary and primary discourse that they experience in other areas of their lives. They are able to participate in the learning process in much the same way they participate in church and participated in formal schooling: formally and distantly.

The literacy class resisters give various reasons for not attending classes, but the reasons they give are sometimes at odds with their actual practice. From my research it appears likely that they resist the class mainly because there is nothing about the discourses associated with it to attract them, while the discourse about retardation which is present in Ocean View, and in the class, actually deters those with aspirations towards middle class status and success in their lives. (It was an obstacle even for some of the learners.)

The formality associated with attending a class is a further deterrent for those whose primary discourses are founded on oppositional practices and whose lives demonstrate considerable integration of primary and secondary discourses and an acquisition rather than learning approach to acquiring secondary Discourse (to use Gee's terms). If they were to attend classes it is likely the resisters would find the formal, structured methods at odds with the more integrated approach to acquisition of secondary Discourse they have demonstrated in their lives so far. At the same time if an integrated approach were to be used with them it could expose the oppositional discourses and practices that are also a feature of their lives.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS

Again I find it difficult, within a framework that is influenced by senses of partiality and non-closure, to even attempt to consider the implications of this research. I do so because it is a question that was asked of me constantly by people in Ocean View. What does your work mean for us, as people who don't read and write, or as teachers of those who don't read or write, or as professionals in the area?

Also, any work or text is likely to have implications whether one likes it or not. The very fact that this research has been done and that this text has been written is likely to have an effect on structures, even as structures had an effect on it. The effect might be minimal, it might be reproductive, it might lead to change. As Anthony Giddens has said: "We have to grasp what I would call the double involvement of individuals and institutions: we create society at the same time as we are created by it (Giddens, 1981: 14).

I am unable at this stage to predict what those effects would be but I am able to say what I would like them to be. I would hope that this research leads to greater recognition of:

- the danger of articles such as the one from Readers' Digest which I quote at the start of this thesis. It creates an unrealistic picture of illiterate people as a dependent, homogeneous mass and of reading and writing as a panacea to all their problems.

- the complexity and diversity of the discourses and practices of those who do not read and write. Illiterate people are not, in the words of Fingeret, "the stereotypical, dependent, incompetent individuals" often associated with the term. Nor are they a bland homogeneous group of people with similar interests and needs.

- the importance of formal school education. It is this that people associate with "gelerendheid". It is this that they feel they have missed in life. And having missed

the chance of acquiring it, they are not anticipating that literacy classes will make up lost ground. In a sense, it is regarded as irreplaceable.

- the need for more research into the reasons for women's resistance to literacy classes. My research, like that of Rockhill in the United States, indicates that power relations within the home are a significant factor.

- the need for strong, practical incentives to learn to read and write. If South Africa for whatever reason (national pride, economic growth or whatever) wants to lower its illiteracy rate, it will have to ensure that literacy can mean something concrete and material in the lives of those who attempt to attain it. If it cannot be seen to change lives in any way, the drop out rate for which literacy classes are notorious, will continue. In this regard, employers can play a major role in providing material incentives to the acquisition of literacy and the opportunity to learn and to practice literacy skills.

- informal means of literacy acquisition. My research has shown that the formal, structured discourses and practices of a class might well be at odds with the more integrated social practices of a resister's life. There is a need for further research into ways of strengthening and supporting informal acquisition practices.

- the role of radio and television in the lives of illiterate people. Every one of my interviewees either owned a television set and radio or had access to one and there was evidence that considerable learning as well as entertainment was effected in this way. There is a need for research into ways of utilising radio and television as a means not only to promote literacy but also to provide instruction.

To sum up, it is only within the "universes" of the resisters' discourses (to quote a term of Habermas's that is quoted, in turn, by Cherryholmes, 1988:11) that I envisage successful and productive adult basic education taking place. This points to a need for at home, on site, in prison, undercover, if necessary, instruction for those who do not dichotomise primary and secondary discourses in the way a literacy class (such as the one in Ocean View) requires them to do.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkinson P (1990) The Ethnographic Imagination: Textual Constructions of Reality. London: Routledge.

Barton D and Ivanic R, eds (1991) Writing in the Community. London: Sage Publications.

Basson J M (1991) Basiese Lees en Skryf vir, Volwassenes:Kursus 1. Paarl: J M Basson.

Basson J M (1991) Ontdek die Ou Testament: 'n Bybelkor kursus vir nuwe lesers. Wellington: Bybelkor.

Basson J M (1991) Ontdek die Nuwe Testament: 'n Bybelkor kursus vir nuwe lesers. Wellington: Bybelkor.

Basson J M (1991) Handleiding vir Kursusleier, Kursus 1. Paarl: J M Basson.

Basson J M (1992) Funksionele Geletterdheid: Kursus 2. Paarl: J M Basson.

Basson J M (1992) Handleiding vir Kursusleier: Kursus 2. Paarl: J M Basson.

Bell D, Caplan P and Karim N J, eds, (1993) Gendered Fields. London: Routledge.

Bernstein B (1971) On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge, in Young M F D, ed, Knowledge and Control. UK: Collier Macmillan.

Bernstein B (1990) The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse. London: Routledge.

Bourdieu P and Eagleton T (1992) Doxa and Common Life, New Left Review, Vol 191.

Bourdieu P (1990) The Logic of Practice. California: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu P and Passeron J-C (1977) Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture. London: Sage Publications.

Burgess R G, ed, (1989) The Ethics of Educational Research. UK: The Falmer Press.

Burman S and Reynolds P (1986) Growing Up in a Divided Society. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Central Statistical Services (1991) Report for the Cape Peninsula. Part 1. Pretoria: Central Statistical Services.

Cherryholmes C (1988) Power and Criticism: Poststructural Investigations in Education. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Cousins M and Hussain A (1984) Michel Foucault. UK: Macmillan.

Cherryholmes C (1993) Reading Research. In Journal of Curriculum Studies, Vol 19 (4).

Christian-Smith L K (1989) Power, Knowledge and Curriculum: Constructing Feminity in Adolescent Romance Novels. In De Castell S, Luke A and Luke C, eds, Language, Authority and Criticism. London: The Falmer Press.

Comaroff J and Comaroff J (1992) Ethnography and the Historical Imagination. San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press Boulder.

Crush J and Ambler C (1992) Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa. Pietermartizburg: University of Natal Press.

Davis D (1991) Adult Literacy Programs: Toward equality or maintaining the status quo? In Journal of Reading 35:1.

de Avila M (1983) Illiterate Adults and Readers: Their Exchange System. Adult Literacy and Basic Education., Vol 7.

de Castell S, Luke A and Luke C (1989) Language, Authority and Criticism: Readings on the school textbook. London: The Falmer Press.

Douglas S (1994) The Politics of Improvement Unpublished Honours thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Cape Town.

Dowling S (1988) A History of Squatting in the Fish Hoek Valley. Unpublished Honours thesis, Department of African Studies, University of Cape Town.

Dreyfus H L and Rabinow P (1982) Michel Foucault. UK: Harvester Press.

Du Toit L (1991) Hersiening en Vaslegging. Stellenbosch: Lydia du Toit.

Eagleton T (1992) The crisis of contemporary culture. New Left Review, Vol 196.

Fairclough N (1992) Discourse and Social Change. UK: Polity Press.

Ferdman B M (1990) Literacy and Cultural Identity. Harvard Educational Review, Vol 60 No 2.

Ferguson J (1990) The Anti-politics Machine. Cambridge University Press.

Fetterman D (1989) Ethnography Step by Step. California: Sage Publications.

Fingeret A (1983) Social Network: A new perspective on independence and illiterate adults. Adult Education Quarterly, Vol 33, Number 3.

Foucault M (1967) Madness and Civilization. UK: Tavistock.

Foucault M (1970) The Order of Discourse, in Shapiro M ed (1984) Language and Politics. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Foucault M (1973) The Birth of the Clinic. UK: Tavistock Publications.

Foucault M (1976) Mental Illness and Psychology. US: Harper and Row.

Foucault M (1979) Discipline and Punish. New York: Vintage Books.

Freebody P, Welch A R, eds Knowledge, Culture and Power. London: Falmer Press.

French E (1989) The Reading World of Black Workers. Report of the Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria.

Gee J (1990) Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses. UK: The Falmer Press.

Geertz,C (1973) The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.

Gerhardt H P (1989) Literacy for What? The plurality of cultural approaches. Prospects, Vol X1X No 4.

Gillis L S, Lewis J B, Slabbert M (1965) Psychiatric Disturbance and Alcoholism in the Coloured People of the Cape Peninsula. Unpublished research report, University of Cape Town.

Giddens A (1982) Sociology: A brief but critical introduction. London: Macmillan.

Giddens A (1990) The Consequences of Modernity. California: Stanford University Press.

Giroux H (1983) Theory and resistance in education: a pedagogy for the opposition. S Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

Giddens A (1991) Modernity and Self-identity. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goldin I (1987) Making Race: the Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Graff H J (1979) The Literacy Myth. New York: Academic Press.

Graff H J (1987) The Labyrinths of Literacy. New York: Falmer Press.

Hart C J L (1976), Voluntary Association? Soccer in a Cape Peninsula Coloured Township. Honours dissertation, University of Cape Town, Department of Social Anthropology.

Heath S B (1983) Ways with Words. Cambridge University Press.

Hutton B, ed (1992) Adult Basic Education in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Horsman J (1987) From the Learner's Voice: Women's Experience of Illiteracy. In Taylor M and Draper J, eds (1987), Adult Literacy Perspectives.

Innes D (1975) Disqualified:a study of the effects of uprooting the Coloured people of South Africa. London: The Africa Publications Trust.

International Centre for Education in Development (1992) Women's Literacy for Development. University of Warwick, Department of Continuing Education.

Jameson F (1991) Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. US: Duke University Press.

Janesick V J (1991) Ethnographic Inquiry: Understanding Culture and Experience. In Short E C, ed, Forms of Curriculum Inquiry. US: State University of New York Press.

Keddie N (1971) Classroom Knowledge. In Young M F D, ed, (1971), Knowledge and Control. UK: Collier Macmillan.

Keddie N, ed, (1973) Tinker, tailor... the myth of cultural deprivation. England: Penguin.

Keddie N (1980) Adult education: an ideology of individualism. In Thompson J L, ed, (1981), Adult Education for a Change. London: Hutchinson.

Klassen C (1991) Obstacles to Learning: The Account of Low-education Latin American Adults. Unpublished research report, Ontario, Toronto.

Kritzman L D, ed, (1988) Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture. Interviews and other writings 1977 - 1984. New York: Routledge.

Lankshear C (1993) Adult Literacy in Nicaragua 1979-90. In Freebody P and Welch A R, eds, (1993) Knowledge, Culture and Power: International Perspectives on Literacy as Policy and Practice. London: Falmer Press.

Layder D (1993) New Strategies in Social Research. UK: Polity Press.

Lomnitz L A (1977) Networks and Marginality: life in a Mexican shantytown. New York: Academic Press.

Luke, A (1988) Literacy, Textbooks and Ideology: Postwar Literacy Instruction and the Mythology of Dick and Jane. London: The Falmer Press.

Luttrell W (1989) Working-class Women's Ways of Knowing: Effects of Race, Gender and Class. In Sociology of Education, Vol 62.

Malan L M (1993) Die betekenis van geletterdwording vir Kaapse Afrikaanse volassenes op die platteland. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Pretoria.

Maralack D and Kriel A (1985) "A Streetless Wasteland": A Preliminary Report on Ocean View. Paper prepared for the Carnegie Investigation into Poverty.

Marcus G E (1993) Possibilities for Critical Anthropology: What Comes (Just) after "Post"? Unpublished paper presented at seminar, University of Cape Town.

McMenamin V (1986) Coloured Youth Unemployment in Cape Town. Honours dissertation, University of Cape Town, Economics Department.

Millar C, Raynham S-A and Schaffer A (1991) Breaking the Formal Frame. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Morphet T, Millar C and Prinsloo M (1992) Developmental Strategy in Adult Basic Education. Report of study conducted for the Independent Development Trust.

Muller J (1993) Beyond unkept promises: the micro-methodological challenge in educational policy research. Unpublished paper presented to the Symposium on Methodological Challenges of Interdisciplinary Research in the Social Sciences, Bratislava.

Muller J (1993) Between State and Civil Society: The National Education Policy Investigation. Unpublished paper, presented at the University of Cape Town.

Nasson B (1988) Bitter Harvest: Farm Schooling for Black South Africans. Perspectives in Education, Vol 10, No 1.

National Education Policy Investigation (1992) Adult Basic Education. Cape Town: Oxford University Press/NECC, 1992.

Olivier L (1989) The physical and psychological problems of the peoples of South Africa. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Prinsloo M (1987) Thinking strategies in education: the political limits of Paulo Freire's perspective. In Millar, Raynham and Schaffer (1991) Breaking the Formal Frame. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Prinsloo M, Millar C and Morphet T (1993a) Reading the world of reading and writing: University-based literacy theory and practice in South Africa. Unpublished paper. University of Cape Town.

Prinsloo M, Millar M and Morphet T (1993b) University-based theory and practice in South Africa: Planning the work. Draft revised paper based on paper presented at University-based Adult Educators' Conference, Stellenbosch.

Prinsloo M (1993) Research into the Social Uses of Literacy. Unpublished research proposal. University of Cape Town.

Quigley B A (1990) Hidden Logic: Reproduction and Resistance in Adult Literacy and Adult Basic Education. Adult Education Quarterly., Vol 40, No 2.

Radway J (1987) Reading the Romance. London: Verso.

Ramdas L (1989) Women and literacy: a quest for justice. Prospects, Vol X1X, No 4.

Reder S M (1985) Giving Literacy Away. Unpublished paper prepared for the National Adult Literacy Project, Portland Oregon, US.

Reed-Jones S (1992) Faith in the Reality of Belonging. Paper preseented atthe annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Cincinnati.

Reynolds P (1989) Childhood in Crossroads: Cognition and Society in South Africa. Cape Town: David Philip.

Riley S (1992) The Construction and Contestation over the Person: a Reappraisal of Freire in the Light of the "New Literacy Studies and the Changing Context in South Africa. Unpublished dissertation, University of Cape Town, Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies.

Rockhill K (1987) Gender, Language and the Politics of Literacy. In Street B, ed, Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy. Cambridge Univbeersity Press.

Ross F C (1993) Houses Without Doors: Diffusing Domesticity in Die Bos. Unpublished Masters thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Cape Town.

Schreuders T (1987) The Coloured Community at Simon's Town: A Study in Class, Community and Politics. Honours dissertation, University of Cape Town, Department of Economic History.

Scribner S and Cole M (1981) The Psychology of Literacy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Scully P (1992) Liquor and Labor in the Western Cape, 1870 - 1900. In Crush and Ambler C, eds, Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa. Pietermartizburg: University of Natal Press.

Sheridan A (1980) Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth. London: Tavistock Publications.

Simon, J (1993) Up from illiteracy. Reader's Digest., Volume 143, October 1993.

Simpkins, C (1986) Household Composition and Structure in South Africa, in Burman S and Reynolds P (eds) Growing up in a Divided Society. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Stone G (1972) Identity Among Lower-class Cape Coloureds. In Whisson MG and Van der Merwe HW, eds, Coloured Citizenship in South Africa: Report of the Second Workshop, 1972. Rondebosch: Abe Bailey Institute of Interracial Studies.

Street B (1984) Literacy in Theory and Practice. Cambridge University Press.

Street B (1988) Literacy practices and literacy myths. In Saljo,R (ed), The written world: studies in literate thought and action. Berlin and New York: Springer-Verlag.

Street B and Street J (1991) The Schooling of Literacy. In Barton D and Ivanic R Writing in the Community. London: Sage Pubications.

Street B (1993a) Cross-cultural approaches to literacy. Cambridge University Press.

Street B (1993b) The Implications of the New Literacy Studies for South Africa. Journal of New Library Studies., Vol 9 (2).

Stromquist N (1991) Women's Literacy and the Quest for Empowerment. Speech presented at the seminar on "Reading the Word and the World" organized by Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Oegtgeeest, The Netherlands.

Szwed J F (1981) The Ethnography of Literacy. In Whiteman M F, ed, Writing: The nature, Development and Teaching of Written Communication. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Taylor N, Muller J, Cloete N and Narsing Y (1989) The First and Last Interpreters. Paper presented to the Kenton Conference, Magoebaskloof, SA.

Thomas A M (1989) The social and economic costs of illiteracy. Prospects, Vol X1X, No 4.

Thompson, John B (1984) Studies in the Theory of Ideology. US: University of California Press.

Thompson J L (1980) Adult Education for a Change. London: Hutchinson.

Van der Burgh C (1983) Views of White, Coloured and IndianSouth Africans on Mental Illness and the Mentally Ill. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Van der Ross, R E (1979) Myths and Attitudes: an inside look at the Coloured people. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Vogelman L (1986) Apartheid and Mental Health. Opening address at OASSA National Conference, 1986.

Weedon C (1987) Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Wexler P (1987) Social Analysis of Education. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Whisson M G (1972) The Fairest Cape? Cape Town: South African Institute of Race Relations.

Wiersma W (1991) Research Methods in Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Willis PP (1977) Learning to Labour. UK: Saxon House.

Young M F D, ed, (1971) Knowledge and Control. UK: Collier Macmillan.

Ziegahn L (1992) Learning, Literacy and Participation: Sorting out Priorities. In Adult Education Quarterly, Vol 43, No 1.

NOTE FOR APPENDICES A,B AND C.

Please note: in the following three appendices, a blank space next to a category of information indicates the information was not obtained. "N/A" means that the category is not applicable to that person. A dash (used only for literacy practices) means the person did not engage with written materials in that context.

A question mark means I was not able to find the reason for the specified action.

MARY A

AGE:	57
ORIGINS:	Cape Town, Wynberg, Retreat, Noordhoek.
SCHOOLING:	Std 1
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	Doesn't know if they went to school. Father could "write a little bit, read a little bit", mother not at all.
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Mother a domestic servant, father a builder.
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	N/A (Mary was an adopted, only child)
MARITAL STATUS:	Divorced
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	"Teagirl", Navy
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	Child care, domestic work.
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	Std 5
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Son Std 7, Son Std 8, Daughter Std 7.
RELIGION:	NG Sendingkerk, member of choir and regular churchgoer
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	Wants to write a letter to friends overseas (son of former employer who is now in England and former Ocean View woman)
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	N/A
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
AT WORK	–
SHOPS	Reads prices without help
BANKS	Uses NBS card

CHURCH	Manages hymn and prayer books
READING	Magazines (such as Huisgenoot and You) supplied by literacy teacher
HELPER:	Daughter

KAREL P

AGE:	35
ORIGINS:	Franschhoek, Redhill
SCHOOLING:	Std 2
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	
MARITAL STATUS:	Engaged
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Foreman, cleaning staff, Navy also works as barman and in the canteen and does catering privately in spare time
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	Cleaner
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	N/A
RELIGION:	Full Gospel Church, regular churchgoer
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	"..om iets te bekom in die lewe" (in order to get on in life)
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	Doesn't want others to know he attends. Attends private sessions in the morning during work hours.
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	Has to complete stock sheets and cleaners' leave forms.
SHOPS	Reads prices
BANKS	
CHURCH	Manages hymn and prayer books

READING	Rapport, romance novels
HELPER:	Boss (knows he is attending literacy classes, fellow workers think he is going to computer classes)

ANNE W

AGE:	43
ORIGINS:	Harfied Village, Glencairn
SCHOOLING:	One week of Sub A at the age of 13. Before this Anne was kept at home to look after her younger brother. Only sent to school when her mother stopped working.
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father's occupation unknown. Stepfather a line fisherman. Mother a hotel chambermaid until A was 13.
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Brother went to school, doesn't know how far.
MARITAL STATUS:	Married
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Char
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	Domestic work, child care
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	Std 8
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Blacksmith assistant, dockyards, Navy.
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Son, aged 21, Std 8, has left school. Son, aged 17, Std 7. Son, aged 14, Std 6. Son, aged 11, Std 3. Son, aged 8, Sub B.
RELIGION:	Anglican
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	Wants to read passages in prayer group and to serve on school PTA committee and parents' committee of the Boys Brigade (an Anglican organisation).

REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	Doesn't want people to know she can't read and write (she even hides the fact from her children).
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	
SHOPS	Can read prices without help. Listens to friends discussing supermarket specials and picks up information.
BANKS	–
CHURCH	Has only recently learned to open the page in the right place. Cannot read the text.
LEISURE READING	–
HELPER:	Husband

COLLEEN S

AGE:	38
ORIGINS:	Carnarvon
SCHOOLING:	Std 1
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	Mother: none, could not read or write.
Father:	doesn't know. Died when she was a child.
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Farmworkers
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Twelve children, only four learned to read and write a little (Colleen and a sister at school, two brothers at an adult night school).
MARITAL STATUS:	Married
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Housekeeper
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	Hairdressing, domestic service.
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Unemployed (retrenched from kaolin mine).
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Son, aged 9, Sub B.
RELIGION:	New Apostolic (regular churchgoer)
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	Says she wants to read fluently and to write a letter.
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	Baby became too demanding.
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	Telephone messages (memorises names, writes numbers)
SHOPS	Can sign name, read prices
BANKS	–

CHURCH	Manages to open hymn book at right place
OTHER READING	Recipes (can read quantities, with difficulty)
HELPER:	Husband

ESTHER O

AGE:	31
ORIGINS:	Noordhoek
SCHOOLING:	None
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	None
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father a gardener.
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Sister Std 1. Sister Sub B. Brother Std 4. Brother Std 4. Brother Sub B. Brother Sub B.
MARITAL STATUS:	Single
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Char
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	Domestic work
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	N/A
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	N/A
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	N/A
RELIGION:	NG Sendingkerk
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	Originally just wanted to learn to read and write. Now wants to be Sunday school teacher or literacy teacher (on voluntary basis).
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	N/A
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	Telephone messages
SHOPS	Reads prices
BANKS	–
CHURCH	Manages hymn and prayer books
OTHER READING	Romance novels and popular psychology
HELPER:	Brother with Std 4

DIANA (sister of Esther and Sanetta)

AGE:	40
ORIGINS:	Noordhoek
SCHOOLING:	Std 1
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	None
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father a gardener
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Sister, none. Sister, Sub B. Two brothers, Sub B. Two brothers, Std 4.
MARITAL STATUS:	Unmarried, one child.
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Protective workshop
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	One previous job – ironing.
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	N/A
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	N/A
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Ocean View Training Centre for the Mentally Handicapped.
RELIGION:	NG Sendingkerk (regular churchgoer)
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	?
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	N/A
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	Literacy classwork at Protective Workshop
SHOPS	–
BANKS	–
CHURCH	–
OTHER READING	Literacy classwork at Ocean View Library
HELPER:	Elizabeth O and brother with Std 4

SANETTA (sister of Esther and Diana)

AGE:	33
ORIGINS:	Noordhoek
SCHOOLING:	Sub B
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	None
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father a gardener
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Sister none. Sister Std 1. Two brothers Sub B. Two brothers Std 4.
MARITAL STATUS:	Unmarried
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Protective workshop
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	Only one previous job doing housework, Ocean View.
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	N/A
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	N/A
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	N/A
RELIGION:	NG Sendingkerk (fairly frequent churchgoer)
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	?
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	N/A
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	Literacy classwork at Protective Workshop
SHOPS	–
BANKS	–
CHURCH	–
OTHER READING	Literacy classwork at Ocean View Library
HELPER:	Elizabeth O and brother with Std 4

APPENDIX B: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF SIX LITERACY CLASS RESISTERS

PIETER K

AGE:	44
ORIGINS:	Middelburg, Cape
SCHOOLING:	Std 1
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	None
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father a street cleaner, mother a domestic worker.
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	
MARITAL STATUS:	Married
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Handyman, Navy
PREVIOUS WORK:	Farmworker, builder's "handlanger"
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	Sub B
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Char
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Eleven children including son, 28, no schooling (deceased); son, 21, Std 1 (now in prison awaiting trial); daughter, 18, Std 3 (now out of school and pregnant); son, 12, Std 3; daughter, 9, Std 1; stepson, 25, Std 4 and child in home for mentally handicapped. Four children reared by mother in Middelburg.
RELIGION:	New Apostolic (not a regular churchgoer)
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	N/A
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	Says he didn't know about the class, but literacy teachers say he did. His drinking habits might be a reason.

lITERACY PRACTICES:

WORK	"Papers from Pretoria". Superior helps him with these.
SHOPS	– (Wife does all shopping)
BANKS	–
CHURCH	– (Stands with someone who will open book for him.)
OTHER READING OR WRITING	–

HELPER: Neighbour, uncle.

TOSSIE K

AGE:	48
ORIGINS:	Paarl
SCHOOLING:	Sub B
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	Unknown
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Farmworkers
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	They did go to school but she doesn't know the details.
MARITAL STATUS:	Married
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Char
PREVIOUS WORK:	Housework
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	Std 1
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Handyman
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Eleven children including son, no schooling, who was stabbed to death at the age of 28; son, 21, Std 1, in prison awaiting trial; daughter, 18, Std 3, now out of school and pregnant; son, 12, Std 3; daughter, 9, Std 1; son,25, Std 4; child in home for mentally handicapped; four children reared by mother-in-law in Middelburg.
RELIGION:	New Apostolic (not a regular churchgoer)
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	N/A
REASON FOR RESISTING:	Says she didn't know about it. Her drinking habits and general tiredness at the end of a day are probably a factor.

LITERACY PRACTICES:

WORK	–
SHOPS	– Buys for cash wherever possible. Asks people (whites only) to read prices for her.
BANKS	–
CHURCH	–
OTHER READING AND WRITING	–

HELPER: Her brother

ANNA W

AGE:	31
ORIGINS:	Redhill
SCHOOLING:	Std 1
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	Unknown but Anna says they could "read and write"
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	"Some went to Std 5, some to Std 8"
MARITAL STATUS:	Married
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Unemployed
PREVIOUS WORK:	Egg packer, chicken farm; cleaner, hotel.
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	Std 1
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Painter
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Daughter, 10, Std 4.
RELIGION:	"Handekloppers"
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	N/A
REASON FOR RESISTING:	Did not know about classes in Ocean View. Husband feels it would be dangerous for her to walk there at night.
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	–
SHOPS	Can't read prices. Husband shops for her or she takes her sister's child who is in high school with her to read prices.
BANKS	–
CHURCH	–
OTHER READING OR WRITING	–
HELPER:	Husband, sister's child.

LITERACY PRACTICES

WORK	Forms (dockyard); quotations (painting work). Helped by fellow workers and potential clients.
SHOPS	Has received accounts. Helped by mother or sisters. Can read prices.
BANKS	–
OTHER READING OR WRITING	–

HELPERS: Mother and sisters

OOM PIET S

AGE:	68
ORIGINS:	Clanwilliam, Graafwater, Darling
SCHOOLING:	None
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	None
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Raised by mother, a farm worker, and grandfather, a farmer.
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Four step-siblings, born after his mother married a man from the Kalahari, were sent to school. Remainder were prevented from going to school by their grandfather so they could work on his farm.
MARITAL STATUS:	Widowed. Lives with girlfriend.
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Retired
PREVIOUS WORK:	Farmworker, garage "handlanger", truck driver, cleaner.
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	None (Girlfriend Std 8)
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	N/A (Girlfriend is a fisherwoman)
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	All went to school, can't remember details except that one got Std 9.
RELIGION:	NG Sendingkerk, regular churchgoer and elder in the church.
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	"Dis swaar" (as jy nie kan lees en skryf nie)
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	Eyesight

LITERACY PRACTICES:

WORK	Traffic signs (Could recognise pictures, but couldn't read words, concentrated on signs painted on actual road)
SHOPS	Can read low prices "like R2,50 or R3,50". Asks for help (from people around him in the shop) for other prices. Sometimes takes one of his children of the wife of a friend to help him.
BANKS	–
CHURCH	–
OTHER READING AND WRITING	–

HELPER/S:	Children, girlfriend, friend, anybody he can find (when in a shop).

MOEGAMAT A

AGE: 28

ORIGINS: Retreat, Athlone, Constantia (bush), Ocean View (the family moved repeatedly during his early years, living in make-shift accommodation – an old bus in Athlone, in the bush in Constantia – before his mother left his father and moved with her nine children to a tent in the bush surrounding Ocean View. Eventually they were given a small semi-detached house in an old section of Ocean View, situated near the cemetry and known as Ghost Town.)

SCHOOLING: Went as far as Std 2. He was taken out of school because his father, a Muslim, did not want him to attend a non-Muslim school. When his mother moved to Ocean View, he was sent to Marine Primary. At 15 he felt too old for Std 2 and so he soon left and went to work. He gained experience in plumbing but does not have his "papers" (as the necessary qualifications are called).

PARENTS SCHOOLING: Father Std 8, mother Std 7.

PARENTS' OCCUPATION: Father spent long spells out of work, making money by stealing or begging or simply waiting (believing God would provide). Mother was a factory worker for Reckitt and Colman but was laid off several years ago and hasn't found work since.

SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING: Nine children in the family, several went to high school.

MARITAL STATUS: Unmarried

CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Serving six years' imprisonment in Pollsmoor Prison for possession of stolen goods. Previously served two year sentence for possession of stolen firearm. Is doing plumbing work in prison in the hope he will gain experience and get the papers necessary to start his own business one day. Chose this instead of doing schoolwork.
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE:	Plumbing
SPOUSE'S SCHOOLING:	N/A
SPOUSE'S CURRENT OCCUPATION:	N/a
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING:	Has one child aged 4
RELIGION:	Muslim
REASON FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASS:	N/A
REASON FOR RESISTANCE:	Decided it would be more useful to get plumbing experience and qualifications than a Std 4 which is where he might have fitted into the prison education system. (A prison official later told me that prisoners can do a one year literacy course in prison and thereafter Std 2, Std 4, Std 5, Std 6 and N1, a technical qualification roughly equivalent to Std 8.)
LITERACY PRACTICES:	
WORK	–
SHOPS	Has no difficulty with prices.
BANKS	Keeps a Post Office savings account.
MOSQUE	
LEISURE READING	Comics, westerns, love stories.
OTHER	Writes letters to his family from prison. Improved his reading and writing skills after leaving school

by doing his younger brothers' and sisters' homework.

HELPER:

APPENDIX C: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE LITERACY TEACHERS

commented on the fact that the teachers were not paid for their literacy classes, Carla said:

"... Like we went to this school and I was speaking to the teachers that I knew. And they couldn't believe that we are not being paid for the work here... So I said no, if you are willing to help people then you do it for nothing. They said no, no, it's unbelievable, there must be something in there for you. But no, there's nothing in there."

NAZEEMA A

AGE:	20
ORIGINS:	Ocean View (parents moved from Simonstown in 1968)
SCHOOLING:	Marine Primary Sub A to Std 5 Ocean View High Std 6 to 10 Matriculated 1990
OTHER TRAINING:	Went to Rhodes in 1991 to study social work. She described the institution as "nice but... totally different to school... we all know what an adjustment it is". She said she only obtained two credits so her father refused to send her back. In 1992, Nazeema "attempted UNISA". She also registered for social work but "I wasn't applying myself because I wanted to go back to Rhodes. I was definitely not into studying through UNISA so I didn't do well there". At the time of my interview she was wanting to study to be a travel consultant.
LITERACY TEACHER TRAINING:	No formal training. Learned from Carla and Shahieda .
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father a high school teacher, now retired. Taught at Arsenal School Simonstown until his move to Ocean View. At Ocean View high school he taught Afrikaans until 1982 when he studied further. On his return he was made a Science teacher. Mother a primary school teacher at Marine Primary, about to retire.
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	One sister is a nursing sister, one sister is a staff nurse, brother is a

	qualified jeweller but is not working at present, except that he has a "sort of a boerewors stand at the weekends".
MARITAL STATUS:	Married
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Unemployed at time of our interview. Later took job as receptionist at holiday establishment in Muizenberg.
RELIGION:	Muslim

REASON FOR TEACHING LITERACY CLASS:

"What happened was that this man came to ask my mother if she couldn't teach him to read and write at home. And then he was coming to me with it, twice a week. And Carla knew about it. And I was helping him because she (Nazeema's mother) says seeing as I was at home, I could help him. So I was helping them, and then... they were opening the literacy again, at the beginning of last year. So then she (Carla) asked me if I wouldn't help out."

When I asked Nazeema if there were any other motivations for teaching at the library apart from Carla's request, she replied:

"Well, my general disposition is I like helping people, hence that's why I wanted to do social work. And I know that doing voluntary work, it's very rewarding and, if you can't help people then you know I mean there's no, I can't say that I just decided to do it because, so I mean, it keeps me busy and I like working with people. And I like to learn about, it's not only them learning."

I asked Nazeema if she was interested in making a living out of literacy teaching:

"..look ... what I decided was if I were to get a job I would still like to teach the literacy classes, I'd still like to sort of, be involved in the literacy. I don't think I want to spend my life, devote my life to literacy, but certainly I would still want to continue teaching classes I suppose..."

SHAHIEDA S.

AGE:	27
SCHOOLING:	Marine Primary Sub A to Std 5 Ocean View High Std 6 to 10 Matriculated 1986
OTHER TRAINING:	Wants to do National Diploma in Librarianship through Technikon RSA.
LITERACY TEACHER TRAINING:	One week course Maryland.
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	Father Std 7, mother Std 6
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father recently retired after 35 years as a boilermaker in the Navy. Mother a housewife.
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Brother completed Std 9 then left school. Sister left after Std 8.
MARITAL STATUS:	Unmarried
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Has been working at the library for seven years, 20 hours a week plus overtime until October 1993. Since then fulltime.
OTHER WORK:	Casualed at Shoprite, Fish Hoek, during her Std 9 and 10 years and at Sales House for about a year.
RELIGION:	Muslim.

REASON FOR TEACHING LITERACY CLASS:

"Pat (from NLP) was giving the classes... some days she couldn't make it because she had to travel from far.... And then Pat couldn't come any more, so Jean was doing it. And then, whenever Esther, then there were certain days when Jean couldn't be here, a meeting, or whatever, and then we must turn them down. And it's there where I made up my mind. Because to see Esther coming every time, and they determined, and then turned away, I mean we gonna sort of, they going to lose interest, and I told Jean I think I would like to assist and so on..."

She said there were times at the beginning when she rather dreaded having to teach at night after work but she was not sorry now that she was doing so. She said the teaching had made her feel "better".

"I feel I'm doing something for my community."

ANITA A

AGE:	19
ORIGINS:	Ocean View
SCHOOLING:	Marine Primary, Ocean View, Sub A to Std 5. Ocean View High School, Std 6 to 10. Matriculated 1991.
ADDITIONAL TRAINING:	Basic computer course
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	
MARITAL STATUS:	Unmarried
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Casuals at a ladies' clothing store in Wynberg.
PREVIOUS WORK:	Casualled for two and a half months at Hertex, curtaining suppliers.
RELIGION:	Anglican

REASON FOR TEACHING LITERACY CLASS:

"... I am interested in doing work with people and just helping ... like my grandmother did ... she was my role model" (Her grandmother was chairman of the Mardi Gras, chairman of the Ballroom Committee and also raised A and her cousin because A's mother was working. In her 50's this grandmother trained to become a pre-school teacher. Tragically, she dropped dead in front of her class soon after starting her teaching.)

LIFE HISTORY: OOM PIET SPEELMAN

Piet Speelman[5] is 68 years of age when I meet him and known to his friends as Oom Piet or Oom Pietie. He is the father of ten adult children, the owner of a plot of land and a respected ouderling (elder) in the Ocean View NG Sendingkerk.

But in his youth, he tells me, he was known as Piet Duiwel. In those days he lived in the Clanwilliam district, was a drinker (18 bottles of wine a weekend, he claims), a dagga smoker and a terrifying fist-fighter.

It took a strange kind of conversion experience to make him change his ways. This, and a move to the Cape Peninsula, gave his life new direction and at the height of his working days he was a truck driver for a major Cape Town company that produces asphalt.

That he achieved such a position is all the more remarkable because Oom Piet never went to school and says he cannot read and write words.

He was brought up on his grandfather's farm in the Clanwilliam district and the nearest school was about as far away from his home as Wynberg is from Ocean View. He would have had to board on a weekly basis to attend. His grandfather would not let him go and insisted that he look after cattle instead. Once when he tried to attend school, his grandfather fetched him back. Oom Piet had three brothers who were also kept from school. Later his mother, Klasina Speelman, married a man from the Kalahari and the six children she bore this man (four daughters and two sons) were all sent to school.

Oom Piet says his grandfather, who also could not read or write, came from Scotland where he had run away from home accompanied by a brother. They came to South Africa by ship, as stowaways. Oom Piet traces his grandfather's ownership of a farm called Vaalsyfer in the Clanwilliam district to a story that goes something like this: One day, during the time of the Anglo-Boer war, his grandfather happened to see a group of Boers gathered around on this farm one day, drinking coffee. He fired a shot at them from a nearby hill and hit the coffee cup out of one of the Boer's hands. It gave them all such a fright they fled the farm, never to return again and his grandfather and great-uncle took occupation.

Oom Piet says his grandfather worked and lived on Vaalsyfer for a good deal of his life, producing 17 children, of whom only two were sons. The farm was regarded as his until a neighbouring white farmer declared it belonged to him. Oom Piet says:

"Toe het hulle met die apartheid... die ding so gesmokkel dat daai grond aan hulle behoort." (With apartheid, they manipulated the sitution so that the land belonged to them.)

The white farmer let his grandfather remain on the land but he was required to pay rent. He continued living on Vaalsyfer until this farmer decided he wanted to marry one of Oom Piet's aunts – his grandfather's second-youngest daughter called Rooitjie – despite

[5] Not his real name.

the Immorality Act which was in force at the time. This young woman did not want to marry the farmer and her father did not want her to either. Eventually he decided to leave the farm with his entire family. He moved to another farm called "Bloemfontein", also in the Clanwilliam district, and farmed there until his death. Meanwhile the farmer whose love was not requited, left Vaalsyfer and moved to Vredendal where he died at a young age, having never married. Rooitjie married someone else.

Oom Piet said he left his grandfather's farm with one of his brothers after an incident in which the brother was ordered off the farm by his grandfather because he had refused to grind wheat. Oom Piet said he and this brother had to get up early each morning to grind wheat on a gatskuursteen, a kind of hand mill that consists of two flat, round stones one on top of each other with a handle inserted into the top one. This kind of mill is notorious for the way it chafes one' backside. On this occasion his brother had felt too weak to work at it.

He and his brother went to work for a neighbouring white farmer, a Mr Willem N., who, he says, had practically raised them. He enjoyed a close relationship with N.'s son, Frans, and they each called the other's mother "Ma" (Mother) – provided there were no other whites in earshot.

"Hy noem my ma, Siena, ek het vir sy ma gese, Ma Kotie, maar as daar ander blanke mense is dan sê ek Ounooi." (He called my mother Siena, and I called his mother Ma Kotie but if there were other white people around I would say Ounooi.)

Oom Piet says it was not uncommon for whites in the area at that time to raise coloured children almost as their own, in the way this family raised him. He knew of another boy who was raised in this way. That boy would call the white couple "ma" and "pa" but if other white people came on the scene he would become embarassed and say "baas" and "nooi".

Oom Piet married while on this farm and several of his children were born here. He left the farm at the age of about 30 after an argument with Frans's brother. Old man N. wept bitterly when he and his brother departed. He believed this was because they had actually "carried" the farm ("ons het eintlik die plaas gedra").

Oom Piet's next job was in Vredendal where he worked as a mechanic's "handlanger". He moved to the Fish Hoek area on the advice of a late brother-in-law who was working on a chicken farm there. During one of his trips back to the home country, this man had told Oom Piet: "Ou Piet, daar, daarso is die lewe". (Old Piet, there, there is the life.) Oom Piet was earning only R5 a week at the Vredendal garage at the time. On the chicken farm he earned R35 a week and for his children he was given an extra R13 a week. "At last I could see that I could get ahead."

And so he did. He progressed from the chicken farm to a job with Much Asphalt, which he says is connected to Murray and Roberts and Clifford Harris construction companies. He joined this company after obtaining his driver's licence in 1977. This was a major achievement for him, seeing that he could not read or write. He first tried to obtain a licence in Cape Town but the traffic officials there said they could not give him a licence if he could not read traffic signs. He then approached an official in Fish Hoek. This man

was impressed by the way Oom Piet drove and decided to give him another chance. He gave him a book of traffic rules and three days in which to learn them. Oom Piet then got his children to help him learn the answers by rote. When he retured to the traffic department he was able to answer their questions correctly and was granted a licence. (A document in his possession confirms that he was granted a heavy motor vehicle licence in November 1977.

Oom Piet remained with Much Asphalt for nine and a half years during which time he transported asphalt all over the country and also transported diesel to Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe was then called, when the pipeline from South Africa to that country was blown up. Before he left Cape Town someone drew him a map without any words on it to show him how to negotiate the Johannesburg highways and get onto the correct road to Zimbabwe. He managed it without a hitch.

He said people often marvelled at the way he did this, and also how he could drive around the centre of Cape Town. He had had only one accident and that occurred near Vredendal.

> "People said they could not understand how I could not read words but on the road, I could understand the road signs..."

Oom Piet gave up his job at Much Asphalt because of chronic back pain. After a long trip he would often have to lie flat on his back for two or three days to recover. His last job was with the Council as a cleaner in the toilets in Kommetjie where he said he was required to do just about nothing. He had been retired three years when I met him.

Oom Piet's first wife who died about seven months before I met him, had also never been to school and did not read and write, he said. During their 46-year marriage she did not work outside of the home. During this time Oom Piet acquired 10 children – two were children whom his wife had had by a previous man, the rest were his own. His children were all sent to school. He could not tell me how far they went with their studies. He only knew that his "baby" of 23, who was currently working at Pick 'n Pay as a cleaner, reached Std 9.

I conducted my interviews with Oom Piet in the wooden wendy house which he has a put up on a plot of land on Imhoff's Gift, acquired for R300 in terms of the IDT-supported development scheme there. He is currently living there with a woman called Minnie whom he met about three months after his wife's death.He has plans to build with the help of a son, and has already put down foundations for his house, but has not yet obtained a bond. He still has a flat elsewhere in Ocean View which is occupied by two of his daughters but says he must sleep here every night or the place will be stripped by burglars. The bungalow is tiny and I have to perch on the end of his bed to talk to him but it is spotlessly clean and neat. I find it difficult to imagine Oom Piet as Piet Duiwel.

He assures me, however, that he was once a person who did "all the most dangerous, bad things" and Minnie confirms that he was "so verkeerd, Mevrou, as ek" ("as bad as I am").

His conversion happened while he was living in the Vredendal district with his wife and four children. He was drinking heavily at the time. He would buy only half a pound of coffee and pound of sugar to see him through the week, but for a weekend he would buy 18 bottles of wine and drink them all on his own.

One Sunday night, about eleven o'clock (after a weekend of such drinking) Oom Piet was lying on his bed when he saw a man enter his room. Now this was amazing, he said, because the door was latched in such a way that no person could possibly enter from the outside. This man came and stood next to him, next to the head of the bed and said: "Piet, have you ever met God?" He then disappeared. Oom Piet searched the house for him, waking his pregnant wife in the process, but no one could be found.

He thought he was going to die and something inside him told him to pray so he got down onto his knees and prayed. He stopped drinking after this incident and started to attend church and to "serve the Lord". Shortly after his move to the Cape to work on the chicken farm, he was elected an elder in the NGSendingkerk in Noordhoek.

Oom Piet is still an elder, in the NGSendingkerk in Ocean View, and is often asked by the dominee to pray or to preach on some text from the Bible. He is also a member of a brass band called the New Guiding Star which goes from door to door each festive season, singing hymns on request. His role in this band is to walk ahead and guide the traffic.

Oom Piet today shows no signs of his ignominious past. There are empty liquor bottles in the corner of his bungalow but these are his girlfriend, Minnie's, he tells me, and she confirms this. He does admit, however, to having retained his powerful fists.

"Do you know how strong this man is, Mevrou?" Minnie asks me. "He is 68 but he hammered my boyfriend of 29." ("Weet jy hoe sterk is hierdie man. Hy is 68 en hy het my boyvriend weggeslat van my van 29"). Oom Piet confirms that he threw this young man out of his home after finding him there and that two policemen battled to restrain him during the incident.

Ek het as kind nie die voorreg gehad om Skool toe te gaan nie, dit was nog altyd my begeerte om ook te kan leer, lees en skryf. Dit was vir my baie moeilik omdat ek nie kan gelees het nie. Ek het gevoel soos, iemand wat blind was en ek het gedink dat ek nooit die kans sal kry, om te kan leer nie. Maar hier is ek nou besig om te leer, ek woon ongeletterdheids klasse by, hierby die Biblioteek. Die Juffroue is baie liefde vol en moedig, ons altyd aan om nie moed te verlor nie. Ek geniet die klasse baie en ons Bid ook saam wanneer ons, klaar is met die lesse en ons is soos 'n familie hier. Dit is so wonderlik om te kan lees en Skryf dus soos wanneer 'n mens die son sien skyn na 'n lang tyd se reën. Dit is wat Lees en skryf vir my beteken want 'n mens is nooit te oud om nog te kan leer nie.

My eie hand Skrif.

[illegible]
[illegible]
NOORDER PAARL
[illegible]

Beste ,

Baie dankie vir jou pragtige brief.
Jy skryf baie netjies en ek is saam met
jou baie bly dat jy so mooi kon leer!
Ek verstaan wanneer jy skryf dat dit so
wonderlik is om te kan lees soos die
son skyn na 'n lang tyd se reën.
Ek is seker jy kan ook nou die Bybel lees
en dan kan die Here met jou praat deur
Sy woord. Geniet dit en help ook ander
vir wie dit nog moeilik is.

Vriendelike groete,
Mev. Joan Basson.

JEREMY K

AGE:	22
ORIGINS:	Ocean View (parents moved there from Glencairn in 1968)
SCHOOLING:	Kleinberg Primary Sub A to Std 5 Ocean View High Std 6 to 10 Matriculated 1991
OTHER TRAINING:	Did eight-week "computer literacy course" at the high school.
PARENTS' SCHOOLING:	Mother Std 5, father Std 8
PARENTS' OCCUPATION:	Father a builder in Knysna, mother looks after his sister's twins (in Ocean View).
SIBLINGS' SCHOOLING:	Sister left school at Std 7, brother left at Std 5.
CURRENT OCCUPATION:	Unemployed
PREVIOUS WORK:	Since leaving school, Jeremy's only paid employment has been • a few months labourer's work at Marine Oil (a fish oil refinery). The work involved "filling up bags and drums". • a month as a till packer at OK Bazaaars, Fish Hoek • an Easter weekend "casualling" in the bakery at Pick 'n Pay, Sun Valley
RELIGION:	Is a confirmed Anglican but does not attend church. Spoke to me about the possibility of "turning Moslem".

REASON FOR TEACHING LITERACY CLASS:

"When they (the classes) started I was going out with Shahieda ... Sometimes I had to go fetch her because she was working late.... I used to tell jokes, start a conversation (with the learners). Afterwards three new learners pitched up and they needed somebody to fill in. And one night Shahieda asked me if I am interested and I said yes because I know most of the learners already, they know me, I'd like to help them, I mean I'm doing nothing on this evening."

APPENDIX D: TWO LIFE HISTORIES

LIFE HISTORY: ESTHER O.

(Some of the names in this life history have been changed to protect identities.)

Esther was born in Ocean View on 10 October 1962, the youngest child of Awie and Jacomina O. Her parents had moved to the area from Noordhoek some time before and were living in a "rietdak" house on the farm of Mr Van der Horst whose grave is near the top of the Imhoff's Gift hill in Ocean View. He owned the land which was then called Slangkop.

Esther had four brothers and two sisters. She was never sent to school. She told me this was because her mother had something wrong with her leg and needed her help in the home. Her father, who had earned their living mainly by doing gardening work, died when Esther was about four years old. Her two sisters, Diana and Sanetta, were sent to school but did not progress ("het nie gevorder nie"). Diana went only as far as Standard 1 and Sanetta Sub B. Two of Esther's brothers, Herman and John, fared as badly. The two remaining brothers, Bernie and Cyril, stayed at school until about Standard 4.

At the time of my visit, Cyril, now about 36, was working for the Simonstown Municipality. He was married and lived in a new part of Ocean View. Bernie, 43, was working in Ocean View for the Regional Services Council. He was also married and lived in Mountain View. The rest of the siblings were unmarried and still lived with Esther and her mother in a two-bedroomed flat in the centre of Ocean View. Herman, 38, did gardening work in Kommetjie and John, 41, did some kind of cleaning work (Esther could not describe it more accurately) in Simonstown. Diana, 40, and Sanetta, 32, went each day to the Ocean View Centre for the Mentally and Physically Handicapped where they did handwork, at that time mainly the making of ponytail holders out of elastic and material. Diana had one son, Frederik, aged 23, who lived with her in her mother's flat and also works at the Protective Workshop in the Handicapped Centre.

Neither of Esther's parents went to school and neither could read or write. Jacomina, Esther's mother, told me she had to work from an early age. She could not say whether her own mother had been to school and doubted whether her father, a fisherman, had ever been to school. She did not know if they could read or write. She had never seen them do so.

Esther began working outside of her home at the age of about 13 when a cousin of hers paid her to look after her twin babies while she went out to work in a clothing shop. The twins were eight months old when Esther started this work and she looked after them for about two years. Her first job out of the area was in Kommetjie where she worked for a few months doing housework three days a week. Thereafter she worked in Fish Hoek for seven years for a Mrs F., doing charwork three days a week. In addition she worked one day a week for a young unmarried couple who shared a house in Noordhoek – until they moved to Hout Bay. When Mrs F. moved to Durbanville she found another job for Esther with a Mrs R. At the time of my visits, Esther was working three days a week for Mrs R. and one day a week for a Mrs M., also in Fish Hoek.

Esther made her first attempt to learn to read and write at the age of about 14 or 15. A friend told her that classes were being held at the high school. Pamphlets advertising

them were being handed out. This friend, Lynette, could read a bit and just wanted to improve.

Esther and her friend went to these classes for about six months. When the friend left, Esther did too. About eight people attended the classes and were divided into three groups: those who could not read or write at all (Esther and Lynette were in this class), those in St 1 and those in St 2.

Esther made her next attempt to learn to read and write more than a decade later, when she started attending the literacy class run by a NLP teacher at Kleinberg Primary School. She stayed in this class for two years, moving with it to the Ocean View Library when it could no longer be held in the school. When the librarians took over the classes, Esther continued to attend regularly. She became a highly valued member of the literacy group and was asked last year to give a speech about the literacy classes when the library celebrated its 21st birthday.

It was then that Mrs R. learned for the first time that Esther had never been to school and had not, until recently, been able to read and write. The Ocean View librarian had telephoned Mrs R. to ask permission for Esther to be away from work on the morning of the library's birthday celebration. In the process she had told Mrs R. of Esther's success in the literacy class. Esther said she never told Mrs F. that she could not read or write.

Esther said she hoped to teach others to read and write once she had perfected her own reading and writing. Asked if she planned to study further, she said she had not thought of that but had considered taking up sewing since Mrs M. had given her a beautiful piece of material and she would like to make herself some nice, new clothes.

She said she could crochet – she had crocheted the bedspread covering the bed in the lounge and also the doilies. She could also knit but couldn't make the collar-part of a jersey and couldn't follow a written pattern.

Asked what had motivated her to attend literacy classes, Esther said she just wanted to learn to read and write. Asked what kind of book she wanted to read, she said "any book". She said she took many books from the library now, mainly love stories. She had also taken out a few Christian books but thought she had read most of them by now. She showed me the book she was currently reading: "Seisoen op 'n verlate strand" deur Marzanne le Roux and a book called "Jaloesie" by Dr Paul Hauck. I asked her if she was a jealous person and she said no but she had been told men were jealous and a girlfriend of hers had said her brother was jealous. This had motivated her to take out the book. She had also read another book by this author called "Hou op skuldig voel" that she found interesting.

She was a member of the NG Sendingkerk and remembered the time when she couldn't pick up the words the congregation was singing.
She could open the book at the right place because she had learned a few numbers when she attended classes at the high school.

Before that time she attended confirmation classes.

"I told them I couldn't read or write and they just gave us easier lessons to learn."

One incident seemed to stand out in Esther's memory. On the last Saturday before confirmation all those to be confirmed came together before the church council to answer questions to see if they had learned all they had been required to learn. Those who could read and write were together with those who could not and questions were put to the group. After a particular question there was silence from the group. Esther recalled:

> "I think the holy spirit was with me because I hadn't learned anything (of this) but I said the right word. It was the words that the others who could read and write had learned. And they said to me: "That's right, Elizabeth." I think the Lord gave me the word to say."

Now she could read the Bible and any texts read out in church. She could also follow the hymns in the hymnbook. At the library she was working on the Old Testament bible book of Mrs Basson's.

She said she thought Mrs Basson's books were good because there were many things in them that one could learn that she did not know before and work that she could do at home. She had never met Mrs Basson but had received a letter from her. Mrs Basson had asked for a copy of Esther's speech (which she also wrote out) and wrote to Esther to compliment her on her writing. (Esther showed me the speech and the letter – see attached photocopy)

I asked Esther how her life had changed since she learned to read and write. She said she felt as though she was at last beginning to grow. She felt more adult. She realised now what she had missed. Had it given her confidence? She thought it had given her a bit more confidence.

Asked if she wanted to do another kind of work, Esther said "Not at the moment. I want to continue with this work at the moment."

I asked Esther on more than one occasion if she had a boyfriend. It intrigued me that a young woman as attractive as she was had not married, but she always insisted – laughingly – that she had no boyfriend.

I also tried to find out how she had coped with written words before learning to read and write. Esther laughed when I asked her how she took telephone messages, for example. She said that after her classes at the high school she could take down numbers quite easily and would just ask callers to spell their names.

Did she use a bank or building society? No.

What did she do in shops? Esther said that until about five years ago she went to few shops because she could not read the prices. It was only after she started classes at Kleinberg Primary that she started doing the shopping because now she could read a few prices. She usually shopped on a Friday after work, in Fish Hoek. She said she had to do everything for the family – pay the rent money, the "skuldgeld" and everything like that that had to be seen to.

At home her mother did the cooking but she served the food and kept the house clean. She also did her mother's washing, her brothers' and her own.

She said they had two Bibles in the home – one given to her by the Ocean View librarian and one that belonged to her mother. She did not buy books. Mrs M. had given her books but they were English books and her English wasn't good so she threw them away. She wanted to learn English and had been attending classes at the library on a Tuesday morning with a man from Kommetjie but he wasn't coming any more. He had had an operation on his back. She said she was the only person who had attended those classes and they helped her a lot. She said her employers spoke English. She understood it but could not speak it well.

Although the O.'s did not keep reading materials in their home, apart from the Bibles, they had given pride of place to the children's confirmation certificates. I spent some time looking at Esther's, dated 7 Desember 1980, Cyril's, dated 11 November 1973, Sanetta's dated 30 November 1975 and Diana's also 30 November 1975. All four had been framed and were hanging on the lounge walls. Esther also produced her mother's certificate, dated 17 Oktober 1948, Herman's, dated 20 Oktober 1991, and Frederik's, dated 27 Oktober 1985. These had not been framed. Esther said she was not able to read her certificate at all at the time she obtained it and of the rest of her family, only Cyril and Bernie could read theirs, but they kept these certificates nonetheless. She was not sure whether they still had their birth certificates.