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**The Empathy Imperative**  
**Primary Narratives in South African History Teaching**

By  
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
In the Department of Historical Studies  
Faculty of Humanities  
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Supervisors: Dr. Sean Field and Professor Crain Soudien

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**Declaration**

I declare that this doctoral thesis is my own unaided work, except where indicated. It has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted for any degree at any other university.

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Cape Town, February 2008

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## **Abstract**

National and international literature on intergenerational dialogue presents the sharing of primary narratives as necessary to prevent an atrocity from happening again. International literature on history education and memory studies questions this 'never again' imperative, pointing out that remembrance does not necessarily lead to redemption. The aim of this research is to conduct a similar exercise by investigating the following paradox within South African history education. On the one hand, public spaces such as the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre acknowledge and involve primary witnesses in the education of the younger generations. On the other hand, South African history teachers are expected to know how to bring about change, while their multiple positionings, being both teachers *and* primary witnesses to the Apartheid regime, are neglected.

The thesis sets out to address this paradox through a case study of means by which Grade Nine history teachers and museum facilitators use and construct primary narratives about the Holocaust and Apartheid Forced Removals in classroom and museum interactions with learners. A dialogue with the interrelated fields of oral history, trauma research and memory and narrative studies, as well as positioning theory and pedagogical theories on history education and the mediation of knowledge forms the theoretical basis for the study.

The central finding of the study is that pedagogical interactions are far more complex than the theories suggest. Another, related, finding is that teachers expressed their experiences of Apartheid in various ways, and not always, it seemed, to the benefit of the learners, the teachers or the 'never again' imperative. The study addresses possible reasons for the complexity of teachers' use of primary narratives and other forms of positionings of self and others in history. The study suggests that the different groups of educators involved in South African history education may benefit from interacting with each other through analytic and constructive dialogues; dialogues in which we address the challenges of the 'never again' imperative as well as the epistemological roles we allocate to the different parties involved in history education.

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University of Cape Town

*For Azriel, Aure and Luca*

*“...it seems that what is beautiful  
is the same as what is good ...  
we tend to define as good  
not only what we like,  
but also  
what we should like to have for ourselves ...  
A good is that which stimulates our desire.  
Even when we consider a virtuous deed to be good,  
we should like to have done it ourselves,  
or we determine to do something just as meritorious,  
spurred on by the example of what we consider to be good.  
Other times we describe as good  
something that conforms to some ideal principle,  
but that costs suffering,  
like the glorious death of a hero,  
the devotion of those who treat lepers,  
or those parents who sacrifice their own lives to save their children.  
In such cases we recognise that the thing is good  
but, out of egoism or fear,  
we would not like to find ourselves in a similar situation.  
We recognise this as a good,  
but another person’s good,  
which we look on with a certain detachment,  
albeit with a certain emotion,  
and without being prompted by desire. ...”  
(Umberto Eco, *On beauty*)*

*All things in this creation exist within you,  
and all things in you exist in creation.  
There is no border ...  
(Khalil Gibran, *A treasury*)*

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## The beginning

*“We are what you’re looking at ...”*

This thesis focuses on how South African history Grade Nine teachers and museum facilitators of two Cape Town Museums use primary narratives when teaching the young generation about Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust. Academics and the public perceive the telling of and listening to these narratives crucial *so that the atrocity will never happen again*. While internationally researchers have questioned the ‘never again’ imperative or the “remembering obligation”,<sup>1</sup> a local (South African) exploration of *why* this is problematic has not yet been done. This study attempts to do this by dialoguing the field of oral history, trauma research and narrative research with not only positioning theory but also pedagogical theories on history education and the mediation of knowledge. The importance of this exercise is that it counters the idea that the mere *presence* of primary narratives in a pedagogical interaction would trigger change (‘never again’).

Of special interest to this study is South African teachers’ paradoxical, multiple positionings. Primary witnesses easily position themselves (and are positioned by the general public) *as primary witnesses* in a museum setting such as the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and the District Six Museum. Interestingly, a majority of South African teachers, having experienced Apartheid in different ways, hardly position themselves *as primary witnesses* of this regime during classroom interactions. This study shows how, in the cases where teachers do position themselves as primary witnesses during classroom interactions, they do not necessarily express this through consciously constructed primary narratives. Often their position of primary witness comes to the fore through ‘less organised’ ways of positioning self and others (e.g. the learners, or the learners’ parents) in history, for example single utterances in the form of an address or a regulative comment. The title of the study seems therefore, on first sight, to be misleading. In the light of the multiple, often paradoxical, positionings of the teachers and museum facilitators, the title is meant as an invitation to the academic field to revisit and question above-mentioned ideas and imperatives around the use of primary narratives in history education.

The working assumption of this study is that the intergenerational dialogue - and transition or change - is indeed far more complex than the ‘never again’ imperative suggests. One of the reasons for this is that ‘understanding’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘learning’, are socially constructed, a

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<sup>1</sup> Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”; Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*, especially Simon *et al.*, “Introduction”; Baum, “Never to forget”. See also Simon, *The touch of the past*, especially Simon with Eppert, “Remembering obligation”; Simon, “Innocence without naivete”.

dynamic, changing *performance* in ever-changing presents. I learned this in reflection on a dialogue with one of the museum facilitators. At the time of the interview with KH,<sup>2</sup> an outspoken former resident of District Six, at the end of 2003, I assumed ‘trauma’ had one, universal meaning and thus incorporated it as such in my research question: “how do history teachers and museum facilitators share traumatic memories of Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust in Cape Town high schools and museums?” I also thought that ‘the truth’ about the District Six Museum’s construction of the Forced Removals was merely to be found in the absence of ‘others’, those inhabitants that did not fit the ‘hero’ image of the area’s resistance against the Group Areas Act (1950), those who ‘benefited’ from the Forced Removals. KH strongly resisted this absolute notion of trauma, historical knowledge and positions towards changing regimes, and offered a different perspective or research question:

*We are what you’re looking at when, you are now twenty, when you’re thirty, forty you’re look[ing] at things differently and you relate to it differently. So it’s always in a state of flux. (pause) But think [of] history that is never permanent or perspectives are never permanent. [...] I’m living today in the new S/in the democratic South Africa. I’m living in that context and my behaviour is determined by that context. In the Apartheid years, I lived in the Apartheid context and I was a victim of Apartheid, so naturally I lived in Apartheid and resisted it. But when I was a little boy I waved the flag when the queen came here when I was at school and I hated black people for killing the white settlers. You see? So I lived in the colonial context. (pause) Um, so I can never say how I feel, because as you live through life and as you become enlightened or not enlightened, whatever, you, your attitudes and your perceptions and your strategies change all the time. I like to talk about where one positions oneself and why knowledge is important and why historical knowledge is important.*<sup>3</sup>

While KH offers some absolutes himself (“*naturally*”), the main idea he defends here is that positionings and knowledge are ever-changing and subject to choices made within particular social and cultural settings. Thanks to his persistence in questioning my original research question, but also the interactions with other interviewees, the readings, and maturation that time spent on a project brings with, I shifted my perspective. Rather than static inner/personal ‘things’, traumatic memories are an ever-changing, social reality. They are ever-changing positionings, performances and constructions of primary narratives and less organised positionings of self and others in history.<sup>4</sup> This shift in perspective is not only important because it shifts our gaze towards another research *object*, but also because it acknowledges the role of continuous self-reflection and the marking of the researcher’s positionings or subjectivity in the construction of new contributions to the academic field (see below).

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<sup>2</sup> All names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the subjects, see section on ethics below.

<sup>3</sup> The practical note at the end of this study explains the transcription conventions I use when representing the interviewees’ voices.

<sup>4</sup> I use the verbs ‘to perform’, ‘to position’ and ‘to construct’ interchangeably because of the common idea that their subjects and objects are changing, chosen and negotiated. As I will explore in the next chapter, these verbs however come from different traditions within the academic field.

More specifically, the question that this thesis seeks to address is that of *how teachers and museum facilitators use and construct primary narratives, and 'less organised' forms of positioning self and others in history, when teaching about the Holocaust and the Apartheid Forced Removals*. This question is asked against a paradoxical background: on the one hand, stakeholders such as the Department of Education, academics, but also teachers, museum facilitators and the wider public, perceive primary narratives as being crucial within the 'never again' imperative. On the other hand, history teachers and museum facilitators are expected to know how to bring about change, while their multiple, complex, and often ambiguous and contradictory positionings, being both teachers and primary witnesses to the Apartheid regime, are neglected.

In the remainder of this chapter, I explain why it is important *and fruitful* for the study of history education to question the 'never again' imperative or the "remembering obligation".<sup>5</sup> I do this by sketching a context that relates to academic discussions on regime shifts and idealistic interpretations of change, and the 'absence' of teachers as potentially primary witnesses in official documents of the South African Department of Education. I subsequently explain the set up of the study, its ethics, and the role of the researcher's subjectivity or positionings in the analysis and formulation of answers to the research question. Lastly, I give some glimpses of the findings and explain what each chapter deals with. Note that, in this chapter, I merely touch on important strands that run through the study without fully explaining them here.

### **The why**

Why is this question around the construction of primary narratives and less organised positionings of self and others in history important in a country like South Africa? It has been 14 years since the first democratic elections in South Africa took place, and history is actively rewritten and negotiated while most of the primary witnesses are still alive. The psychologist Bar-On would argue that South Africa is a "quasi-democratic" nation, a society that moved very quickly out of an oppressive regime.<sup>6</sup> In his study *The indescribable and the undiscussable: Reconstructing human discourse after trauma*, he argues that people do not merely change their identities and values as political or social changes occur.<sup>7</sup> The citizens of these quasi-democratic societies have to invent a new discourse, "relearn or reinvent the

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<sup>5</sup> Simon and Eppert, "Remembering obligation". For other references discussing this obligation, see footnote 1, above.

<sup>6</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 4

<sup>7</sup> See also Halbwachs, *On collective memory*, 21-22.

flexibility to doubt and ask questions concerning facts and resume the social responsibility abolished earlier”.<sup>8</sup> Discursive boundaries of what is perceived and accepted as ‘normal’, ‘describable’ and ‘discussable’ are re-inscribed. Bar-On explains that this process of reconstructing identities and discourses in quasi-democratic societies is something not to be taken for granted because it is a complex process which does not always happen, or come about easily.<sup>9</sup>

One can witness the complexity of this process of change and reconstruction in the treatment of primary witnesses and primary narratives in the official documents of the South African Department of Education.<sup>10</sup> The curriculum suggests both Nazi Germany and Apartheid as topics in Grade Nine, in an attempt to address learning outcomes around historical consciousness, citizenship and democracy.<sup>11</sup> From the perspective of an oral historian, the inclusion of these two topics is potentially good for the process of popularising oral history. Both present real opportunities for providing substance to those interested in oral history.<sup>12</sup> The revised curriculum for Grades R-9 indeed encourages the “inclusion of lost voices” in history and encourages teachers to undertake oral history projects and visits to heritage sites.<sup>13</sup> The Department, however, does not make explicit who these “lost voices” (or “silent voices”) are,<sup>14</sup> nor does it make a distinction between primary witnesses and primary narratives or explain what oral history and its various and changing practices (oral history’s historiography) were and are.<sup>15</sup>

For the present study, it is important to point out that ‘the primary witness’ is often treated as ‘the Other’ in education, someone ‘from outside’ who has to be brought in into the teaching and learning process. One easily forgets that the majority of the South African teachers have

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<sup>8</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 255. See also Cohen, *States of denial*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 253-291.

<sup>10</sup> As explained below, I make these observations to sketch a historical and textual *context* to the present study. Future, more in-depth, analyses of the underlying assumptions and discourse of the curriculum are needed but beyond the scope of this particular study.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) social sciences*, 4-6 and 92-93. Important to note is that Grade Nine is the last grade in the South African high schools in which history (taught within the learning area of social sciences) is an obligatory subject for all learners.

<sup>12</sup> For a more in-depth discussion, see Chapter Three.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) social sciences*, 4-6 and 92-93.

<sup>14</sup> The statements seem to suggest that these “lost voices” are the voices of “ordinary people” (5) and of “marginalised communities” (6). Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) social sciences*, 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> In the *Teacher’s guide*, the Department encourages the use of oral history as “an important source for finding out about the past. Learners should be encouraged to interview people”. Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R – 9 (schools) teacher’s guide*, 29 see also 36.

experienced Apartheid first hand in various ways, as teenagers, adults/parents and even as people who may have taught during the tumultuous times of 1976 and the 1980s. Many teachers, moreover, have experience of being trained and socialised into history and history teaching in particular ways during that era. The curriculum seems to bear witness to this ‘forgetting’: It assumes that educators know how to achieve the prescribed outcomes and how to facilitate the learning process and, implicitly, how to bring about change. References to the role and influence of personal positions and experiences of the teacher on the learning process are rare.<sup>16</sup>

This is problematic for socio-historical and pedagogical reasons. Philosophers, narrative researchers and socio-cultural theorists point out the importance of paying attention to the construction of narratives by individuals and groups within a society. Identity, knowing who one is, is in the words of Taylor “to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what not, what has meaning and importance for you and what is trivial and secondary”.<sup>17</sup> We inescapably understand this moral orientation in the form of narratives.<sup>18</sup> In addition, LaCapra states that “critically tested” testimonies of events such as the Holocaust have a social role in the sense that they contribute to “a cognitively and ethically responsible public sphere”.<sup>19</sup> While this argument confirms the above mentioned assumption of an uncomplicated intergenerational transmission of knowledge and values, it points to the importance of paying attention to the subjectivity of mediators, be they teachers or museum facilitators, if we want to understand how people change, reflect on change and how they mediate this to younger generations.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Harley, *et al.*, “‘The real and the ideal’”; Goodson, “The life and work of teachers”; Harley and Wedekind, “Curriculum 2005”; Taylor, “Curriculum 2005”. This is also the case in museum studies, see Kratz and Karp, “Introduction: Museum frictions”, 19-20; Swina, “Museum multicultural education for young learners”, 265; Brown, “Trauma, museums and the future of pedagogy”.

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, *Sources of the self*, 28.

<sup>18</sup> Taylor, *Sources of the self*, 50-52. See also Wertsch, “Specific narratives and schematic narrative templates”, 49-50.

<sup>19</sup> LaCapra, *Writing history*, 91. See also Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 24; Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”. See for a discussion on Holocaust education in post-war Germany and in the U.S.A. Krondorfer, *Remembrance and reconciliation*.

<sup>20</sup> I use the verb ‘to mediate’ in its commonsense meaning, focussing on the role of a primary witness who *brings across* a past experience in the form of a narrative, or a teacher who *connects two generations* by sharing with his/her learners a narrative originally told by a primary witness. Socio-cultural theorists explain the importance of how the active agent and the cultural tool (in this instance a primary narrative) “operate in tandem” in giving *guided assistance*. This contrasts with the idea that narratives (cultural tools) unproblematically ‘mirror’ the past, and that narratives and agents function independently from each other. Wertsch, *Voices of collective remembering*, 6-7. See also Wells, *Dialogic inquiry*, 75-78.

In the field of education, Ellsworth, Jagodzinski, Bruner and others also challenge an idealistic, unproblematic interpretation of change.<sup>21</sup> Ellsworth points out that pedagogy is “a much messier and more inconclusive affair than the vast majority of our educational theories and practices make it out to be”.<sup>22</sup> Educators (and human beings in general) have the desire to forget that “the fancy of understanding” is a prestigious but seductive illusion.<sup>23</sup> Ellsworth explains:

Teaching is not psychoanalysis. But consciously or unconsciously teachers deal nevertheless in repression, denial, ignore-ance, resistance, fear and desire whenever we teach. And in any classroom, the presence of the discourse of the Other can often become painfully and disturbingly evident and ‘disruptive’ to goals such as understanding, empathy, communicative dialogue. This is especially so in classrooms that deal explicitly with histories.<sup>24</sup>

Internationally and locally, stakeholders within Departments of Education, teachers and academics increasingly perceive museums as crucial educational sites that document and symbolise the transition, and facilitate the building of the future - or in Bruner’s words, “the Possible”.<sup>25</sup> Research on and acknowledgment of history classrooms as a site where this transition and the construction of collective memory also takes place, or *might* take place, however is minimal and if present, mostly situated in First World Countries.<sup>26</sup> Most research on history classrooms in South Africa focuses on learners’ perceptions, performance and learning outcomes.<sup>27</sup> Research on transition and the classroom practice of history teachers as

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<sup>21</sup> Ellsworth, *Places of learning*; Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Jagodzinski, *Pedagogical desire*; Bruner, *The culture of education*; Kozulin *et al.*, *Vygotsky’s educational theory in cultural context*; Britzman, “If the story cannot end”.

<sup>22</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 81-82. See also Britzman, “If the story cannot end”; Chang, *Deconstructing communication*; Hooks, *Teaching to transgress*.

<sup>24</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 70. See also Litowitz, “Deconstruction of the zone of proximal development”, 187 -194.

<sup>25</sup> Bruner, *The culture of education*, Chapter Four; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Exhibitionary complexes”, 39-41; Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 5. Contributors to *Museum frictions*, for example Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Witz, point out that museums’ role in political and social transformation goes together, often paradoxically, with the pressure to be agents in economic transformation as well. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Exhibitionary complexes”, 39-41 and Witz, “Transforming museums”, 107-109. For South Africa, see various contributions in Jeppie, *Towards new histories for South Africa*; Witz, “Transforming museums”; Davison, “Museums and the reshaping of memory”; and Davison, “Reading exhibition”; Dominy, “New directions”; Thelen, “memories and monuments”; Ward, “Making history”. See for a more general discussion on the history of museums and their current role in offering a forum on representations of the past: Karp, *et al.*, *Museum frictions*; Boswell and Evans, *Representing the nation*; Dubin, *Displays of power*; Roberts, *From knowledge to narrative*; Spalding, *The poetic museum*; Hodgkin and Radstone, *Contested pasts*; Rowe *et al.*, “Linking little narratives to big ones”.

<sup>26</sup> Stearns *et al.*, “Introduction”, 1-2. See also Bage, *Narrative matters*. See for a practical example of the use of oral history in an American history classroom: Kuhn and McLellan, “Voices of experience”. For a recent discussion of studies on history teaching, see Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*.

<sup>27</sup> See for research on classroom history education for example Bam, *The current relevance of populist history in schools* and Dryden, *Mirror of a nation in transition*. For research on the history syllabus, textbooks and the curriculum see Kros, *Trusting to the process*; Kros, “Telling lies”; Chisholm, “The

“an epistemological and cultural act” is limited.<sup>28</sup> This thesis attempts to address this under-researched area in history education in South Africa.

Many history teachers, however, do instruct their learners to interview their parents, grandparents or neighbours about their experiences during Apartheid. In addition, museums like the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and the District Six Museum actively involve primary witnesses in the development of the exhibitions and in the daily programs offered to schools.<sup>29</sup> This way of using primary witnesses, and the underlying assumption of a transmission of knowledge and values from one to another generation and learning from and transforming of the past (the ‘never again’ imperative or “remembering obligation”<sup>30</sup>), is well known, defended *and simultaneously* questioned by many.<sup>31</sup>

### **The how**

This thesis investigates our paradoxical relationship with this “remembering obligation”<sup>32</sup> by analysing how South African teachers and museum facilitators construct and perform primary narratives of Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust as historical knowledge and how they position themselves and others within these constructions and performances. As mentioned above, teachers and museum facilitators do not necessarily construct and perform

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making of South Africa’s national curriculum statement”; Chisholm, “The history curriculum in the (revised) national curriculum statement”; Bundy, “New nation, new history?”; Siebörger, “History and the emerging nation”; Legassick, “Reflections”. See also contributions to the *International Journal of Historical learning, Teaching and Research*, for example Weldon, “A comparative study”. See for an overview of research focussing on both input and output (learner assessment) Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*; Taylor and Vinjevoold “Teaching and learning in South African schools”. See also Harley and Wedekind, “Curriculum 2005” and Jacklin’s discussion of research on pedagogy in South Africa in Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 4-8.

<sup>28</sup> Stearns *et al.*, “Introduction”, 3. For research in South Africa taking this angle, see Dryden, *Mirror of a nation in transition*; Coombes, *History after Apartheid*; and contributions in Jeppie, *Towards new histories*. See also Naidu and Adonis, *History on their own terms*. The “lack of detail on specific factors in the areas of management and pedagogy which impact on learning” is a challenge in the whole field of education research. Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*, 64-65. See also Harley and Wedekind, “Curriculum 2005” and Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 4-8.

<sup>29</sup> The Cape Town Holocaust Centre also offers programs to adult visitors such as members of the correctional service and teacher students. The nature of the museums is however changing in that over time primary witnesses play a less central role. Rassool addresses the recent challenges of “museumization” in the District Six Museum namely the institutionalisation, professionalisation and the pressures of a business approach. Rassool, “Community museums”, 301-314.

<sup>30</sup> Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”.

<sup>31</sup> I discuss academic perspectives on this obligation in Chapter Two and facilitators’ and teachers’ perspectives respectively in Chapters Four and Six. Academic literature, discussed in this work that directly or indirectly address the remembering obligation are, *inter alia*, Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*; Simon, *The touch of the past*; Simon and Eppert, “The Remembering obligation”; Eppert, “Entertaining history”; Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Ellsworth, *Places of learning*; Felman, “Education and crisis”; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*; LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*; Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*; Ashplant *et al.*, “The politics of war memory and commemoration”; Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*; Bettelheim, *Surviving and other essays*; Husbands, *What is history teaching?*; Harvey, *Perspectives on loss and trauma*.

<sup>32</sup> Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”.

primary narratives. The study therefore includes an analysis of less organised ways of positioning self and others in regards to these historical events.

I choose to focus on the historical events of the Holocaust and the Apartheid Forced Removals for two reasons. Firstly, the South African curriculum, as stated above, mentions both events as history topics for Grade Nine.<sup>33</sup> It is thus likely that a majority of teachers teach one or both of these events in their classrooms.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, and most importantly, many primary narratives of these traumatic events are available in the public realm. Many primary witnesses are still alive, and some of them play a role in museums such as the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. The two museums are arguably accessible to schools because they are situated in the centre of Cape Town. I say ‘arguably’ because many schools, especially those in the disadvantaged areas,<sup>35</sup> do not have the material resources (finances for transport for example) to visit even these museums.

While I do start from the above mentioned assumption around a shared reality of the Holocaust and the Apartheid Forced Removals (as traumatic events affecting social and individual identities and world perceptions), the present study does not aim to engage in a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of a comparison between the two events. The primary reason for using these two historical events lies more in the “witnessing fever”<sup>36</sup> present in the public realm regarding these two events, and in the academic attention given to this “fever”, than in the assumption that the events are comparable, even though many teachers and museum facilitators who took part in the study did compare the events and/or the regimes.<sup>37</sup> In other words, the comparison is on the level of ‘the how’ (the fact that people construct and share primary narratives and less organised positionings of self and other in

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<sup>33</sup> Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) social sciences*, 4-6 and 92-93. While the Holocaust is mentioned explicitly in this document, Apartheid Forced Removals is not. The statement mentions the following related points: “What was Apartheid; how it affected people’s lives; repression and resistance to Apartheid in the 1950s (e.g. the Defiance Campaign, the Freedom Charter and popular culture); repression and the armed struggle in the 1960s; divide and rule: the role of the homelands”. The statement also mentions, under “issues of our time” “dealing with crimes against humanity: Apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission compared with the Holocaust and the Nuremberg Trials” (93).

<sup>34</sup> The teachers I interviewed and observed did not unequivocally perceive the Holocaust as ‘a topic to be taught’ while Apartheid was a generally accepted ‘standard’ topic. Apartheid Forced Removals, however, were not necessarily included in the latter. See also Chapter Three.

<sup>35</sup> In Cape Town, disadvantaged areas are the ‘black’ and ‘coloured’ townships on the Cape Flats, where the Apartheid government dumped ‘the non-whites’.

<sup>36</sup> Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 3-4.

<sup>37</sup> As the curriculum statement seems to suggest, under “issues of our time”: “dealing with crimes against humanity: Apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission compared with the Holocaust and the Nuremberg Trials”. Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) social sciences*, 93.

history regarding traumatic events) rather than on the level of ‘the what’ (the actual historical events).

One indeed needs to be careful in drawing comparisons between the two events. Jews were a minority in Nazi Europe and were, as individuals and as a community, nearly totally eliminated during the Holocaust. ‘Black’ South Africans were a majority and were denied citizenship and literally displaced during Apartheid but gained political power with the transition to democracy in 1994.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, it is legitimate to argue that authoritarian regimes such as Nazism in Germany and Apartheid in South Africa affected and affects people both in the past and in the present. This happened and happens in two intertwined ways: They erased and reshaped individual and collective memories of ‘other’ pasts and presents, particularly those memories that were not compatible with their ideologies.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, in the case of the Holocaust and Apartheid Forced Removals, they took people away from their physical and social place in society. For the survivors the actual loss of this place, and the transformation of identity it brings with it, is traumatic. The social contract is broken: they lost their trust in others and in the safety of the world.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear from the above that this research is qualitative. Qualitative research is an umbrella covering many tools, approaches and theories.<sup>41</sup> I chose to do a small-scale and descriptive study. I explored two distinct research paths in order to answer the research question, namely those of semi-structured oral history interviews and observations of history teachers and museum facilitators.<sup>42</sup> These two paths allow for an analysis of people’s meaning-making processes in both speech and action.<sup>43</sup> It is important to note that these processes include positionings of self and others and that language plays a crucial role herein.

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<sup>38</sup> LaCapra, *Writing history*, 45.

<sup>39</sup> Winter and Sivan, “Setting the framework”, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 5-21; Lacapra, *Writing history*, 45-46. Bar-On defines the social contract as follows at the end of his study: “The social contract can actually be seen as a *meta-dialog* which has evolved between members of society, in which the difficult mixture of acknowledgment and suppression or avoidance has been tested, negotiated, and agreed upon”. Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 288 (Bar-On’s emphasis). See also Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 8-9.

<sup>41</sup> For an overview, see Babbie and Mouton “Qualitative data analysis” and Fielding and Lee, “Approaches to qualitative analysis”.

<sup>42</sup> People often asked me what then the learners’ perceptions and experiences are of these classroom interactions. While it is important and valuable to study the perceptions of these younger generations, being born ‘post-Holocaust’ and ‘post-Apartheid’, this thesis focuses mainly on the constructions of teachers and museum facilitators. However, in two of the schools, where I conducted classroom observations over a longer period of time, I interviewed a few learners and had access to some of their written work.

<sup>43</sup> This study then differs from the majority of educational research that looks both at input and output (learner assessment) as described in Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*.

Practically, I answer the research question on two levels:

(a) I interpret oral history interviews with museum facilitators of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and the District Six Museum as well as with Grade Nine history teachers from different high schools in Cape Town. I conducted the first cycle of interviews in 2003 with seven museum facilitators of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and five facilitators from the District Six Museum. Both museums, established during the first ten years of South Africa's democracy, are extensively visited by school groups and have developed lesson material and specific programs for schools. Two of the Holocaust Centre interviewees are Holocaust survivors and all the District Six Museum interviewees lived in District Six. During 2004, I conducted the second cycle of oral history interviews this time with 26 Grade Nine history teachers from 19 high schools in broader Cape Town. In these oral history interviews, I asked the facilitators and teachers to recount experiences from their own life in accordance with more 'conventional' oral history interviews. In contrast to 'life history' interviews, I also asked facilitators and teachers questions relating to pedagogy, for example, how they perceive the role of history education and museums, the role of primary narratives, and their own role in this mediation.

(b) I interpret the classroom practices of seven Grade Nine history teachers I observed in their respective classes for various lengths of time during 2005. While gaining access to schools and teachers to conduct interviews was challenging, gaining access to teachers' classes and getting permission to observe them was a titanic enterprise to say the least. The access to these teachers and their classes varied according to the rapport with the teacher(s), time pressure, and agreement with other stakeholders such as principals and Heads of Department. Depending on the specific agreement with these respective teachers, I spent from one period in a teacher's class to several periods over a period of five to eight months (see Chapter Three and overview in appendix).

I pay attention to not only *what* the educators say in the interviews and the classroom interactions about historical knowledge and primary narratives of Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust, but also *how* they position themselves and others in these constructions or performances. I construct the thesis with the assistance of theories and methodologies of oral history and broader narrative research, trauma research, history education and Post-Bernsteinian, -Vygotskian and -Lacanian pedagogic research (see Chapter Two). I also use sociological and discourse analytic lenses because the collected data is mainly utterance-

based and I start, as the above researchers do, from the premise that language is recruited, in the words of Gee, “to “pull off” specific social activities and social identities”.<sup>44</sup>

To systematise the analysis based on these different angles and to be able to access the circa 1000 pages of transcriptions and notes, I used the Nvivo computer program.<sup>45</sup> This program allows one to identify, categorise and code similarities and discrepancies in transcriptions and observation notes. I based my coding on grounded theory as developed by Miles and Huberman.<sup>46</sup> An Nvivo analysis is designed “[to integrate] reflection and recorded data”.<sup>47</sup> Coding of the material went hand in hand with a constant (self)reflecting in the accompanying journals,<sup>48</sup> memos and node properties. Richards explains that this process is flexible and dynamic. The coder might organize, link, categorize, question, shape and synthesize at the same time and might prioritise any of these actions at any point during the process.<sup>49</sup> I used the Nvivo program foremost as a tool to code and organise the many pages of data. Writing the final analysis and the chapters, I relied more and more on the summaries and impressions of the coding I had jotted down in the journals. In this, I differ with researchers using the program to look for quantifiable patterns.

More specifically, the coding process consisted of searching for meaningful units based on my readings of literature on history education, primary narratives, and trauma research (see above and Chapter Two). This search seemed to be more straightforward with the transcribed interviews than with the observation notes and transcriptions. I started coding the latter looking specifically for instances where primary narratives enter the interaction. I learned through the process of coding, however, that this is not enough to understand if and how teachers use primary narratives. In other words, I had to analyse the broader context namely how the teacher taught (his/her pedagogy) and what the teacher’s approach to history was. I analyse this broader context with the assistance of Jacklin, Seixas and Ellsworth, who apply theories developed by Bernstein, Vygotsky, Lacan, Foucault, and others to specific pedagogical interactions.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Gee, *An introduction to discourse analysis*, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Richards, *Using Nvivo*.

<sup>46</sup> Miles and Huberman “Early steps in analysis”.

<sup>47</sup> Richards, *Using Nvivo*, 4.

<sup>48</sup> I kept an Nvivo journal, which is part of the software, to reflect on and summarise the coding process and integrate (or ‘bounce off’) my analysis with the theoretical literature described in Chapter Two. In addition, I kept a hand-written Ph.D. journal to reflect on challenging moments in the process of interviewing and observing teachers as well as to jot down general impressions after a day of analysis.

<sup>49</sup> Richards, *Using Nvivo*, 21.

<sup>50</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*; Seixas, “Sweigen! Die Kinder!”; Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*. While I mainly use these three references in order to analyse the broader educational context, I do interact with some basic Bernsteinian *concepts* such as regulative and instructive discourse without

In addition, I needed to understand the use of primary narratives in a pedagogical interaction from an oral history/narrative research perspective instead of solely an educational research perspective. To be able to do this, I studied how the teachers and museum facilitators deliberately positioned themselves and others. Central concepts in reading the educators' constructions and use of primary narratives are Hirsch's "memory" and "postmemory" to deal with, but also nuance, the trans-generational character of the pedagogical interactions.<sup>51</sup> In addition, I explore the re-inscribing and performing of discursive boundaries in these interactions. I do this *in reference* to Bar-On's concepts "the indescribable" and "the undiscussable", without however operationalising these concepts as absolute labels. Instead I employ the concepts "position" and "positioning"<sup>52</sup> (borrowed from the positioning theory<sup>53</sup>), and what Butler and Ellsworth call "performance" and "the mode of address": the interpellation and constitution of subjects.<sup>54</sup>

Bringing together then the pedagogical and narrative angles, I operationalised a triple-layered analysis which focuses on the teacher's or facilitator's "mode of address" which includes his/her mode of pedagogical practice,<sup>55</sup> his/her approach to history<sup>56</sup> and his/her positioning of self and others in history.<sup>57</sup> The latter includes not only identifiable primary narratives but also less organised ways of positioning self and others in history, for example single utterances in the form of an address or a regulative comment.

### **Ethics**

Following the ethical expectations of a qualitative study, I sought permission of the various institutions and individuals involved. The Western Cape Education Department (W.C.E.D.) gave me permission to interview and observe teachers in selected high schools in Cape Town (reference number 20040617-0017). I contacted and sought the cooperation of the schools' principals, Heads of Department and/or the history teachers in writing and telephonically.

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fully applying a Bernsteinian *analysis*, which requires a far more detailed and structured observation and coding. Bernstein, *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*.

<sup>51</sup> Hirsch, "Mourning and postmemory".

<sup>52</sup> Overall, I use the latter term more frequently than "position" because it expresses the dynamic, ever-changing process of *taking positions*.

<sup>53</sup> Harré and van Langenhove, "The dynamics of social episodes". Initially, I looked at M.C.A. (membership categorisation analysis) and positioning theory and chose to use the latter because it gives more freedom to the researcher. M.C.A. requires audiotaped data, which I could not guarantee for all observations. In addition, positioning theory, in my view, resonates well with discourse analysis, theories on performance and Ellsworth's "pedagogical mode of address" (see Chapter Two).

<sup>54</sup> Butler, *Excitable speech*, 2; Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*.

<sup>55</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*.

<sup>56</sup> Seixas, "Sweigen! Die Kinder!"

<sup>57</sup> Harré and van Langenhove, "The dynamics of social episodes".

Each interviewee signed a copyright release contract designed by the Centre for Popular Memory (C.P.M. at U.C.T.) where the interview tapes and transcripts are lodged. In addition, I signed an Ethics Form, which is congruent with the U.C.T. Code for Research involving Human Subjects (lodged at the U.C.T. Graduate School of Education).

In accordance with these agreements, I did my best to guarantee the anonymity of teachers and schools involved. I use initials based on pseudonyms, to protect the identity of the teachers and facilitators, and, in the case of the few 'personalised' learners in two schools, I use pseudonym first names. The museums are recognisable and one private high school, the Jewish independent school, is identifiable by deduction due to its religious identity. I agreed with the school that I would describe the school as a "Jewish independent school" and that, for their perusal, I would provide the teachers BD and GB with drafts of the chapters in which I mention the school and teachers. I provided these drafts also to MD, the third teacher (in another, not-identified school) I had observed over a longer period of time (see Chapters Three and Eight). Similarly, I provided all the museum facilitators involved with drafts of articles based on the interviews with them and, if applicable, with a draft of the chapter on the interactions during GB's visit to the museums. The other (not identifiable) teachers did not get access to the researcher's observation notes, interview transcriptions or drafts. As with the teachers, I signed a C.P.M. interview contract with the facilitators of both museums. The facilitators of the District Six Museum did not wish to remain anonymous while the facilitators of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre did. To be as consistent as possible in my approach, however, I used pseudonyms for everybody.

In addition, I sought intercoder reliability of a selection of the interviews and a selection of the classroom observations. The Centre for Popular Memory (U.C.T.) archived the interviews with the museum facilitators, the teachers and a selection of learners from two schools. The tapes, transcriptions and observations notes of the classroom interactions are in the researcher's private possession.

### **Subjectivity and approaches to history**

In the beginning of this chapter, I already hinted at the importance of continuous self-reflection and the marking of the researcher's subjectivity in the construction of new academic contributions. The researcher's subjectivity involves his/her positionings in relationship to both the informants and the wider academic field. It is clear from the above that I follow traditions within the academic field that perceive 'reality', 'knowledge' and 'truth' as multiple, fluid, indirect, fragmented, social constructions. This perception entails a specific interpretation of the position and role of the researcher and his/her subjects. It

demands a self-reflective interpretation of the interview and observation space as a dialogue in which both sides observe each other, create and recreate expectations and assumptions.<sup>58</sup> In the era of ‘post’-theories, one perceives subjectivity and self-scrutiny as part of rigorous, academic work.<sup>59</sup> In Portelli’s words:

By ‘subjectivity’ then, I do not mean the abolition of controls, nor the unrestrained preference, convenience or whim of the researcher. I mean the study of cultural forms and processes by which individuals express their sense of themselves in history.<sup>60</sup>

Researchers who use subjectivity in this way draw, to an extent, upon psychoanalysis because of the shared interest “in exploring implicit meanings”.<sup>61</sup> While it is impossible to uncover these implicit meanings fully, it is essential in a study of this kind to acknowledge their presence in the relationship between researcher and informants. As Roper argues, an oral history interview (and, I would add, an ethnographic observation) is not simply a narrative, but rather a *relationship* that produces *situational* knowledge and various emotional responses informed by past experiences.<sup>62</sup> In this regard, it is important to signal that I am (labelling myself and being labelled by others as) a non-South African, non-Jewish (though often thought to be Jewish by several informants and readers), ‘white’, educated, female and relatively young historian and teacher when compared to the teachers and museum facilitators I interviewed and observed. This dynamic, ever-changing basket of labels sometimes played to my advantage, at other times, it did not, depending on how both parties, consciously and unconsciously, forwarded and/or neglected, *included* and/or *excluded*, parts of one’s own and the other’s (assumed) “identity kit”.<sup>63</sup> The interview and observation relationship was often asymmetrical due to the historical and political power given to ‘whites’ and ‘educated people’. In addition, my ‘being foreign’ brought with it both liberties and constraints because subjects perceived me as ‘not being implicated in Apartheid’.

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<sup>58</sup> Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories*; Portelli, *The battle of Valle Giulia*; van Langenhove and Harré, “Introducing positioning theory”.

<sup>59</sup> Seixas, “Sweigen! Die Kinder!”, 30.

<sup>60</sup> Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, ix.

<sup>61</sup> Hunt, *Psychoanalytic aspects of fieldwork*, 10. Hunt gives the history of the discussion in social sciences on the role of subjectivity in fieldwork. See also Yow, ““Do I like them too much?””. See for oral historians ‘using’ psychoanalysis (looking at intrapsychic conflict and the unconscious): Roper, “Analysing the analysed” who warns against the dangers of exporting psychoanalytic concepts and methods from a clinical setting but argues that psychoanalytic theory provides insights into the *relationship* and subjectivities played out in an oral history interview. See also Jones, “Distressing histories and unhappy interviewing”; Figlio, “Oral history and the unconscious” and Field, “Beyond ‘healing’”. The latter refers to Ian Craib explaining psychoanalysis as a ‘sensitising theory’ for oral historians (34 and 42, footnote 45). An example of an oral historian applying psychoanalytic concepts such as ‘desire’ without indicating and analysing the interdisciplinary borrowing is Portelli in his study *The death of Luigi Trastulli* for example in chapter six “Uchronic dreams: Working-class memory and possible worlds”, 99-116.

<sup>62</sup> Roper talks here in terms of transference and counter-transference. Roper, “Analysing the analysed”, 20-21.

<sup>63</sup> Gee, *Social linguistics and literacies*, 65-67.

On a larger scale, the interdisciplinary character of the thesis, being positioned somewhere in-between the fields of historical studies, education, trauma research and museum studies, challenges theories and conventions in these various though related fields. While the study is interdisciplinary, the researcher writes as a historian who investigates, and is involved in, history education. This is different to, for example, an educator critically analysing the South African curriculum's bearing on history teachers' pedagogy in actual classrooms. In order to provide a historical and textual context, I do engage in some preliminary analysis of the South African curriculum as presented in the South African Department of Education's official documents (see above and Chapters Three, Six and Nine). Given that history teachers' (and museum facilitators') practice is my primary focus, an in-depth analysis of the underlying assumptions and discourse of the curriculum is beyond the scope of this particular study.<sup>64</sup> South African researchers have documented the historical changes underlying the curriculum and its fruits critically and in detail.<sup>65</sup> The contribution of the present study lies in bringing together different academic fields in order to rekindle the discussion around the role of primary witnesses and the use and construction of primary narratives, and less organised positionings of self and others in history, within history education.

The researcher's positionings in relation to the informants and the academic field, however, intertwine much more than the above paragraphs suggest. Simon and Eppert explain that the historian has to attend to a "double attentiveness" of discipline-specific judgment and apprenticeship in witnessing someone's performance of an experience.<sup>66</sup> This "double attentiveness" engages with the researcher's multiple positionings as much as it engages with the subjects' multiple positionings. The seemingly uncomfortable interaction with MP, one of the primary witnesses of the Holocaust involved in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, exemplifies this (see also Chapter Three). After having interviewed her on her experiences of

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<sup>64</sup> For an introduction to the challenging position teachers are in, see Modiba, "South African black teachers' perceptions about their practice"; Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*; Taylor and Vinjevold "Teaching and learning in South African schools"; Fleisch, *Managing educational change*; Harley and Wedekind, "Curriculum 2005"; Chisholm, *et al.*, *South African education policy review*. I support the idea that teachers' knowledge of and training in the various disciplines and in the curriculum does not have a straightforward, linear, relationship with their pedagogical practices in actual classrooms (see Chapter Three). See Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 205-206; Kros, *Trusting to the process*, 4-6. This discrepancy seems not to be unique to South Africa. See studies on history education in the U.S.A. and the U.K. Ravitch, "The educational backgrounds of history teachers" and Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 246-260.

<sup>65</sup> For research on the history of the construction of the present curriculum, the initial downgrading of history and its subsequent integration into the learning area of social sciences, see Bundy, "New nation, new history?"; Chisholm, "The making of South Africa's national curriculum statement"; Chisholm, "The history curriculum in the (revised) national curriculum statement"; Kros, *Trusting to the process*; Kros, "Telling lies"; Legassick, "Reflections"; Siebörger, "History and the emerging nation".

<sup>66</sup> Simon and Eppert, "The remembering obligation", 179-182. See also Simon with Rosenberg, "Beyond the logic of emblemization", 85.

the Holocaust and her involvement in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, I found it difficult, *as a historian and educator*, to make any discipline-specific judgment of her testimony. This is largely due to the traumatic character of her experiences, but also to the specific dynamics of intergenerational dialogue ('How can I critically analyse her testimony, given I am not a primary witness? I have not been there!'). It seemed easier to be, *as a person*, an apprentice in witnessing the performance of her experience (I had had some experience listening to my grandfather who hid from the Nazis during WWII, not because he was Jewish (he was not) but because of his political orientation). I agree with academics who argue that the discomfort that comes with "double attentiveness" is not something deplorable (a common first reaction) but rather something rewarding.<sup>67</sup> More specifically, while especially secondary witness facilitators of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre were critical of my analysis, I received - to my surprise - a call from MP in which she thanked me and pointed out the importance of this kind of work. Moreover, the critical feedback of the secondary witness facilitators assisted me in maturing my analysis. Through the interaction I realised how the investment in 'truth' and 'facts', and especially the underlying epistemological roles that go with this kind of positioning ('you have to accept what I say, because this is the truth; I am the authority!') is shared across the different educational institutions - that is, including universities, including myself (see Chapter Nine).

For the reader this marking of the informants' modes of address and the researcher's positionings in relation to the informants and the academic field might come across as 'unsavoury' or 'saying the obvious'. While an easy way out might have been to avoid talking about this 'noise' in the observation scene, I argue that a reflection on the challenge of responding as a professional and a personal self contributes to a deeper understanding of how educators position self and others in history (see also Chapter Three). More specifically, there are two discussions taking place in the academic field that are intrinsically connected to this kind of marking: the discussion amongst historians on approaches to history and the discussion amongst historians and educators on empathy and its role in history education and in the historical analysis of primary narratives.

While I turn to the discussion amongst historians on approaches to history in more detail in Chapter Two, it suffices to mention here that I follow Peter Seixas' distinction between three kinds of approaches to history.<sup>68</sup> I call these three approaches 'factual', 'disciplinary' and 'positioned'. A 'factual' approach to history focuses mainly on 'facts' and 'the truth'. A 'disciplinary' approach to history is primarily concerned with the validity of historical

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<sup>67</sup> See Simon with Rosenberg, "Beyond the logic of emblemization" and Simon, *The touch of the past*.

<sup>68</sup> Seixas, "Sweigen!"

accounts. Lastly, a ‘positioned’ approach to history pays attention to the present construction of different versions of history, which serve present day purposes. As is clear from the above discussion on *ways* in which teachers and museum facilitators *talk and teach* about the Holocaust and Apartheid Forced Removals, the study is mainly informed by a positioned approach to history. I say ‘mainly’ because the study does make discipline-specific judgments in relation to validity and truth while engaging, at the same time, with an awareness of the present construction of different versions of history. For example, in my discussion of the interaction with MP, I was concerned about how I could, as a secondary witness, talk about events I did not experience, implicitly adhering to the ideas that there is ‘one’, ‘right’, ‘true’ version of the past and that there are ‘more valid’ historical accounts (in this context those of primary witnesses). Historians involved in the discussion argue that the three approaches to history are ‘progressive’ in the sense that they form “a hierarchy in terms of cognitive and moral complexity”.<sup>69</sup> The findings of the present study, however, suggest that the ‘more complex’ approaches *include* and transcend the ‘less complex’ approaches: a disciplinary approach to history seems to include and transcend a factual approach to history, while a positioned approach seems to include and transcend the two other approaches to history. These findings confirm Seixas’ comment that it is dangerous to present the relationship between the approaches as “an overly linear and one-dimensional model of progress”.<sup>70</sup>

### **The empathy imperative**

The discussion amongst historians and educators on empathy and its role in history education and in the historical analysis of primary narratives, is similarly important especially when one (primarily) follows a positioned approach to history. Understanding and practising a specific form of empathy does not only play a role in critically questioning my (professional and personal) secondary witness-position in relation to, for example, a South African history teacher who has experienced Apartheid in particular ways (‘How can I critically analyse his/her testimony, given I am not a primary witness?’). It also plays, as I explain in this study, a role in formulating answers to the questions raised in this study regarding the ‘never again’ imperative.

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<sup>69</sup> Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 22-23. I take the liberty here to apply Seixas’ reflection on Rüsen’s four types of historical consciousness to Seixas’ three approaches to history as described in his “Sweigen!”.

<sup>70</sup> Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 22-23. See for a more in-depth discussion, Chapter Two and Chapters Seven to Nine. One could argue that this ‘progress’ in approaches to history might partly mirror historiographical changes in the academic field of historical studies. Peter Seixas, however, talks solely within the context of school history and does not discuss if and how approaches to history in the public realm relate to the historiography of academic history.

In 'reviving' the concept of empathy, I do challenge studies on history education, such as that by Husbands and by Barton and Levstik, which suggest that there is no consensus on the meaning and practice of empathy and that, for that reason, history teachers should rather not engage with it.<sup>71</sup> These studies, I argue, are throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Empathy is difficult to understand, define and practise, but that is not a reason to do away with it. A historical and contextual reason is that South Africa has experienced a regime shift and, *as a nation*, has recently practised listening to primary narratives through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The fact that this process has been critically analysed is due to the character of academic work and civic response-ability in a democratic society; it does not undo the recognition and growing awareness, both nationally and internationally, of the importance *and* challenge of listening to different, often painful, narratives and perspectives in order to build or rebuild a nation or community.<sup>72</sup> As Simon explains in another context, the belief that remembrance leads to redemption can be dangerous, but this potential danger does not release us from the obligations of remembrance.<sup>73</sup>

A related reason for considering the meaning and practice of empathy in history education is that historical work on trauma, especially in the context of the Holocaust, and educational studies on pedagogy and the discourse of learning and teaching nuance in important ways the ease with which the terms 'empathy', 'sympathy' and 'identification' are conflated in daily language. LaCapra and others explain that while 'sympathy' has connotations of pity and condescension, 'identification' is only a part of 'empathy'.<sup>74</sup> Practising empathy merely as identification (conflation of self and other), through for example 'putting oneself in the shoes

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<sup>71</sup> A more dated work by Husbands states that there is no consensus on the meaning and practice of empathy in U.K. governmental publications and studies on the teaching of history. Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 67-68. In a more recent publication, Barton and Levstik give an overview of interpretations of 'empathy' amongst history teachers in the U.K. and the U.S.A. They propose the (seemingly consensual) definition of empathy as involving two separate skills namely "perspective recognition" and "care" and state that they agree "with those who prefer to drop the term altogether and replace it with something more focused" because "[p]erceptions have become so hopelessly muddled". Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 207-208 and 241. See also how the Holocaust survivor Breznitz defines empathy as "emotional" and "simply identification with the characters", contrasting it with "reflection" and "food for thought". Breznitz, "The advantages of delay", 47-48. For a study of teachers' interpretations of 'empathy', see Cunningham, "Empathy without illusions".

<sup>72</sup> See, *inter alia*, Naidu and Adonis, *History on their own terms*; Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid*; Jeppie, *Towards new histories for South Africa*; Van Der Merwe and Wolfswinkel, *Telling wounds. Narrative, Trauma & Memory*; Gibson and MacDonald, "Truth-yes, reconciliation-maybe"; Posel, "The T.R.C. Report".

<sup>73</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 1-2. See also LaCapra, *Writing history*, 39 and 98-99.

<sup>74</sup> LaCapra advocates for not using the term 'sympathy' because of its connotations with pity, condescension and patronising from the 'superior' position of the sympathiser, and its commodification through its use in greeting cards "and other relatively affectless or evacuated modes of expressing sorrow or fellow feeling". LaCapra, *Writing history*, 38. See also Barton and Levstik who define both terms as follows: "Empathy involves imagining the thoughts and feelings of other people from their own perspectives, whereas sympathy involves imagining them as if those thoughts and feelings were our own". Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 206.

of the primary witness' might, as Smith explains, foreclose remembering that one does forget and imply the uncritical acceptance of what the primary witness conveys.<sup>75</sup> A possible reason for this is that practices of identification, as Eppert explains, secure fantasies of heroism and do not invite self-evaluation and an encounter with 'the other'.<sup>76</sup>

So what is empathy then according to these academics? Empathy is not identification, though it might contain moments of identification. It is an appreciation through mental visualisation of the very place another person is in.<sup>77</sup> The latter is crucial though difficult to grasp. To foreground this aspect of the meaning and practice of empathy, LaCapra talks about "empathic unsettlement", a practice "in which emotional response comes with respect for the other and the realization that the experience of the other is not one's own".<sup>78</sup> This "empathic unsettlement" presents "remembrance as a difficult return" instead of merely adhering to the redemptive myth that the future will be better if one remembers.<sup>79</sup> In other words, it acknowledges but also challenges, and moves beyond, the illusion of unproblematic identification, healing and closure in redemptive narratives.<sup>80</sup>

Rephrasing this in terms of approaches to history, "empathic unsettlement" acknowledges our adherence to 'facts' and 'the one true past' within collective memory. At the same time, it tests this adherence by bringing into the picture our fragmented, ever-changing present-day purposes of creating narratives about the past and the people who have experienced that past and the restrictions we have in creating these narratives (the other person but also the past always remain to an extent 'ungraspable'). As I explain in Chapter Two, LaCapra's "empathic unsettlement" might be perceived as part of Ellsworth's "analytic dialogue", Bar-On's "constructive dialog", Nystrand's "dialogic interaction" and Simon's interpretation of "gringostroika".<sup>81</sup> This kind of dialogue (from now on 'analytic, constructive dialogue')

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<sup>75</sup> Smith, "The trajectory of memory", 447. See also LaCapra, *Writing history* and Jagodzinski, *Pedagogical desire*.

<sup>76</sup> Eppert, "Entertaining history".

<sup>77</sup> LaCapra, *Writing history*, 27 and 211-213; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 17 and 19; Field, "Beyond 'healing'", 37-39; Field, Personal communication, July 2006.

<sup>78</sup> LaCapra, *Writing history*, 40.

<sup>79</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 102. See also LaCapra's analysis of redemptive narratives. LaCapra, *Writing history*, 153-158. See also Eppert, "Entertaining history"; Britzman, "If the story cannot end"; Baum, "Never to forget"; Colvin, "'Brothers and sisters'".

<sup>80</sup> See LaCapra, *Writing history*, and Hartman, *The longest shadow*, especially his "Introduction: On closure", 1-14. See also Hartman, "Introduction: Darkness visible"; Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 108-110; Field, "Beyond 'healing'"; Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 14-15. Note that this interpretation differs with that of Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*. The latter do not engage with the complexity of 'empathy' (involving conflict, estrangement and uncanniness) in the way LaCapra and others do.

<sup>81</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*; Nystrand, "Dialogic instruction"; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 17-21.

invites us to *analyse* and consciously reflect on (the interrelatedness of) self and the world, and our desire for *both* closure (historical certainty, emblemization and identification) and openness (fragmentation, otherness).<sup>82</sup> In this kind of dialogue, ‘the Other’ is acknowledged as being located on several different levels: as much as ‘the Other’ is part of the world outside the self, the self, within its own being, also has unknowable or unconscious characteristics, which one does not always want to, or is able to, address.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, this kind of dialogue is *constructive* in its recognition of and commitment to “the ethical relationship between self and others in the narratives we tell [and listen to]”.<sup>84</sup>

It is with this interpretation and practice of empathy that I embark on telling the story of the present study. More specifically, I work with the idea that as researchers and as educators, we might need to interact with not only the complexities of the ‘never again’ imperative, but also with the complexities of what I call ‘the empathy imperative’. The empathy imperative concerns *a sensibility to engage simultaneously with multiple positionings of self and other in history*. I interpret this as nuancing an unquestioned conflation of self and other (a common practice amongst the observed teachers) on three levels: (1) an empathic (unsettling) and *historical* differentiation between generations, between the self and the Generational Other, (2) an empathic (unsettling) differentiation between the self and the ‘racial’/social... Other, and, (3) an empathic (unsettling) differentiation and acknowledging of the Other *within* oneself (see Chapter Nine).

The academic contribution this study aims to achieve relates also to broadening our analysis of the epistemological role of the history educator beyond ways in which the educator positions self and others in history, for example in the form of primary narratives or less organised forms such as regulative comments. In order to understand how and why educators position self and others in history in particular ways, - as already briefly mentioned above - we need to analyse the educator’s modes of pedagogical practice and approaches to history. In Chapter Two, I explain how the educator’s modes of pedagogical practice, approaches to history, and positionings of self and others in history (e.g. the use and construction of primary narratives) relate to each other.

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<sup>82</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 33 and 77. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*; Friedlander, “Trauma, memory, and transference”; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 218-219.

<sup>83</sup> See Levi, *The drowned and the saved*; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 256 and 265; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 168-169 and 218-219; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 129 and 133 *passim*; Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 109; Wertsch, *Mind as action*, 116-117.

<sup>84</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 23.

The academic contribution of this study therefore moves beyond merely questioning an unproblematised notion of change, as it is often used within the ‘never again’ imperative. Questioning an unproblematised notion of change, however, is not the same as questioning the possibility of change. Rather, this study suggests (in support of research already undertaken by academics like Simon) that the ways in which we might achieve change is not necessarily (or not easily) through *uncritically* following the ‘never again’ imperative.

### **The road on paper**

Even though I attend to theoretical (and ethical) issues throughout the chapters, I first construct, in Chapter Two, a theoretical background to my analysis of both interview and classroom interactions. Crucial in this theoretical background is a discussion amongst academics regarding the ‘never again’ imperative and the construction of an ‘ideal’ (intergenerational) dialogue that would enhance change. Chapter Two also discusses in more detail theories on teachers’ approaches to history and modes of pedagogical practice, in order to analyse the broader pedagogical setting in which teachers construct primary narratives. Having sketched a theoretical context, I then introduce, in Chapter Three, the educators I met in the museums and schools and the methodological and analytical challenges of these encounters.

In Chapters Four and Six, I construct a reading of how the people that are central to this research, namely the museum facilitators and teachers, construct primary narratives of Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust as historical knowledge in the interviews I conducted with them. This also entails a reading of how these educators position themselves and others in these constructions and in less organised forms of positioning self and others in history. In the analysis of the interviews with the museum facilitators (Chapter Four), I focus on the intergenerational dialogue because of the specific positioning by the facilitators, namely as primary witnesses who task themselves to talk to the next generation. I employ the above-mentioned concepts of ‘memory’ and ‘postmemory’, ‘the indescribable’ and ‘the undiscussable’, ‘positioning’, and ‘mode of address’ to describe their sense-making practices of the dialogue. In the analysis of the interviews with the teachers (Chapters Six), I use a slightly different entrance point by emphasising the concepts related to the different approaches to history education. The reason for this is that the majority of teachers, despite having lived through the era of Apartheid, still did not perceive ‘being a primary witness’ as a vital part of their teacher-identity. The teachers seemed to be more comfortable with, or even seemed to expect, that their teacher-identity (or subject position) was held as more important and relevant to the interaction with the researcher than their own primary experiences.

As an intermezzo between the above discussed chapters, I present in Chapter Five an interpretation of the visit one teacher and her learners paid to the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. This teacher was the only teacher out of the seven observed teachers that visited the museums and allowed me to observe this process. Placing this analysis anachronistically before the analysis of the classroom observations, allows me to first present the interviews and observations of museum facilitators and only then those of history teachers. It also allows me to highlight the theoretical challenges of analysing museum interactions and the role of primary narratives herein. While my main concern in this study focuses on how educators use primary narratives in the *formal* setting of a classroom, it is crucial to study how educators use these kinds of narratives in the *informal* setting of museums, which place primary narratives in a central position in their design and mission.

Chapters Seven and Eight present my interpretation of the modes of address of seven Grade Nine history teachers I observed in the course of 2005. I do this by analysing their modes of pedagogical practice, their approaches to history and their (deliberate) positionings of self and others in history, the latter often but not always expressed in the form of primary narratives. I distinguish between my interpretations of teachers' practice according to my degree of access to their classrooms. I allocate Chapters Seven and Eight respectively to the teachers I could observe over a short period of time (one period to three days) and those I could observe over a longer period of time (four days to fifteen days spread out over several months). While this distinction is partly arbitrary, it reflects the level of cooperation of the teachers involved. The latter influenced my access to their classrooms, and, crucially, my analysis. I address this in more detail in the related chapters as well as in Chapter Three.

Lastly, in Chapter Nine, I summarise the findings of this study, and formulate suggestions for future research and interventions. The central finding of this study is that pedagogical interactions are far more complex than the theories such as the ones developed by Seixas and Jacklin and by academics working on the 'ideal' intergenerational dialogue suggest. Teachers' approaches to history and modes of pedagogical practice are not one-dimensional and straightforward, and the 'more complex' approaches and modes (as the theories do suggest) include and transcend the other approaches and modes. However, a teacher's ability to use multiple approaches to history within 'more complex' modes of pedagogical practice might not necessarily aid the use of primary narratives to facilitate constructive and analytic dialogues between a teacher and the next generation. I suggest that the reason for this is that educators *across the wide spectrum of institutions* (not only high schools) share a similarly deep yet differing investment in not only the ideal of nation-building, but also the epistemological roles, underlying a factual approach to history. These epistemological roles,

placing the teacher in an 'authoritative' position and the learners in an 'accepting and reproducing' position, might impede the ideal of changing for the better the nation, the learners, but also ourselves. Another, related, finding is that teachers expressed their experiences of Apartheid in various ways, and not always, it seemed, to the benefit of the learners, the teachers or the 'never again' imperative. While not all teachers constructed clearly distinguishable primary narratives, they did position themselves and the learners *in history* in the form of, for example, addresses and regulative comments. Most teachers, across the spectrum of schools, backgrounds and education, conflated generations within their respective inner (social and 'racial') 'we' groups, and learners reacted on this in different, seemingly paradoxical ways. In my conclusion, I argue that the different groups of educators involved in South African history education may benefit from interacting with each other through analytic and constructive dialogues; dialogues in which we address the complexities of the 'never again' imperative and the empathy imperative as well as the epistemological roles we allocate to the different parties involved in history education.

Let me now turn to Chapter Two, which situates this study as talking interdisciplinarily from, and to, the fields of oral history, trauma research, memory and narrative studies, as well as positioning theory and pedagogical theories on history education and the mediation of knowledge.

## Chapter Two

### Theoretical literature review

*I think that the repeated failures of education, as a field of study, to come up with definitive solutions to its own problems is what saves it from being perverse.<sup>1</sup>*

As mentioned in Chapter One, research on and acknowledgment of the history classroom as a site where “an epistemological and cultural act”<sup>2</sup> and an intergenerational dialogue takes place, or *might* take place, is minimal in present day South Africa.<sup>3</sup> While most research focuses on the intended curriculum, learning outcomes, learners’ perceptions and performance, the paradoxical, multiple positionings of the teacher (*beyond* his/her professional identity) is largely left unexplored.<sup>4</sup> What happens when a history teacher, having experienced Apartheid, interacts with a younger, post-Apartheid generation about Apartheid in a pedagogical setting? What happens when the teacher in this context shares his/her or another person’s primary narrative? Does this scenario contain a problematic “extension of a ‘therapeutic ethic’” (attempting ‘closure’) as, according to Colvin, does the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?<sup>5</sup> And/or is it teaching “the three great P’s,” the Present, Past and Possible?<sup>6</sup>

As this chapter shows, the possible answers to these questions are far more complex and demand an engagement with not only the interrelated fields of oral history, trauma research, memory and narrative studies, but also with positioning theory and pedagogical theories on history education and the mediation of knowledge. The former provide us with a conceptual language to talk about the intergenerational dialogue, illustrate the complexities of the ‘never again’ imperative and help to construct an ‘ideal’ (intergenerational) dialogue that enhances change. To be able to apply this language in the South African context of a *variety* of classroom interactions (not just ‘the ideal’), I engage with studies in the field of educational theory, history education and positioning theory that focus on (classroom) interactions as

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<sup>1</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 12

<sup>2</sup> Stearns *et al.*, “Introduction”, 3.

<sup>3</sup> For research in South Africa taking this angle, see Dryden, *Mirror of a nation in transition*; Coombes, *History after Apartheid*; and contributions in Jeppie, *Towards new histories*. See also Naidu and Adonis, *History on their own terms*. The “lack of detail on specific factors in the areas of management and pedagogy which impact on learning” is a challenge in the whole field of education research. Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*, 64-65. See also Harley and Wedekind, “Curriculum 2005” and Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 4-8.

<sup>4</sup> See references mentioned in Chapter One.

<sup>5</sup> Hodgkin and Radstone, “Introduction: Contested pasts”, 9.

<sup>6</sup> “The three great P’s” is coined by Bruner, *The culture of education*, Chapter 4. See also Portelli’s chapter, “Uchronic dreams: Working-class memory and possible worlds” in his *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 99-116.

epistemological acts. The latter, however, do not discuss the unique kind of interaction that comprises the subject of this study. I would thus argue that these fields of knowledge need to be brought into dialogue with each other, and elaborated upon.

### **Intergenerational transmission**

To understand the process of intergenerational transmission, academics, notably those who study the Holocaust through oral history interviews, make a distinction between primary and secondary witnesses of the Holocaust and their respective narratives.<sup>7</sup> Primary narratives are narratives from the actual victims of the historical event as opposed to narratives of secondary witnesses. The latter not only include relatives of the primary witnesses but also commentators and witnesses without a familial connection. Secondary witnesses have what Hirsch calls ‘postmemory.’ She defines this term as follows:

[P]ostmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through imaginative investment and creation.<sup>8</sup>

Ashplant, Dawson and Roper give a definition that resonates with that of Hirsch:

[Postmemory] signals the shift from narrative based on direct memory to cultural productions which explore what it means to live under the shadow of past wars. It is constantly negotiating events and experiences which are outside personal experiences, but which nevertheless shape the subjectivities of the ‘outsiders’ in profound ways.<sup>9</sup>

Historians, educators and people working in the heritage industry distinguish between these two (or more) generations in terms of (memory-) ‘distance’ to the historical event and generally allocate more authority to primary witnesses, who nevertheless initiate “a chain of testimony”.<sup>10</sup> The latter often occurs together with the so-called ‘never again’ imperative. Harvey expresses this common imperative in reflection on the aftermath of the Holocaust as follows, “How do we avoid another Holocaust? By keeping the memory alive through the telling of individual stories”.<sup>11</sup> Simon *et al.* call this idea “the pedagogical justification of

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on distinctions between primary and secondary witnesses, and between ‘historical memory’/‘metahistory’ and ‘autobiographical memory’ see Halbwachs, *On collective memory*; LaCapra, *Writing history*; Hynes, “Personal narratives and commemoration”; Sorlin, “Children as war victims”. See Chapter Three for alternative distinctions between kinds of memories.

<sup>8</sup> Hirsch, “Mourning and postmemory”, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ashplant *et al.*, “The politics of war memory and commemoration”, 47.

<sup>10</sup> Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”, 176; Wertsch, *Voices of collective remembering*, 40. Kurasawa provides a socio-political context of “an era of testimony” with its “witnessing fever” (1) in order to explain why witnessing became so important and prevalent after World War II. Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*. “An era of testimony” is Felman’s phrase, see Felman, “Education and crisis”, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Harvey, *Perspectives on loss and trauma*, 230.

remembrance”.<sup>12</sup> This imperative is a pedagogical myth that promises that full understanding, even change, is possible if one conveys primary narratives to the next generation.

While this justification is used and defended by many (including myself), it includes the danger of using primary narratives in order to remove or annihilate the other.<sup>13</sup> In addition, it bypasses challenges to the understanding and communication of traumatic events. A major challenge is to understand the complexity of empathy (see Chapter One). Another challenge is that the pedagogical justification of remembrance embodies an assumption about the moral vigilance of the young listener, which is not unproblematic. In the words of Simon *et al.*:

While the promise of remembrance is that of a moral vigilance that stands over and against indifference, the continuation of local and global violence suggests that such a pedagogy rarely serves as an effective safeguard.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, primary narratives, as a practice of remembrance, can be selective and “a prop of power and authority, as well as an impetus to the reproduction of hatred and violence”.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the younger generations face tests specific to ‘their’ present - the relationship between the past and present, between the lives of the older generations and that of the younger generations, might not always be clear, or may even be denied.<sup>16</sup>

A way to unpack this myth and to understand what happens in an intergenerational dialogue is to nuance the seemingly uncomplicated distinction between memory and postmemory. While the above definitions emphasise mainly the *differences* between the two kinds of memory, I choose to explore the *commonalities*, i.e. the socially constructed character of the two generations’ understanding and use of ‘trauma’ and ‘narratives’. On first sight, this may seem to counter, paradoxically, the above warnings around the myth.

### **Constructing trauma**

Holocaust studies and narrative research often work in tandem with so-called trauma research. ‘Trauma research’ is a rather vague and broadly used term. For historians adhering to a more ‘empiricist’ stance, it stands for the academic transgression into ‘memory politics’ particularly when the distinction between the individual and the collective is undone, and history’s (‘objective’) “distance from the present” is replaced by “a purely subjective

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<sup>12</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*.

<sup>13</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*, 5. See also Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 100-101; Cohen, *States of denial*; Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*.

<sup>15</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ashplant *et al.*, “The politics of war memory and commemoration”; Bettelheim, *Surviving and other essays*; Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*.

mode”.<sup>17</sup> For historians adhering to a more ‘discursive’ stance, it stands for the academic invitation to find a language of suffering and rupture.<sup>18</sup> In daily language, we often use the words ‘trauma’ and ‘traumatic’ interchangeably with words such as ‘painful’ and ‘sensitive’. It is important to remain aware of the easy slide between these words. Not all painful experiences are traumatic, but traumatic experiences and memories have painful legacies.<sup>19</sup> In addition, painful narratives can reflect some of the ‘trauma signals’ that BenEzer has distinguished (such as self-report and ‘hidden’ events), without necessarily being traumatic.<sup>20</sup>

Trauma is difficult to define and there is no consensus amongst academics regarding this. Trauma was originally a medical (Greek) term meaning a physical wound.<sup>21</sup> In the late nineteenth century, the groundbreaking though contested work of Freud transferred the meaning of trauma from the physical to the psychological.<sup>22</sup> Since then the discussion has revolved around the question: is trauma an external and/or internal reality. Psychologists such as BenEzer, as well as researchers in history and in literature studies choose to work with the notion of trauma as a temporary and/or permanent rupturing of the boundaries between a person’s sense of his/her external and internal reality.<sup>23</sup>

While the above reflections on trauma are insightful, one needs to unpack the meaning of trauma even further in order to understand the *intergenerational* experience of and response to rupture. Jagodzinski, applying Lacanian theory to pedagogical research, says the following:

It is important that trauma has to be understood not only in its most dramatic and tragic forms (i.e. loss of a loved one, the horror of war neurosis, a disabling accident, etc.) but also as a pedestrian experience where an unexpected, unanticipated, and seemingly unexplainable event occurs.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hodgkin and Radstone, “Introduction: Contested pasts”, 6-9.

<sup>18</sup> See Friedlander, *Probing the limits of representation*; Friedlander, “Trauma, memory and transference”; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 135-136; LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 169-203; LaCapra, *Writing history*; Hodgkin and Radstone, *Contested pasts*, 3 and 99; Leydesdorff *et al.*, “Introduction”.

<sup>19</sup> BenEzer, “Trauma signals in life stories”; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 64.

<sup>20</sup> BenEzer, “Trauma signals in life stories”, 34-36. See also LaCapra, *Writing history*, 64.

<sup>21</sup> Douglass and Vogler, *Witness and memory: The discourse of trauma*, 2. Leydesdorff *et al.* state it comes from the Greek *traumatizo*, to wound. Leydesdorff *et al.*, “Introduction”, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Hacking, “Memory sciences, memory politics”, 75-76. See for a discussion of various (literal and symbolic) interpretations of trauma, Leys, *Trauma. A genealogy*, and Douglass and Vogler, *Witness and memory: The discourse of trauma*.

<sup>23</sup> Leydesdorff *et al.*, “Introduction”; LaCapra, *Writing history*; Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*; Portelli, *The battle of Valle Giulia*; Caruth, *Unclaimed experience*; Felman and Laub, *Testimony crisis*. See for a critical reading of the latter two studies, however, Leys, *Trauma. A genealogy*, and Douglass and Vogler, *Witness and memory: The discourse of trauma*.

<sup>24</sup> Jagodzinski, “A strange introduction”, xlviii. Compare with Simon’s reference to Levinas’ “traumatism of astonishment” – the experience of something absolutely foreign, which may call what I know and how I know into question”. Simon, *The touch of the past*, 54.

This distinction resonates with LaCapra's distinction between the historical trauma of the Holocaust and the structural trauma of the child's entry into language, which coincides with the 1-3 year old child's separation from the primary caregiver. LaCapra warns, however, against "the idea of a wound culture or the notion that everyone is somehow a victim" which results from a conflation between historical and structural trauma.<sup>25</sup>

Bar-On offers two other concepts while talking about how trauma tests our discursive boundaries. "The indescribable" refers to the difficulties often encountered in communication between people due to wrong assumptions about another person's feelings or thoughts or due to the absence of language and/or knowledge about something (a thing, event or a feeling).<sup>26</sup> Bar-On explains that this kind of "soft" (though not easy) impediment "can be addressed and even shared after being clarified through a constructive dialog".<sup>27</sup> Applying this concept, one could say, for example, that the challenge for a Holocaust survivor, and to an extent his/her listener, is to create meaning out of an experience that is unprecedented, not normal and thus traumatic.<sup>28</sup> The survivor, and the listener, tries to fit the experience into his/her previous personal experiences and cultural understandings of the world and, according to Ashplant *et al.* the culturally constructed templates society has of previous conflicts.<sup>29</sup>

The challenge of trauma, however, is that ruptures such as the Holocaust do not only heighten the prevalence of the indescribable but also of what Bar-On calls "the undiscussable". The undiscussable is a "severe" impediment to communication during and after man-made atrocities. The undiscussable or "the unknowable" are "silenced facts which cannot be easily traced in the discourse since they are deleted intentionally or unintentionally, though they may unwittingly steer our actions and discourse".<sup>30</sup> The atrocities committed during the Holocaust are mostly described and silenced as 'unspeakable'.

The undiscussable and the indescribable often intertwine because silencing, forgetting and deleting are part of society's discourse; they shape what is remembered and said. The

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<sup>25</sup> LaCapra, *Writing history*, 77.

<sup>26</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 6-8.

<sup>27</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 8. Compare with Levi's discussion of the "incommunicability". Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 88-89.

<sup>28</sup> LaCapra, *Writing history*, 41-46. See also Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 140.

<sup>29</sup> Ashplant *et al.*, "The politics of war memory and commemoration", 34-36. See also Young, *Writing and rewriting the Holocaust*, 15-26; Stone, "Narrative theory and Holocaust historiography"; Wertsch, *Voices of collective remembering*, 58-61. For a critical reflection on the complex interplay between culturally developed scripts and individual recollections, see Green, "Individual remembering and 'collective memory'". Green argues that historians do not acknowledge the consciously reflective individual enough or the role of experience in changing the ways in which individuals view the world.

<sup>30</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 17. See also Foucault's concept 'prohibition' or taboo. Mills, *Discourse*, 64.

willingness, power and knowledge of individuals, but also the power/knowledge structures of discourses shape these social practices of forgetting and remembering, of demarcating what is describable and discussable.<sup>31</sup> In other words, memory work<sup>32</sup> involves a complex process of negotiation within and between individuals and groups in a society. This process entails a constant reshaping of memory, a constant negotiation between those voices that want to forget and those who want to remember. Winter and Sivan call this process a “multi-faceted negotiation”:

Remembrance consists of negotiations between a multiplicity of groups, including the state. Obviously, the partners are not equal. Repression happens, but counter-voices may be heard. If some voices are weaker than others, at least in the context of a pluralistic society, this is not only because they lack resources – or [to use] the metaphor of the choir – they are too far from the microphone. They may also be weak because of self-censorship due to lack of moral status in the eyes of others, or due to a low self-image.<sup>33</sup>

To overcome the fear of revealing the undiscussable, to move beyond a convergence of the undiscussable and the indescribable, “powerful procedures, like social crisis, and change of generations or paradigms” are needed.<sup>34</sup> What happens ‘in-between’ a regime in which the undiscussable converges with the indescribable, and a regime in which the former diminishes to such an extent that the social contract is restored might be what Raymond Williams (as discussed by Pickering) calls “structures of feeling”. Structures of feeling are socially mediated, new, “emergent and provisional” ways of thinking and living emerging out of an experience of rupture.<sup>35</sup> This new way of thinking and living is not yet understood in a consistent, articulated way; “not formally identified, learned and reproduced”.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the concept is “a shifting signifier”: one generation can have different, internally

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<sup>31</sup> See Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 162-199. Consider for example the following comment by Bettelheim, made in the late 1970s on the Americans not intervening at the time of the Holocaust: “Imagining it [the reality of the extermination camps] would have meant experiencing it to some measure. Better to declare it unimaginable, unspeakable, because only then could one avoid facing the full horror of what happened in its details, which would be extremely upsetting, guilt-provoking, and anxiety-creating. These more subtle psychological defensive mechanisms still dominate many Americans’ present approach to the true significance of the Holocaust.” Bettelheim, *Surviving and other essays*, 91. See for South African studies on forgetting and silencing within society: Field, “‘I dream of our old house’”, 117; Zur, “Remembering and forgetting”, 50. See also Passerini, “Memories between silence and oblivion”.

<sup>32</sup> Field talks about “memory work” in order to counter the seeming dichotomy (and its underlying ‘moral’ assumptions) of ‘remembering and forgetting’. Field, “Sites of memory in Langa”, 21-22. Compare with Ricoeur’s notion “work of memory”. Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 18-21. See also Zur, “Remembering and forgetting”, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Winter and Sivan, “Setting the framework”, 30. See also Leydesdorff *et al.*, “Introduction”.

<sup>34</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 200.

<sup>35</sup> Pickering, “Structures of feeling and traces of time”, 33.

<sup>36</sup> Pickering, “Structures of feeling and traces of time”, 37.

contradicting, structures of feelings, and these structures are constantly changing, in-motion.<sup>37</sup> This is what links it to *change*,<sup>38</sup> moving the boundaries of language and social conventions.<sup>39</sup>

LaCapra's, Bar-On's and Williams' concepts contribute to our theoretical understanding of ways people and societies construct realities. It is, however, difficult to operationalise these concepts, because they easily come across as absolutes, void of social interaction. An alternative is to look at *narratives* in which people dynamically *position* themselves and others.<sup>40</sup>

### **Narratives: Positioning oneself in relation to Past, Present and Possible**

The sharing of primary narratives is one way of dealing with and understanding ruptures at an individual and collective level. Narratives are a way of organising our sense of who we are, who others are, and how we relate in the world(s) we inhabit.<sup>41</sup> In the words of Brockmeier and Carbaugh, narrating is "a complex and fleeting construction [of] human identity [...] in cultural contexts of time and space".<sup>42</sup> Narratives tell us about a person's intentions, actions, evaluations, his/her values and world-making.<sup>43</sup> Narratives express a "notion of the good life".<sup>44</sup> Gee describes the basic function of a narrative as "the way we make deep sense of problems that bother us".<sup>45</sup> Wertsch's summary of White's notion of narrative gives a more 'practical' definition:

[A narrative] is organized around temporality, it has a central subject, a plot with a well-marked beginning, middle, and end, and an identifiable narrative voice; it makes connections between events; and it achieves closure,<sup>46</sup> a conclusion, a resolution.<sup>47</sup>

Narrating, moreover, is a *social* process of constructing, re-membering the self, others and the world(s), instead of a process of 'reporting' or 'representing' an absolute, 'fixed' individual,

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<sup>37</sup> Pickering, "Structures of feeling and traces of time", 41.

<sup>38</sup> Pickering, "Structures of feeling and traces of time", 50.

<sup>39</sup> See Gee, *An introduction to discourse analysis*.

<sup>40</sup> Bar-On states "The narrative is assumed to be a mixture of the discussable and the undiscussable, the genuine and the normalized". Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 280. See also Kurasawa who argues that the uneven positions in this kind of dialogue have not enough been recognised. Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 2.

<sup>41</sup> See also Field, "Remembering experience", 128-131. LaCapra points out, however, that narratives are not the only and "most conventional" form of discourse, and refers to lyrics, images, arguments, etcetera. LaCapra, *Writing history*, 63-64.

<sup>42</sup> Brockmeier and Carbaugh, "Introduction", 15.

<sup>43</sup> Bruner, "Self-making and world-making"; Labov, *Language in the inner city*; Taylor, *Sources of self*.

<sup>44</sup> Freeman and Brockmeier, "Narrative integrity", 75.

<sup>45</sup> Gee, *An introduction to discourse analysis*, 113.

<sup>46</sup> Note that this definition sounds 'absolute'. This research suggests a more dynamic interpretation of 'closure' in narratives. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 120.

<sup>47</sup> Wertsch, *Mind as action*, 80. See LaCapra, *Writing history*, 63-64 and Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*, 111 and 126-127 for a critical reading of the notion of 'conventional narratives' and the idea that all discourse is narrative in nature.

his/her history and the world-out-there.<sup>48</sup> As discourse analyst Gee explains, language is an act with two intertwined functions: “to scaffold the performance of social activities [...] and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions”.<sup>49</sup> The ways people speak but also act, “integrate language with non-language “stuff””, within these affiliations, are what we call ‘discourses’.<sup>50</sup> Especially useful for a historical study in this regard is Gee’s statement that the individual encapsulates different voices, as “the meeting point of many, sometimes conflicting socially and historically defined discourses”.<sup>51</sup> In this kind of study, therefore, the individual cannot be viewed in isolation.<sup>52</sup>

Researchers from various fields defend this post-positivistic stance and have contributed to the increasingly inter-disciplinary field of narrative research.<sup>53</sup> A useful concept in analysing how individuals and groups construct their sense of self, others and the world in a complex and fleeting manner is “position” and “positioning”. Positioning theory developed out of discursive psychology in response to the, rather static, assumptions of role theory.<sup>54</sup> Davies and Harré define the concept “positioning” as “the discursive process whereby people [not necessarily intentionally locate themselves and] are located in conversations as observable and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines”.<sup>55</sup> Of relevance to this study is especially the notion of “deliberate self-positioning” which one can accomplish not only by referring to one’s agency and one’s unique point of view, but also “by referring to events in one’s biography”.<sup>56</sup> The notion of deliberate self-positioning accords more active agency to a subject and differs from the notion “subject position,” which locates a subject in relation to distinct power relations within a discourse (for example ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ within pedagogical discourse). Davies and Harré offer these concepts as alternatives to the concept “role”.<sup>57</sup> They do this in order to locate agents in personal and social (structured) history:

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<sup>48</sup> Bruner, *The culture of education*; Hodgkin and Radstone, *Contested pasts*; Leydesdorff *et al.*, “Introduction”; Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*. See also the notion ‘composure’, as explained by Thomson, mentioned below. Thomson, “Anzac memories”, 300-301. A case study of how visitors link their personal (‘little’) narratives to a museum’s ‘big’ narrative illustrates this point, Rowe *et al.*, “Linking little narratives to big ones”.

<sup>49</sup> Gee, *An introduction to discourse analysis*, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Gee, *An introduction to discourse analysis*, 13.

<sup>51</sup> Gee, *Social linguistics and literacies*, 132. One finds this idea also in other, linguistic and socio-cultural, studies. See Butler, *Excitable speech*; Chang, *Deconstructing communication*. See also Bruner, *The culture of education*, and his older work *Actual minds, possible worlds* and *Acts of meaning*. See also Wertsch’s *Voices of the mind* and *Mind as action*.

<sup>52</sup> Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*, 104-106 and 131-132.

<sup>53</sup> Brockmeier and Carbaugh, “Introduction”.

<sup>54</sup> For an introduction, see Harré and van Langenhove, “The dynamics of social episodes”, and Harré and Moghaddam, *The self and others*.

<sup>55</sup> Davies and Harré, “Positioning and personhood”, 37.

<sup>56</sup> Van Langenhove and Harré, “Introducing positioning theory”, 24.

<sup>57</sup> Davies and Harré, “Positioning and personhood”, 43.

'Positioning' and 'subject position', in contrast [to 'role'], permit us to think of ourselves as choosing subjects, locating ourselves in conversations according to those narrative forms with which we are familiar and bringing to those narratives our own subjective lived histories through which we have learnt metaphors, characters and plot.<sup>58</sup>

Using the concept 'position', we can study the way discourses constitute people and at the same time study how these discourses are resources for people's *complex, multiple and contradictory agency*.<sup>59</sup> Concepts that similarly express this agency are "performance" and "mode of address". Langellier states that the telling of a narrative involves a two-way dialogue, a "contract" or a "performance" between the teller and her audience. The performance does not only entail the "enactment" of the narrated event (what is told) and the creation of the narrative event (the act of telling) but also the "act" of creating a space where "the social is articulated, structured, and struggled over".<sup>60</sup> Ellsworth, talking about the pedagogical interaction, calls this space "the mode of address", "the misfit or space of difference between address and response".<sup>61</sup> Of special interest for history research is the fact that this mode of address is part of the social praxis of remembering. Simon *et al.* describe the latter as follows:

[A]ll formations of memory carry implicit and/or explicit assumptions about what is to be remembered, how, by whom, for whom, and with what potential effects.<sup>62</sup>

Memories, then, are not "discrete *things*, but acts: I remember".<sup>63</sup> These acts happen in multiple presents rather than being recollections of distinct pasts:

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<sup>58</sup> Davies and Harré, "Positioning and personhood", 41. See for a more structured and linguistically orientated approach, membership categorisation analysis (M.C.A.) initiated by Sacks, who, according to Lepper, combined the study of everyday interaction (ethnomethodology as developed by Goffman and Garfinkel) and the study of ordinary language (as developed by Wittgenstein and Chomsky) into a new discipline namely the study of naturally occurring conversation. Lepper, *Categories in text and talk*, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Davies and Harré, "Positioning and personhood", 52. Compare with Field who, in the context of oral history interviews, speaks about "the fluctuations of agency and passivity" and "people's struggles to build, defend and enhance their potency as decision-making agents". Field, "Remembering experience", 131. See also Green, "Individual remembering and 'Collective memory'".

<sup>60</sup> Langellier, "'You're marked'", 150. Compare with Butler who uses the notion of 'the performative' in a more general way to speak about how people continuously establish their identities and change reality. Butler, *Excitable speech*, 160. Douglass and Vogler explain that the transformation of the primary witness from victim to survivor to "a performer, telling the tale of survival as a form of self-therapy and inspiration for others" is a recent phenomenon. Douglass and Vogler, *Witness and memory. The discourse of trauma*, 41. See also Simon and Eppert, "Remembering obligation", 176 and Felman's use of 'the performative' in Felman, "Education and crisis".

<sup>61</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 38.

<sup>62</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*, 2; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 16-17. See also Hodgkin and Radstone, "Introduction: Contested pasts", 1-2. The fact that the study of 'positionings'/'positions' is crucial in any study of individual and collective remembrance is clear from a case-study done by Simon and Rosenberg of B.Ed. students' engagement with how one could and/or should remember and learn from the Montréal massacre, see Simon, *The touch of the past*, 65-86.

[T]o understand recollection in relation to the aim of recovery is in fact to *misunderstand* what it is all about; the positing of an intelligible [sic] order to the past from the vantage point of the present. Indeed, the past – qua past – only exists in the present, in memory; it is not to be confused with the ‘past presents’ we formerly lived.<sup>64</sup>

By studying primary narratives and utterances aimed at explicitly making sense of self and others in history, we might have a ‘window’, however indirect and incomplete, into the meaning-making processes by teachers and learners of the South African regime shift, and of their role in “the three great P’s”, the Past, the Present and the Possible.<sup>65</sup>

### **Intergenerational *positionings* in relation to regime shifts and trauma**

The relevance of this interpretation of experience as narrated and socially constructed in ‘the present’ is that ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ become more elusive and ‘possible’. It makes more sense then to talk about ‘intergenerational *positionings*’ instead of ‘intergenerational transmissions’ to express the agency of those involved, and the complex and fleeting character of the construction of narratives, identity and ‘life’.<sup>66</sup> Linguists, discourse analysts, narrative researchers and oral historians have elaborately explained the importance of the idea, introduced by Bakhtin,<sup>67</sup> that interactions, and the self, are multivoiced and dialogical. While in the 1960s and 1970s, oral historians and academics in related fields would claim that ‘forgotten’, ‘silent’ and ‘ignored’ voices represented the authentic truth of a regime shift, oral historians now study the narrator’s motivation and the meaning of *the process of remembering*.<sup>68</sup> In this context then, understanding is an active process of response that takes place in an “inconclusive present” and contains possibilities in the “unrealized surplus of humanness”.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Freeman, *Rewriting the self*, 89 (Freeman’s emphasis). See also Halbwachs, *On collective memory*; Husbands, *What is history teaching?*; Winter and Sivan, “Setting the framework”; Field, “Remembering experience”, 128-131.

<sup>64</sup> Freeman, *Rewriting the self*, 52-53 (Freeman’s emphasis). See also Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*; White, “The most telling: Lies, secrets, and history”.

<sup>65</sup> As mentioned above, “The three great P’s” is coined by Bruner, *The culture of education*, Chapter Four. See also Portelli’s chapter, “Uchronic dreams: Working-class memory and possible worlds” in his *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 99-116. See Brockmeier and Carbaugh, “Introduction” and Chang, *Destructing communication* for the idea of narratives or linguistic signs as ‘windows’ or ‘key holes’ into the cultures and histories in which they are constructed. See also White, “The most telling”.

<sup>66</sup> See also Kurasawa who offers an analysis of what makes up the positions within a dialogue between a primary witness and his/her listener. Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*.

<sup>67</sup> Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination*; Bakhtin, “The construction of the utterance”.

<sup>68</sup> Hodgkin and Radstone, “Introduction: Contested pasts”, 4. See also the introduction to the “Critical Developments” section in Perks and Thomson, *The oral history reader*, 1-13, and Field and Swanson, “Introduction”, 11-12.

<sup>69</sup> Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination*, 37 and 280-282. This process also involves the above mentioned dynamic, dialectic of remembering *and* forgetting and the dynamic interaction with discursive boundaries of what is ‘describable’ and ‘discussable’. Bakhtin’s “surplus” in an uncanny way resonates with what other academics refer to as “surplus meaning” (Friedlander quoted in Hartman)

This is especially pertinent in one's narratives and memory at times of change. Freeman and Brockmeier suggest that in epochs "in which standards pertaining to the good life are not so clear or are in the midst of being contested or redefined, [...] autobiographical memory [would emerge] as decidedly more ambiguous and multivoiced".<sup>70</sup> For first hand witnesses it is important to be able to deal with their traumatic past and to construct a morally defensible self-image - they often achieve this by narrating stories. However, not everybody speaks about his or her trauma. Harvey stresses that while story telling and meaning making is "amongst our most significant tools for confronting, understanding, and addressing our losses" as human beings, not everyone has the same ways of adaptation. A survivor might repress or act out in order to deal with the pain. Some may confide in few, or "effectively avoid the issues or distract themselves".<sup>71</sup>

A possible reason for this is that the experiences are intolerably painful to speak about. Other possible reasons might be that people tend to struggle with describing painful experiences or experiences they cannot defend on current moral grounds.<sup>72</sup> Sense is made of events in reflections, for example during and after a regime change, and the narrator "unifies his vision in the knowledge of its outcome".<sup>73</sup> In addition, people narrate with greater ease personally painful memories in which others hurt them, than memories in which they hurt themselves or other people.<sup>74</sup> Memories of apathy and the absence of resistance in the sight of severe maltreatment in for example the extermination camps are especially difficult. As Levi explains, a primary witness "believes he sees [a judgment] in the eyes of those (especially the young) who listen to his stories and judge with facile hindsight, or who perhaps feel cruelly repelled. Consciously or not, he feels accused and judged, compelled to justify and defend

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and an 'excess' of memories in and around us. See Friedlander, *Probing the limits of representation*, 1-21; Friedlander, "Trauma, memory, and transference", 262; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 153-156; Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 81; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 4 and 10; Simon and Eppert, "Remembering obligation", 180; Hodgkin and Radstone, "Part II. Remembering suffering", 97; Field, "Sites of memory in Langa", 21-22; Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 10-11.

<sup>70</sup> Freeman and Brockmeier, "Narrative integrity", 76. See also Wertsch, *Voices of collective remembering*.

<sup>71</sup> Harvey, *Perspectives on loss and trauma*, 4-5. See also Bettelheim, "The Holocaust - one generation later" in his *Surviving and other essays*, 84-104, and Levi, "The memory of the offense" in his *The drowned and the saved*, 23-35.

<sup>72</sup> Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 52-53; Samuel and Thompson, *The myths we live by*, 38. See also Langer who describes in detail the inner conflict within Holocaust survivors between the past self that was deprived of moral agency and the present self that seeks to describe his/herself as a responsible agent. Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 185 *passim*. In this context, Langer comments on Taylor's moral theory as based only on a society that assumes choice. Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 198-205. See also LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 185-188.

<sup>73</sup> Young, *Writing and rewriting the Holocaust*, 30.

<sup>74</sup> See Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 109. See also Crane, "Memory, distortion, and history in the museum", 59.

himself”.<sup>75</sup> Thomson explains that, in an attempt at (self-) composure, people create legends in which the horrors of war or the fate of its victims are rarely recognized.<sup>76</sup> This attempt, however, is never achieved because it is based on selective remembrance, repression and exclusion.<sup>77</sup>

In memory work, and especially when one has to deal with traumatic memories, selective memory goes together with what Portelli calls “uchronia”, the sharing of stories that “emphasize not how history went, but how it *could*, or *should* have gone, focussing on possibility rather than actuality”.<sup>78</sup> In sharing these “nowhen” events, the interviewee emphasises intentions and evaluation, rather than his/her actions.<sup>79</sup> In addition, one can interpret uchronic constructions as “one possible narrative expression of the refusal of the existing order of reality”.<sup>80</sup> In countries in transition, these constructions might give an indication of a person’s ideals and desires relating to the regime shift, and a (re)positioning of her own role in the process of transition. “The need to imagine a progressive history” and relating one’s life in narrative to ‘the good’ can be strong.<sup>81</sup> One way of doing this is linking one’s personal narrative to master narratives, “a greater pattern of history, as the realization of a good, whether it be the traditional *Heilsgeschichte* of Christianity, or that of the Progress of mankind, or the coming Revolution, or the building of a peaceful world, or the retrieval or continuance of our national culture”.<sup>82</sup>

One could say that survivors of atrocities experience an uncanniness that “occurs when the boundaries between *imagination* and *reality* are erased”.<sup>83</sup> As Langer carefully illustrates, the

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<sup>75</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 77-78.

<sup>76</sup> Thomson, “Introduction”, 4-10. See also Roper, “Analysing the analysed”, 29 and Jones, “Distressing histories and unhappy interviewing”, 51-52.

<sup>77</sup> Thomson, “Introduction”, 10. Thomson defines ‘composure’ (originally pioneered by the Popular Memory Group at the University of Birmingham) in two, interrelated, ways: “In one sense we ‘compose’ or construct memories using the public language and meanings of our culture. In another sense we ‘compose’ memories which help us feel relatively comfortable with our lives, which gives us a feeling of composure.” The second form of composure involves remaking or repressing painful or traumatic memories which are unresolved or which “do not easily accord with our present identity”. The latter involves public acceptability in the wider society and in particular groups, which links the second to the first form of composure. Thomson, “Anzac memories”, 300-301. See Field, “Beyond ‘healing’”, 42, footnote 72 for the history of the term. See also Green, “Individual remembering and ‘collective memory’”, 39-40.

<sup>78</sup> Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 100 (Portelli’s emphasis).

<sup>79</sup> Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 100.

<sup>80</sup> Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 108. Compare with how White (with reference to Northrop Frye) describes a myth: “an example of thought working at the extremities of human possibility, a projection of a vision of human fulfilment and of the obstacles that stand in the way of that fulfilment”. White, *Tropics of discourse*, 175.

<sup>81</sup> Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 112-113.

<sup>82</sup> Taylor, *Sources of the self*, 97 (Taylor’s emphasis). See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 78.

<sup>83</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to ourselves*, 188 (Kristeva’s emphasis). One could argue that ‘imagination’ here includes the uncanny, fearful, fantasy of what *could* have happened, but also the experiences that move

survivor experiences “an estrangement between [his/her] present and past persona”.<sup>84</sup> The listener also experiences uncanniness or unsettlement, when faced with a “confusion of tongues” and might seek a heroic interpretation.<sup>85</sup> The unsettlement includes what Simon and Rosenberg describe as *witnessing* trauma (“reliving of trauma”) in terms of “a shock of awakening to the terms of one’s own survival”.<sup>86</sup> Similar to the primary witness, the listener might build an emotional *wall* against painful experiences.<sup>87</sup> Part of this emotional wall is the “normalisation” of discourse, in which the undiscussable and indescribable are perceived and constructed as “normal” and thus left unquestioned.<sup>88</sup> These challenges of speaking about and listening to traumatic histories play a role in the pedagogical interaction, as Ellsworth, drawing on Goldberg, explains:

Teaching and representing traumatic histories such as the Holocaust or the Middle Passage brings educators up against the limits of our theories and practices concerning pedagogy, curriculum, and the roles of dialogue, empathy, and understanding in teaching about and across social and cultural difference. If, as Michael Berenbaum asserts, “Children have to learn about the untrustworthiness of the world as they learn to trust the world,” how might teachers teach distrust (Goldberg, 1997, p. 319)?<sup>89</sup>

### **Primary narratives in pedagogical practice**

From the above it is clear that while primary and secondary witnesses are positioned differently in terms of ‘memory’ to the historical event, their understanding and use of trauma and narratives bear commonalities. In other words, the differences and commonalities lie in the social and dynamic construction of trauma and narratives. Both parties construct and listen to complex and fleeting narratives, and both experience the ever-changing discursive boundaries of the indescribable and the undiscussable – albeit in different ways. I would like to argue that a realisation of this social construction (not only differences but also commonalities) is the first and most important step towards understanding and unpacking (and possibly reviving) the intergenerational dialogue in pedagogical settings.<sup>90</sup> As Ellsworth

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*beyond* one’s worst imaginations. See Hodgkin and Radstone, “Part II. Remembering suffering”, 97; Field, “Beyond ‘healing’”, 38.

<sup>84</sup> Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 143.

<sup>85</sup> Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 64.

<sup>86</sup> Simon with Rosenberg, “Beyond the logic of emblemization”, 81-82. See also Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 110-111; Britzman, “If the story cannot end”, 39; Baum, “Never to forget”, 99-100 and 108-109.

<sup>87</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 168. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 1-38, 58-68, 82; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 40 and 262; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 138-139; Wieviorka, “On testimony”; Friedlander, “Trauma, memory, and transference”; Krondorfer, Remembrance and reconciliation, 102; McCully *et al.*, “‘Don’t worry, Mr. Trimble.’”; Salmons, “Moral dilemmas”. See for a critical reading, Bettelheim, *Surviving and other essays*, especially the chapter “The Holocaust – one generation later”, 84-104.

<sup>88</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 264-278.

<sup>89</sup> Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 99-100.

<sup>90</sup> Kurasawa also talks about this kind of dialogue as a *social* endeavour. However, his reflections move beyond one-on-one interactions and pedagogical interactions. He talks about an ethico-political

puts it, this social space or mode of address “bears the traces and unpredictable workings of the unconscious, and this makes it able to escape surveillance and control by both teachers and students”, and, even though teachers cannot control it, it can be “a powerful and surprising pedagogical resource”.<sup>91</sup>

These then are the three premises of this study: Firstly, narratives are dynamic and fleeting constructions or ways of positioning(s) in a specific, in this case pedagogical, setting. Secondly, awareness of discursive boundaries is more pertinent during and immediately after a regime shift. People who have experienced regime shifts, such as the one in South Africa, will express their positionings towards this shift across different discourses, also the pedagogical one, even if they consciously choose to solely focus on their subject-position ‘teacher’ or ‘museum facilitator’. The third premise is that the mere *presence* of primary narratives does not guarantee learning in the sense of (potential) ‘positive’ change.<sup>92</sup>

The latter premise is crucial. As Husbands states it, the telling of stories and (primary) narratives is “a means to an end, to the making of historical understanding”; it is “to *support* pupil thinking, not to replace it”.<sup>93</sup> To be able to ‘see’ complex and fleeting positionings, learning and change in a pedagogical interaction, I am arguing, one needs to include an analysis of the teacher’s approach to history, or understanding of historical truth, and her pedagogical practice. There are two interrelated reasons for this. Firstly, the teacher’s interpretation of the past affects assumptions about the classroom interactions.<sup>94</sup> Secondly, the mode of pedagogical practice a teacher follows mirrors the teacher’s moral ideas around how a teacher and a learner *should* behave in the pedagogical interaction but also, I would like to argue, in the wider society.<sup>95</sup>

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practice of the global civil society and the juridical, institutional and existential aspects of the ‘never again’ imperative. Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*. See for a critical note on the use of the adjective ‘global’, Kratz and Karp, “Introduction: Museum frictions”, 4-5.

<sup>91</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 38.

<sup>92</sup> See also Bage, *Narrative matters*, 88-96; Colvin, “‘Brothers and sisters’”.

<sup>93</sup> Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 51 and 91 (Husbands’ emphasis).

<sup>94</sup> Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 40.

<sup>95</sup> Bernstein explains that while the teacher differentiates between (or “classifies”) her own and another school subject, she controls (“frames”) the internal pedagogical communication using two systems of rules: the rules of social order (“regulative discourse”) which “refer to the forms that hierarchical relations take in the pedagogic relation and to expectations about conduct, character and manner”, and the rules of discursive order (“instructional discourse”) which “refer to selection, sequence, pacing and criteria of the [subject-specific] knowledge”. Bernstein describes the relationship between these two systems of rules as follows: “the instructional discourse is always embedded in the regulative discourse, and the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse”. Bernstein, *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*, 26-28.

Narratives, *together with* the teacher's approach to history and her pedagogical practice, then, play a role in the construction of a *moral* world; they express the teacher's ideas and hopes in regards to how the world *could or should* be and how people *could or should* behave. Both the strength *and* danger of intergenerational positionings lie in this characteristic because the moral construction easily places the audience in fixed positions. Ellsworth, in particular, questions this.<sup>96</sup> She expresses her concern around how especially teachers "manipulate" their learners into taking a fixed, unquestioned, prescribed, or "modelled" position, when, for example, reading a narrative around the lynching of an Afro-American man in 1930.<sup>97</sup> As educators, we use these "modelled" positions easily as "positive references". For example, we present the position of 'the resister', 'the defender of human rights', or 'the victim' as preferable to 'the perpetrator'. Instead, Ellsworth advocates for a mode of address that "paradoxically manipulates" the listener/reader/learner "into taking on responsibility for the meanings" he/she makes of the narrative.<sup>98</sup> She calls this "teaching without positive reference" or "teaching the multiple whos within us". With this, she means that knowledge and justice is rather social and *performative* than individual and fixed; it is historically framed and situated; it cannot be projected to other times and places. She advocates for

A story that keeps open the possibility of exploring with students how the ongoing constructions of selves within and through and against racisms may mean that we can be simultaneously ignorant *and* knowledgeable; resistant *and* implicated; committed *and* forgetful; committed *and* ambivalent, tired, enjoying the pleasures and safety of privilege; effective in one arena *and* ineffective in another.<sup>99</sup>

Attention to this multiplicity-within and the social, performative character of knowledge and justice is part of what Ellsworth calls an "analytic dialogue". This resonates with Bar-On's "constructive dialog", Nystrand's "dialogic interaction" and Simon's interpretation of "gringostroika".<sup>100</sup> During this kind of dialogue (from now on 'analytic, constructive

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<sup>96</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*. See also Simon who points out the risks involved in prefiguring the importance and meaning of primary narratives relating atrocities. Simon, "The Paradoxical practice of *Zakhor*", 17-18. Krondorfer, in his study of encounters between third generation non-Jewish Germans and American Jews, reflects upon the complexities and dangers of "read[ing] each other through the eyes of (symbolic) victim and victimizer". Krondorfer, *Remembrance and reconciliation*, 29. See also Bage's earlier work mentioned in *Husbands' What is history teaching?* and Wertsch's *Mind as action and Voices of collective remembering*.

<sup>97</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 150-157.

<sup>98</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 156. See also Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 125-147; LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 9-11; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 174-175; and *Husbands, What is history teaching?* 48-51. See also Ellsworth's more recent work, *Places of learning*, in which she interprets the design of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, which offers a "narrative without closure" (104) and challenges "conventions of pedagogy by refusing the obscenity of presuming to know or to understand the Holocaust" by focussing on "spaces of difference between history and memory, the concrete and the abstract, the unique and the universal" (102).

<sup>99</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 157 (Ellsworth's emphasis).

<sup>100</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*; Nystrand, "Dialogic instruction"; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 17-21.

dialogue’) attention is given to estrangement and uncanniness rather than merely adhering to the illusions of understanding and democracy within “a communicative dialogue”.<sup>101</sup> The feelings of estrangement and uncanniness caused by the above-mentioned soft and severe impediments to communication are, instead of denied or ‘othered,’ accepted and analysed.<sup>102</sup> LaCapra’s “empathic unsettlement”, discussed in Chapter One, is thus part of this kind of dialogue.<sup>103</sup> “Suppressed” stories of ‘others’ are not just “recovered” or used to “correct” history. They are listened to “differently” in order “to renew a reconstructed living memory for a community”<sup>104</sup> – a living memory “that dialectically presses on the sense of one’s future purposes and possibilities”<sup>105</sup> and in which “we can come to a recognition of the ethical relationship between self and other in the narratives we tell”, and, I would add, listen to.<sup>106</sup> This kind of interaction, then, entails, in Simon’s words, not only attention to the primary narrative “as a document” but also as a “summon[ing]”.<sup>107</sup> The latter potentially opens up “a moral time, a time of non-indifference of one person to another, of obligation and responsibility to and for the other”, a “future time”, the Possible.<sup>108</sup>

In history education, these complex and continuously constructed and reconstructed positionings most likely take place within what I call a positioned approach to history. I base this approach loosely on one of three approaches to history, identified by Seixas and

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<sup>101</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*.

<sup>102</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 130-145. See also Simon, *The touch of the past*, 1-31 and LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 185-188. See also Husbands who states that the use of stories in the history class implies obligations for both the storyteller and the listeners. The teller (mostly the teacher) has to adhere to the obligation of accuracy, authenticity to period and character, and openness to other versions of the story. The audience (mostly the learners) has “to go further than the story, to pose questions about it, to examine its consistency with the evidential remains, to offer further interpretations, to examine its authenticity and its representations of character, time and place”. Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 50-51. Husbands’ interpretation, however, differs with that of Bar-On for example in the sense that the latter talks about questioning and reflecting upon the “illusion of control” – “the relatively common habit of ignoring what we do not know, [...] undermin[ing] it, and actively emphasiz[ing] what we do know”. Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 283.

<sup>103</sup> See LaCapra, *Writing history*, 40-42.

<sup>104</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 17-18.

<sup>105</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 32. Simon with Eppert explain the relationship between witnessing and living memory as follows: “Central to witnessing is either the re-presentation to others of what one has heard or seen, or the enactment of one’s relationship with others so as to make evident that one’s practice has been informed by the living memory of prior testimony”. Simon with Eppert, “Remembering obligation”, 53.

<sup>106</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 23. Simon speaks about “the practice of a transactive public memory”, see Simon, *The touch of the past*, 88-89. See also Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 133. Eppert addresses “ethical remembrance” in exploring “entertaining history” in the form of films and novels in which ‘difficult’ positions such as ‘the perpetrator’ are foregrounded. Eppert, “Entertaining history”.

<sup>107</sup> Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”, 178-182; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 92-93 and 101-103; Simon, “Innocence without naivete”, 53-58; Simon with Di Paolantonio and Clamen, “Remembrance as praxis”; Rosenberg, “Intersecting memories”. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 38; Felman, “Education and crisis”; Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 5-6 and 22-23.

<sup>108</sup> Simon, “The paradoxical practice of *Zakhor*”, 18-21.

discussed earlier in Chapter One.<sup>109</sup> A positioned approach to history defends the idea that history consists of different versions, created in the present and serving present day purposes. The aim of history education then is to understand how different groups organize the past into histories and how their rhetorical and narratological strategies serve present-day purposes. In this approach, teachers and learners study the choices available for emplotting history and historiography as an open and unfinished process. This approach thus includes an awareness of the creative power of the language we use but also of the limitations of ‘progress’, the positionality of historians and the narrativity of history.<sup>110</sup>

This approach differs from a disciplinary and a factual approach to history. A disciplinary approach defends the idea that history consists of different versions of which some are valid and others are not. The role of the teacher is to teach learners what makes a valid historical account. The learners learn disciplinary criteria for deciding what makes good history.<sup>111</sup> A teacher with this approach explains disciplinary understandings such as evidence and cause<sup>112</sup> and might use terms like ‘bias’, ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’. In contrast, a factual approach defends the idea that history consists of ‘facts’; there is ‘one’, ‘true’ or ‘right’ version of the past. The role of the teacher is to teach the ‘best’ story ‘as the way it happened’. The role of the learners is to ‘absorb’ it. Seixas describes this approach as “enhancing collective memory” and argues that it assists in providing identity, cohesion and social purpose (e.g. struggle for human rights, sacrifice for national good).<sup>113</sup> As I will argue in Chapters Six,

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<sup>109</sup> Seixas, “Sweigen!” Compare Seixas’ three approaches with Husbands’ differentiation between history as an academic discipline, as a classroom subject and as popular interest. Husbands, *What is history teaching?* Simon’s differentiation between Historicization, Memorialization and Transformative Recollection seems to resonate with Seixas’ approaches. Simon, “Innocence without naivete”, 48-49. While writing the final version of this thesis, I came across another typology of people’s understanding of history. Jörn Rüsen (elaborating upon Nietzsche’s work) distinguishes the following four “types of historical consciousness”: traditional, exemplary, critical and genetic. Seixas describes the four types respectively as “support[ing] the continuity of fixed and unchanged moral obligations, without acknowledging any significant change over time”, “draw[ing] [...] [on] the past as a source of cultural universals, which apply across temporal change”, “turn[ing] towards the past in order to break from it” and “acknowledg[ing] the ongoing legacy of the past, at the same time that it comprehends radically changed present circumstances and mores”. Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 22. For an (adapted) application of these types of historical consciousness, see Seixas and Clark, “Murals as monuments”. I choose to stay with the three approaches as described by Seixas in “Sweigen!” because he situates these three approaches to history within the teacher-learner *relationship*, while Rüsen uses the four types to analyse learners’ historical consciousness. See contributions by Seixas, Rüsen and Lee in Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*. For the same reason, I do not engage with Barton and Levstik’s “four principal “stances” toward history” namely the identification stance, the analytic stance, the moral response stance and the exhibition stance. See Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*.

<sup>110</sup> Seixas, “Sweigen!”, 31-32. Seixas calls this approach ‘post-modern’. Being aware of this heavily critiqued label, I chose the more descriptive (and more neutral?) label ‘positioned’.

<sup>111</sup> Seixas, “Sweigen!”, 24-26.

<sup>112</sup> See Lee, “Understanding history”, 144.

<sup>113</sup> Seixas, “Sweigen!”, 21-23. As this research shows, however, teachers also use this approach for example to assert their authority, to ‘shut up’ learners. In these cases, the approach seems to be rather

Seven and Eight, I choose to emphasise that even though teachers (and learners) practise mainly one of the three approaches, more than one approach can occur within the practice of a teacher and his/her learners, especially when they engage with a positioned approach to history. This implies that I perceive these approaches as ‘progressive’ in the sense that they form “a hierarchy in terms of cognitive and moral complexity”, though as Seixas points out, there is indeed a danger in presenting it as “an overly linear and one-dimensional model of progress”.<sup>114</sup>

To understand the workings of these approaches to history, and the role of primary narratives within them, it is pivotal to look at the bigger context, namely the teacher’s mode of pedagogical practice, in which these approaches take place. Teachers, who employ a positioned approach, most likely work within a “discourse led” mode of pedagogical practice. This mode of pedagogical practice is one out of four ideal typical modes developed by Jacklin who in her study brought together Bernstein’s theory, situated activity theory and Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis in order to study the relation between repetition and difference in pedagogical interaction.<sup>115</sup> The aim of this mode of pedagogical practice is to introduce the learners to a “principled community”.<sup>116</sup> The teacher assists learners in recognizing and realising the discipline specific discourse (in this case history) through not only repetitive practice routines and structures but also specialized language, references to past learning and other sites of knowledge (such as media, the home, ...).<sup>117</sup> The teacher also explains the how and why of evaluation.<sup>118</sup> Discipline-specific activities are diverse and form part of “complex, layered, multi-step internal structures”.<sup>119</sup> While, in theory, the discourse led mode can co-occur with all three approaches to history, a disciplinary and/or a positioned approach seem to be most

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part of the teacher’s regulative discourse than of the teacher’s instructive discourse (see Bernstein, *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*). For this reason, I chose to rename the ‘label’ of this approach. On ‘national’ level, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (T.R.C.) took this “enhancing collective memory” approach. See for a critical discussion, Field, “Beyond ‘healing’” and Colvin, “‘Brothers and sisters’”.

<sup>114</sup> Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 22-23. I take the liberty here to apply Seixas’ reflection on Rüsen’s four types of historical consciousness to Seixas’ three approaches to history as described in his “Sweigen!”.

<sup>115</sup> In contrast to my study, Jacklin’s study does not only include an analysis of “the individual teacher’s practice performance in the classroom”, but also “the level of interactions within a practice community within a broader school environment”. Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 136.

<sup>116</sup> Jacklin, Personal communication, 23 March 2006.

<sup>117</sup> Bernstein defines the realisation and recognition rules as follows: “The realization rule determines how we put meanings together and how we make them public. The realization rule is necessary to produce the legitimate text. [...] [R]ecognition rules regulate what meanings are relevant and realization rules regulate how the meanings are to be put together to create the legitimate text.” Bernstein, *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*, 32.

<sup>118</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 139-144 and 161-168. Bernstein’s instructive discourse and regulative discourse are thus closely related in this mode of pedagogical practice. Bernstein, *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*.

<sup>119</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 143. See also Nystrand, “What’s a teacher to do?”

common amongst the interviewed and observed teachers. A possible explanation for this is that teachers who follow this mode have had some sort of training as historians at tertiary institutions that support a disciplinary and/or positioned approach rather than a factual approach to history. However, as this research shows, this does not mean that teachers following the discourse led mode do *not* follow, at times - in pursuit of continuity and cohesion - a factual approach to history. Neither does a university diploma guarantee that a teacher follows a particular mode of practice and a particular approach to history.<sup>120</sup>

A disciplinary approach and a factual approach to history are more likely to occur in Jacklin's three other modes of pedagogical practice: "convention led", "repetition led" and "empty" modes of practice. Both factual and disciplinary approaches to history can occur in a convention led mode of pedagogical practice. This practice is oriented towards the procedural form of the activity convention. There is a greater reliance on everyday knowledge and terminology. Criteria for evaluation are absent or derived from procedural forms of the activity itself. The activities stand by themselves, though, in contrast to the below mentioned repetition led mode, they recognisably draw from a particular pedagogical discourse (in this case history).<sup>121</sup>

A factual approach to history is most pertinent in what Jacklin calls a repetition led mode of pedagogical practice and an empty mode of pedagogical practice. A repetition led pedagogical practice focuses on routine activities. The teacher and learners repeat these routine activities for each pedagogical text regardless of its discursive source. There is little explicit text-related communication from the teacher; teacher and learners are assumed to be used to the routine. This implies either teacher or the text can be absent, and learners might use each other or each other's textbooks as sources. Generative principles of the pedagogic discourse are absent. Evaluation is mostly oriented to the control of bodies, movement and noise.<sup>122</sup> An empty mode of pedagogical practice, in contrast, is not perceived as 'teaching' because the teacher focuses solely on what Bernstein calls the regulative discourse. In other words, the teacher selects no 'pedagogical text' or 'activities' relating to a specific pedagogic discourse. Instead, the teacher solely focuses on the evaluation of the learners' behaviour and movement in space, for example by giving a 'sermon' on how they *should* behave.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> See references mentioned in Chapter One, footnote 64.

<sup>121</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 144-150 and 168-177. In my research, however, I saw teachers following the other modes of pedagogical practice also using everyday knowledge and terminology. Jacklin asserts this is possible and that the researcher needs to find out for what purpose the teacher uses this everyday knowledge and terminology in the various modes. Jacklin, Personal communication, 23 March 2006.

<sup>122</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 150-156 and 178-200.

<sup>123</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 138.

Seixas' three approaches to history and Jacklin's four modes of pedagogical practice are useful concepts in describing and analysing a teacher's practice. However, the complex and fleeting character of teacher's practices brings with it a need for the researcher to check carefully evident characteristics of each mode and each approach when analysing the interview(s) and the pedagogical interactions of a specific teacher. As Jacklin explains, there is a continuum of pedagogic modes in classroom activities and teachers might shift from one mode to another.<sup>124</sup> As this research shows, while a teacher is likely to adhere to one approach to history, teachers who follow a positioned approach to history also tend to follow a disciplinary approach. In addition, a factual approach is present in each case study, albeit in different degrees. I also coded some teachers as following a repetition led mode of practice but, at the same time, they *seemed* to follow a convention led mode of practice. The 'deeper' work of this mode, however, was absent. As Nystrand and Gamoran argue:

Authentic questions, discussion, and small-group work have important instructional potential, but unless they are used in relation to serious instructional goals and, more important, unless they assign significant and serious epistemic roles to students that the students themselves can value, they may be little more than pleasant diversions.<sup>125</sup>

Lastly, this study indicates that, similar to approaches to history, modes of pedagogical practice might be hierarchically related to each other. Teachers who have access to the most complex mode of practice, a discourse led one, for example, have also access to the other modes of practice, while teachers solely adhering to modes that are weakly discursively regulated do not have access to more complex modes of practice.

## **Conclusion**

Existing literature in the interrelated fields of oral history, trauma research, and memory and narrative studies provides us with conceptual language to talk about the intergenerational dialogue and the complexities of the 'never again' imperative or, in the words of Simon *et al.*, the pedagogical justification of remembrance. Academics have put this language to use in search of a notion of how an 'ideal' (intergenerational) dialogue, in which primary narratives about atrocities are told and listened to, could or should be. I call this ideal 'an analytic, constructive dialogue', which is based on an interpretation of Ellsworth's "analytic dialogue", Bar-On's "constructive dialog", Nystrand's "dialogic interaction" and Simon's interpretation of "gringostroika".<sup>126</sup> These and other academics allocate to this kind of dialogue the

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<sup>124</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 136 and 155-156.

<sup>125</sup> Nystrand and Gamoran, "The big picture", 72.

<sup>126</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*; Nystrand, "Dialogic instruction"; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 17-21.

potential to change learners' (and, I would add, teachers') perceptions. The dialogue is *analytic* in its acknowledgment and reflection upon feelings of estrangement and uncanniness raised during the telling and listening to primary (and secondary) narratives about atrocities.<sup>127</sup> It is *constructive* in its "different" listening, because, as Simon explains, it holds the potential "to renew a reconstructed living memory for a community".<sup>128</sup> This is a living memory "that dialectically presses on the sense of one's future purposes and possibilities"<sup>129</sup> and in which "we can come to a recognition of the ethical relationship between self and other in the narratives we tell [and listen to]".<sup>130</sup>

While the construction of this 'ideal' - 'an analytic, constructive dialogue' - seems to be largely based on critical readings of texts, such as primary witness accounts, pictures, museum artefacts and poems, a few academics engage with the construction of this 'ideal' also in the context of *social interactions*, such as oral history interviews with Holocaust survivors and pedagogical interactions.<sup>131</sup> How one can use this kind of language to describe and analyse a *variety* of classroom interactions (not just 'the ideal') as well as museum interactions is, however, largely left unresolved.<sup>132</sup> In the field of educational theory and history education, Jacklin and Seixas do provide us with 'general' conceptual language to describe and analyse classroom interactions and underlying epistemological roles. They do not discuss, however, the kind of interactions that are the subject of this study. The fields of knowledge then need to be brought into dialogue with each other, and elaborated upon. I choose to do this through a case study of South African Grade Nine teachers and museum

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<sup>127</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 130-145; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 1-13 and 14-31; LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 185-188; Nystrand, "Dialogic instruction".

<sup>128</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 17-18.

<sup>129</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 32. Simon with Eppert explain the relationship between witnessing and living memory as follows: "Central to witnessing is either the re-presentation to others of what one has heard or seen, or the enactment of one's relationship with others so as to make evident that one's practice has been informed by the living memory of prior testimony". Simon with Eppert, "The remembering obligation", 53.

<sup>130</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 23. Simon speaks about "the practice of a transactive public memory", see Simon, *The touch of the past*, 88-89. See also Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 133.

<sup>131</sup> See for the former: Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*; Hartman, *Holocaust remembrance*. Most academics engage with both. See for example Wieviorka, "On testimony"; Felman and Laub, *Testimony crisis of witnessing*; Simon, *The touch of the past*. An example of an 'individual' critical reading of practices of remembrance is Rosenberg, "Intersecting memories". The studies focussing on enacting the 'ideal' in pedagogical interactions mentioned in this chapter are: Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*; Felman, "Education and crisis"; Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Ellsworth, *Places of learning*; Eppert, "Entertaining history"; Simon, *The touch of the past*; Simon and Eppert, "The remembering obligation", and, to an extent, Husbands, *What is history teaching?*

<sup>132</sup> See for other studies that address this: Simon and Rosenberg's case study of B.Ed. students who engaged in different ways with the question how one could and/or should remember and learn from the Montréal massacre. Simon with Rosenberg, "Beyond the logic of emblemization". See also Brown, "Trauma, museums and the future of pedagogy"; Liss, "Artificial testimonies"; Kros, *Trusting to the process*.

facilitators using, performing, and constructing primary narratives about the Holocaust and Apartheid Forced Removals and less organised positionings of self and others in relation to these historical events.

I now introduce the teachers and facilitators I met in the museums and schools as ‘characters’. By speaking about ‘characters’, I address the social character and the methodological challenges of these encounters. This introduction and methodological orientation prepares the ground for Chapters Four and Six in which I present an interpretation of how facilitators and teachers construct primary narratives of Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust as historical knowledge (or otherwise) and how they position self and others within these constructions in interviews with the researcher.

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## Chapter Three

### A search for primary narratives

#### Meeting and creating the people

*Oral history changes the manner of writing history much in the same way as the modern novel transformed literary fiction; and the major change is that the narrator, from outside of the narration, is pulled inside and becomes part of it.<sup>1</sup>*

How do South African Grade Nine teachers and museum facilitators use, perform, and construct primary narratives about the Holocaust and Apartheid Forced Removals or, in the absence of primary narratives, less organised positionings of self and others in relation to these historical events? The social process that underlies the relationships temporarily created during the interviews and observations shapes, in important ways, this research question and the answers to it. As mentioned in the previous chapter, narrating is a social process of constructing, re-membling the self, others and the world(s), instead of a process of 'reporting' or 'representing' an absolute, 'fixed' individual, 'his/her history' and 'the world-out-there'.<sup>2</sup> This applies both to the primary narratives that I am 'seeking' in the educators' talk and practice, *and* to the 'characters' I construct here, based on the 'real' people I met over the last five years in history classrooms and museums.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce these 'characters' and to address methodological and analytic challenges of this kind of research. It is indeed not my intention to 'give voice to the voiceless' as the post-war generation of oral historians initially aimed to do, but to acknowledge the *interactive* nature of these encounters and my own role as the one who interprets and dialogues with the narratives of these 'characters'.<sup>3</sup> I speak about 'characters' and the discursive nature of these encounters because they are not only fleeting, in the sense that they are socially constructed and un-controllable, but the 'characters' also have their own lives. The author, not dissimilar to fiction, creates these characters without being able to 'control' them and the reader interprets them in different ways. More importantly, the 'real people' behind these characters, but also behind the reader and the author, carry on their

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<sup>1</sup> Portelli quoted in Figlio, "Oral history and the unconsciousness", 121.

<sup>2</sup> Bruner, *The culture of education*; Hodgkin and Radstone, *Contested pasts*; Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*; Thomson, "Anzac memories", 300-301.

<sup>3</sup> Different to the first, post WWII, oral historians who aimed to let the voices of the subjects 'speak for themselves', this chapter intertwines their voices with the self-aware voice of the researcher. I therefore situate myself among post-positivist and self-reflective oral historians who have influenced the field of oral history since the late 1970s. See the introduction to the "Critical Developments" section in Perks and Thomson, *The oral history reader*, 1-13. See also Field and Swanson, "Introduction", 11-12.

respective lives after having met or witnessed each other's meaning-making processes for either a short or more extensive time.<sup>4</sup>

All but one<sup>5</sup> of these 'characters' are South Africans who have experienced Apartheid in one way or the other and who are educators of one kind or another. While these museum facilitators and Grade Nine history teachers have these two characteristics in common, there are considerable differences in how they positioned themselves in the interaction with the researcher, *and* how I positioned them. These differences have to do with their roles and positionings during Apartheid, how the educators gave and give meaning to these experiences, and the interaction at hand. As explained in Chapter One, both parties, consciously and unconsciously, forwarded and/or neglected, *included* and/or *excluded*, parts of our own and the other's (assumed) "identity kit".<sup>6</sup> In addition, underlying assumptions regarding 'good' or 'appropriate' teaching also influenced the ease with which the interview or observation went. Some informants were confident, 'strong', educators, while others were on the other side of the continuum and struggled to present an (in their eyes) 'acceptable' image of their teacher-identity. Some informants struggled to 'take the microphone'<sup>7</sup> because, as they explained, they did not have the resources, or, because – and often this was left unsaid – they lacked the confidence, at least in the presence of someone they perceived as 'an outsider'. Others were 'strong' storytellers – they loved sharing stories and 'entertaining' an audience, often actively *including* the researcher in their stories. Some informants had experienced traumatic events and struggled to speak about, and remember, these experiences, though they felt an obligation to share their stories. Others had a fairly 'normal' life and either felt they did not really experience anything worth mentioning, or entertained their audience with stories about how they witnessed/watched Apartheid from a neighbouring country and their thoughts about such an oppressive regime. Often informants were somewhere in-between these different poles. To be able to study the different ways in which the informants positioned themselves, I analysed not only identifiable primary narratives,<sup>8</sup> but

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<sup>4</sup> See White, *Tropics of discourse*, for the idea that history, as all discourse, is "tropical", "figured" or "emplotted". See Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination*, for the idea that writing and reading, creating meaning is a continuous, reciprocal process of active response. See also Hunt, *Psychoanalytic aspects of fieldwork*, 24. See also the above-mentioned introduction to the "Critical developments" section in Perks and Thomson, *The oral history reader*, 1-13. Note that by sketching "characters" of "relatively unimportant" people "on a reduced scale of observation" and incorporating the researcher's voice and procedures, the researcher 'brushes along' the approach of microhistory, without however applying it. Penn, *Rogues, rebels and runaways*, 1-7 and 167, footnote 4.

<sup>5</sup> One of the younger history teachers was born in a neighbouring country but told stories of how he experienced/witnessed Apartheid when visiting South Africa as a child.

<sup>6</sup> Gee, *Social linguistics and literacies*, 65-67.

<sup>7</sup> See previous chapter where I quote Winter and Sivan using and explaining this metaphor, Winter and Sivan, "Setting the framework", 30. See also Yow, "Interpersonal relations in the interview".

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter Two for a 'practical' definition of narratives with reference to White and Wertsch.

also less organised ways of positioning self and others in history, for example in the form of single utterances.

For the researcher, the one who has, in this study at least, the last word, it is challenging to do justice to the living people behind these ‘characters’. One way of positioning South Africans in relation to the Apartheid regime is to refer to people’s ‘race’ and ‘skin colour’ in order to indicate the degree in which the informants have been advantaged or disadvantaged by the regime and its aftermath. There is, however, disagreement in academic discourse and in the broader public sphere on whether one can or should use these kinds of labels.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, there is the argument that terminology referring to people’s ‘race’ and ‘skin colour’ is problematic owing to its connections with colonization and the Apartheid regime. By using these labels, one perpetuates prejudice and segregation. For this reason, some of the facilitators and teachers explicitly chose not to use these labels to describe themselves or other people. On the other hand, there is the argument that the labels still play a role in present South Africa. Many subjects still use ‘race’ as a basis of differentiation in their discourses.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, government, non-governmental organisations, and international projects gear their interventions towards the ‘previously disadvantaged’ and for that reason still use labels such as ‘black’, ‘white’ and ‘coloured’. Having considered these arguments, I chose to keep the labels included in the study, indicating, however, their discursive origin by using single quotation marks. I ask the reader to be aware of the fact that, as this study shows, the complexity of the various identities of each person nevertheless defies classification.<sup>11</sup>

Another form of classification I use in the following pages relates to how the educators present reality or truth. I approach this by dialoguing their words and practice with academic literature that addresses our (human) challenge to find a balance between dividing and uniting forces in the past, present and future.<sup>12</sup> This interpretation, involving the subjectivities of both interviewee and interviewer, is crucial. Ellsworth warns against the ideal that full understanding, “a communicative dialogue”, is possible and desirable. The ideal, she argues, lacks a theorization of discontinuity. This is also applicable to the dialogue between subjects and researchers.

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<sup>9</sup> See also Martin, “what’s in the name ‘coloured’?”, 262; Butler, *Excitable speech*. See for an application of this debate in museum studies, Witz, “Transforming museums”, 115-123.

<sup>10</sup> See also Bundy, “New nation, new history?”, 96.

<sup>11</sup> Similarly, I refer to schools in relation to their Apartheid-labels in an attempt to document the disparities in South African schools, even though the use of these labels is limited when describing the complexities in present South African schooling (see below).

<sup>12</sup> See Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination* and Nystrand “Dialogic instruction”.

Without it [a theorization of discontinuity], the only way we can read someone's unwillingness to stay in dialogue is that they have not sufficiently developed the moral virtues necessary to keep their minds "open", their emotions in check. The only way we can read their failure or refusal or limits to understanding is as a failure of their rational capacities, or as a mean-spirited, separatist, antagonistic and dangerous-to-everyone-who-loves-democracy refusal to honor another human being's attempt to "connect" through communication.<sup>13</sup>

I am therefore partial in that my account is not only taking sides but it is also unfinished. Portelli's reflection on oral history also applies, I would argue, to the relationship between subjects and an observer, and to the researcher's final write up:

[O]ral history can never be told without taking sides, since the 'sides' exist inside the telling. And, no matter what their personal histories and beliefs may be, historians and 'sources' are hardly ever on the same 'side'. The confrontation of their different partialities – confrontation as 'conflict', and confrontation as 'search for unity' – is one of the things which make oral history interesting.<sup>14</sup>

Our perceptions and uses of discursive boundaries around what is discussable and describable, our positioning of self and others in history, approaches to history, and modes of pedagogical practice are part, or expressions, of this (human) challenge to find a balance between dividing and uniting forces in the past, present and future. I relied more on the first three forms of relating to, and constructing, the world when interpreting informants I could interview but not observe. In addition to these lenses, I operationalised the fourth lens to a greater degree when discussing observations of museum and classroom interactions.

Below I present first a background to the two museums and a reflection on the interviews conducted with a selection of museum facilitators. I then present a background to the high schools and a reflection on the interviews with a selection of teachers. Lastly, I present the seven teachers I could both interview and observe.

### **The museums**

The District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre are museums of a different nature. They do not only deal with different histories, namely Apartheid Forced Removals on the one hand, and the Holocaust on the other hand; *how* they deal with these histories differs as well. An important influence in this regard is the way in which these histories have been remembered and constructed differently over time in the public space. The Holocaust gained public recognition only from the 1960s onwards and now, at least in academic circles, it is

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<sup>13</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 102.

<sup>14</sup> Portelli, "What makes oral history different", 73.

perceived as being part of our (global) public memory.<sup>15</sup> In the case of the District Six (and other) Forced Removals, a wider public (beyond those involved in resistance against Apartheid) only became aware of and interacted with this history during the process of South Africa's political transformation in the 1990s. The ways in which these events have been remembered is also, as Kurasawa explains, different in that socio-economic hierarchies influence the primary witnesses' access to material and symbolic resources as well as various institutional and popular audiences.<sup>16</sup>

As explained in Chapter One, however, the above-mentioned historical events do bear some commonalities in the make-up of totalitarian and oppressive regimes that staged them, the traumatic character of the experiences of primary witnesses and the "witnessing fever"<sup>17</sup> both are submitted to in present-day public memory. Both museums prioritise the position of the victims of these regimes, and advocate for a future without totalitarianism and authoritarianism.

### **The District Six Museum**

The District Six Museum "*as a museum*" officially opened in the old church of the Central Methodist Mission in Buitenkant Street on 10 December 1994, the year of the first democratic elections in South Africa.<sup>18</sup> Since the establishment of the District Six Museum Foundation in 1989 and its itinerant exhibitions, District Sixers not only claimed the right to tell their stories in a public space, as a spin-off of the Hands Off District Six campaign, they also continued their fight for the actual District Six area.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See for a history of the remembrance of the Holocaust, Loshitzky, "Postmemory cinema"; Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*; Wieviorka, "From survivor to witness"; Friedlander, "Trauma, memory, and transference". See also Chapter Eight. See for a more general introduction to the public remembrance of traumatic events, Leydesdorff *et al.*, "Introduction", 8-12. Note that I cautiously use 'public memory' here as referring to complex and changing ways in which past events are remembered in public spaces by individuals and collectives. See Green, "Individual remembering and 'collective memory'" and Popular Memory Group, "Popular memory" for a critical analysis of the use of terms such as 'public memory', 'collective memory' and 'individual memory' and the complex relationship between them.

<sup>16</sup> Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 7. See also more generally Leydesdorff *et al.*, "Introduction", 8-12. Coombes provides an analysis of socio-political and economic struggles affecting the working and image of District Six Museum. Coombes, *District Six*. See also Rassool, "Community museums". For a reflection on the commodification of the term 'holocaust' and differences in socio-economic positions of communities using 'holocaust' as a metaphor to describe atrocities, see Ruffins, "Revisiting the old plantation".

<sup>17</sup> Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 3-4.

<sup>18</sup> Rassool, "Introduction: Recalling community in Cape Town", vii (Rassool's emphasis). See also Rassool's more recent article "Community museums".

<sup>19</sup> Soudien, "The first few years of the District Six Museum Foundation", 5-6. Since 1997, the District Six Beneficiary Trust co-ordinates and monitors the process of restitution and redevelopment in District Six. See Nagia, "Land restitution in District Six"; Coombes, "District Six"; Rassool, "Community museums".

District Six is one of the best-known areas in Cape Town and South Africa for understanding Forced Removals. During the 1970s and the early 1980s, the Apartheid government had forcibly removed the cosmopolitan community of District Six and demolished their houses.<sup>20</sup> In an attempt to implement colour segregation, the government dumped the people on the Cape Flats, a vast sandy landscape at a considerable distance from the centre of Cape Town with barely any infrastructure such as shops, schools and work places. Despite plans to repopulate the area with ‘whites’, the area remained largely empty, a wasteland of the Apartheid’s policy of resettlement, but also - with its isolated, untouched churches and mosques - an icon of resistance.<sup>21</sup>

Academics and museum facilitators call the District Six museum, a *living* museum, a *people’s* museum, or a *community* museum.<sup>22</sup> It stands as a monument for the history made and remade by not only heritage professionals, but, especially, by ordinary people. Its beginnings lie in a working project, “Streets”, that was open to the general public but more specifically was designed for former residents to reclaim the social and ‘memory’ space of District Six, or as Delpont argues, to generate meaning through “visual catalysts”. This was done not only by means of the exhibition of pictures and artefacts that former residents donated, but also through a process of inscribing and re-inscribing a large street map that covers the central floor space of the museum. Since then the idea of a museum as a lived space has been taken further in the ever-changing and growing construction of memory cloths, audiovisual installations, new exhibitions on Forced Removals in other areas in Cape Town, and debates on transformation and forgiveness.<sup>23</sup> This idea of a museum as a lived space also highlights the people’s narratives as contested, ever changing and dynamic.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Forced Removals and segregation did not exclusively happen during the Apartheid regime. ‘African’ residents of District Six were already removed after the 1901 bubonic plague (for which they were seen to be responsible) to what later became Ndabeni, a ‘black’ township. Rassool, “Community museums”, 287.

<sup>21</sup> For the history of the area, the Forced Removals and the District Six Museum see the following literature: various contributions in Rassool and Prosalendis, *Recalling community*; in Jeppie and Soudien *The struggle for District Six*; in Field, *Lost communities*; and in Zegeye *Social identities in the new South Africa*. See also Coombes, “District Six” and Goldin, “The reconstitution of coloured identity in the Western Cape”.

<sup>22</sup> See for a nuanced analysis of the term ‘community museum’, Rassool, “Community museums”, 311-314.

<sup>23</sup> Delpont, “Signposts for retrieval”; Rassool, “Community museums”. See Coombes, “District Six” and Rassool, “Community museums” for an analysis of the various parts of the exhibition space, the ‘District Six walk’ and other projects in the District Six area. Rassool addresses the recent challenges of “museumization” namely the institutionalisation, professionalisation and the pressures of a business approach. Rassool, “Community museums”, 301-314.

<sup>24</sup> As Soudien and Meltzer put it: “[A]ll the narrations of the District, because they are human are also partial, incomplete and unavoidably ideological. Racial, class and cultural prejudices are unavoidably lodged in many of the stories that are told of the District, even those from within it. They include and exclude different people at different times”. Soudien, and Meltzer, “District Six: Representation and struggle”, 68.

### **The Cape Town Holocaust Centre**

The first Holocaust Museum on the African continent, the Cape Town Holocaust Centre opened its doors officially on 10 August 1999. The Centre strives to further South Africa's transformation process by making explicit links between the racial ideologies of Nazism and Apartheid and by documenting in detail the Holocaust, the intentional and systematic killing of six million Jews in Nazi Europe. The Centre has developed lesson material and programs for learners, teachers and other groups such as prisoners, police, magistrates and nurses.

In contrast to the survivors who have an “episodic memory” of the Holocaust, we - the post-Holocaust generation - have (or are assumed to have) a “semantic memory” or abstract knowledge of the Holocaust. Breznitz, in reference to Tulving, contrasts these two forms of memory and defines the former as “refer[ing] to information stored as a specific event in the history of the person himself/herself. As such, it has a specific location and context, often with rich sensory elements”.<sup>25</sup> The names of the camps, images such as the entrance of Auschwitz, and events that lead up to the genocide such as *Kristalnacht*, are part of public memory. The Holocaust is the subject of popular culture (theatre, novels, movies ...) and many educational initiatives that attempt to teach about this genocide, a “Crime against Humanity” that inspired world leaders to form the United Nations in 1948.<sup>26</sup>

Within the context of these different spaces (the space of the museum, but also the space of public memory), museum facilitators constructed reality and truth in different ways. Some facilitators explicitly talked about and seemingly felt comfortable with the chaos and complexity of life, while others tried to find order and closure by presenting seemingly fixed, unquestioned, narratives. These differences and commonalities played a role across both

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<sup>25</sup> Breznitz, “The advantages of delay”, 44-45, quote from 45. Compare with Holocaust survivor Charlotte Delbo's differentiation between “*mémoire profonde*” (internal, embodied memory) and “*mémoire ordinaire*” (intellectual, external memory). Delbo locates these two kinds of memories *within* herself. See Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*, 50-54; Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 7-8; Wieviorka, “On testimony”; Friedlander, “Trauma, memory, and transference”. See for critique on Delbo's and Langer's distinctions based on the perspectives of secondary witnesses, Baum, “Never to forget”, 96-98. Compare also with Simon's differentiation between historical and autobiographical memory. Simon, “The paradoxical practice of *Zakhor*”, 9-10.

<sup>26</sup> For further readings, see Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*; Hartman, *Holocaust remembrance*; Levy, *Remembering for the future*; Hartman, *The longest shadow*; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*; Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*; Iorio, *et al.*, *The Holocaust: Lessons for the third generation*; Loshitzky, “Postmemory cinema”; Young, *The texture of memory*. See also literature mentioned in the previous chapter: Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*; Simon, *The touch of the past*; Simon and Eppert, “The remembering obligation”, Eppert, “Entertaining history”; Salmons, “Moral dilemmas”; Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*; Krondorfer, *Remembrance and reconciliation*; LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*; Young, *Writing and rewriting the Holocaust*.

museums. In order to give a glimpse of these differences and commonalities, I present below two facilitators from each museum.

*KH, District Six Museum*

I met KH, a retired ‘coloured’<sup>27</sup> librarian, at the end of 2003, the year in which I looked for primary narratives in the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and interviewed a selection of museum facilitators. KH was born in District Six and later (before the Forced Removals) moved to the townships where he, as librarian, felt “*the great responsibility of mediating between people and knowledge [...] counteracting state propaganda*”. He was involved in setting up the District Six Museum and served as a museum facilitator until recently.

Several people had told me KH was a passionate storyteller with outspoken ideas. The meeting was indeed worthwhile - a mine of gems for oral historians. KH spiced his talk with jokes and interpolating sub-stories through which he propelled his critique on totalitarianism, authoritarianism and racism. A constant in his construction, around which he shuttled back and forth in time was the *mythical* city of Cape Town, which holds together different times, different people and generations:<sup>28</sup>

*[T]his is my city, my ancestral city. My ancestors, the males were fishermen, um, stonemasons. They all came from Europe: Naples, Sicily, Corsica. [...] [M]y favourite joke is: they come here, because they're coming to Africa, they've heard about the gold, you know. And they get off the boat in the Waterfront and they take their bundle and they go to Cape Town station and they see this amazingly beautiful woman and then they forget all about the gold. And then they decide to stay here. So it's like the island of sirens, everybody who comes here, falls in love and stays and that is what Cape Town is made of. [...] Today people who are genetically descendant from the Khoisan go to a white anthropologist, "please teach me to click, I can only speak Afrikaans", you know, they've been totally colonised. So, and I DELIGHT in being a Capetonian, I delight in not falling into any category (long pause) and so do many Capetonians and (pause) the Apartheid government had terrible problems with places like Cape Town and people like me, because we wouldn't just accept classification because it MUTATES all the time.*

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<sup>27</sup> KH rejected colour classification. He vehemently resisted the idea of making or perceiving the museum as ‘coloured’. He did not describe himself as ‘a coloured’ though spoke about ‘white’, ‘black’ and ‘coloured’ people, however always indicating the humanity that they all share. When reflecting on elections and distrust between ‘coloureds’ and ‘blacks’ in Cape Town, he said the following: “[T]hese poor coloured people, they’re not coloured people, they’re poor people. They’re ignorant people, they’re frightened people. White people were ignorant, white people weren’t poor, but they were afraid, so they all voted for the Apartheid government, frightened people vote for the Apartheid government, not white people or coloured people”.

<sup>28</sup> See for the idea of interviewees shuttling back and forth in time, Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*. See for a history of Cape Town and its “many real and imagined cultural maps” based on memories and stories drawn from oral history interviews, Field *et al.*, *Imagining the city*, especially Field and Swanson, “Introduction”, 3-17.

KH's portrait of the city resonated with his definition of truth: it is diverse and ever changing. It is against this background that he expressed his critique on my initial, static, interpretation of trauma (see Chapter One):

*You can be creative about it [trauma] and you can learn from it and you can get wisdom from it and you can use it, for education, for inspiration but you see, pain is an emotion and it's about the human spirit and it's about the soul, you see? [...] [I]t can be used and abused, [it] can [be] used for torture, it can be used for self-pity and it can be used for political propaganda (pause) you see? And fear is another one (pause) you know? "All the black men is [sic] gonna kill you, be careful," you know, "oh no, world's gonna come to an end". Fear's another emotion, "vote for me, otherwise ..." (pause) All those bad [...] emotions, they are destructive, they ARE parts of the human conditions. [...] You'll be capable of hating; we are capable of killing but you ['re] also capable of loving and you ['re] also capable of forgiving ...*

KH's interpretation of trauma resonates strongly with Simon's description of practices of remembrance as selective and potentially used for destructive ends.<sup>29</sup> As I discuss in Chapter Four, KH propagated a "rogues' gallery" in the Museum to show that District Six was not only the democratic, peaceful construction many former residents bring forth. At the same time, however, he defended the choice many former residents make to emphasise precisely the latter.

#### *HA, District Six Museum*

While KH took a 'rebellious' position within the museum and in life, HA, a 'coloured' retired teacher and currently one of the trustees of the museum, represented a more conservative position and presented District Six as *the* example for future South Africa. He described his role in the museum as preserving the endangered mission and ethos:

*[T]he mission changes slowly, but surely. It changes and before you know where you are, the museum becomes an institution or a space where we start allowing ourselves and associating ourselves with the (pause) the criminals of the past. The political criminals of the past. You know? People forget that we have a particular mission and that is to ensure that no, in no way must people ever behave in the selfish, vicious, um, arrogant way again towards one another - which is a problem of our will! OK? We're never satisfied with our little space, we always want the space someone else has! [...] District Six is and was a terrific, example of a community that has succeeded in co-existing and not because someone said "now, this is what we're going to do". It was a natural development. Which suggests that it is natural for us to co-exist! (long pause) that's why it is important, I think, for (pause) for as many as possible of the original (pause) foundation members [...] [to] ensure and help staff and new board members to never forget the purpose that this museum has to perform ...*

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<sup>29</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 15.

HA was born in the Bo-Kaap<sup>30</sup> but spent most of his life in District Six. Until the mid seventies, he taught in the area until he moved to the Cape Flats where he taught at a teacher college. Because of his position in the community, HA was involved in resistance initiatives in District Six and in the establishment of the museum. As is clear from the above extract, HA spoke about the bigger context and about how things should be. Only sporadically, did he sketch his personal history or spoke from the 'I'. Throughout our conversation, he held up a 'natural' portrayal of humankind as containing a group that is animal-like, wanting to survive and kill each other, and another group being able to co-habit peacefully as people did in District Six. Even though he often spoke from the 'we' perspective when describing the 'dark' side of humanity, he did not question this polarity.

While the five museum facilitators I interviewed at the District Six Museum were all primary witnesses to life in District Six and/or the Forced Removals,<sup>31</sup> only two out of the seven facilitators I interviewed at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre experienced the Holocaust first hand.<sup>32</sup> The age of Holocaust survivors, the geographical distance and the lapse of time between the events in Nazi-Germany and present South Africa, and the traumatic character of their experiences result in fewer primary witnesses serving as museum facilitators.

*MP, Cape Town Holocaust Centre*

I interviewed MP, a Jewish elderly woman, as one of the primary witnesses involved in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. Born in Warsaw she experienced, as a young woman, the Warsaw ghetto, several extermination camps and the death march out of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Unlike her family, she survived the Holocaust and came to South Africa. When we sat down for the interview, MP launched immediately in giving her chronologically ordered, gruelling account of what happened to her and her loved ones before and during World War II – seemingly assuming that that was what I had come for – as indeed so many had before me.

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<sup>30</sup> The Bo-Kaap (District Two) was (and still is) a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood (though not all its inhabitants were and are Muslim). It is in walking distance from District Six but situated closer to the mountain and the centre of Cape Town. It was spared from the Forced Removals. See Worden, *et al.*, *Cape Town*, 249-250.

<sup>31</sup> Only JA experienced the Forced Removals from District Six first hand. The other four interviewees (KH, HA, SA and GC) married and moved to other areas before the actual demolition of District Six between 1966 and the early 1980s. The Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act, both implemented from 1950 onwards, affected all of them by the restriction on the areas they could move to and in the daily discrimination they encountered.

<sup>32</sup> MP and IL are both Jewish. They experienced the Holocaust in different ways. MP grew up in Warsaw and as a young woman experienced the Warsaw Ghetto and several extermination camps (see below). IL was a child at the time. She experienced concentration camps in France until an agency took her to a children's home. She survived the war under a false name in a convent.

MP's Polish accent strengthened while she spoke about her youth and she motioned towards the tattoo on her arm without baring it. She organised her gruelling account around "*acts of courage and heroism*" of different Jewish figures ranging from the well known Adam Czerniakow, head of the Warsaw *Judenrat*, to a little unnamed girl that hid away, the people who helped her survive in the extermination camps and her own brother who died during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. She closed off her account with the following sub-story:

*[After the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau] [w]e walked through, you know, destroyed Germany. We met on the way German people. Old people with little children. The little children's parents were the sons and daughters of the old people. They were the guards, the SS, the Aufseherins and the guards in all the camps! Some were in the army probably. But the, these old people, the parents, they would put the children in front of us, when they saw us, "Wir wussten nichts! Wir Wussten nichts!" They were afraid of us! Because they thought, we will kill them or we will do something to them. NOBODY, NOBODY lifted a hand to a German person. NOBODY even SAY [sic] a bad word to them. We just said to ourselves "um, they tell us they didn't know! Of course they knew!" Everybody, the whole NATION was involved! The WHOLE nation! And, um, um, we left them alone. And we marched along. But what the Russians did to them, I don't know, but what I want to tell you: we didn't look for vengeance; we did not become animals. Although we, we lived in an animal world for six years. Because in MY upbringing (pause) in MY environment, MY parents and MY teachers taught me that even in inhuman circumstances one must behave like a human, be a Mensch.*

Presenting her people as in essence good, seemed to be all-important to MP. She did not mention any experience akin to what for example Levi calls "the grey zone" in his *The drowned and the saved*.<sup>33</sup> When I tried to ask questions relating to my research on the mediation of these experiences to younger generations, MP made clear that it is the role of younger teachers to do so (see Chapter Four). Recounting her story repeatedly to different people seemed to be painful enough. At the same time, instead of responding to my questions regarding *how* she spoke about her experiences with younger generations, it might have been less threatening for her to recount her often told story; a story "fixed in a stereotype, in a form tested by experience, crystallized, perfected, adorned, installing itself in the place of the raw memory and growing at its expense".<sup>34</sup> I shared this desire-to-avoid by repeatedly referring to other primary narratives and literature on the Holocaust – in an attempt to indicate I had an inkling of what she was talking about so that she did not have to go into 'the details'; inside myself, I felt a resistance against listening to it. MP, however, pointed out how I either made 'wrong' references or that the experiences were not the same. More than any other interview,

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<sup>33</sup> See also Bettelheim's *Surviving and other essays*; Frankl, *Victor Frankl recollections*; Wiesel, "Afterword". For an analysis of Levi's "grey zone", see Harrowitz, "The grey zone of scientific invention".

<sup>34</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 24. See also Jones, "Distressing histories and unhappy interviewing", 51-52.

this interview with MP made me aware of how both speaker and listener are taking part in the construction of “the undiscussable”.<sup>35</sup>

*MG, Cape Town Holocaust Centre*

MG, a secondary witness Jewish middle-aged woman, grew up in Johannesburg and taught for several years before joining the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. At the time of the interview, she was also involved in Jewish community projects in ‘black’ townships. At one point during our conversation, MG talked about how her involvement at the Centre allowed her not only to meet many different people, but also to become self-reflective.

*[G]rowing up in Apartheid South Africa, I was a victim TOO because it didn't give me the opportunity to interACT with all the wonderful people living in this country! You know. And unfortunately because of my white skin I was restricted in (sighs) not restricted um, maybe as an ADULT and I think even certainly as a child [...] [I did not have the opportunity to interact with all people] because of the system. [...] I was grateful that my parents brought me up in a certain way, to, you know, respect other people! But that's not the beginning or the end, that doesn't give one the opportunity to sit down and really get to know other people. Since working here, I have had an amazing opportunity to meet people from all over, young people, older people. It really enriched my life.*

In the above passage, MG employed the label ‘victim’ in a specific way, which she nuanced later on in the conversation by differentiating between her own experiences and that of a ‘generic’ ‘black’ person under Apartheid:

*I think that if I look at my own life (pause) it's been an exceptionally (pause) good one so far. Um, it's obviously one's attitude; there is not one person in this world who GOES through life on a straight road. There's always been lanes and avenues [...] I have always been fortunate. I had a roof above my head. There's never been a time in my life where I've got to worry where I was going to sleep, um, I've never begged for food, clothing, education. I'm fortunate to have a caring and loving family [...] Sad as it is, it's maybe my white skin and living in South Africa, I tend to think. I haven't thought about it what it must have been like to be black, my age, growing up in South Africa. Where, what was home, what was clothing, hand outs from other people, your home was a tin roof above your head, food was, well ja, nothing really yummy and delicious at the time (pause) um, awful, absol[utely] and YET and yet, amazing how these people are, um, turned not really being bitter, um, it's exceptional ...*

Even though MG speaks from another position, she shares with MP, and also with HA, a silence around “the undiscussable” in their own and other people’s lives (for example feelings of distrust and resentment or positions of “empathic unsettlement”, see Chapters One and

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<sup>35</sup> See Chapter Two and see White “Marking absences”; Klempner, “Navigating life review interviews with survivors of trauma”. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*; Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*, 37-38; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 133 and 140.

Two). Even though KH questions this kind of silence, he also defends it as a characteristic we all, as humans, share.

### **The high schools**

The teachers I interviewed and observed, similar to the museum facilitators, constructed reality and truth in particular ways. In contrast to the facilitators, the majority of teachers spoke clearly and strongly from (within) their teacher's identity rather than from a primary witness position. An obvious explanation for this is that the facilitators' primary experience is the very reason for their involvement in the respective museums and is an important aspect of their positioning in society, while the majority of teachers, having lived through the era of Apartheid, nevertheless do not perceive 'being a primary witness' a vital part of their teacher-identity. As stated in the introduction, this 'forgetting' is also found in the official voice as expressed in the Curriculum and Teacher's Guide documents.

One can see this created distance between the self and the event or experience in the underlying assumptions the interviewees had around the aim of these interviews and their own role herein. Primary witnesses more easily gave their life story – even when I tried to ask them questions about the dialogue with younger generations, and their present construction of their past. Secondary witnesses (both facilitators and teachers) talked more about the program/curriculum or the audience/learners and seemed to find it difficult or perhaps strange to position themselves as primary witnesses *while simultaneously being a teacher/facilitator*.

'Opening up' the interview dialogue with the teachers was challenging, as was gaining access to teachers' classrooms. The particular, *divided*, character of South African schooling might play a role herein. Due to the Apartheid legacy and fifteen years of resistance against this legacy, the South African education system is segregated and in many ways dysfunctional. Separate departments administered Apartheid schooling with tremendous inequalities in the distribution of resources, including teacher qualifications. This continues to shape the reality in many schools today, even though there is now one education department on a national and provincial level.

Presently, schools are still described according to their Apartheid labels in order to highlight the inequalities. The former D.E.T. (Department of Education and Training) and H.O.R. (House of Representatives) schools are historically disadvantaged schools respectively serving the 'black' and 'coloured' population, while the former H.O.A. (House of Assembly) and many private schools served the 'white' population. Many former H.O.A. schools

became so-called Model C schools in the early 1990s, doing away with segregation, opening their doors to all. Many of the advantaged schools now have learners from different backgrounds (often outnumbering 'white' learners) and 'coloured' schools have increasingly more 'black' learners due to changes in the socio-economic structure of the South African society (a growing 'black' middle class) and/or scholarship initiatives.<sup>36</sup>

The new government did not only install one Department of Education, but also developed one - Outcomes Based Education (O.B.E.) – curriculum.<sup>37</sup> Teachers praised and called for the new O.B.E. Curriculum - especially immediately after the regime change. Once it was implemented, however, teachers revolted against it. Research indicates that there are not only challenges on the level of school management but also in the classrooms: teachers lack the conceptual knowledge and confidence to *implement* the changes.<sup>38</sup>

I would argue that not only time and work pressure but also the above-mentioned lack of knowledge and confidence amongst teachers across the different kinds of schools shaped the interviews with a majority of the 26 teachers I met during 2004 and 2005 in 19 different high schools across Cape Town.<sup>39</sup> I selected eight schools from this sample for observations,

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<sup>36</sup> See Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*.

<sup>37</sup> See for the history of the construction of the present curriculum, the initial downgrading of history and its subsequent integration into the learning area of social sciences, Bundy, "New nation, new history?"; Kros, *Trusting to the process*; Kros, "Telling lies and then hoping to forget all about history"; Chisholm, "The making of South Africa's national curriculum statement"; Chisholm, "The history curriculum in the (revised) national curriculum statement"; Siebörger, "History and the emerging nation"; Legassick, "Reflections".

<sup>38</sup> For an introduction to the challenging position teachers are in, see Modiba, "South African black teachers' perceptions about their practice"; Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*; Taylor and Vinjevoold "Teaching and learning in South African schools"; Fleisch, *Managing educational change*; Harley and Wedekind, "Curriculum 2005"; Chisholm, *et al.*, *South African education policy review*. This discrepancy seems not to be unique to South Africa. Ravitch, for example, reports that half of history teachers in the U.S.A. are "out-of field" teachers, "without so much as an undergraduate minor in the subject". Ravitch, "The educational backgrounds of history teachers", 143. Barton and Levstik, however, discussing history education in the U.S.A. and the U.K., point out that teachers' *knowledge* of the discipline and of pedagogic practices does not automatically translate into classroom *practice*. They state that "[u]nless they have a clear sense of purpose, teachers' primary actions continue to be coverage of the curriculum and control of students, no matter how much they know about history, teaching, or the intersection of the two". Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 246-260 (quote from 258).

<sup>39</sup> During 2004, I contacted 28 high schools in Cape Town out of which 19 responded positively. The schools are situated in the city bowl, the southern suburbs and in 'coloured' and 'black' townships. Because of the specific compilation of the Cape Townian population, I contacted a majority of former H.O.R. schools, an equal amount of former D.E.T. and H.O.A./Model C schools, and a minority of private schools. Of the 19 schools that responded positively ten (out of 13 contacted) were former H.O.R. schools, four (out of six) former H.O.A./Model C schools, two (out of six) former D.E.T. schools, and three (out of three) private schools. In these schools, I interviewed a total of 26 teachers and one primary witness that worked at a former H.O.R. school in another function. Of the 26 teachers, two taught at former D.E.T. schools, eight at former H.O.A./Model C schools, four at private schools, twelve and the primary witness at former H.O.R. schools (one of these twelve teachers moved

according to the willingness of the history teacher to cooperate, his/her life story (presence of primary narratives) and the possibility that the school might visit the District Six Museum and/or the Cape Town Holocaust Centre.<sup>40</sup> At the end of 2005, I had observed six teachers and a primary witness teaching history to Grade Nines. The seven persons came from different backgrounds and worked in six different schools. In total, I observed in two former H.O.R. schools, two former D.E.T. schools, one Jewish independent school and one former Model C school.

Gaining access to teachers' classrooms, however, was even more challenging than setting up interviews. The majority of the teachers explicitly said during the interviews that they did not have the time to cooperate in the study or expressed more subtly that they were not interested. In other instances, teachers agreed to cooperate but then cancelled just before the planned observations. For example, out of the four former H.O.R. Schools I contacted for observations, two schools agreed, while a third school initially agreed, but then withdrew.<sup>41</sup> The teacher did not respond to any of my calls. The secretary explained that the teacher was very busy and that the school had cancelled their planned visits to the museums because learners did not (or could not) pay for the outing. This is a reality in many schools; of the 28 contacted schools in 2004, those that responded negatively gave similar reasons for not being able to take part in the interviews. Teachers that cooperated in the interviews praised the new Curriculum and 'talked O.B.E.'. Many, however, indicated that it was not easy to implement the curriculum. They mentioned challenges such as work overload and lack of teachers and resources to explain why for example they did not teach about the Holocaust nor visit the museums in town, even when – in the case of some schools –these were situated almost literally down the road. As the analysis of the observations shows, not all teachers taught about the Holocaust while 'Apartheid' seemed to be a generally accepted, standard, topic. Apartheid Forced Removals, however, were not necessarily included in the latter.

Many teachers seemed to be uncomfortable with having an observer in their classroom. Some teachers explicitly referred in the interview to continuous visits by subject advisors and inspectors to their classrooms in the context of Apartheid's segregated education and/or the more recent national attempt to adhere to the O.B.E. ideals. Many teachers did not seem to be

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from one to another school during the research period). In both former H.O.A./Model C and former H.O.R. schools, I had the opportunity to interview more than one teacher.

<sup>40</sup> In order to have a representative sample of Cape Town schools, I selected four former H.O.R. schools, one former H.O.A., two former D.E.T. and one private school.

<sup>41</sup> At first, out of the eight schools I contacted for observations, seven responded positively and one former H.O.R. school chose not to cooperate. With the withdrawal of the H.O.R. school under discussion, I had six schools left, namely two former H.O.R. schools, two former D.E.T. schools, one private school, and one former H.O.A./Model C School.

used to having a researcher interested in their work and might be expressing their anxiety around their lack of knowledge and confidence by addressing the researcher *as if* she was a subject advisor<sup>42</sup> or an inspector. An alternative explanation is that the teachers perceived the interview as an opportunity to elicit knowledge from the researcher, whom they addressed as an academic historian and teacher (someone who has knowledge they seek) rather than a researcher (who seeks knowledge in the teachers) (see introduction to Chapter Six).

Many of the interviewed teachers, explicitly or implicitly, expressed anxiety around expectations regarding their pedagogical practice and the recent changes in education, and more largely, the country. Many teachers advocated for a factual approach to history. FW, a teacher from a former H.O.R. school and RT, a teacher from a former H.O.A. school, talked extensively about the ideal of unity amongst the learners. While FW portrayed this ideal as something she (and teachers in general) had to work on, RT portrayed it as 'given'.

*FW, teacher at a former H.O.R. school*

I interviewed FW, a young 'coloured' Muslim woman, in a high school with a majority of 'coloured' and a minority of 'black' learners situated in the industrial areas around Cape Town. She had taught overseas the previous year and at the time of the interview had undertaken part-time studies in educational psychology. Just before the interview, another teacher told me that FW focuses on the role of women during Apartheid. FW did not speak immediately about this when I asked her how she taught about Apartheid and whether she used primary narratives. Instead, similar to the majority of teachers interviewed, FW spoke about history as something 'factual' that needs to be 'given' and 'installed' in the children:

*[W]hat we basically do is just start off with getting the different laws that we have of the Apartheid years. There are 7 or 9 of them. Basically install that into them, explain to them nicely so that is where then the stories start coming in. Say for instance we're doing the Group Areas Act, then I would say like people of different racial groups couldn't live together in one area ok? And then now we're starting with say like, ok, like say for instance we have Sea Point now, today EVERYBODY is living there, but back in the Apartheid years, we couldn't even WALK there! And you bring in like little stories and, what we also try to do is, like for assessment, there we would ask to do, give the learners a set [of] questions maybe, like they maybe have to go home and go interview someone at home cause their grandparents obviously went through the Apartheid era. And they come up with nice little stories, and you know, one of the learners, actually also brought me one of the Dom pass[es]!*

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<sup>42</sup> The Department of Education allocates advisors to teachers, according to the subjects, or rather Learning Areas, they teach. Subject advisors regularly visit schools in their allocated areas, and organise workshops for teachers.

Similar to other teachers FW explained that visiting museums was not possible due to financial and logistic reasons (learners do not have the money to pay the bus and museum fees; the school does not have enough teachers to accompany the learners). Field trips, however, would “enlighten” the learners, she stated:

*FW: [T]here is such a lot of things that we touch on, especially with the schooling. But like I said, it would have been nicer, you know, if we could maybe just take them out, and maybe if we're doing the township, actually take them out, to one of the townships. And take them around and so that they can actually see the, um, how it looks there. Because you know our children, they live here. They don't/*

*SG: O ja, the majority lives in this area?/*

*FW: in this area. Ok, we have black learners as well that lives now in that area. But OUR learners here, they will never be able to see because some of my children never have been to the beach yet, you know. And for some people they [make fun of the townships] [...] but it's not funny because some of these learners are still close to these things, like yet they are still very far as well. So if we could maybe just have those little FIELD trips and things ...*

FW saw it as one of her tasks to explain to her learners what it was like to live under Apartheid. She felt this would help them to understand how easily they can hurt each other without realising it. However, FW herself also othered ‘black’ learners in her use of words, as is clear from the above interaction.

*RT, teacher at a former H.O.A. school*

I interviewed RT, a ‘white’ middle-aged woman, at a high school using Afrikaans as its primary medium of language. RT had taught for almost 30 years. As other teachers, she expressed regret about the increased workload of teachers and the diminished quality of education (“*die standaarde [...] het verlaag*”, “The standards have gone down”). When I asked her if and how she used primary narratives, she said that a teacher has to warn her learners that primary witnesses are “*biased*”. She gave Robben Island as an example, and seemed to speak from an exclusive Afrikaner position:

*Voor ons Robbeneiland besoek sê ek vir hulle “hulle moet weet dit kan baie eensydig oorkom. En hulle moet ook oopkop daarvoor wees, en hulle moet nie geafronteerd voel nie want hulle kan voel dat hulle volk dalk half aangevat word. [...] hulle gaan om te gaan luister al is die persoon bevooroordeeld volgens hulle, luister wat hy te sê het. Jy kan maak met die inligting daarna mee wat jy wil. En gaan kyk na die FEITE en sien die mense se emosie raak. Hulle het ‘n REDE hoekom hulle so is en moet hulle nie afskiet daarvoor nie. [...] [D]it is belangrik want dit help nie jy het jou eie idees SO sterk dat jy die ander een nie kan raak, want [...] dan beteken die uitstappie niks”.*

[Before our visit to Robben island I said to them “Know that what you will hear might come across as one-sided. You have to be open-minded. Do not feel affronted because you might feel that your nation [‘volk’] is being attacked in a way. [...] You go there to listen. Even though the person is prejudiced according to you, listen to what he has to say. Afterwards you

can do with that information what you want. And look at the FACTS and see the other people's emotions. They have a REASON why they are like that and you do not have to look down on them for that. [...] [T]his is important because it is not beneficial when your own ideas are SO strong that you cannot see the other person because [...] then the trip is meaningless".]

Throughout our conversation, RT seemed to defend an Afrikaner position, using "*die Anglo-Boere Oorlog*", "the Anglo-Boer War", twice as historical reference point when talking about trauma. Regularly she emphasised that one should not forget, but also that one should move on, not carry hate, and, for example, not accept the stereotype that every 'white' person is racist. At the same time, she painted the school (and the country) as a place in which the children had not experienced Apartheid. The learners, therefore, as she argued, do not experience any conflict or unease amongst each other: "*blanke en nie-blanke kinders [...] vorm baie mooi eenheid*", "White and non-white children are uniting well".

Underlying her 'defensive' positioning might have been a concern that what she said about 'people', namely that they stereotype 'white' (i.e. Afrikaner?) South Africans as 'racist', also included possible stereotypes the researcher ('white' though non-South African) might hold towards 'her' people. As interviewer, I found it difficult to ask more direct questions about this issue (possibly experienced as a 'burden') because her negation seemed to declare that the topic was a 'no go' zone; she presented it as non-existing.

*ED, teacher at a private school*

While FW and RT strongly adhered to a factual approach to history with the underlying epistemological roles of the teacher as 'the authority' and the learners as the ones to 'swallow' and 'accept' what the teacher says, ED, a middle-aged 'white' teacher at a private school, embraced a positioned approach to history. In contrast to the interview with RT, it was easier to interview ED, not only because she was more confident,<sup>43</sup> she also held a more 'accepted' position; a position 'we' (the younger, present, generation) could more easily discuss, namely that of a 'hero' or 'freedom fighter'. She defined herself as "*definitely an African*"<sup>44</sup> and explained how she had taught in 'Black' schools for almost 25 years, and how the Apartheid government had sacked her during the school boycotts. She described how she brings in her personal history:

*[W]hat they like in my classes is that they have to argue. [...] I put up very controversial statements, particularly because they didn't live in this period. They didn't understand, they were born in post Apartheid nowadays, which is*

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<sup>43</sup> Important to mention in this regard is that she had a leading function at the school.

<sup>44</sup> In addition, ED distanced herself from the use of 'colour' labels, as did KH mentioned above. A difference with KH was that ED highlighted the act of classification in saying "'classified' black" etc. See also Chapter Six.

*hard to understand. [...] [T]hey enjoy being able to speak their mind and to contradict what I have to say, or to go do research, to find out well, and to actually look at my own biases! Because I put a position across and they challenge it and that's good! Because that's the skills that they should learn. So, um, ja, I think I do definitely bring my background in. I must say at this school they are more SHOCKED and horrified. Um, they have to digest what I'm saying. Whereas at a school like [x, a former H.O.R. school] which was politicised and I taught people who were oppressed, they had more understanding of what I was saying, and involvement. But when you come from the ruling class, and your parents have come from the ruling class, you maybe have to look at some of the things that one gets involved in, say marches or demonstrations. And say "wow somebody was say jailed or some people was arrested or somebody lost their jobs". Those are seen as bad things by many people in the ruling class instead of basically quite positive. So it's, it's interesting to see how people react to one's own personal history. And it also encourages them to look into their own history.*

In contrast to RT, ED claimed that because the history of the end of Apartheid is so recent the oppressed could understand the hardships of the past. For learners from the ruling class, however, learning about Apartheid is potentially painful.<sup>45</sup>

*[T]hey realise that their parents were forced maybe [to be conscripted in the army] or maybe they enjoyed it but that they in fact were participators in keeping the Apartheid regime in power. And that actually often causes conflict when they go home and question their parents. And then they bring their ideas to school. Or maybe they don't. You know, or it might be something that they don't want to even reveal in class. I have one or two saying um, 'my grandfather was a Nazi'. But you find that out after we have been discussing things, but, and then we try and work through as to 'did [he] had a choice in those particular periods of time', and so on.*

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As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I employed Jacklin's concepts in order to study teachers' use of primary narratives within the broader context of their pedagogical practice. I analysed the observations of the six teachers and the primary witness CW according to the degree of access I had to their interactions with the learners. In Chapter Seven, I discuss the first group of teachers, namely BM and KQ both teaching at former D.E.T. schools, and JJ and CW, both working at former H.O.R. schools. In Chapter Eight, I discuss the second group of teachers, namely MD working at a former Model C school, and BD and GB working at the same Jewish independent school. While the latter group granted me access to their classrooms with relative ease over a long period of time, the former group allowed me to observe them only for a short period of time. The two groups of educators also differed in their modes of pedagogical practice.

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<sup>45</sup> Compare with Krondorfer's chapter "Skeletons in the closet. German family histories" in his *Remembrance and reconciliation*, 97-128.

More specifically, I was able to observe the first group of educators mentioned above only in a ‘snapshot’ way ranging from one period to two or three days. The four educators also shared similarities in their approaches to history and modes of pedagogical practice. An in-depth coding of the teachers’ modes of practice and approaches to history showed that they followed a factual approach to history within a mainly repetition led mode of practice. I say “mainly” because the three teachers gave the impression of following, *at times*, a convention led mode of practice, which is – arguably – associated with an O.B.E. approach. The teachers, however, in the words of Taylor *et al.*, “deploy[ed] empty forms of learner-centred practices without offering their pupils opportunities for substantive learning”.<sup>46</sup>

This ambiguity might indicate a discrepancy between what the teachers perceived as desirable practice, what they wanted and expected the observer to want, and what they implemented and were able to perform.<sup>47</sup> In some of the cases, it was clear that the teachers literally slotted in primary narratives because of the researcher’s presence. Primary narratives, or more generally positionings of self and others in history, did not seem to have a function within the teachers’ instructional discourse.<sup>48</sup> JJ, for example, positioned the learners *in history*, using historical references to the National Government and the Constitution. During one of the lessons on Apartheid laws, he commented to the learners that some of them were preventing others from being educated, by making a noise and disturbing the class; “*So it means that some are breaking the Constitution, they are acting as the National Party government*”. The next day, in another class, he said something similar, “*You do what Apartheid government did years ago*”. One could argue that these positionings had a function within the teacher’s regulative discourse, not his instructional discourse as one would expect (see Chapter Two). On another level, these positionings also seemed to enable the teacher to express irony or resistance to ‘what is expected/normal/accepted’ in pedagogical interactions (and in research relations?).

While the common approach to history and mode of pedagogical practice amongst these teachers is an interesting finding, one needs to approach it with caution. The fact that I could only observe these four educators over a short time influences the way I portray them. They come across as static and set. In the cases of JJ, BM and KQ there were feelings of discomfort and anxiety on the side of both the researcher and the subjects. BM and KQ made clear that they would rather not have me in their classes, while in the case of JJ I decided to

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<sup>46</sup> Taylor *et al.* *Getting schools working*, 62.

<sup>47</sup> Portelli, “What makes oral history different”, 70-71. See also education research: Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*, 60-63, 133-134; Taylor and Vinjevoold, “Teaching and learning in South African schools”, 131-162; Fleisch, *Managing educational change*, 133-158.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter Two on Bernstein’s differentiation between instructional and regulative discourse.

step out. Moreover, it was clear in these interactions that I was made a ‘character’ in other plots than ‘the research plot’.<sup>49</sup> For example, in the case of KQ, I was “*his friend*” and a means for him to keep the learners’ attention. And BM ‘warned’ me during the interview that his learners need to be taught in their home language (Xhosa). He might have suggested here indirectly that there was no place or ‘role’ for me in his class, but I did not ‘hear’ that at that point in time.

Reflecting on these ‘difficult’ encounters, I realise that these constructions of individuals and their practice are not only static but also elusive, because of the *positionings* of both researcher and teachers. On a superficial level, teachers did not seem *willing* to cooperate. Nonetheless, our relationship was dynamic and diverse, because both parties continuously allocated positions of insider and outsider to each other.<sup>50</sup>

In other words, I am aware of my underlying expectations of cooperation and agreement and the potential resistance of teachers against these underlying expectations, and, similarly, the teachers’ expectations and my own resistance towards these. Teachers slotted me into other plots, *or* – from my perspective - they performed a pedagogy that I did not share. Teachers allocated a role for me in a plot they knew (e.g. ‘subject advisor’). Other teachers choose not to be part of the research (take on a role in a research relation, and grant the researcher a temporary role in their classrooms). They did not know how the research plot worked. Or they knew, but did not want to be part of a reflection and/or accommodate my theoretical expectations in relation to ‘finding primary narratives’ in their classroom interactions because they had other pressing concerns (workload), they perceived primary narratives not as part of history, or more generally allocated different functions to education. At times, I felt uncertain in my role as a researcher, for example in the case of BM, being labelled as and labelling myself as an outsider when the children called me “*mlungu*” (a derogatory Xhosa word for ‘white’ people) - BM rightly pointed out that I did not speak Xhosa (at least not sufficiently). It is possible that, on a deeper level, especially with the ‘subject advisor’- plot, teachers directed feelings of antagonism and aggression towards the researcher rather than an external figure or force responsible for the present workload of teachers (e.g. representatives of the past and present Departments of Education or the wider society).<sup>51</sup> The history of these

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<sup>49</sup> Compare with the case study in Davies and Harré, “Positioning and personhood”, 45-49.

<sup>50</sup> Soudien, Personal communication 2 March 2007.

<sup>51</sup> See Roper, “Analysing the analysed”, 29-30. My own emotional responses (fear of ‘intruding’ the interviewees’ space and the feeling that they expected me to be, and treated me as, a subject-advisor (or, worse, an inspector) might be clues to this interpretation. I agree here with Roper, who states that the emotional responses of the researcher are “an interpretative resource”. Roper, “Analysing the analysed”, 22. See also Field, “Disappointed men”, 220. However, as is clear from the above, I stay

disadvantaged schools and the kind of education these teachers received (in comparison to my own background) might have been of influence on the teachers' confidence, as well as the discrepancies between our respective underlying expectations.

*KQ, teacher at a former D.E.T. school*

Born in the Eastern Cape, KQ, a young 'black' man in his early thirties, came to Cape Town to further his tertiary education at the University of the Western Cape. He stayed to teach in a co-ed school with a rich, political, history, situated in one of the older 'black' townships around Cape Town. The learners came from 'black', working-class or unemployed families. Learners and teachers travelled from the township in which the school is situated as well as from surrounding 'black' townships. There were around 1500 learners and the school fee was circa 220 Rand in 2005. The fee was not obligatory. According to one of the teachers, the school accepted half of its learners fee-free that year. During my stay at the school in February 2005, while waiting to see the principal, I met several mothers who tried to get their children's fees cancelled because of a fire in a nearby township. The school allowed victims of this fire to come to school without uniform.

As other teachers, KQ answered the interview questions and acted in the classroom as if I was a subject-advisor, assessing his teaching practice. During the interview, he explained - with notes in front of him - what exactly he would tell the learners about Apartheid, focusing mostly on content and rarely on the actual interaction with the learners. His amazement, for example while describing his visit to the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, was genuine; even though he made several historical mistakes, (e.g. "*What [did] the United Nations [do] about this thing of [the] Holocaust?*"). Interestingly (from an oral historian perspective<sup>52</sup>) and in contrast to other teachers, he shared richly layered sub-stories for example about his father's unfair treatment in front of a liquor store:<sup>53</sup>

*Once, I was, [...] Maybe I was around 12 years, [...] I went to town with my father. And then he went to a to a bar. [...] Uh, and, then (coughs) there he called a, a coloured guy, outside the bar. And he asked, he's asking to, to go inside, inside there and then bought a bottle of [liquor]. But (coughs) we wait and wait and wait, but the man never come back (laughs). [...] [The man had passed them after having removed his sunglasses so KQ's father had not recognised him] And then he [KQ's father] was furious and then he didn't want to listen to me. And then he tried to force to get inside the bar. [...] And then he was, he was forced out of the bar. Uh, but, uh finally he*

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with our respective professional identities and do not delve into more unconscious responses that might be playing a role in these encounters.

<sup>52</sup> The interview with KQ is the only one in which I had the opportunity to co-interview with a South African colleague at the U.C.T. Centre for Popular Memory, Thabo Manetsi. His presence most likely influenced the rapport with KQ.

<sup>53</sup> The 1928 Liquor Act (Act 30 of 1928) outlawed the sale of 'European liquor' to 'blacks'.

*didn't get his money. You see. In fact he was ROBBED! You see? So those are the things that used to happen to uh to our lives of, to our grandparents or our parents as well. So those are the things that I use to tell the schoolchildren you see. But they used to, they used to laugh with these things. You see. And then they [don't take all these things] as the truth, you see. In fact, so they didn't see, as if those things were happening. [...] They just see us, the people who were living by then, as we were stupid. You see. And then we, we were, um, we were not strong enough, to challenge, to challenge those laws. You see. And then they gave us some tips, we/we were supposed to do this and this and this (laughs).*

Even though he explained later on in the interview that the learners' reaction was painful for him, KQ – as well as some other teachers – seemed to be used to this type of discourse in which he brings across his rather serious and even sad primary narrative in the form of anecdotes.

As I discuss in Chapter Seven, however, primary narratives were absent in KQ's teaching during the three days observations in February 2005. I observed six periods of Grade Nine history, of which four periods were on "force removals" (sic). The two other topics KQ addressed were the discovery of gold and the differences between primary and secondary sources. I also observed KQ teaching history and geography to Grades Eight. The teacher taught the same classes on the discovery of gold (history) and on reading a map (geography) to both Grade Eight and Grade Nine learners. During one of the lessons on Forced Removals, Grade Nine learners copied notes on the colonisation of Africa, which the teacher had put on the board during a Grade Eight class. This seems to suggest that he taught the same to both Grades.<sup>54</sup> Similar to other teachers, KQ talked 'O.B.E. language' during our interactions in and outside the classroom. For example, after having instructed the learners to do a certain activity, he came over to me and said, "*This is O.B.E., this is group-work*".

Regulative discourse was prevalent in KQ's classes and he mobilised the researcher as 'a stick'.<sup>55</sup> The main activities were organised around lecturing, writing notes in question-answer format on the board, which the learners had to copy in their notebooks. The 'O.B.E.-activities' were repetition-orientated and the teacher (with his textbook, board, and board wiper) remained the main reference and orientation point.<sup>56</sup> At the beginning of one of the lessons on the Apartheid Forced Removals, he commented, "*I don't want to write notes;*

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<sup>54</sup> Siebörger offers a possible explanation for this: "The way in which the [curriculum] range statements have been interpreted [...] has created the impression that all the content has to be covered (as a syllabus was) in each phase". Siebörger, "History and the emerging nation", 4.

<sup>55</sup> Once he told the learners that I was his "friend". He said, "*You must behave, just for the short period of time she is here*".

<sup>56</sup> For a theoretical description of a repetition led mode of practice, see Chapter Two and Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 150-156.

*we're not going to write notes. We'll see what you can bring in*". But, in the end, he lectured and even though he formulated questions, he responded to them himself. However, KQ gave learners positive feedback when they gave 'the right answer'. Now and then, he asked questions like "Are you still with me?" and "Are there any questions on this lesson?" He also used follow-up questions and sporadically reformulated learners' input, but not in the majority of the lessons.

The teacher used both English and Xhosa as medium of instruction. Observing the learners, however, I had the impression that they were not used to English instruction. After a few days, when I called the teacher to arrange observations for the following week, KQ suggested indirectly to discontinue the observations by saying that his subject-advisor had advised him to carry on with 'work to be done'.

*JJ, teacher at a former H.O.R. school*

During the same month that I visited KQ's classes, I observed JJ, a 'coloured' man in his forties, teaching at a co-ed, working class, former H.O.R. school. The school had a majority of learners from 'coloured' townships and a minority of learners from 'black' townships and divided these learners in different classes according to medium of instruction (Afrikaans or English). JJ had followed a teacher-training programme at the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town. During two days, I observed four periods of Grade Nine history on the Apartheid laws (both Afrikaans and English medium). I also observed two periods of Grade Eight history on the colonial struggle over gold and diamonds (Afrikaans medium), three periods of Grade Ten history on the French Revolution (English and Afrikaans medium) and Two Grade Nine 'home classes' (English medium).

Even though the lessons had these topics or titles and there were moments where teacher and learners interacted with historical content within a repetition led and sometimes convention led mode of pedagogical practice, most of the time JJ did not teach. At these moments, the teacher's pedagogical mode was exemplary of the so-called empty mode. As explained in Chapter Two, the empty mode is characterised by the absence of a pedagogical text and activities relating to a specific discourse, in this case history.<sup>57</sup> JJ solely focused on the evaluation of the learners' behaviour and movement in space, for example by giving a 'sermon' on how they *should* behave and by making insulting, shaming, comments.<sup>58</sup> I had interviewed JJ the previous year while he was still at another school. He said during that

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<sup>57</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 138.

<sup>58</sup> Positioning theory discusses derogatory, shaming and insulting modes of address such as calling adolescents "little babies". See Antaki and Widdicombe, "Identity as an achievement and as a tool".

interview, and he repeated this during my visit to this school, that he wanted to leave the profession. The school with around 800 learners, who paid circa 950 Rand as school-fees in 2005, seemed to disintegrate as a whole: an observable number of teachers was absent and large numbers of learners roamed around aimlessly. After two days of observations, I decided, in consultation with my supervisors, to leave the school. The research-relationship with JJ had reached its limit, in that I tried to listen when he spoke to me about his distress, but I could not do more than that. I could not, for example, take over his teaching as he – albeit jokingly – requested.

*CW, a primary witness working at a former H.O.R. school*

At another former H.O.R. school, known for its political history, I observed CW, a ‘coloured’ woman in her sixties, on two subsequent days in April 2005. CW was not a teacher but part of the personnel of the school, which draws a majority of ‘coloured’ learners and a minority of ‘black’ learners from middle class and working class families. The circa 950 learners had to pay 2100 Rand fees that year. The co-ed school, in comparison to JJ’s school, seemed disciplined and working.

I observed CW guiding three groups of Grade Nine learners through the area she had lived in up until the Apartheid government forcibly moved her to one of the ‘coloured’ townships on the Cape Flats. Even though CW did not have a formal training in teaching or in history, she established a specific and patterned pedagogical mode of interaction. Most likely, her experiences as a learner informed this. The pedagogical texts were encapsulated in CW’s speech as well as her body language. She linguistically pointed out and marked the landscape of the area with shops and people that used to be there. She often made regulative comments like “*move on, don’t be inquisitive*” (at a house where a piece of paper on the door read “... *no jobs! No money!*”), and “*Don’t look, just walk. Don’t look into windows*”. These comments demarcate what she perceived as acceptable behaviour but also the pedagogical text (i.e. not the inside of people’s houses).

Overall, CW followed a repetition led mode of practice. She focussed mainly on, and regulated the pace according to, the learners’ note-taking of what she told them and of spatial markers, such as street-names. Some of the activities were more convention led: CW asked the learners if they knew people who lived in the area and she asked them to define the Group Areas Act and Forced Removals (something the learners had learnt about in class). Discipline-specific activities such as asking the guide questions, looking around (investigating), thinking about/linking back to what had been done in class, were rare and activities such as comparing different sources/voices and critical investigation were absent.

The main role allocated to the learners was to listen and to take notes. Quite a few of the ‘coloured’ learners, however, approached CW after the tour or the next day to tell her that their parents and/or grandparents had experienced the Forced Removals from the same area.

In 2004, I had also interviewed two history teachers, LA and SF, at the school. Despite an initial agreement with LA to observe her Grade Nine history classes, I had, notwithstanding several attempts, no contact with her anymore after the tours.

*BM, teacher at a former D.E.T. school*

Establishing a research-relationship with BM was similarly taxing. A ‘black’ teacher in his thirties, BM was one of the teachers I interviewed in 2005 in the hope to find more teachers who would allow me in their classrooms, after it was clear that several teachers I had interviewed in 2004, pulled out just before agreed-upon observations. However, BM did not easily share information about his experiences and the interview became fragmented as I tried to interview him and at the same time negotiate entrance into his classroom. Yet, he did allow me to observe one period of Grade Nine history on the Holocaust in May 2005, two weeks after our first meeting and interview.

Originally from the Eastern Cape, BM had come to the Western Cape after his studies to find work as well as to further his education at the University of Cape Town. The co-ed former D.E.T. school he taught at was situated in one of the biggest ‘black’ townships around Cape Town with a year fee of 290 Rand in 2005. Most of the circa 1500 learners came from working class and lower middle class families and lived in the township where the school was situated.

BM’s pedagogical practice seemed to be a combination of a repetition led and what seemed to be a kind of convention led practice, in which conventional activities such as a discussion did appear but the deeper work of these activities was absent. The lesson structure was mainly organised around a question-answer interaction between the teacher and the learners, but the teacher also lectured at times and often repeated what he had said. The teacher asked repetition led questions, with the seeming underlying assumption that the learners already knew the subject at hand, as if they had had this lesson before. The interaction was characterised by what I call ‘worksheet’ language<sup>59</sup> and BM often prompted the learners to

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<sup>59</sup> A teacher uses ‘worksheet’ language when he or she starts making a statement, in the form of a question, expecting the learners to ‘fill in’ the statement (as on a physical worksheet). For example, at one moment, BM said, “Jews did not believe in Jesus, as the Son of God, the ...”. Learners filled in “Messiah”. Later on in the conversation, he said/asked: “They [Jews in Nazi-Germany] were taken

answer and even formulate questions, which seemed to have what Nystrand calls “prespecified answers”.<sup>60</sup> The teacher mostly answered these questions himself, though there were several moments where learners answered and the teacher took up their input. He also often checked if the learners were still following, if they had any questions, while also referring to previous and following lessons. He invited the learners to speak in English, stating, “*Please be not ashamed of your broken whatever*”.<sup>61</sup> Even though the Holocaust Centre manual (positioned in front of the researcher) and the board were the teacher’s major tools, the latter contained, next to the chronology copied from the manual,<sup>62</sup> only short hand notes. At one point, BM commented, “*I am sure you’re writing what I’m saying, not what I’m writing, I’m writing in short*”. It is unclear if the learners were used to short notes, or if this was done (and marked) because of the researcher’s presence.

However, in contrast to other teachers and especially JJ, BM’s regulative discourse was implicit, at least in English. I had the impression that the teacher respected the learners and that they respected him. When the teacher saw that one of the learners had fallen asleep, he pointed this out to the boy in a friendly way. There was no shouting or ‘sticks’, and even though the teacher introduced me in a similar way to JJ namely that the aim of my observation was to see how the learners behave, he said this in a joking way. Irony or cynicism seemed to play a role throughout the interaction, but, for an outsider, this was difficult to detect and interpret (see Chapter Seven).<sup>63</sup>

After the observation of this one period, I continued to negotiate with BM during May and June 2005 as there was the possibility of observing more classroom interactions and the Grade Nine visit to the Holocaust Centre. This did not materialise, however, because the teacher pulled out from the classroom observations and cancelled the visit to the Holocaust Centre.

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The ‘static’ portrayals of the first group of educators contrast sharply with those of teachers who seemed to be adequately at ease to include me temporarily in their lives. These teachers

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to...” A boy said “ghetto”. The teacher said to the boy “say it” (requesting him to repeat for the whole class?). The boy replied, “ghettos”, after which the teacher gave a definition of the term ‘ghetto’.

<sup>60</sup> Nystrand, “Dialogic instruction”.

<sup>61</sup> Without a non-Xhosa speaking observer present, the teacher and learners would have interacted in Xhosa. The teacher had ‘warned’ me of this in the interview, saying that it is important that the teacher explains in the home language because the learners need to understand.

<sup>62</sup> Silbert, *The Holocaust*, 37-8.

<sup>63</sup> See also Yow, “Interpersonal relations in the interview”, 135. Compare with LaCapra who mentions “the carnivalesque” being used both by Nazis and by the oppressed in the ghettos and camps. LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 222.

more willingly cooperated; they spoke longer during interviews and outside classroom observations, and I could observe them over a longer period of time. These teachers came across as 'dynamic', 'complex' and with shifting positions. Their elusiveness, in contrast to the above educators, was less disquieting. As mentioned above, one of these teachers, MD, taught at a former Model C School, while the two other teachers, DB and GB, taught at the same Jewish independent school. I spent most of my observations in MD's and especially GB's classes. Both teachers gave me permission to partly audiotape their lessons, and (in GB's case) the Grade Nine visits to the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre.

*MD, teacher at a former Model C school*

MD, a 'coloured' woman in her early fifties, was born in District Six. She had received a Primary Teacher Certificate at the Hewat Training College in Athlone. She taught history, English and Drama to all Grades at a former Model C school. The co-ed school had a majority of learners from 'coloured' and 'black' townships, a few 'white' learners and a considerable number of learners from other African countries (for example, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo). The school had a total of circa 370 learners in 2005 and the fee was around 4100 Rand.

I observed MD irregularly between February and September 2005. I observed her for a total of 12 days in the period February-May 2005 and for a total of three days during the months August and September 2005. During the first semester, I observed 14 periods of Grade Nine history (two Grade Nine classes), and, in order to get a detailed impression of her pedagogical practice, eight periods history or English she taught to the other Grades. During the second semester, I observed and partly audiotaped four Grade Nine history lessons. The observations provide a total of 18 periods of Grade Nine history in which the teacher compared the laws and the youth during Apartheid and Nazi Germany, and showed a video documentary on the Holocaust.

MD's mode of pedagogical practice was convention led. The activities related to the subject (history) but took a procedural form. The teacher and learners perceived the teacher as the site of authority and orientation point to move from one task or activity to another. Learners did silent individual "seat-work"<sup>64</sup> focussing on specific, procedural activities which had to be put in their portfolios. The latter seemed to be central to most of the activities. At times, the learners worked in groups. MD gave them insight into how she would evaluate their work,

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<sup>64</sup> Nystrand, "Dialogic instruction".

but the criteria for evaluation related to the specific activities, not to the discipline of the subject. In other words, individual activities were central to the interaction; the bigger picture, how these activities belonged together and fit in the discipline of history, was absent.

MD's regulative discourse and strong pacing aimed to facilitate these procedural activities. She reiterated rules of communication constantly and immediately reprimanded learners who violated these. MD seemed to rely heavily on the strong school structure, and experienced ruptures as confusing and upsetting, for example when the school bell did not work or when there was a fight in the passage between two boys of the class. During the latter rupture, the learners asked her to discuss a newspaper article calling the school "racist" towards township schools. She promised the learners they could have an open discussion at the end of the lesson, but this did not fully materialise because the bell went. On our way downstairs, she told me that she was happy they did not really start the discussion because she was not sure how to handle the different views in the class.<sup>65</sup>

Working with MD was interesting especially because of the complexities of our (nevertheless long) research-relationship. While she was willing to be part of the project, she also lacked confidence – to an extent similar to the above-mentioned teachers – and she expressed feelings of unease and anxiety around being observed and (maybe because of) the quality of her pedagogical practice. She did use primary narratives during her history teaching, mostly *because* the researcher was present.<sup>66</sup> However, she also used primary narratives to encourage the learners to play an active role in the new South Africa (see Chapter Eight). At one point she told the learners how she had experienced the student uprisings of 1976, and how she *sees* potential in them, the youth (note the present tense). She then commented that she had never thought she would one day teach at this school and that their parents had never thought their children would one day attend this school (which, during apartheid, was closed to 'non-whites').

I had interviewed MD during 2004 and after some negotiation, MD had agreed to be part of my classroom observations in the following year. My presence in her classes, on first sight, did not seem to be intimidating to her. She often spoke to me *as if* I was a subject-advisor saying that she wanted to learn and improve her practice. She regularly asked for advice and

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<sup>65</sup> See also Kros, *Trusting to the process*, 12-13. This might not be unique to South African history teachers. Levstik mentions that history teachers in the U.S.A. are unwilling and feel unequipped to address conflict while learners show confusion about and interest in it. Levstik, "Articulating the silences".

<sup>66</sup> MD explicitly pointed this out to the learners.

elaborately discussed her practice outside the class. During the lessons, she often came over to me to explain what she was doing.

However, MD was disillusioned and unmotivated and spoke about this extensively during reflective interviews in June and October 2005 as well as during informal conversations in-between lessons. When I met MD for the first time in 2004, the first thing she asked me was whether she would get a percentage, once I had supposedly published 'the book'. This question made me feel uncomfortable, but during the interview, I assumed it was her way of speaking; maybe it was even a joke. Two years later, in reflection, the comment/request made me aware of our different positions and expectations around sharing a story. It is an important question on the side of the interviewee: "What do I gain out of this?", "Why would I share my story with you?"<sup>67</sup> During our last interview, after eight months of observations, she spoke about another kind of gain. She said she had become aware of her own practice and, especially after an unfavourable internal evaluation of her practice, decided to step out of the teaching profession. Not only her more strained and distant interaction with the researcher during the second semester reflected this (I had less easy access to her classroom), but also a dramatic change in the classroom decorations. She stripped the classroom of all posters: Learners' posters on human rights and democracy, motivational texts saying, "*You have worth*", "*you're special*" and the sentence, "*We're history makers*", which had previously hung in big letters at the back of the room, had now disappeared.<sup>68</sup> MD is currently furthering her tertiary education – a dream she had already spoken about in the first interview.

#### *BD and GB, teachers at a Jewish independent school*

In April 2005, I observed BD and subsequently GB at a Jewish independent school with a majority of 'white' learners and a few 'coloured' and 'black' learners. While the majority of the teachers at the school was Jewish, some teachers, among them BD and GB, came from other religious and cultural communities. The school differed in many aspects from the other schools I had visited. For example, it had spacious sports facilities and a library with specialised sections. In 2005, the school had circa 340 learners and learners paid 6.700 Rand per term (26.800 Rand for the year) unless they could not afford to pay the full fees.

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<sup>67</sup> See Colvin, "Brothers and sisters".

<sup>68</sup> In the follow up interview in October 2005, MD told me she also started wearing black clothes during this period. The stripping of the classroom walls and the change in the teacher's clothing might be an expression of mourning, or a form of retreating. It might also have been an expression of anger and spite.

BD, a 'white' woman in her forties, had graduated with a Higher Diploma of Education (H.D.E.) at the University of Witwatersrand. I observed her during four days in April 2005 teaching five periods of Grade Nine history (on Nazi Germany), one Grade Eight English class, and two Grade Nine English classes. The first time I entered BD's classroom, she introduced me to the learners and used my presence as a teaching opportunity by asking the learners what primary narratives are. When she asked them to give examples from their own experiences in school, the learners referred to primary narratives they heard during assembly, or read about in the library and during English classes.<sup>69</sup>

Due to exhaustion, BD left the school for six months to recover her strength. GB, a 'white' woman in her forties, took over BD's English and history classes from May to September 2005. GB had followed a H.D.E. course at the University of Cape Town. While I was at first uncertain about her willingness to cooperate in the project (being an interim teacher in what was, for her, a new school), GB seemed rather comfortable with my request and my presence in her classes. During the classroom interactions, she ignored my presence.<sup>70</sup> In-between lessons, during reflective interviews in June and October 2005, and after school, however, she eagerly commented and reflected on what happened in the classes and seemed to perceive me as a sound board. One evening she even called me "*to debrief*" on the discussion she had had with the learners that day on "*superiority*" (see Chapter Eight).

I observed and partly audiotaped GB during eight periods of Grade Nine history on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust (with cross-reference to Apartheid) over a total of five days in May and June 2005. During this period, I also observed and audiotaped a half-day visit to the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. Over a total of six days in the period July-September 2005, I observed and audiotaped 13 history periods on Apartheid (with cross reference to Nazi Germany) and one assembly in which a 'coloured', Muslim teacher told about his experiences of the Forced Removals from District Six. I also observed and partly audiotaped the learners' half-day visit to the District Six Museum.

Both BD and GB followed a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice. They both positioned themselves as historians, referring to discipline-related activities they undertook outside school. While both teachers used primary narratives in their interactions with the

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<sup>69</sup> During this time, I also observed a life orientation teacher in two Grade Eight classes and one Grade Nine class. This teacher had invited me to his classes because during these three lessons on drugs abuse he used primary narratives. He had also followed the Facing History, Facing Ourselves course. It is not the objective of this study to analyse his pedagogical practice.

<sup>70</sup> GB did not have to introduce me given that she took over BD's classes. Only when learners asked about me, did GB speak *about* me, but not *to* me. The one exception where GB addressed me directly in the classroom, was when learners were given a 'free period'.

learners, BD focussed more on narratives of other people and less on her own experiences. GB in contrast, clearly and repeatedly brought in narratives about how she experienced Apartheid. She also involved the learners in what she calls “*volatile conversations*” in which she challenged them to think about and discuss in detail their present positionings and responsibilities within a new South Africa, a country in which the legacy of a dividing regime is very much present. In contrast to the other teachers I observed, GB took on an unexpected ‘role’ when teaching about Apartheid. While most teachers (also those I could only interview) mostly took on roles of ‘heroes’, ‘freedom fighters’ and/or ‘victims’, GB positioned herself – but also the learners – as ‘perpetrators’ (see Chapter Eight).

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Having sketched several ‘characters’ I met during my time in the museums and high schools, and having addressed some methodological and analytic challenges, I now turn to my analysis of the oral history interviews that I conducted in 2003 with 12 museum facilitators – seven from the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and five from the District Six Museum. In Chapter Five, I present my analysis of GB’s and her learners’ visit to the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. In Chapter Six, I present my analysis of the oral history interviews I conducted in 2004 with 26 history Grade Nine teachers and the primary witness, CW, working at one of the former H.O.R. Schools. In the last two chapters, then, I present my analysis of classroom interactions, which I observed in the course of 2005.

The positionings of the interviewees as well as the existing literature and theories on intergenerational transmission of primary narratives inform the way in which I present the analysis of both groups of educators. As mentioned above, teachers did not, or not easily, position themselves as primary witnesses. There is also a gap in the existing literature related to this. I did not, for example, find literature on how to analyse teachers’ positionings of self and others in history *while being a teacher*.<sup>71</sup> Another gap in the literature comprises an analytic framework for an analysis of the *pedagogical* interactions in museums.

I solved this problem as follows. In the chapters on the interviews (Chapters Four and Six), I use the concepts I discussed in Chapter Two in slightly different ways. While I do make use of the whole range of concepts, I put more emphasis on the concepts associated with the intergenerational dialogue (‘memory’, ‘postmemory’, ‘indescribable’, ‘undiscussable’) in the analysis of the interviews with the museum facilitators. In the analysis of the interviews with

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<sup>71</sup> There are, of course, oral history studies on teachers who played a role in the resistance against Apartheid, but these studies do not look into the teachers’ present pedagogical practice. See for example, Wieder, *Voices from Cape Town classrooms*.

the teachers, I put more emphasis on the concepts related to approaches to history ('factual', 'disciplinary' and 'positioned' approaches to history). In the chapters on the pedagogical interactions (Chapters Five, Seven and Eight), I operationalised a triple-layered analysis which focuses on the teacher's or facilitator's approach to history,<sup>72</sup> his/her mode of pedagogical practice<sup>73</sup> and his/her positioning of self and others in history<sup>74</sup> (see Chapter Two). This triple-layered analysis is most fruitful when applied to the observations that took place over a long period of time. I discuss these observations in Chapter Eight. Even though the observations in the museums took place during the period I observed in the classrooms of the teachers discussed in that chapter, I position the analysis of the museum interactions as an 'intermezzo' chapter in-between Chapters Four and Six. In that way, the reader can read the Chapters discussing the interviews and the observations of museum facilitators as a whole and in juxtaposition of each other. Another reason for this set up is that, in contrast to my expectations at the time of writing my research proposal, only one out of the seven observed teachers visited the museums. The analysis therefore is, similar to the analysis of the classroom interactions in Chapter Seven, restricted due to 'access' difficulties. Another restriction, and this in contrast to Chapter Seven, is the above-mentioned absence of an analytical framework for museum interactions in existing literature. In other words, the analysis of the museum interactions is exploratory not only because of the short duration of observation, but also because of the use of analytic concepts originally developed for classroom interactions.

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<sup>72</sup> Seixas, "Sweigen!"

<sup>73</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*.

<sup>74</sup> Harré and van Langenhove, "The dynamics of social episodes".

## Chapter Four

### The museum facilitators

*For us to speak with the young becomes ever more difficult. We see it as a duty and, at the same time, as a risk: the risk of appearing anachronistic, of not being listened to. We must be listened to: above and beyond our personal experiences, we have collectively witnessed a fundamental, unexpected event, fundamental precisely because unexpected, not foreseen by anyone. It took place in the teeth of all forecasts; it happened in Europe; incredibly, it happened that an entire civilized people, just issued from the fervid cultural flowering of Weimar, followed a buffoon whose figure today inspires laughter, and yet Adolf Hitler was obeyed and his praises were sung right up to the catastrophe. It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say.<sup>1</sup>*

As explained in the previous chapter, I present in this chapter an analysis of how the museum facilitators construct primary narratives of Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust as historical knowledge. My reading focuses on the intergenerational dialogue that the facilitators described in the interviews. All facilitators perceived their talking to the next generation as pivotal in the working of the respective museums. Not only the primary witness facilitators, but also the secondary witness facilitators placed primary narratives central in these interactions with younger generations. In what follows, I unpack the facilitators' perceptions of this intergenerational dialogue by looking first at what Simon *et al.* call "the pedagogical justification of remembrance".<sup>2</sup> I then proceed to analyse the intergenerational dialogue further by using the concepts memory and postmemory to analyse the facilitators' understanding of the different ways primary and secondary witnesses understand the respective atrocities. I subsequently employ the concepts "the indescribable" and "the undiscussable" to describe the social processes of forgetting and remembering, and the facilitators' understanding of changing, constantly re-inscribed discursive boundaries. Lastly, I analyse the role of time and (ever-changing) positionings of the parties involved in the dialogue. Throughout the analysis, I use the concepts "positioning" and "mode of address" to describe the way the facilitators placed themselves and others in relation to these interactions and changing discursive boundaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 199.

<sup>2</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*.

As explained in Chapter Two, the central argument that I put forward is that notwithstanding the widely accepted “pedagogical justification of remembrance”, the intergenerational dialogue contains tensions and complexities for two interrelated reasons: the distinction between the two generations and their respective memories is less clear than established dichotomies relating intergenerational dialogue seem to suggest.<sup>3</sup> Silences and gaps inherent in every narrative and dialogue, not only intergenerational ones, complicate listening. Moreover, the two generations position themselves differently according to their different experiences of and ‘distance’ to the atrocity, and their different understanding of what the goal of the dialogue is.

### **Pedagogical justification of remembrance**

As explained in Chapter Two, the moral enunciation ‘never again’ or the “pedagogical justification of remembrance” is well known and widely used in history and museum education. When I approached my interviewees and explained my research, many took this moral enunciation as a universally accepted and applicable injunction, although some were aware of its internal contradictions. Central to these contradictions is the unquestioned assumption that listening to primary narratives brings understanding and guarantees (positive) change; or, in other words, that secondary witnesses are able to listen to and understand narratives about events they did not experience, and change whether as individuals or as a group or society.

A first step in untangling these contradictions is to analyse how the museum facilitators construct or understand this intergenerational dialogue and the space in which this dialogue takes place. I say this because space is one of the dimensions of remembering and imagining and shapes social and individual identities.<sup>4</sup> The narratives of the facilitators at the District Six Museum exemplify this. With the destruction of the space and community, that was District Six, the inhabitants lost their *place* that created and was created by their cosmopolitan identity as individuals and as a community.<sup>5</sup> To an even greater extent, the Jewish community in Europe was destroyed as a physical and social entity, with the majority of its members having been killed and their homes having been wiped out. Most survivors of the Holocaust left Europe. In contrast to the Holocaust survivors, the interviewees of the District

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Hirsch’s distinction between memory and postmemory as discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>4</sup> Nora, “Between memory and history”, 9 and 13; Winter and Sivan, “Setting the framework”, 37. See for a reflection on the role and meaning of ‘space’ in remembering contested and traumatic pasts, Field, “Sites of memory in Langa”.

<sup>5</sup> Field, “I dream of our old house”; McEachern, “Mapping the memories”. See also Rassool and Prosalendis, *Recalling community*.

Six Museum currently live in close proximity to District Six, and this spatial ‘gap’ is a crucial part of their story.

It is in the light of the meanings allocated to the respective spaces, or *absence* of space, that the facilitators described their respective museums along generational and familial lines. IL, a Holocaust survivor working at the Holocaust Centre for example describes the Centre as “*a spiritual home*” for survivors. The Centre is also, according to PB, a secondary witness facilitator, “*a memorial*” where Jewish visitors are able to mourn in the absence of graves for the victims of the Holocaust. SA, one of the older trustees of the District Six Museum spoke about the Museum as “*a place of memory*”. In addition, many interviewees working at the Museum spoke about the Museum’s involvement in the Beneficiary Trust that strives to physically reconstruct District Six.

The notion of “*a spiritual home*” is closely linked to the above mentioned pedagogical justification of remembrance: to guarantee that the atrocities are not repeated, young people have to listen to and thus acknowledge the stories of the survivors as historically accurate, while also learning to not make ‘the same mistakes’. PB, for example, asserted that while the Holocaust Centre has a “*memorial*” function for survivors and their descendants, it is rather a “*place of learning*” for secondary witnesses without familial connection, because, as she explained, “*I want to, I want them to threat it with respect. If there is any danger in them not doing so*”. SA explained this relationship between remembering and repetition of atrocities as follows:

*[T]he essential aspect of remembering and bringing to the youth also is important because, um, there is a saying that if you don't [sic] forget your past, you're up to return it, to, to, to actually repeat it. And the people tend to repeat bad things you know. So essentially what we're saying is, that, um, the place and the struggle for the, um, the formation of the District Six Museum [...] is to say that, never again must anything like this happen. [...] But also and that is the function of what we believe, because we believe that this institution certainly needs that connection to, for young people. Because [...] they get the stories primary here! They get the stories that have been spoken and, and, and, recorded, and the photographic um, witnesses of it [...]. And that should impact on people in terms of where they are, and say that 'how is it that this occurred in, in what we call a civilized country?'*

SA’s construction holds the assumption that a space in which the primary narratives are shared might bring redemption. One could even ask the question whether the creation of “*a spiritual home*” is redemption in itself. SA explicitly and repeatedly referred to the District Six Museum as having been a church before, and located his own and the community’s spiritual and emotional roots in this very space. In the church, and subsequently the museum,

he asserted, “*everything that um, that was necessary for me, was - I found in this place! You know, to advance, my, my ability to be a human being*”.

### **Memory and postmemory: defining the intergenerational dialogue**

As SA stated, atrocities are still repeatedly committed today. He defined listening to primary narratives as a way of helping people to stop this repetitive behaviour. However, what does this listening entail? Merely listening to primary witnesses does not seem to guarantee a stop to atrocities and the facilitators are aware of this. Most of the facilitators reflected on the tensions that inhabit the pedagogical justification of remembrance by indicating the gap between the why and the how of the pedagogical interactions in the respective museums. This gap is often explored by defining the actual and desired roles of primary and secondary witnesses and by reflecting on the difficulties secondary witnesses have in understanding the traumatic experiences of the primary witnesses.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, academics researching intergenerational dialogues employ but also question the distinction between primary and secondary witnesses, and their respective narratives and memories.<sup>6</sup> The museum facilitators also elaborately discussed the tensions and complexities within the assumptions underlying the intergenerational dialogue. Even though they indicated that certain groups amongst the young visitors have a familial connection with the traumatic event, having parents or grandparents that have experienced Apartheid Forced Removals or the Holocaust, and one could expect these groups to have a ‘better’ understanding of (or potential to understand) these experiences, the facilitators did not take this for granted. Most of the museum facilitators questioned the possibility of imagining for those who did not experience the atrocities first hand. I had the following dialogue with HA, one of the trustees of District Six Museum:

*HA: [...] the children don't and I can't exp/I don't know, I don't expect them to fully understand and appreciate, they can read about it and they can say 'I hear what you're saying'. But they CAN'T identify with it.*

*SG: Why?*

*HA: Because they've not experienced it! So what does it need now, is for them to know the HISTORY, and to accept when people TELL the [...] that when you are stripped of your humanity, this is what happens to you! Now I need you, if you are the/the student, I need you to accept my word!*

*SG: To believe you.*

*HA: To believe me! And to believe what other writers have written about hum/humankind's behaviour towards humans. OK? [...] And here understanding is linked to seeing, and hearing it, and also feel. And the best way is to be able to use a vehicle, use words, which could be a vehicle, use sounds, which could be a vehicle, use visuals, which could be a vehicle to*

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<sup>6</sup> See Halbwachs, *On collective memory*; Hirsch, “Mourning and postmemory”; Winter and Sivan, “Setting the framework”; LaCapra, *Writing history*.

*help you [...] to transPORT yourself into that situation. And, and, and imagine that you are experiencing that pain, that hardship. It's not easy! It is not easy for the children, descendants of those, those parents, those grandparents who suffered Forced Removals to FULLY appreciate [their experiences] [...] They never lived here.*

HA says here that learners do not fully “understand,” “appreciate” and “identify with” what the older generation went through because they did not experience it themselves. He states that they need to “know” history, “accept” his word and the words of others. Understanding in this context is perceived as social. In other words, understanding is not only “paradigmatic knowing” but also means listening to the narratives of other people’s experiences.<sup>7</sup> However, at the same time, HA presents understanding here in rather dogmatic and didactic terms. Similar to many other facilitators, he presents history as factual: there is one story, and this is the story that the facilitators need to tell and the audience/learners and researcher need to accept:

*[W]e therefore require the staff who meet and work on visitors here, to, to be fully conversant with the story, the history. [...] people had similar experiences who lived in the same area. So when you tell your story, your story is very similar to (pause) X's his story, and Y's story and A's story, and M's story and so on. With (pause) a different flavour. And all these stories were put together, [which] give us (pause) a far more accurate (pause) social history, even an economic history and even a political history than what other people would like to come from outside, outside the city, or Cape Town, or District Six and then write, and then the kids must learn that history in school. [...] And from time to time we do ensure that there are [floor] meetings where we can ensure that the staff do not move off what is considered to be the path of the accurate um, story.*

HA states that the learners can start to understand through the “vehicle” of the senses (hearing, seeing, feeling) so that they can “transport” themselves into other situations, “[imagining] that you are experiencing that pain, that hardship”. HA’s reflection on what understanding is in this intergenerational dialogue brings out its complex, multidimensional character. As Bruner, referring to David Krech, states it: “people ‘perfink’ - perceive, feel and think at once. They also *act* within the constraints of what they ‘perfink’”.<sup>8</sup> The social meaning of ‘place’ then also relates to those who visit the museums. As Richard Rive explains, there cannot be a place without people and without the capacity to empathise.<sup>9</sup> However, as explained in Chapter One, empathy is complex, and often interpreted as merely identification.

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<sup>7</sup> Bruner, *Actual minds, possible worlds*, 11-43; Wells, *Dialogic inquiry*. 107-108.

<sup>8</sup> Bruner, *Actual minds*, 69 (Bruner’s emphasis).

<sup>9</sup> Rive quoted in Delport, “Signposts for retrieval”, 31. See also Field, “Sites of memory in Langa”, 30-32.

HA's request "I need you to accept my word" can thus be answered in different, often paradoxical ways. This complexity can be understood by looking at the emotional impact of the traumatic experience, which often expresses itself in unwillingness on *both* sides to understand the narrative, to accept its gaps and silences. MP, a primary witness facilitator at the Holocaust Centre, for instance, stressed that it is impossible for the young learners to understand what had happened in the camps. Even for herself, a survivor of the extermination camps, understanding is an everlasting challenge and this is what makes testifying a difficult thing to do:

*They [learners] don't grasp it! And another thing! We can't speak so often! You speak a few times; you have to have a break! It, it's, you yourself cannot und/you're trying to find out, you're trying to learn, you're trying to study, you will never fathom it! [...] [Reflecting on a personal, very upsetting experience in one of the concentration camps:] For a (pause) good moment I thought I must have died and I am in hell! Because it couldn't happen in reality. [...] [N]o MATTER how much you learn about it, you cannot fathom it, you cannot even VISUALISE it!*

The personal pronoun 'you' in MP's positioning first solely refers to 'we' - the witnesses who testify - for whom the attempt to understand is very painful. Later on the pronoun refers to the researcher/interviewer who tries "to find out," "to learn," "to study", but who "will never fathom it". Finally, after having reflected on a personal upsetting experience, MP positions 'you' as implicitly including both the researcher/interviewer and the survivor herself who could not "fathom" what happened to her "because it couldn't happen in reality". The complexity of this mode of address nuances the seemingly uncomplicated distinction between what Hirsch calls memory and postmemory of the Holocaust (see Chapter Two). Both memory and postmemory are invested, however in different degrees, with indirectness, fragmentation and what Hirsch calls "imaginative investment and creation".<sup>10</sup>

PB said that the Centre asks the Holocaust survivors to testify only in certain educational programs because of the emotional impact the act of testifying has on them. She stated that even when the survivors talk, listeners do not necessarily understand what they say:

*[O]ften that is also falling, almost, on deaf ears. Because the listeners haven't got the context, and therefore haven't even got the empathy. Unless you've done quite a bit of reading, you don't really know what they are talking about. Because they never talk worst case scenario. They give you an outline of what happened to them. And these people have no idea what the worst case scenario actually was. (pause) And we also don't LIKE to expose them to st/, even to young people, who may not appreciate what they are talking about. [...] [They do] not empathise efficiently, you know, this, to them, to a very young person, this is an old person standing and talking*

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<sup>10</sup> Hirsch, "Mourning and postmemory", 22.

*about something that happened 60 years ago. OK and they don't REALLY understand what it is.*

PB's reflection indicates that reaching an understanding is not easy because of the different historical positions and needs of both parties. Understanding requires of a listener to place the narrative in "context" and to "empath[ise]". There is the assumption that learners might understand the agony, pain and also silences or gaps in the narratives of primary witnesses after they have "done quite a bit of reading". It is however not only what learners already "know" that is important in the practice of understanding. Implicitly PB seems to refer also to the role of imagination in bridging what learners might read in books and what is left unsaid in the witness' narrative. Egan and Gajdamaschko assert that the cognitive tools, which learners use in their imaginative lives, are part of their intellectual life and can offer ways to deal with "the extremes and limits of reality".<sup>11</sup>

From the above it is clear that it is beneficial to look not only at the distinctive characteristics of memory and postmemory but also at the interplay and at shared characteristics of the two kinds of memories. The facilitators' expectations and assumptions regarding the role of the teacher are shaped in relation to this complex relationship between primary and secondary witnesses. JA, a primary witness working at the District Six Museum, for instance, made the following remark about the teachers visiting the Museum:

*I think we didn't really have problems. You know, we sort that out. If they have a project for their children, they will inform us what it is about, or they're asking me to fax a copy of their paper so that there can be some um, focus on the project while they are here and to motivate the learners so I don't think I have difficulties with the teachers. [...] But what I do, um, teachers have to participate in what goes on. They have to take responsibility for their children and they have to be included. Um, and they, sometimes the teachers think they will just drop the child, the children and um, you know I would just take over completely and they have to be here and some of them will escape to the coffee shop (laugh) and you know have a nice break. And I will you know, invite them to rather join. Because it is for their own benefit too.*

JA seems to ascribe here both the role of 'teacher' and 'learner' to the teachers visiting the museum: they are expected to take responsibility for the (discipline of the) children, but they also need to "participate" and "be included" because they might "benefit" from the visit. Secondary witness facilitators at the Holocaust Centre, for example PB, talked in similar, practical, pedagogical terms. With this, they seem to be placing the teacher in the position of someone with a postmemory, who is teaching and learning *with* the younger generation. It is

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<sup>11</sup> Egan and Gajdamaschko, "Some cognitive tools of literacy", 88-89. See also Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 15-16.

interesting that facilitators from both museums do not take into account the possibility that teachers could be primary witnesses themselves, for example of Apartheid Forced Removals or of the oppressive regime of Apartheid – a topic dealt with in the Holocaust Centre. The Holocaust Centre does attend to the latter during workshops specifically organised for teachers. When teachers visit the museum with their learners, however, the facilitators do not address this potential aspect of the teachers' identity.

MP, who personally experienced and survived the Holocaust, preferred to allocate an 'interface' role to the teachers that visit the Holocaust Centre. She explained that the Holocaust survivors only talk to adult groups (and to Jewish learners) because it is too painful to talk to young children. Well-informed teachers should speak, she asserted:

*We find that for us to speak to young children is not necessary. Teachers, who are well informed, should speak, as part of their Holocaust Education. That's why we speak only to, you know, students, people over 18 and so on. Because every time we speak it/it's a PIECE of my HEART. And it's a piece of my HEALTH. That is destroyed. You know, for the young people, 60 years, 50 years, [is] long time ago! For them it is part of history! For me it's my youth that was brutally taken away from me! And even after my miraculous survival it was not given back to me! I never got my youth back! I never got my home, my parents, my, my, my relatives, my teachers, my school!*

MP talks here about potentially painful interactions with young people who she positions as not having the same emotional investment in the experiences she went through. Memory for her is her youth being brutally taken away; it is, she said, "a PIECE of my HEART [...] that is destroyed". In contrast, postmemory for the young children is "60 years, 50 years [...] ago"; "it is part of history". As also MP's previous quote about the difficulty for both parties to understand and describe the atrocity indicates, the dialogue between memory and postmemory has discursive boundaries that are constantly re-inscribed along the lines of what is perceived as describable and discussable for the parties involved in the dialogue at hand. In this instance, MP's concern regarding her "health" rather than a pedagogical concern regarding learners' Holocaust education draws these discursive boundaries.

That the constant re-inscription of these discursive boundaries also has a physical complexity is clear from the paradox of the open space of District Six. The District Six Museum facilitators stressed that the identity of the museum is shaped in an important way by this space. The physical space, especially in relation to the stories told in the museum, is a vehicle for outsiders to feel the lost space, to feel what it is like to be thrown out of your neighbourhood. It is a space one needs to commemorate by making it a heritage site. This, however, might conflict with the realism of human empathy for the victims who want to

rebuild their home in that very same space. GC, a former resident of District Six working at the museum, was very aware of the contrasting practices of empathy and tried to relieve the tension by stating that a “*realistic*” point of view is pivotal:

*So there I sit in a catch-twenty-two situation, from where I look at it from both sides. I put myself IN THEIR PLACE, and I want to get out, I got a family and I want to get out of here, and here is an opening. And it is being offered. I would take it! So, um, that is where I sit in a catch-twenty-two situation. So I haven't got a problem with people coming back, but I've also got a problem with, you know, with what you're going to be losing. The, the heritage of, of, of the open space of District Six. Where the sorrow and the pain happened. Maybe it is a healing process! [...] I want to be realistic about it, and people want to come back, then that's the way it is then. You've got to be prepared to sacrifice.*

This paradox highlights the different positionings and desires of primary and secondary witnesses. A reading of the discursive boundaries of what is describable and what is discussable adds an extra dimension to the analysis. It is to these boundaries that I now turn.

### **The indescribable and the undiscussable: defining the discursive boundaries of the intergenerational dialogue**

As explained in Chapter Two, Bar-On describes the indescribable and the undiscussable, as that which we struggle to put in words because of the (‘wrong’) assumptions we make about what the other might feel or think, but also because of fears and social taboos around topics that violate constructive dialogs and trust between people.<sup>12</sup> In the living, contested and ever changing space of the museum we catch glimpses of these constantly re-inscribed discursive boundaries in the social process of forgetting and remembering, and in the constant shaping and reshaping of insiders and an outsiders.<sup>13</sup> Both practices happen within the (un)consciousness of the survivors, in interaction between survivors and their descendants, and in the interaction between survivors and the general public, including learners and teachers.

#### *Forgetting, silencing and remembering*

The District Six Museum facilitators who were evicted from the District were literally cut out of the place they belonged to. This loss ran the risk of being erased from their memories. This happened in two ways: Apartheid officials named streets and housing complexes in the new areas after the names of streets and flat buildings in the destroyed neighbourhoods, such

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<sup>12</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*.

<sup>13</sup> Soudien and Meltzer, “District Six: Representation and struggle”, 68; Davison, “Museums and the reshaping of memory”.

as Hanover Park and Lavender Hill.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the people who directly experienced eviction often tried to suppress their memories in an attempt to overcome the trauma of having lost that very space that was their home and made their identity as an individual and as a community. They express this trauma in the constant tension between wanting to remember and wanting to forget. Silences and forgetting are shared absences that shape what is remembered; they play a role in “memory work”.<sup>15</sup> JA and her family for example cut memories of the eviction out of their memory “*like we wanted to forget*”. SA expressed the tension between wanting and not wanting to visit that world, where people behave in such ways to one another, as follows:

*(Y)our place and space is, [...] that is significant to you because it IS your identification [...] I wanted to just, to pull it out of my mind. But I HAD to, for my own healing, come BACK to it, and say ‘yes, but that is exactly where I lived’ [...] So, I had to re-, re-look at myself again and say ‘well, no, I can’t um, compartmentalise my mind!’ you know. And I think because Apartheid already wanted to do that! [...] So what we have to do now is to create this in our mind again. Um the fear about Forced Removals, um, one sometimes don’t know how they could have act/actually [...] done something like this, you know. And, yet, the, the world out there, it’s, it’s possible today.*

SA’s reflection and the very language he used clearly points to the tension of wanting to forget and wanting to remember. Traumatic memories have the potential to recur independently of the individual’s will to recall.<sup>16</sup> SA also perceived the (re-) creation of the mental place as pivotal for his healing. “*Pull[ing] out*” the memory would mean to surrender to the ideology of Apartheid and to deny his own identity. This healing does not entail a complete reconstruction of all that was or is forgotten. It might take the form of what Portelli calls “*uchronia*” (see Chapter Two) which mostly accompanies a selective memory in memory work, especially when one has to deal with traumatic memories. For the interviewees it is important to be able to deal with their traumatic past and to construct a morally defensible self-image.<sup>17</sup>

Remembering the Holocaust was (and still is) difficult. In the words of Laub:

Not only, in effect, did the Nazis exterminate the physical witnesses of their crime; but the inherently incomprehensible *and* deceptive psychological structure of the event precluded its own witnessing, even by its very victims.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Delport, “Signposts for retrieval”, 39; Hart, “Political manipulation of urban space”, 128-129.

<sup>15</sup> Field talks about “memory work” in order to counter the seeming dichotomy (and its underlying moral assumptions) of remembering and forgetting. Field, “Sites of memory in Langa”, 21-22. See also Zur, “Remembering and forgetting”, 50; Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 18-21.

<sup>16</sup> Leydesdorff *et al.*, “Introduction”, 1-7.

<sup>17</sup> Winter and Sivan, “Setting the framework”, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Laub, “An event without a witness”, 80 (Laub’s emphasis).

The atrocities were such that both the survivors and those who did not experience them did not want to or could not believe it really happened. I had the following dialogue with IL about how she got to know about the atrocities committed in the extermination camps in which her parents died:

*SG: How did, how did they tell you, because you were only 12 or something.*  
*IL: I was 12. It is not only how I was told, [...] I didn't know my parents were in Auschwitz. [...] How did we know? Because at the end of the war, when all the atrocities became known, it was SHOWN on huge big pictures, it was shown in the MOVIES, on the/ (SG: the screen). You HEARD about it! And amongst the Jewish community, we all heard about it. And I actually saw pictures, of you know the emaciated bodies, and, and, that's how I heard about it. And I hoped that my parents weren't among THEM [...]*  
*SG: How did, how does it feel?*  
*IL: Well it was for me very, very traumatic. And very, and very, um, I really looked once, and didn't look again. I, I really didn't want to, to see them. I had to see them, because I HAD to know, but I didn't want to see them*  
*SG: um, ja, I understand.*  
*IL: I mean, I could understand that people were so thin, because I knew we were hungry in the camps and there wasn't food and, and it wasn't an ordinary LIFE style, it was not the one I had been living before. But I didn't know exactly, I didn't know about the extermination camps, that I didn't know about, until after the war. Most of the world PRETENDED not to know about it. But we, we as a child, I really didn't understand and I think I was also shielded from being told.*

This dialogue between IL and myself points to the interactive character of forgetting, silencing and remembering.<sup>19</sup> It also points to how people do not have a language (and schemata) to talk about such a seemingly unprecedented atrocity. There is, in other words, a convergence of the indescribable and the undiscussable in IL's testimony.<sup>20</sup> IL referred to things she experienced herself but everything that went beyond her own experiences seemed difficult to fathom, not only because she did not experience them herself but also because of the dynamics of forgetting and remembering within herself and within and between the people around her.<sup>21</sup> In the interview IL referred to her previous life, which was "totally different" to the experience in the concentration camps.<sup>22</sup> She referred to the (assumed) commonly held present schemata of concentration camps four times. One of these four equations was an assumed understanding of "living like Gypsies". She made this assumption about the listener's knowledge because as we look back at the event, we have within present society an assumed understanding of what a concentration camp is.<sup>23</sup> Making this

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<sup>19</sup> Bettelheim speaks in this context about denial and linguistic circumlocution. See his chapter "The Holocaust – one generation later" in his *Surviving and other essays*, 84-104.

<sup>20</sup> See also Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 162-199.

<sup>21</sup> See Bettelheim's chapter on "The Holocaust – one generation later" in his *Surviving and other essays*, 84-104; and Iorio *et al.*, *The Holocaust: Lessons for the third generation*.

<sup>22</sup> See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 103-104.

<sup>23</sup> See Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*.

assumption, however, also makes it easier for the survivor not to have to go into the details of the experience - to relive the experience. This is particularly true for the primary *and*, as IL's narrative indicates, *secondary* witnessing of the extermination camps. As explained in Chapter Two, the listener often shares in this reluctance to 'revisit' this kind of experience.

### *Insiders and outsiders*

There is yet another reason, which makes the process of representing and empathizing a complex one. Both visitors and facilitators constantly reshape identities of insiders and outsiders for themselves and those they talk or listen to.<sup>24</sup> The possibility of understanding and imagining needs, in the words of Simon *et al.*, "a much more dialectical and uncanny conception of what constitutes a 'point of connection', one that initiates an ongoing attentiveness to identification and difference, to ordinariness and the shock of the unordinary".<sup>25</sup> This is not only the case in the facilitators' relation to younger generations. It is also the case in the facilitators' relation to people who have 'other' memories of the atrocities.

The District Six Museum is unique, JA said, "*because we are passionate about what we do here*". But who is represented in the museum?<sup>26</sup> There are people who lived in District Six but also benefited from the Forced Removals and have 'other' memories. Their position and memories are one of the most contested areas in the District Six Museum. They are not represented in the museum. The relationship between the museum facilitators and those who have other memories of the Removals influences the relationship between the museum facilitators and those who did not experience the Removals, such as the younger generations. The dialogues in the museum contain stories in which agency and a good feeling derived from a (morally) accepted self-image are central. These stories are an attempt to deal with loss, to reclaim the ability to make individual choices and to retain a sense of self.<sup>27</sup> These 'good old times' stories are also part of the museum's role in reshaping public memory for a new and better South Africa.<sup>28</sup> In these stories, idealization and demonization of characters might give clues to unrealized hopes or hidden fears.<sup>29</sup> Silences are created and insiders might be positioned in contrast to outsiders, victims in contrast to observers, and members of older generations in contrast to younger generations.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Soudien, "District Six and its uses", 125-126.

<sup>25</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> See Soudien and Meltzer, "District Six: Representation and struggle", 66-68.

<sup>27</sup> Field, "I dream of our old house", 118.

<sup>28</sup> Davison, "Museums and the reshaping of memory", 147.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel and Thompson, *The myths we live by*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Hayden, "Landscapes of loss and remembrance", 145.

In the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, the need to imagine a progress towards an ideal society without racism and prejudice is equally strong. MG, a secondary witness facilitator, highlighted “[the] extra dimension” that the Cape Town Holocaust Centre gives to the teaching of history by exploring the links between the ideologies behind Nazism and Apartheid:

*[...] even though there are people who know about the Holocaust, who know about Apartheid, it's the way that it's done here that gives them that extra dimension. So, they possibly haven't THOUGHT about, they know the history of both, but they don't realise what the stepping stones were all about. They don't process what the stepping stones to all this was all about and hopefully and really what I always say to whoever I take around, the history is one thing that's there but what you learn from the history you know. [...] I hope that whoever comes and whoever leaves goes away and really just looks at themselves.*

She was however aware of the “sermon” quality that teaching about these ideologies might have:

*I hope by the time they leave, they don't feel that they've had a good dose of church, sometimes they think, maybe I'm giving them a sermon along the way.*

This concern rubs in an unpleasant way against her wish that learners will reflect upon their own attitudes and practices. AH, another secondary witness facilitator, pointed at the fragile construction of an understanding within the museum by mentioning the sensitive question that listeners ask and that she finds only the survivors can answer - “How could the survivors have faced coming to an Apartheid state?”. EW, also a secondary witness facilitator at the Centre, pointed at the different positions amongst Jewish and non-Jewish people on whether one can compare the Holocaust with Apartheid. Facilitators also regularly mentioned questions relating to the factuality of the Holocaust (Holocaust denial) and the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

These sensitive questions point to the possible uncanniness within the interaction between primary and secondary witnesses. They highlight the historical trauma the primary witness went through and the ‘post’-encounter of this trauma by the secondary witness. The uncanniness revolves around the accountability of one’s agency in different historical and social contexts. These questions also indicate the challenge of understanding each other through the use of language and the difficulty, if not impossibility, according to some facilitators, of imagining and understanding events (in this case atrocities) that one did not experience first hand. Secondary witnesses encode the Holocaust according to their own present needs and their imaginative possibilities and this easily collides with the “psychic and

political imperatives of survivor memory”.<sup>31</sup> The memory work of both primary and secondary witnesses is a construction of not only an (idealised) understanding of the past (which does not necessarily mean the same for both parties) but also of the respective present positions.<sup>32</sup>

This tension between insiders and outsiders highlights the crucial balance between empathy and critical reflection. KH of the District Six Museum pointed out the possible dangerous pedagogical impact of conveying only ‘good’ stories in the museum:

*It’s affecting the children [...] The children think that only heroes lived in District Six when they come to our museum [...] [but the District Sixers] still have memories of these people [...] [and the collaborators’] children are alive, hey? It’s like take the white, no white person comes now in South Africa today, you know ‘I voted for the Apartheid government’. Nobody voted for the Apartheid government! And there again, you’ve got a problem with memory, selective memory, you see? (Sigh) So, all these things are taken into consideration, you know. And maybe history has to be reviewed every ten years, you know, and retold in a relevant way for its time.*

This reflection on the selectivity of memory exemplifies the tension between wanting to forget and wanting to remember and the ever changing process of making history. As a remedy, KH argued that the museum should put up “*a rogues’ gallery*”, to show the kids of today that in that time there were ‘bad’ people as well. At the same time, however, he defended the particular constructions at the museum and was aware that his proposal contrasts with that of other District Sixers who do not want to talk about “memories that might reflect negatively on others”.<sup>33</sup> Certain trustees strongly defended this path: SA for example wanted to “*pay tribute to the ordinary men and women who sacrificed much in the quest for freedom*”. To him they are role models for the present society. Those who did not fight for justice and peace do not have a place in his narrative. And HA stated:

*Well I suppose the best way to, to, to protect the future is to keep as far as possible away from all [sic] the potential enemy or who overrun us.*

However, this “*keep[ing] away*” can be questioned when it is linked with SA’s reflection on the dialectic between wanting to forget and wanting to remember: To what degree is this potential enemy or Other not part of ‘us’? Is this not what we are afraid of, namely imagining the other inside us, *being the other*?<sup>34</sup> KH seems to solve this tension by pointing out that people and museums *make choices*:

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<sup>31</sup> Ashplant *et al.*, “The politics of war memory and commemoration”, 72.

<sup>32</sup> Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 184.

<sup>33</sup> Field, “I dream of our old house”, 123.

<sup>34</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to ourselves*, 1 and 13. See also Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 90.

*So, you get the whole range of responses, you see and when I'd say the museum makes a decision to remember the people who made/who had positive thoughts the people who should not be forgotten. The people who campaigned, you know. Because people will come and say, 'I went to the [name] school, where is his photo?' He says 'that man, you must be joking. We'll never waste our, our, our (pause) bloody money on his bloody face'. It's a PREJUDICE[D] MUSEUM, it's a BIASED museum and it's the museum's POLICY to be biased and if anybody wants to start their own district six museum and put up THEIR photos, they are welcome to do so ...*

KH presents here the District Six museum facilitators as choosing to represent their old District Six as a good place, and not as a 'slum'. As Soudien points out, however, the debate in the District Six Museum is much more open-ended and contested than these informants suggest.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, this kind of selectivity might, as KH pointed out, create a tension between the remembering of the District Sixers and the imagining of the younger generations. The younger generations, growing up in a post-Apartheid South Africa characterised by poverty, crime and unemployment, might think that 'good' and 'bad' people only exist in their present and that 'District Six' as remembered by the facilitators is an unreachable, 'foreign' place. Similarly, younger generations may perceive the Holocaust as 'foreign' - an event that happened as a result of uncontested stereotyping and prejudice on another continent, in another time. As Baum states it:

*Survivor stories are irreplaceable in their witness of the event [of the Holocaust], but they do not provide models of remembrance for those who did not experience the destruction primary.<sup>36</sup>*

### **The role of time and positionings**

From the above reflections on the intergenerational dialogue, it is clear that assumptions about the listener's knowledge and potential to understand, as well as the dynamic and intrinsically social practices of forgetting and remembering that both parties share, shape the dialogue.<sup>37</sup> For the survivors it is important to be able to deal with their traumatic past and to construct a morally defensible self-image while the listeners might accept and even demand redemptive narratives.<sup>38</sup> IL highlighted the two-way direction of wanting to forget by saying the following about a family member who experienced the extermination camps:

*[S]he would never talk to me about it. About the camp. And I didn't want to know.*

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<sup>35</sup> Soudien, Personal communication, 8 August 2006. See also Karp *et al.*, *Museum frictions*; Rassool, "Community museums"; Rassool, "Introduction". See also Coombes, "District Six" on the role of idealistic nostalgia in the museum and the role of various parts of the exhibition in an attempt "to guard against a romantic nostalgia from within a certain constituency of former District Six residents themselves" (141).

<sup>36</sup> Baum, "Never to forget", 95.

<sup>37</sup> Hayden, "Landscapes of loss and remembrance"; Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*.

<sup>38</sup> Friedlander, *Probing the limits of representation*; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 153-159.

Silences and gaps across generations also take place in the homes of the learners who visit the District Six Museum. JA perceives her role in conveying her personal stories to children as being pivotal in this context:

*[...] especially I like to share it with the small children, you know. (pause) because for them it is history, but yet if you make it personal and if you, um, to get their attention, um, for them to appreciate what people've gone through (pause) and to make them AWARE of the past, you know, for children, it is not, they don't have this experience of what we went through, [about] Apartheid and so on. Because I think their parents don't talk about it with them. There MIGHT be some parents, but the majority of parents are so, um, stressed by work and family and so on. So they don't have much time, to spend with their children and talking about the past. And, so, um (pause) I [can] make it interesting for them um, you know, [if] they will appreciate it, or maybe, maybe get some sense of understanding.*

The analysis of the different positions that primary and secondary witnesses take, and of the choices they make, seems rather bleak. However, time might have a positive impact on the dialogue and positionings. Primary witness IL and secondary witness MG stated the following:

*It is VERY interesting to know WHAT they come up with. So HOPEfully, even if maybe at the moment it [the Holocaust] is not the most important thing in their lives, later on, you know, they won't forget about it. Cause I think once you have seen it, you can't go forget about it. So it is very important they've seen. Especially if they are living in a country like South Africa. (SG: yes) So it is very important. And if I didn't feel it is important, I wouldn't been doing it, you know. Because it is not a pleasure (SG: no). You know, it is not a pleasure to talk about all these things. (IL)*

*I, I often wonder what happens when some of these children go home and [...] they come with these new ideas, how the parents react you know. [...] It's probably hard to go home and say, 'well how was it at the Holocaust Centre today?' I mean teaching X Y Z and we're teaching them Z Y X, you know how, 'I don't want to be disrespectful to my parents but' (pause) it's HARD, it's very hard but maybe even if it doesn't happen then, it happens at another point in time but they, ja, might just remember what happened. (MG)*

What learners take from the intergenerational dialogue is as important as what they bring to it.<sup>39</sup> Both IL and MG express the hope that learners learn and take on another view of the past but also of their own present lives. This brings estrangement and uncanniness (see Chapter Two), not only because it implies remembering what is “not a pleasure” but also what parents might not want to share. Understanding then is not a clear-cut fact or wish. It does not only require primary experience, but also extension and re-interpretation.<sup>40</sup> It implies an

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<sup>39</sup> Wells, *Dialogic inquiry*, 90-92.

<sup>40</sup> Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination*; Hexter, “The sown and the waste, or the second record”; Wells, *Dialogic inquiry*; Wineburg, *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts*. See also Simon, “The pedagogical insistence of public memory”; Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”, 178.

active acknowledgement of its meandering and various shades, and the dynamic, complex and ever changing positionings of both primary and secondary witnesses.

In addition, while narrators and listeners might experience uncanniness and misunderstandings as something restraining and even threatening, as something that needs to be 'remedied', they also open a door to what Lacapra calls "empathic unsettlement" (see Chapters One and Two). MS, one of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre secondary witness facilitators for example did not experience the suffering of the Holocaust but directly witnessed the humiliation inflicted upon 'blacks' during Apartheid. Her reflection on the suffering of the Holocaust indicates that she will never fully understand it, despite her attempts to imagine "what it must be like".

*I can imagine, but it wasn't me, so the best I can do is try in limited LANGUAGE I have, because I don't have a vocabulary to describe that suffering. And I wasn't even there! But the more I read, the more I know, the more I can give examples, and explain and engage and interact, the closer one can get to imagining what it must be like. I don't think one needs to have gone through it to be able to say we/we can now relate to it, we can relate in SOME ways, because we do have an imagination and with/with more knowledge, we can BEGIN to understand without actually experiencing the same emotion.*

MS's reflection points out that learning through empathetic unsettlement happens on two levels: One learns about what happened to others, in another time and space. In addition, one learns "within the disturbances and disruptions inherent in comprehending these events".<sup>41</sup> According to Schlender "estrangement" plays a crucial role in this context: One willingly and unwillingly estranges the experiences of oneself or another human being.<sup>42</sup>

Estrangement and the tension between wanting to know and not wanting to know amongst secondary witnesses is often overlooked, partly because of the illusion of "the fancy of understanding".<sup>43</sup> Instead, one could argue that uncanniness, misunderstandings, and delays in understanding/change are 'part of the deal'. "Empathic unsettlement" I would argue is part of what Ellsworth calls "analytic dialogue" or Bar-On calls "constructive dialog": questions regarding what is describable and what is discussable - the discursive boundaries of the dialogue - are part of the very dialogue (see Chapters One and Two). Quite a few facilitators advocated for this kind of dialogue during the interviews (for example MS, EW, KH). As I will explain in Chapter Six, a minority of teachers did the same. However, as the analysis of

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<sup>41</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Schlender, "Sexual/textual encounters in the high school", 138. See in this regard also Jay's analysis of Walter Benjamin's "refusal to mourn". Jay, "Against consolation: Walter Benjamin and the refusal to mourn".

<sup>43</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; see also Chapter Two.

classroom and museum interactions will show (see Chapters Five, Seven and Eight), these positionings during the interviews did not always coincide with similar positionings during actual interactions with learners.

In the next chapter, I analyse the visit GB and her learners paid to the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. As explained at the end of Chapter Three, this chapter is speculative not only because of the short duration of observation, but also because of the use of analytic concepts originally developed for classroom interactions.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter Five

### Intermezzo

#### Primary narratives in museum interactions

As mentioned in the introduction, academic literature and the South African Department of Education associate spaces such as the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre with a moral and pedagogical imperative of telling stories of past atrocities in order to change Past and Present and build a better future (“the Possible”). I discussed in the previous chapter how the interviewed museum facilitators adhered to this imperative, but how some of them, in their reflections, were also cautious in finding closure in the ‘never again’ imperative.

In this chapter, I fast-forward to an analysis of the interactions in the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre between facilitators and GB and her learners in order to further unpack this ‘never again’ imperative.<sup>1</sup> I created this ‘intermezzo’ chapter in order to place what the museum facilitators *said* during the interviews (discussed in the previous chapter) in the context of *how they interacted* during museum interactions. In the following chapters, then, I continue unpacking the ‘never again’ imperative by analysing teachers’ approaches to history and their positionings of self and others in history during the interviews (Chapter Six), and during observations (Chapters Seven and Eight). In addition, as explained in Chapter Two, I analyse teachers’ and museum facilitators’ modes of pedagogical practice in order to situate their approaches to history and their positionings of self and others in history (not exclusively in the form of primary narratives) in the broader, pedagogical context.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, however, the analysis below is bound to be elusive for two reasons. The first reason is that I did not have the opportunity to observe more than one of the teachers and his/her learners in a museum setting. When I drew up my research proposal, I hoped to be able to find teachers across the different schools who would allow me to observe them both in class and in the museums. In the end, only one out of the seven observed teachers, namely GB, visited the museums and allowed me to observe these visits.

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<sup>1</sup> The Grade Nines (split up in four groups) visited the museums over two half-days (two groups each day). On the second day, I followed one group of learners during their half-day visit to the respective museums. At times, for example during plenary sessions in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, I observed the two groups that were visiting the Centre on that particular day. The teachers of history and geography (social sciences) combined the visit to the District Six Museum with a visit to the area that was once District Six. During the visit to the actual area geography exercises dominated the interaction.

The second reason is an epistemological one. While I am mainly preoccupied with how educators use primary narratives in the *formal* setting of a classroom, it is crucial to study how educators use these kinds of narratives in the *informal* setting of museums which place primary narratives as central to their design and mission (see Chapter Four). Due to a gap in academic literature on pedagogical interactions in museums,<sup>2</sup> I use the concepts introduced in Chapter Two, which relate to teachers' approaches to history and modes of pedagogical practice in order to analyse the museum interactions. I am aware that with this analytic approach, I transpose the character of and expectations around a classroom interaction onto the space of a museum. One of the District Six Museum facilitators described the museum as "*an extension of [the] classroom*". The interaction in the museum space is indeed not just a replica of that in a classroom. Different discourses intertwine: A traditional museum-discourse suggests 'factuality' and 'authority'<sup>3</sup> and therefore, arguably, bears resemblance with a factual approach to history within a repetition led mode of pedagogical practice, as characterised in a classroom setting. Museum designers, museum facilitators and/or visiting teachers, however, increasingly employ a mode of pedagogical practice, which differs, challenges or moves beyond a traditional museum discourse.<sup>4</sup> The design of the District Six Museum for example challenges the idea that there is 'one' story about District Six and former residents defied Apartheid's attempt to erase the District by re-inscribing its streets and its inhabitants on a huge floor-map.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, designers and academics perceive the District Six Museum as moving beyond a traditional museum discourse because of its former residents' myriad of little (i.e. not 'grand') narratives.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kratz and Karp, "Introduction: Museum frictions", 19-20. *Museum frictions*, while acknowledging its limitation, starts to look at museums not merely as "institutions of public culture" but as "a varied and often changing set of practices, processes, and interactions", and this in relation to international connections and global orientations. Kratz and Karp, "Introduction: Museum frictions", 2. Witz's contribution to this recent study does analyse how tourist guides respond in different, paradoxical ways to recent design changes in the South African Museum, especially at the highly contested 'Bushman diorama'. Witz, "Transforming museums".

<sup>3</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, *The educational role of the museum*; Crane, "Memory, distortion, and history in the museum"; Rowe *et al.*, "Linking little narratives to big ones", 97; Brown, "Trauma, museums and the future of pedagogy", 248-251; Kratz and Karp, "Introduction: Museum frictions", 3-4; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Exhibitionary complexes", 38.

<sup>4</sup> Kratz and Karp, "Introduction: Museum frictions", 3-4; Witz, "Transforming museums"; Rassool, "Community museums". See for a discussion on how visitors link their 'little' (personal, private or autobiographical) narratives to museums' 'big' (larger-scale, collective or national) narratives, Rowe, *et al.*, "Linking little narratives to big ones". Resistance can have different faces, however. Crane asks how metahistorical approaches can be used in a museum when the public wants rather "to learn 'facts' about history" (62) and analyses public reactions in the U.S.A. against attempts to move beyond the "good guys" image and to engage with the perpetrator and bystander roles of Americans in WWII in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the controversy around the Enola Gay exhibit (a B-29 bomber) at the National Air and Space Museum. Crane, "Memory, distortion, and history in the museum". See also Ruffins, "Revisiting the old plantation".

<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of another museum that attempts to move beyond 'traditional' designs, see Ellsworth on the design of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in her *Places of learning*, 99-115.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Three for references on the District Six Museum and the history of the area.

One needs to be careful, nonetheless, when allocating power and meaning to the museum design only (as we also tend to do when discussing a curriculum<sup>7</sup>). Ellsworth has shown that design has a *potential* address or invitation.<sup>8</sup> However, its *realisation* depends on how the facilitator, the visiting learners and teachers allocate meaning, how they take the museum home (and into the world). In other words, design does not include teachers', facilitators' and learners' *meaning making*, their social, dynamic and ever-changing *mediations of* and *responses to* the design. An address or invitation does not say anything about whether a facilitator, teacher and/or learner will actually 'see' (i.e. recognise) and accept the address.<sup>9</sup>

I attempt to analyse one observed (and partly audio-taped) pedagogical interaction in the respective museums by looking at the museum facilitators' approaches to history, modes of pedagogical practice, and positionings of self and others in history. I do this, by first typifying the facilitators' modes of pedagogical practice as mainly following a repetition led mode of pedagogical practice.<sup>10</sup> I then analyse the responses of GB's learners, which indicate that they were used to and *responded from* a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice. I

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<sup>7</sup> See Chisholm, "The making of South Africa's national curriculum statement", 201.

<sup>8</sup> Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 7-9. She calls the "pedagogical anomalies" she studies in her work (for example Maya Lin's memorials and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) "deviating orbits" moving around "schools as centers of learning", because these places challenge the traditional ideas around teaching and learning. Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> For an analysis of visitors' responses to recent design changes in the South African Museum, see Witz, "Transforming museums", 115-123. Despite changes in the design of the South African Museum, Witz reports that tour guides repeat and confirm 'racial' images. This calls for a discussion on how one can challenge racial and ethnic categories by representing/reproducing them (on the latter, see Butler, *Excitable speech*). See also Rowe *et al.*, "Linking little narratives to big ones"; Brown, "Trauma, museums and the future of pedagogy"; Roberts, *From knowledge to narrative*. Ellsworth presents the design of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and its artefacts, for example the Ringelblum Milk Can or "the silence" at the end of the exhibit, as being "not inspired by any particular educational theory or practice; rather, they are a social and cultural achievement aimed precisely at staging responsibility as an indeterminate, indeterminable labour of response" (114). I argue, however, based on the readings mentioned in Chapter Two, that both facilitators and visitors might read or *want* to read closure in the design and artefacts of the museum. As the old saying goes, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder". The scene of pedagogical address, in my view, includes not only the design's address (or the designers' intended address), but also if and how facilitators and teachers mediate this address, and how the visiting learners respond to it. An intention (and a potential practice) is not yet actual practice. Ellsworth's analysis addresses the former, not (or not yet) the latter, even though she rightly states that "A student and a teacher never 'are' the 'who' that a pedagogical address thinks they are" (103). Ellsworth, *Places of learning*. See for another analysis of exhibits at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Liss, "Artificial testimonies". The group of young non-Jewish Germans and American Jews Krondorfer discusses in his study visited the offices of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council during the planning phase of the museum. The visit "provoked the fiercest discussion". See Krondorfer, *Remembrance and reconciliation*, 146-154.

<sup>10</sup> Because the facilitators are more easily recognisable (there is only a small group of them in each museum), I chose not to identify the facilitators I discuss below with the pseudonyms I gave them in Chapters Three and Four. For the same reason, I discuss the two museums simultaneously and I speak about 'the facilitator' even though, in the case of the Holocaust Centre, I observed three different facilitators addressing the learners during the different parts of the program.

then look at how the facilitators positioned themselves and the learners deliberately in history. Lastly, I typify the role of GB as mediating the different discourses in the museum interaction from her positionings *as a historian* and *as a person in history*. This present chapter then gives the reader an anachronistic reading of GB's mediating role - in Chapter Eight, I return to GB's classroom practice.

In accordance with the ethics outlined in Chapter One, it is important to mention that museum facilitators elaborated upon the above mentioned shortcomings. Two museum facilitators of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre were concerned after reading the analysis. One said, "*It does us injustice*". The facilitator pointed out that the analysis does not reflect the intention and the effect of the *diverse* programs of the Centre. It does also not say anything about the success of the program, as reflected in the many positive comments made by teachers and learners in evaluations and letters. The analysis is "*a distortion*", "*taken out of context*", in the sense that it only involves 60 learners coming from a *specific* school community, while the Centre yearly serves 60.000 young visitors according to their and their teachers' *diverse* needs. For these reasons, the facilitator was concerned about the perception people might have of the Centre and its programs after reading the below analysis.<sup>11</sup> While the District Six Museum facilitator did not seem to be concerned about the latter, he did ask whether this "*once off surgical analysis*" then implies that he needs "*to change*". While he said that the analysis did bring him an awareness of his "*shortcomings*" and of how the teacher took his "*lecture*" further, he emphasised that his intention is to create awareness amongst his audience and to give them hope.<sup>12</sup> The Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators talked about similar intentions in their response to the 'uncomfortable' analysis.

#### ***"So that's your brief history"* – repetition in the museum facilitators' speech**

Facilitators in both museums employed either a repetition led or - less often - a convention led mode of practice, while all seem to adhere predominantly to a factual approach to history. The District Six Museum facilitator for example listed the different countries District Sixers came from, and checked if the learners took note of what he had said: "*Have you got that now?*" He closed his "*lecture*" with "*So that's your brief history about District Six*". Now and then, he asked a routine question like "*what does Apartheid mean?*" While the facilitator in the District Six Museum gave an introduction and then let the children explore the museum

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<sup>11</sup> Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators, Personal communication, 17, 19 and 23 July 2007. As I explain in the concluding chapter, this dialogue challenged me to rewrite the conclusion of the study. I shared this added paragraph and the adapted Chapter Nine with the two facilitators and gave them the option to write a response which I would attach to the thesis. I have included their response (26 July 2007) at the end of the study.

<sup>12</sup> District Six museum facilitator, Personal communication, 19 July 2007.

after which GB took them to the actual District Six area, the museum interaction in the Holocaust Centre was structured in a program of three, interdependent parts which was led by different museum facilitators. Each part of the program was strongly facilitator-centred. During the first part (introduction), similarly to the interaction in the District Six Museum, a facilitator started with defining important terms and asked the learners what ‘Holocaust’ means. The facilitators structured their talk around imperatives such as “*think about ...*” and “*bear in mind ...*” and started sentences with “*we know that ...*” and “*we always need to remember ...*”

The intonation, speed, structure and rhetorical character of the introductions in both museums seem to suggest that the facilitators lectured a ‘fixed’ text they had already presented before.<sup>13</sup> In the District Six Museum, this text focussed on the history of the area, chronologically structured around dates, the influx of different cultural groupings and the actions of government against “*people of colour*” (listing especially Apartheid laws). In the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, the facilitator structured the introduction around the causes of the Holocaust, namely anti-Semitism, technology/science and attitudes. The Holocaust Centre facilitator established these causes through a question-answer interaction, which sounded rhetoric (see below for examples). The following two parts (exhibition tour and workshop) built upon and referred back to these causes. During the last part of the program, a facilitator elaborated on the last mentioned cause by “*workshopping*” the learners on their present attitudes in relation to racism and intolerance. Because of its over-arching tripartite structure and the question-answer sessions, the Holocaust Centre program alluded to a more convention led mode of practice; a factual approach to history within a repetition led mode of practice dominated the specific interactions *within* these three parts, however.

A factual approach to history within a repetition led mode of practice is expected and accepted within a traditional museum discourse. In the interviews, both facilitators and teachers perceived the two Cape Town museums as places where people can access history or the Past directly through the primary sources and primary witnesses (see Chapters Four and Six). The specific nature of the two museums, documenting traumatic histories and memories, adds weight to a factual approach to history within a repetition led mode of practice. Where people have violated and intentionally ‘forgotten’ other people’s identity, culture and space, memories need to be kept alive and revived for example through the listing of areas where people had lived before the Apartheid Forced Removals and the listing of the

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<sup>13</sup> A few history teachers I interviewed in 2004 and 2005 mentioned this in an unsolicited way. They said they recognise these ‘fixed’ (my words) texts because they visit the museums each year.

extermination and concentration camps in Nazi-occupied Europe.<sup>14</sup> The museum facilitators – in their pedagogical interaction with the learners – did not (or rarely) question/investigate these sources and narratives (as a disciplinary approach to history suggests) or investigate the creative role of language and position themselves deliberately in relation to these sources and narratives (as a positioned approach to history suggests), but presented them as ‘authoritative’, ‘factual’. Even though the majority of teachers accepted this approach in the interviews, several teachers positioned themselves as *wanting* to confront the facilitators with their (i.e. facilitators’) “*bias*” during the actual interaction, while one teacher claimed he had explicitly confronted museum facilitators (see Chapter Six). GB and her learners responded to both museum interactions by taking on (i.e. accepting) but also by resisting and elaborating on the facilitators’ “scene of address”.

### ***“Are these pictures real?” - The learners’ responses***

Overall, the learners seemed to accept a factual approach to history within a repetition led mode of practice in both museums, while at the same time bringing into the interaction disciplinary and positioned approaches to history. The learners responded in diverse ways to the facilitators’ and the design’s address. During the interaction in the District Six Museum, some learners had blank faces, staring at the boards the facilitator flipped back and forth or looking around in silence while others were actively responding to the few questions the facilitator asked. Learners took notes - especially when the facilitator mentioned dates. When learners attempted to ask him questions, however, he did not seem to see their hands (even though one of the other learners tried to signal this to him). The facilitator did not open the floor for questions, but several learners approached him after his talk to ask him questions for example where he moved to and where he now lives. A couple of girls approached him to ask about Jews living in the area. He showed them a timeline on one of the sideboards that spells out the influx of people into the District, and told them there is a lot of information they need to read there.

The interaction in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre differed in this regard. The facilitators made use of repetition led question-answer interactions, mainly focussing on subject content the learners were assumed to know already (for example the facilitators asked the learners what ‘Holocaust’ means, what the difference is between Holocaust and genocide, if they have read Elie Wiesel’s “Night”). This structure, however, allowed the learners to ask spontaneous questions *during* the sessions. Their fascination and curiosity came across especially during the exhibition tour in which they spontaneously asked questions for example at the display on

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<sup>14</sup> Rassool and Prosalendis, *Recalling community in Cape Town*; Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*.

resistance amongst Jews. Throughout the tour, the learners made comments that suggest that they were used to a discourse led mode of practice. At one point, a learner asked if people in Australia thought in a similar way about the aboriginals, *applying* what the facilitator had said to another context. Early on in the tour, at a display with photographs of Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust, a learner asked, “*Are these pictures real?*” This fascination with the *character of sources*, continued throughout the tour. While the interaction overall was strongly facilitator-centred, the facilitator adapted her mode in response to the learners’ excitement around ‘real’ artefacts. Facilitator and learners talked about how the Nazis made most of the visual material present in Holocaust museums. When the learners saw the (‘real’) camp uniform, they moved towards that display, away from the facilitator. This made the facilitator *re-direct* her gaze and talk: she asked follow-up questions, recognising and involving – for the first time during the interaction – the learners’ experiences (or knowledge).

*(Learners seem to be fascinated by prison uniform. They direct F’s gaze towards it!)*

*F: “yes, this is one of the few REAL artefacts that we have. I’m not quite sure the origin of it because this particular man, this person was a political prisoner, and was from Belgium. And there is a little bit of information for those of you who are interested at the bottom. But it could have been donated to the Centre. Uh, have any of you visited any other Holocaust Centres anywhere else?”*

*Boy: no I didn’t.*

*Girls: yes.*

*F: Yes, you two [did]?*

*Girls: We’ve been to Yad Vashem, ja.*

*F: Have you been to the new Yad Vashem?*

*Girl: [inaudible] where they had candles [inaudible]*

*F: Yes, and anybody else have been/*

*(Learners talking amongst themselves. One girl says to her peers that her sister visited one of the extermination camps)*

*F: Guys?*

*T: Guys!*

*F: Anybody else’s [been] to a Holocaust Centre anywhere else?*

*[...]*

### **“Myself as a person, I don’t think I can make really much of a difference” - Positionings of self and others**

To add a deeper layer of understanding to the museum interactions, one needs to analyse the ways the facilitators and the learners positioned themselves and others in this interaction on a more personal level *in history*. As is clear from above, facilitators in both museums overall positioned themselves as an observer talking - with authority - about “*the people*”. The District Six Museum facilitator deliberately positioned himself only once when he was explaining the “*excuses*” the Apartheid government gave for the demolition of the area: He told the learners that where *he* lived, the houses were no slums. To me, this positioning as an

observer was unexpected. It contrasted strongly with his more personal positioning (speaking from the 'I') in the interview with me. It was also unexpected given that the man was a primary witness to life in District Six.<sup>15</sup>

While a deliberate positioning of self was barely present in the District Six Museum facilitator's talk, the positioning of the learners and what they *should* do or be was strong and clear. The facilitator positioned the learners in two distinct ways. He repeatedly and clearly positioned the children according to their religious/cultural identity. He told them repeatedly where Jewish people ("*your predecessors*") lived in District Six, where the different religious places were (especially the synagogue), and how there were many cultural groupings and thus differences (with the Jews for example). A second positioning of the learners that stood out was his questioning whether they had ever visited the Cape Flats. He asked this question and expanded on it after he had told them that the Apartheid government took people from District Six (the centre of Cape Town) out into the Cape Flats, "*which is 15 to 56 kilometres OUTSIDE of the city of Cape Town*":

*F: Have any of you been on the Cape Flats? (...) No? (...)*

*(No answer from learners)*

*F: You know where the Cape Flats is?*

*Learners: yes*

*F: Ok, have you been?*

*Some learners: yes.*

*F: That is a good exercise for (long pause) the FOLLOW-UP on this. Tell your school [inaudible] to take you for a drive through the area, so you can get an UNDERSTANDING (pause) of where people were taken TO, as opposed to where they've lived before. And that gives you a better understanding of [what exactly has happened]. At the moment, now you're all living fine [inaudible] you're still on this side of the railway line, and the Cape Flats is SOMEWHERE out there. You don't even know what it's all about. So it's a good exercise for the school (pause) to TAKE (pause) the groups and take them into the Cape Flats to SEE, you read in the newspaper about Manenberg, you read about Hanover Park, you've got NO CLUE of where it is. [inaudible] Because you're not [afraid]. Time doesn't relieve (pause) rich this side of the world (pause) in a sense (pause) but down there it becomes a daily thing so (pause) it SHOWS the imbalances that are still on. It would be a good exercise, actually for the school, to ARRANGE just for a [inaudible] through the area, then you can get an understanding WHY there is such a lot of crime as opposed to where you are. As an exercise, because it's a SPIN-OFF from the Apartheid legacy.*

The facilitator positioned the learners here clearly, saying, "*You don't even know what it's all about*"; "*You've got NO CLUE of where it is*". Up to three times, he suggested that a visit to

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<sup>15</sup> It is possible that this facilitator generally takes an observer position, deliberately excluding his own experiences and emotions. I do not have a point of comparison, such as for example an observation of how he would guide a different group of youngsters. I did observe him in 2004 guiding a mixed group of international and local 'township' youth. I did not have the presence of mind to take notes at the time, having my 'Amnesty International volunteer's hat' on, not my 'researcher's hat'.

the Cape Flats, as “*a follow-up*” exercise is the responsibility of the school. Giving this repeated advice, and not eliciting from the learners what they already know about the Cape Flats, or which parts they did visit, the facilitator seemed to assume that they had not visited that area yet and that they needed to get out of their comfort-zone (“*there is such a lot of crime as opposed to where you are*”).

To me, he seemed to ‘box’ the learners here as “*spoiled*” – adhering to a ‘rich’ ‘unknowing’ ‘white’, ‘upper-class’ image. I say this because in an interaction with the researcher, before the learners arrived, he had labelled children from the same school who had come the previous day as “*spoiled*”, “*useless*” and “*not interested*”.<sup>16</sup> “*For them it’s just a day off*”, he stated. An additional reason might be the facilitator’s position as a primary witness. He might identify or conflate the present generation of ‘white’ children with the older generation of ‘whites’ who did not (have to) move from their homes, this in contrast to the ‘coloured’ people who had to move out. “*At the moment, now you’re all living fine [...] you’re still on this side of the railway line*”, and later on: “*Bischopscourt, Claremont, Rondebosch, (long pause) those areas where you are staying, there were people of colour living there as well*”.

The facilitator’s positioning of the learners as outsiders, namely as not knowing/not having a clue might say more about his own than about their position. This positioning of the learners reminds me of one of the Holocaust survivors who said, “*You cannot fathom it*” (see Chapter Four). Holocaust and trauma studies discuss in detail this kind of positioning by the speaker, and the often-occurring reaction of the listener to build an emotional wall against this kind of knowledge or reality (for references see Chapter Two). Levi, for example, speaks about how Holocaust survivors are afraid that they would not be listened to, that no one is interested in their experiences, that no one would listen.<sup>17</sup> Observing the tour, I had the impression that at least some of the learners were genuinely interested and tried to ask the facilitator questions. It is possible that even when some learners showed interest, the facilitator *could not* see this because of the internal fear not to be heard. The facilitator’s regulative comment at the start of his talk might support this interpretation: “*To make your life a bit easier, to be quite frankly, if you’re not interested, you might just as well sit on a bench on the side*”.

The facilitators in the Holocaust Centre – all secondary witnesses - employed a similar observer positioning, often speaking from the generic ‘we’ and ‘people’. Interestingly, the

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<sup>16</sup> It is important to mention that facilitators of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, in response to the analysis, described the learners as “*not disciplined*” and “*rather exotic*”. Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators, Personal communication, 17, 19 and 23 July 2007. This positioning seemed to function as an explanation for why the analysis, in their eyes, was not representative.

<sup>17</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 77-78 and 199. See also Wieviorka, “On testimony”.

Holocaust Centre facilitators did not mark their own or the learners' religious-cultural identity, even though learners did position themselves as Jews during the workshop on present attitudes to racism and intolerance but this positioning was unrelated to the historical event of the Holocaust. When I asked one of the facilitators afterwards why this might be, she explained that the previous group of learners (on the previous day) had positioned themselves more clearly as Jews *in relation to the Holocaust*, and that she then responded to that. While in this case, she chose to focus on them 'moving beyond themselves' (my words). At one point, however, a learner's question invited her to respond to a clearer positioning of 'we Jews' in relation to the Holocaust. The facilitator's intonation and change of subject seemed to suggest that she chose not to explore that road.

*Boy: Do you think something like that can happen again?*

*F: Look, things like this, LIKE this, not the same as, but like this, have happened again. We just have to look at Rwanda, we have to look at Bosnia. [...] But I think one of the things that happened AFTER this, the United Nations was very aware and the world was very aware of what [had] gone on in Nazi Germany. And people have more or less promised, and, -more or less- promised themselves that it will not happen again. And it would be very difficult for a country to get away with ORGANISED mass (pause) state (pause) sponsored (pause) murder because somebody would find out, somebody would open it up. [...] So the answer to that is partly yes it can happen for the reasons that it happened, and secondly NEVER to the same extent, and never for that LONG period of time.*

*Boy: [inaudible] Jews specifically?*

*F (with seeming reluctance in her voice): Well, you know, it's not impossible, but the world is different. One of the reasons why the Jews WERE very convenient victims, they had no base. They had nowhere to GO. They had no ASSISTANCE from OUTSIDE. That all made quite a lot of difference. Whereas the world has changed since then. The existence of Israel changes quite a lot of those dynamics. Anyone else? ....*

However, primary narratives of Jews who experienced the Holocaust were present in the displays, and primary narratives of youth responding to primary narratives about the Holocaust were present in the video "Hana's suitcase". This video showed the search for Hana's story by a Japanese curator who had found her suitcase. By showing Japanese and American learners' reactions to Hana's suitcase and the curator's story, the video addressed the intergenerational challenge of making meaning out of experiences one has not witnessed first hand.

After they had shown the video, the Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators did not 'tag' this challenge. Instead, they moved on to a general question-answer session. The facilitator opened this session with reference to the exhibition, referring to but foreclosing the discussion on the factuality of the Holocaust:

*You knew the story before you went through but it is always quite difficult going through the exhibition and being faced photographically with a REALITY (pause) that is so extraordinary. Has anybody got any questions? Are there any things you wish to ask about? Anything you didn't understand? [...] You know the photographs inside, most of them, except RIGHT at the end were taken by the perpetrators themselves; the last few ones were taken by the liberators. (pause) The Holocaust is, is discussed so often because historically there is a huge amount of evidence that has been worked on, with [the help]/ and is probably the most researched period of history, of modern history, anywhere. And people from ALL the sides have looked at it, and (pause) spoken about it. Are there any questions? Any unanswered things in your mind that you would really like to ask now?*

While the opening sentence seems to suggest a possible opening to *emotional* responses relating to the displays, a constant throughout the program was an appeal to the learners to *think* about the Holocaust. There were two moments, however, where facilitators indicated the limits of thinking about the Holocaust. The facilitator of the exhibition tour, while mostly adhering to a factual approach to history, at one point, referred – however ‘unmarked’ – to the unknowable when learners asked the facilitator if Mengele was a qualified doctor:

*Yes, he was a qualified doctor. And, as you know, doctors give a Hippocratic oath, where they have to say that they are, it is an oath where they promise to do the best they can for their patients. So (long pause) if he was a doctor, it doesn't, it was the upside down world with the Holocaust. Really. Um, don't try to make a great deal of sense out of it.*

By saying “*don't try to make a great deal of sense out of it*” the facilitator seemed to attempt to close off or exclude the unknowable.<sup>18</sup> This reference to the unknowable or unimaginable resonated with what was said during the introduction about the agency of victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust:

*All the Jewish population in Europe at the time, they had NO idea of what was going to happen. One would wonder, people do often wonder, they often do ask ‘But why didn't they run away, why didn't they do something about it?’ Running away from what? Pogroms in Europe were not new. Attacks on the Jewish community, or laws against the Jewish community were not new. They had NO idea what awaited them. Even people getting onto the train, and being transported in the most horrendous conditions, still had no idea. Human imagination REALLY doesn't go that far. They had NO idea of what awaited them at the other end. So from THEIR point of view, from the victims' point of view (long pause) we can't expect from them, that they would have done anything different. But from the perpetrators' point of view, it becomes VERY easy when you ACCEPT the idea that Hitler put*

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<sup>18</sup> I originally wrote here “... the facilitator attempted to ‘close off’ ...” but lowered my claim after receiving the facilitator’s response: “I am not comfortable with the idea that by saying ‘don't try to make a great deal of sense of it’ ... I ‘attempted to close off’ or exclude ‘the unknowable’. I do not feel that a history like that of the Holocaust is ‘unknowable’ – it is a history that can be accessed & it is not beyond imagining as it is within human experience. I feel that my point was more particularly that during the Holocaust certain actions by perpetrators (like Dr Mengele) were extraordinary and difficult to grasp but they are not ‘unknowable’ or ‘unimaginable’.” Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitator, Personal communication, 24 July 2007.

*forward: the Jews are a separate (pause) race, they're different from you and me, so the same CODE of behaviour does not apply. Not only are they a separate race, they're an INFERIOR race (pause) O Well! That [makes] the bad behaviour even EASIER. [...]*

The facilitators seemed to other and exclude the Nazi- “evil” here, but at the same time portray it as an “eas[y]” choice. In addition, they seemed to take away agency from the Jewish victims. This contrasts with primary narratives on the displays and in literature, which talk about Jews’ agency in the *cumulative* process of violation and victimisation and the *contradictory positions* of the Holocaust survivors “inhabit[ing] two worlds simultaneously: the one of “choiceless choice” *then*; the other of moral evaluation *now*”.<sup>19</sup> To me it was unclear whether the facilitator differentiated here between allocating this kind of agency and response-ability to the Jews in Nazi-Germany and allocating – from the present – responsibility in the sense of ‘guilt’ and ‘blame’.<sup>20</sup>

The facilitators’ address also seemed to ‘fix’ or ‘box’ the learners’ agency in relation to present injustices. During the third part of the program, they addressed the learners’ present attitudes to racism and intolerance. They did this by first showing a “Facing History Facing Ourselves” video on intolerance amongst American youth and then “workshopping” the Cape Town learners. During the workshop, the facilitator asked the learners for their own experiences, that is, “not [...] whether you in fact [have] been a victim, you may or may not want to, I think it’s often quite difficult for us to verbalise how we felt”, but as “witness[es]” of “real incidences”. This request coincided with the facilitator’s clear positioning of people involved in acts of prejudice and racism. In other words, the facilitator made explicit which positions are acceptable. She first referred to the different positions in Nazi-Germany namely ‘victim’, ‘perpetrator’, ‘bystander’ and ‘resister’. Later on in the interaction, she applied these positions to racism in the present.

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<sup>19</sup> Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 83 (Langer’s emphasis), see also 33, 85 and especially 121-161 and 181-185. See Hartman who, in a reflection on the challenges of interviewing Holocaust survivors, refers to writers as Primo Levi, Jean Améry, and Aharon Appelfeld: “They tell us about weakness as well as courage, about the repression that occurred within the survivor, about the vital need to forget and the struggle against what has bitten into the soul”. Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 23, see also 133 *passim*. See also Levi, *The drowned and the saved*; Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*.

<sup>20</sup> Holocaust survivors and academics agree on “the conditions [during Nazi Germany] in which moral choice was systematically disabled by the persecutors and heroism was rarely possible”. Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 134. Levi in his chapter “Stereotypes” explains how victims of the Nazi ideology could not foresee the future (and therefore not escape or resist as younger generations argue the victims ‘could or should have’). Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 149-166. Clendinnen in her reading of Levi’s work confirms his central argument that ‘we’ (from the present) do not have “footing from which to judge them”. Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*, 64. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 58-68, 77-120, 144-148, 181-185. While I agree with this ‘historical’ interpretation of Jews’ agency in Nazi Germany, I think it is different to the allocation of ‘shame’ and ‘guilt’ which mostly says more about the (present) person allocating these moral judgments than about the (historical) ‘other’. The Holocaust Centre facilitators seemed to conflate these two.

[...] in Nazi Germany, you could divide people into four categories. You had the perpetrators, those who perpetrated people. You had the victims. You had the bystanders. [...] [And you had the brave, courageous, caring and compassionate resisters] And of course we have the victims. One of the things we learn about the Holocaust (pause) IS, APART FROM THE VICTIMS, THE PERPETRATORS, THE BYSTANDERS, AND THE RESISTERS, have a choice. [...] I can't say to you what choice would you have been made [sic] had you been there. (pause) It's a ridiculous question. We weren't there. And it's very hard for us to IMAGINE what those pressures were like. (pause) But you are here.

[...]

Racism (pause) racism is evil. Bigotry is evil. And it doesn't matter from where it emanates. It is evil! [...] It doesn't matter who the perpetrator is. If you discriminate against people on the grounds of the way they look, you're [perpetrating] evil. And it doesn't matter whether you're black or brown, or pink or white; whether we're Jews or Muslims, whether we're Christians (pause) or Buddhists. Discrimination against people, intolerance towards people who are different from ourselves, is evil and ALWAYS has evil consequences.

During this interaction, learners were restless and spoke amongst each other. Regulative discourse was explicit, this in contrast to the previous two parts of the program where regulative comments were not apparent or weak. The facilitator's positioning of the learners might have something to do with this. The learners tried to challenge these 'static' positions, but also the facilitator's attempt to make the learners make a choice. While the facilitator emphasised their individual responsibility, the learners marked peer-pressure. The learners' resistance peaked when the facilitator followed up a learner's question and asked the learners to position themselves by putting up their hands:

*F: Did you hear that question? Do you think that in five generations time people will still be racist, not all people, but many people.*

*(Learners are talking at the same time)*

*F: Hands up those say yes. (long pause) Hands up those who say no. (long pause)*

*(Learners are laughing).*

*F: Right, now the question we've got to ask ourselves is if it's going to be with us, in five generations, what attitude do we take about racism? What's the point of fighting it? If it's going to be with us forever? That's your one choice. Because [racism] always is about choice. What's the point of trying to fight it when we're not going to succeed? OR even if we don't succeed, are we under a moral obligation to continue to fight against it, racism and prejudice? (long pause) Hands up those who say 'what's the point. People don't learn, people won't learn'. Hands up. Hands up those who say 'we are under a moral obligation to try to combat prejudice and racism where-ever we find it'. And [the rest] you are bystanders?*

*Boy in front: Ja*

*F: You've chosen NOT to say we want to fight it, and not to say we don't want to fight it. I ask that question again!*

*(Learners are talking louder now).*

*F: Hands up those who say 'we are under moral obligation to combat, fight against racism', hands up! (long pause) Hands up those who say 'we're not*

*gonna win therefore why bother'. Hands up those who say 'don't even ask me, I don't care, I'm not going to make a decision'.*

*(The boy in front raises his hand)*

*F: Only one bystander. [thank God] two, three bystanders, who say 'leave me out'.*

*Boy front (one of the 'bystanders'): um, I think that race, discrimination/ (Learners are talking)*

*F: Quiet please! Please have respect for one another's opinion.*

*Boy: I think racism, discrimination CAN be abolished but all the other types of discrimination, I think you can't stop.*

*(Learners laugh)*

*F: Does that mean you're not gonna try?*

*Boy: um/*

*F: That's your choice*

*Boy: Myself as a person, I don't think I can make really much of a difference.*

*F: That's not what I'm asking. I'm not asking whether you're gonna win, or lose. I'm gonna ask you whether you gonna try.*

*Boy: I'm sorry but I don't think I will.*

*F: You're not gonna try. In other words the choice you're also making is you just are gonna stand back and allow [it] to go on.*

*Boy: yes.*

*F: Yes. Ok.*

Later on, a girl referred again to peer-pressure. She commented, "It depends on the situation" how she would react to an act of prejudice against a person who is very fat, very thin or who does not dress well. The facilitator strongly challenged this. In her subsequent responses, the learner indirectly challenged the facilitator's 'pure' image of the position of a bystander, and pointed out that once one is aware of what racism does to people, one can make the choice of standing up against it.

*Girl: It really depends on the situation.*

*F: No it doesn't! it depends on, here, you hear a comment : IS IT OK TO LAUGH WITH PEOPLE, MOCK PEOPLE because of they don't conform [...] So what do you do?*

*Girl: Well I want to say, well before, in fact, I always used to think of [inaudible] being accepted in the group and stuff but I think now that, and I won't just become, be a pure bystander and laugh. Cause it's a little bit easy just to, just to laugh, you know, you won't have any effect, I mean you won't start fighting with your friends, or you won't embarrass them, you know; because it's so much easier. I would have done, I would just [have] laughed. You know, but like/*

*F: And now?*

*Girl: well (pause) I mean, now (pause) I think that we all understand better about racism and about the, the effects and stuff but um/*

*F: what could you say?*

*Girl: well, you could stand up for yourself, I mean for/for that person; you could say 'um, I don't think this is right', and, um, '[inaudible] black person' or, or just say, ja, say, you say 'stop!' and, or maybe afterwards you can just [go up to them and say] [inaudible]*

The above interactions indicate that while a deliberate positioning of self was barely present in the Holocaust Centre facilitators' talk, the positioning of the learners and what they *should* do or be was strong and clear. Ellsworth calls this pedagogical positioning "teaching with a positive reference".<sup>21</sup> This teaching is "preoccupied with identifying, inciting, and proliferating discrete turning points in students' attitudes, understandings, and behaviors towards race and racism".<sup>22</sup> Ellsworth, however, advocates for teaching *without* a positive reference because it is not constructive to an analytic dialogue in the sense that it *closes* dialogue. Ellsworth warns against anachronistically taking up binary positions:

To address visitors in ways that invite them to take up positions at either one binary pole or the other would be to invite them to assume positions within the very configuration of relations that perpetrated the Holocaust: insider/outsider, us/them, human/inhuman, victim/perpetrator, Aryan/non-Aryan.<sup>23</sup>

While the Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators do *not* position the visiting learners as assuming positions in relation to the historical event of the Holocaust, they do invite them to take up binary positions *within their own present*. The learners resisted this strongly during the museum interaction and the classroom interactions discussed in Chapter Eight seem to suggest that this discussion had a ripple effect beyond the museum. Their excitement around the strong labelling of racism and their agency seemed to spill over into their classroom interactions with GB, where they returned to the theme and tried to convince the teacher that racism is universal (see Chapter Eight). One could argue that the learners did not only resist *what* the facilitator said in regards to their positioning to present (and past) racism, but also *how* the facilitator's mode of pedagogical practice positioned them as having to accept a *set* choice. Interestingly, while learners, in their responses to the facilitator, talked about *the social context and process of reacting to acts of injustice*, the facilitator talked about *moral choices*, which she - in contrast to Ellsworth<sup>24</sup> - presented as unrelated to the contexts in which one makes these.

#### **"NONE of us have experienced that" - GB as mediator**

GB seemed to bridge the distance between learners and facilitators in both museums. In the case of the District Six Museum this bridging happened in a delayed<sup>25</sup> way when –after having picked up the learners from the museum and now standing in the actual District Six

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<sup>21</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 152.

<sup>22</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 153.

<sup>23</sup> Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 104-105.

<sup>24</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 152-157.

<sup>25</sup> This 'bridging' was also possibly *unintentional* in that the teacher was not present during the museum interaction with this group of learners. While this group of learners visited the museum, GB took the other group of learners to the actual District Six area.

area – GB asked the learners why the land remained vacant for so long. The following interaction took place:

*T: How many of you have been to Manenberg in the Cape Flats?*

*(A couple of) boys: Yes.*

*T: Ok, some of you maybe to play sport.*

*Boys: Ja.*

*T: Now, people that is more than 25 kilometres, or it's about 20, 25 kilometres away. So that's a long way. If your family has lived there, and you're settled there, to move back HERE, and build a structure, it's gonna take some finance, and also it took time for the land to be returned to people. Ok?*

*[...]*

*T: [...] [I]t's precious, people. There is a history to the land. And it is NOT just about economics, it's NOT just about making money. It's about what this land meant to people in the past. That gentleman that presented to you today, HE was one of those who was removed. Ok? He had/That was a very NEGATIVE, a very (pause) emotional experience for him. And he explained that to you. (long pause) You SAW the bulldozers in those displays, you SAW people's test/you read people's testimonies. You SAW the photographs. And I'm hoping that all of this will inform your essay writing. Now listen. Can I say this Grade Nines? I would be pretty/I think I'm accurate in saying that NO ONE in this group, myself included, (long pause) has experienced the trauma of somebody coming along and saying 'you are TOO WHITE, we're gonna bulldoze down your house, and relocate you very far away'. NONE of us have experienced that (long pause) NONE of us! (long pause) So it's better, take a little bit of emotional and mental energy for you to (long pause) EMPATHISE with what people have experienced.*

Note that the teacher's question, "how many of you have been to Manenberg in the Cape Flats?" resonates with the District Six Museum facilitator's question, "Have any of you been on the Cape Flats?" The questions differ in their underlying assumptions: the facilitator's question starts from the assumption that learners have or have not been on the Cape Flats, while the teacher's question starts from the assumption that learners have been on the Cape Flats, but their number needs to be established. Both questions, however, seemed to be posed in order to invite the learners to understand something about the Forced Removals. The museum facilitator seemed to strive for an understanding of the present repercussions of the removals, such as violence and fear amongst people living on the Cape Flats. GB seemed to strive for an understanding of the emotional response of people who have been forcibly removed and who have now the option of returning to District Six. Similar to the museum facilitator, GB did not invite the learners to share their experiences of the Cape Flats, but, different to the facilitator, she did not question their 'knowing the area'. In addition, GB models here an empathic position, talking from an empathic 'you' ("If your family has lived there ..."). Note, however, that later on she does not shift their 'colour-allocation'. The learners and the teacher are still 'white' in the imagined scenario, while Apartheid government forcibly moved 'the other' because of their 'non-white' identity. The learners'

'white' identity most likely played a role in the District Six Museum facilitator's mode of address, assuming that their outer appearance, the school and community they come from, indicate *where* and *how* they live and what they *know* about the world. Interestingly, the teacher says that it was a negative, emotional experience for the facilitator to be forcibly removed – something the facilitator had not explicitly spelled out in his talk. While the facilitator spoke mostly from an observer position, the teacher here speaks from the empathic 'you' in an attempt to explain how they (herself included) have not experienced such trauma and that empathy therefore demands some "*emotional and mental energy*". She seemed to acknowledge but did not attempt to control the 'distance' some learners took, by commenting, at the end of her talk, "*Some of you are more engaged than others but hopefully some of you have learned something*".

While she was not present during the interaction in the District Six Museum, GB's positioning as a history teacher following a disciplinary and positioned approach to history, and as a person *in history*, was clear during the exhibition tour in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. For example, while the facilitator mainly made internal references (to other displays or other parts of the program), GB referred to sources of historical knowledge outside the space of the museum. Twice she referred to her own experiences of *being a historian*, for example by commenting on the fact that they can find information about Nazism in newspapers in the National Archives as she had done herself (having said this, she then exclaimed, "*It's amazing!*"). At one point, the group stood at the displays on Nazi propaganda with for example depictions of the anti-Semitic schoolbook "The poisonous mushroom" and a game called "Get the Jews out". The facilitator asked the learners which images stood out for them. She then asked what the images stood for. The learners did not understand the abstract question. The teacher mediated this by involving the learners' everyday knowledge of computer games; games which invite learners to "*target*" certain 'others', "*set you to a way of thinking in your minds*". At the end of the exhibition, at a display with pictures of Holocaust survivors and a quote by Desmond Tutu, GB positioned herself and the learners clearly. She read out ('*repeated*') the quote<sup>26</sup> and linked it to Judaism, a speech by a Rabbi at the school and the learners' personal Jewish identity. This was the only explicit (observed) positioning of the learners *as Jews*:

*I hear that "we learn about the Holocaust" with this [copy] "so that we can become, so that we can become more human, more gentle, more caring, more*

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<sup>26</sup> This 'repeating' of Tutu's text is done with a particular aim, not to 'repeat' as in a repetition led mode of practice (repeating for the sake of repeating). As Simon with Eppert, Clamen and Beres explain, with reference to Benjamin, it is "an iterative reworking in the site of the present (Benjamin, 50), a reworking that in its very work may unsettle the invested frameworks that help one grasp and negotiate present realities". Simon with Eppert, Clamen and Beres, "Witness as study", 113. See also Simon and Eppert, "Remembering obligation", 178.

compassionate valuing every person as being of infinite worth, so precious that no such atrocities will never happen again, and the world would become a more humane place". *That, for me, when the Rabbi speaks about "the world in one person", then it struck me, not being Jewish, how PROFOUND that is, that in each of you is a world! And to exterminate one of you, is to exterminate the OPPORTUNITY of a WHOLE world. And for me, as someone who isn't Jewish, I thought that was AMAZINGLY powerful, and I think [it echoed] a sentiment, it echoed slightly differently by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and I think when you [hold of] each other, just remember, that in each side, in each one of you, there is a whole world! [And that needs to come out], don't let that go by. Don't let that just become nothing to you, you have to treasure it.*

GB's positioning of the learners here as being Jewish (and her self as not Jewish) differs with the Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitator who chose not to position the learners deliberately as Jews (or not to emphasise that aspect of their "identity kit"<sup>27</sup>) (see above). Another difference is that she mobilises Tutu's voice here, which draws the attention to, not only the learners' thinking (as the facilitators did), but also their emotional *potential* response, "so that we can become more human, more gentle, more caring, more compassionate valuing every person as being of infinite worth". With the reference to the Rabbi who visited the school, moreover, GB situates the museum experience strongly in the context of the learners' and teacher's previous teaching-and-learning experiences. Borrowing, 'marrying' both Tutu's and the Rabbi's voice, she acknowledges the "opportunity of a whole world" within each learner. Similar to the positioning of the facilitators, however, GB emphasises the learners' responsibility to make this "opportunity" become a reality: "remember [that] [...] don't let that go by. Don't let that just become nothing to you, you have to treasure it".

GB adhered to a positioned approach to history, by not only positioning her learners *as Jews in relation to the Holocaust* but also by addressing explicitly the *emotional* impact of experiencing the Holocaust. This transpires clearly from the analysis of the classroom interactions. While I analyse these interactions in detail in Chapter Eight, it is important to emphasise here the importance of looking at how teachers and learners take the museum home. For example, some days after the actual visit to the museum, GB referred back to George, the brother of Hana, the Jewish girl central to the "Hana's suitcase" video that the observed group of learners saw just before the workshop.

*... to WATCH um (pause) Hana Brady um brother. Did you see how emotional he was when telling the story? That he could, he, - I mean they cut the story as he was getting emotional - , just to SPEAK about the fact [...] that he wasn't able to see her, that he had been separated from her, that she now WAS [...] the teacher that she [...] [had] longed to be. That was deeply, very important but also deeply moving, it was something that he didn't do*

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<sup>27</sup> Gee, *Social linguistics and literacies*, 127.

*easily. And hopefully, you will never, we will never experience such kind of event, so that we can identify with it. I hope that it's never none of our experiences. But he does, we do need to be, I think we need to think about the empathy, we need to understand that talking about these things is not a small thing. It's not a small thing. Ja.*

GB's involvement of personal, emotional responses complements the 'thinking' way the facilitators involved the learners' responses. Another complementary response in GB's positioning was when she conflated not only her own and the learners' generation, but also the position of a bystander and that of a perpetrator, when she, in a discussion on Apartheid and present day South Africa, stated "*we are perpetrators. I am a perpetrator because I did nothing*" (see Chapter Eight). This seems to test the strong message of the Holocaust Centre facilitator that, *morally*, one can only take the role of the resister, and that there are four distinct positions in relation to an act of injustice. It also contrasts, however, with GB's empathic positioning in regards to the District Six facilitator and Hana's brother, suggesting the unknowability of the other's position and relatively clear boundaries between self and other.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the absence of theoretical concepts specifically developed for museum interactions, I tried in the above analysis of one Grade Nine class' visit to the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre to draw (out) the facilitators' positionings by employing concepts developed in the context of classroom interactions. I described the facilitators' positionings as taking a factual approach to history within a mainly repetition led mode of practice: overall, they presented the past as one knowable whole, a past the learners need to accept, know and be able to reproduce. The analysis indicates that, while facilitators are more reflective (and cautious) in a one-on-one interview, they take more outspoken 'authoritative' positions in interactions with Grade Nine learners. The facilitators in both museums seem to expect the learners to take on specific epistemological roles, namely to obey and listen to their, in essence, *moral* lessons. Underlying this seems to be the idea that in this way, a better future can be built. The facilitators assume, in other words, knowledge of and control over what the Possible is, and how one has to achieve this. The learners did not oppose the closure implied in these moral lessons, but, in the case of the discussion on racism in the Holocaust Centre, they expressed their disagreement around the underlying epistemological roles.

A point that is important to highlight, in the context of this thesis, is that primary narratives seem not to be central to this kind of 'authoritative' positioning – the moral lessons are more important. Following the thinking of Ellsworth, one could read this 'authoritative' positioning, the absence of primary narratives in which agency and choice is central and

especially the allocation of specific, 'fixed', positions of both past and present agents as problematic.<sup>28</sup> We need to keep in mind, however, that these facilitators, whether they are primary or secondary witnesses to the Holocaust or the Apartheid Forced Removals, are not flawless and that they convey their human-ness and good intentions in the urgency to convey an in essence *moral* message namely that we have the moral obligation to study these regimes and learn from it.<sup>29</sup> This particular group of learners, coming from a school tradition in which they easily voice their disagreement and disquiet within a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice, resisted the way the facilitators positioned them (as having to accept and obey the moral message). However, they also *responded* to the facilitator's in essence *uncomfortable* invitation to take on a particular position. This was particularly clear in the case of the Holocaust Centre where the learners pointed out the *social* character of making choices in the face of atrocities, but also, importantly, the - at times uncomfortable - interactions were 'fertile' and had a ripple effect because the teacher and learners took the discussion outside the museum and into the classroom (see Chapter Eight).

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the analysis itself was uncomfortable for the facilitators; as it was for the researcher. This discomfort, however, as I argue in Chapter Nine, plays a vital role in my attempt to formulate the central findings of this study and to suggest future research and interventions.

I address now the interviews I conducted with 26 Grade Nine history teachers (and CW, the primary witness working in a former H.O.R. school) in 2004. In contrast to Chapter Four, in which I focussed primarily on the construction and positioning of the intergenerational dialogue between museum facilitators and the younger generation, I now put more emphasis on concepts related to approaches to history in the analysis of the teachers' constructions and positionings in relation to primary narratives of atrocities. As explained in Chapter Three, I do this because the teachers positioned themselves primarily according to their subject-position of teacher.

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<sup>28</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 150-157. See Chapter Two for a discussion of her argument.

<sup>29</sup> They do have the learners' wellbeing in mind, when, for example, the Holocaust Centre decides, as many other Holocaust museums all over the world, not to let primary witnesses speak to young children due to the traumatic character of their testimonies.

## Chapter Six

### The teachers

*Popular history, and also the history taught in schools, is influenced by this Manichean tendency, which shuns half-tints and complexities: it is prone to reduce the river of human occurrences to conflicts, and the conflicts to duels – we and they [...] [The spectator] want[s] winners and losers, which he identifie[s] with the good guys and the bad guys, respectively, because the good must prevail, otherwise the world would be subverted.<sup>1</sup>*

In this chapter, I describe how the interviewed Grade Nine history teachers (and CW, the primary witness who worked in one of the former H.O.R. schools) construct primary narratives of Apartheid Forced Removals and the Holocaust as historical knowledge and how they position themselves and others within these constructions and within less organised forms of positioning self and others in history. I do this using as a structuring device the three approaches to history I mentioned in Chapter Two. However, while this device is helpful, it would be an illusion to think that it fully assists us in grasping the complexities of the teachers' points of view constructed within the *social* encounter of the interview.

The majority of the teachers seemed to defend a factual approach to history in our dialogue, namely there is 'one' past and 'one true' story, which needs to be brought across to the younger generations. A few, however, spoke about *how* one practises history *as a discipline* (disciplinary approach) and still a smaller group questioned the idea that there was 'one' past and pointed to the ever-changing and present construction of the past (positioned approach). More often than not, however, the majority of teachers took two or even all three approaches to history in the course of the interview. This diversity indicates not only a relationship between the three approaches; according to academics even a *hierarchical* one (see Chapter Two). It also indicates the multiple choices the teachers made within the particular social context of the interview and within the larger context of the new South Africa and its history.

As mentioned earlier on, the teachers approached my questions mostly from a teacher's position only, and did not easily open up their (potential) primary narratives, or constructions of self and others in regards to the regime shift. In other words, teachers seemed to feel more comfortable solely focussing on the subject-position of being a teacher. As I experienced in my interactions with the two teachers with whom I had contact over a longer period (MD and GB), these more static constructions might be used when the two parties do not know each

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<sup>1</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 37.

other well yet. However, it might also indicate that a majority of teachers have not encountered a dialogue with a researcher or academic before and thus do not know or recognize the discourse.<sup>2</sup> The teachers therefore fall back on other discourses, more well known to them, namely that of the inspector and the subject advisor. In other words, they assume and employ a storyline that is known to them.<sup>3</sup> The teachers therefore addressed the researcher *as if* she was an inspector or a subject advisor. This expressed itself in, for example, specific requests for advice and/or lists of the teacher's activities; a mode of address more likely associated with the discourse of inspectors and subject advisors. An alternative explanation is that the teachers did recognize the academic discourse but did not choose to 'go with it'. Instead, preoccupied with their pressing present concerns situated within their teacher-identity (the day-to-day demands of putting the new curriculum into practice), they foregrounded and addressed my identity as an academic historian and teacher (someone who has knowledge they seek), rather than my identity as a researcher (who seeks knowledge in the teachers).

During these interactions, teachers took mostly a factual and, less often, a disciplinary approach to history. This can be explained by two factors playing a role in perceptions and practices in South African education: there is the influence of a factual, strongly community-based approach pertinent within Apartheid education (as propagated by the Departments at the time) and within its opponents, for example People's Education. In addition, the recent move towards Outcomes Based Education seems to prioritise a disciplinary approach to history as the way to go<sup>4</sup> and, understandably, teachers wish to be perceived as knowing and following this approach. An additional reason for the strong presence of a factual approach to history might be the identity of the researcher: interviewees less likely open up about inner contradictions or tensions within their community or their community's history when talking to an outsider.

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<sup>2</sup> van Langenhove and Harré, "Introducing positioning theory", 30.

<sup>3</sup> Davies and Harré, "Positioning and personhood", 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> The *Teacher's guide* seems to attest to both a disciplinary and a positioned approach to history when dealing with primary narratives. It first emphasises the former by stating, "Oral history is an important resource for finding out about the past". The guide warns and explains why "memories may be faulty". The guide then states, seemingly following a more positioned approach to history, "Although oral sources may be unreliable, they are still useful, reflecting what people felt about events in the past and showing how these events have been remembered" (note, however, the past tense used here). The concluding remark brings the focus back to a disciplined approach: "Oral sources should be cross-checked with other types of sources". Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R – 9 (schools) teacher's guide*, 29. Rösen, reflecting on history teaching in Europe and his four types of historical consciousness, states, "Experience in the teaching of history in schools indicates that traditional forms of thought are easiest to learn, that the exemplary form, dominates most history curricula, and that critical abilities, and genetic abilities even more so, require enormous amounts of effort by both teacher and pupil". Rösen, "Historical consciousness", 80.

These modes of address contrast with (self)-reflective constructions within a positioned approach to history. In general, it seems that positioned approaches are mostly to be found in dialogues in which the interviewee is ‘inquisitive’ and ‘strong-minded’ (as the District Six Museum facilitator KH, mentioned in Chapter One, is an example) or with teachers who had had or were continuing tertiary education in history at the time of the interview. As mentioned in Chapters One and Two, however, tertiary education in history does not guarantee that a teacher follows a particular mode of practice and a particular approach to history.<sup>5</sup>

It is important then, while reading the analysis below, to keep in mind that while these three approaches are useful as a structuring device, the teachers’ positioning towards them is influenced by an interplay of different discourses, most likely not just the above mentioned ‘academic’, ‘inspector’ and ‘supervisor’ discourses. For this reason, I do not only employ the three approaches to history in the following analysis, but also indicate how the teachers within these approaches position themselves and others in history, as well as in the subject-positions of ‘the teacher’ or ‘the learner’. These approaches and positionings provide us with a layered context in which to understand the teachers’ perceptions of the role of primary narratives in history education.

### **Teaching “*what really happened*”: A factual approach to history**

The majority of teachers talked about primary narratives as narratives of ‘others’ and they stated that the learners need “*to identify*” with these narratives. The teachers provided an image of the past as a place or time that one can revisit. KD, teaching at a former Model C school after having taught in the ‘coloured’ townships for years, said the following about JA, one of the facilitators in the District Six Museum:

*[I]t was like as if she was taking them BACK (pause) into the past, like to take them THERE as if they go BACK into the, into the past and they are part of what actually happened there.*

KQ, teaching at a former D.E.T. school, stated the following about a facilitator at the Holocaust Centre:

*[S]he told us EVERYTHING that happened there and we listened carefully.*

And JS, teaching at a former H.O.R. school, positioned the District Six Museum as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> See also Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 205-206; Kros, *Trusting to the process*, 4-6. See for research in the U.S.A. and the U.K. on this subject Ravitch, “The Educational backgrounds of history teachers” and Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 246-260. At the time of the semi-structured interviews, I had not planned to ask the teachers detailed information about their education. As a result, I only have information about the teachers’ education when they spontaneously talked about it during the first part of the interview where I asked them to speak about their own lives.

*[E]verything is [...] there for you to see. And [...] the museum tells the story on its own.*

Teachers following a factual approach to history presented their learners as passive recipients and emphasised that the learners needed to express gratitude towards the sacrifices made by previous generations. FW, teaching at a former H.O.R. school, who positioned herself as a secondary witness to Apartheid, said that she told her learners:

*[T]o take in, to take the importance of Apartheid. Because if [it was not] for those people who fought in, ten years ago, then we wouldn't have had what we are having here. Now today you people can roam around, you can live and go to any school that you want to go. That time we have like classes bigger than what we are having now, and we had different age groups of learners in ONE classroom. And that classroom was not in a condition like our classroom.*

Another characteristic of a factual approach to history I observed in the interview with SS, teaching at a former H.O.R. school: She mentioned the community of the learners as a source to which teachers can refer. She did not speak about questioning the past or the sources; the past is fixed, known, accessible, and 'alive' *because* the learners belong to a certain community that is claimed to have had a certain experience in the past. I also observed this assumption in a few other interviews, in which teachers – from a wide spread of institutions – spoke about 'black', 'coloured' and 'Jewish' learners as being part of, and thus knowing and understanding the past of, their respective communities (BD, MM and IM).

A few teachers who positioned themselves as secondary witnesses employed a strong 'us-them' divide while talking about the learners. They talked about "*moral degeneration*" and "*collapse*" and seemed to suggest that the past was "*better*" (MM, JJ, CG and RV). JJ, teaching at a former H.O.R. school, stated the following:

*Our children cannot identify. When you speak about Apartheid laws, they do not know what you're talking about. They cannot, it's, it's unimportant to them. 'We live for the now!' you know. So to them (pause) history is unimportant, the history of their lives, the history from where they come. Those things are unimportant. They're looking at now, at the now only. (knocking on the table) And (pause) the kids do not look at self-enrichment, the enrichment of self, in, in, in terms of character, principles, values. (takes breath) They talk about money. And, and, and, and, and materialism! You know, they cannot identify really. So it's difficult teaching, I mean even (pause) teaching poetry to students is very difficult as well.*

The teachers following a factual approach to history easily conflated the generations in the sense that they spoke about the learners as "*forgetting*" history; they have a "*fading*" and "*dimming*" memory (IB, BD and LA). The teachers seemed to equate the verbs 'to understand' with 'to identify'. MM, for example, teaching at a former Model C school,

portrayed the past as a time of “*sacrifice*” and the youth of the past as being (only) anti-government and anti-Apartheid. He stated that learners need to appreciate the sacrifices made by people in the past. The complexity and ‘shadows’ of the conflict, however, are not part of his construction of reality.

*So the best way to do that [make the learners appreciate the sacrifices people made], is to relate it to their personal, to their personal experiences or the, that of their family members. Because it doesn't matter which colour you are (pause) you were affected by Apartheid. So that's to sort of, you know, (pause) um, make them identify with that historical um period, and then you can take it from there. Because then, then they want to know, you know, if you tell them, YOUR grandmother could have been sitting on a BUS you know, uh, and suddenly she had to stand up or whatever the case may be. Um, and obviously, how would YOU feel if (pause) somebody stuck a pencil in YOUR grandmother's hair?<sup>6</sup> You know. Then it becomes real to them and then they want to know more.*

One could say that the version of the past given here is, as Seixas would argue, “enhancing collective memory” (see also SS above).<sup>7</sup> The teacher merges past and present generations in his use of both past and present tense in the seemingly inclusive statement, “*it doesn't matter what colour you are, you were affected by Apartheid*”. Weighing MM's statement ‘factually’ one could argue that internal conflicts within communities and within individuals are absent (what if your family is categorised ‘coloured’ but the pencil slides easily through your ‘fair’ hair?). Taking a positioned approach to history, however, one can interpret the teacher as wanting to bring across an image of an unproblematised unity of a group that is both situated in past and present. This group most likely includes the speaker himself – the teacher MM (‘coloured’)-; his direct audience or addressee - the ‘white’ and ‘foreign’ researcher –; and his indirect audience - his learners, of whom the majority he described as ‘black’.

LA, teaching at a former H.O.R. school, went a step further in “enhancing collective memory” by stating that we can and have to “*create a memory*” namely in generations that have not really experienced the events first hand. The reasons she gave for this appeal is that we can “*forget*” or “*lose*” “*so much*” of history/memory (the two are equated in her discourse). To remedy this, however, her Department at the school had asked a primary witness, CW, whom LA described as having “*a wealth of information*”, to take the children on a tour through the historical area from where the Apartheid government had removed CW forcibly. Reflecting on the tour-initiative, LA claimed that the learners would now remember

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<sup>6</sup> The teacher refers here to discriminatory practices during Apartheid: government segregated public spaces and facilities (e.g. buses) and used the so-called ‘pencil test’ to distinguish between and separate ‘whites’ and ‘non-whites’.

<sup>7</sup> Seixas, “‘Sweigen!’”, 20.

because they had done the walk, and they might even pass it on to their children as well. She said the following when I asked for her view on the so-called ‘never again’ imperative:

*Living memory is so short! You know, I, I don't know, I find the memory of people are so short! But so short! (long pause) Ten years on people don't remember (laughs). It's scary, it's so frightening, you know. That for me was also one of the issues why I thought the walk, because the question is, how do you make people remember? But not only remember, (pause) that you don't repeat the mistakes of the past. (long pause) I think there're very few answers. But I think the one thing is through education. That is why I felt that the story must be told. And (long pause) that must be an oral history that is ongoing. So it's passed down the generations. And in that way (pause) I don't think you can say 'never'. But it's more/When that history is not told, when the memory dims, it becomes easier to repeat the mistakes of the past. But when that is a LIVING history when it is stories that are told down the generational line, then I think (pause) there is a greater possibility/[that it won't happen again].*

In the above constructions, identification is associated with a factual and ‘accepting’ approach to history. Many teachers however, at the same time, pointed out that this identification is not easily established and they questioned the “pedagogical justification of remembrance”.<sup>8</sup> CW, the primary witness guiding LA’s learners through the historical area, claimed that: “*they [the learners] don't want to sit with their parents and grandparents and listen to 'old CRAP' they say*”. LA and some teachers proposed practical activities as remedies. For example teachers talked about giving their learners assignments in which they have to interview their parents and grandparents “*so that they can identify with it*”; these narratives “[*give*] the learner a clearer picture of what happened [...] first hand evidence of events that took place” (IM).

Similarly, the majority of the teachers that positioned themselves as primary witnesses of Apartheid defended a strong factual approach to history. IN, teaching at a former H.O.R. school, said: “[*You know EXACTLY what happened there, it's like a story you're telling them*”. Together with his older colleague, TA, IN presented the community, in which their school is situated, and the story of the past as ‘one’. There is no fragmentation in their construction. The teachers asserted that although learners might not understand or be able to imagine it, they still do not question the teachers’ words. The teachers established authority by reference to the family and community: In case the learners would ask questions, they would tell them “*go ask your parents*”. When I commented on the close-knit character of the community and the circulating ‘hero’-stories, the teachers did not seem to pick up my masked critique. When I asked them about learners not being able to understand Apartheid because

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<sup>8</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*. See Chapter Two for other references on the ‘never again’ imperative.

they did not experience it, IN spoke about people “*forgetting*” about Apartheid; presenting “*forgetting*” as a characteristic of the whole community, across the different generations.

Likewise, IM, teaching at a former H.O.R. school, constructed a monolithic, static and unquestioned past, with which the learners can “*relate to*”, “*identify with*”, “*agree with*”, even though he did mention that learners are “*surprised*”, “*amazed*” and “*shocked*” hearing about “*things that happened, things that the police did*” during the student uprisings:

*[I]t happened um, and I was there, so I, I can share it. Um, it only gives the learner a clearer picture of, of, of what happened and, and, you know, they have first hand evidence that (chuckles) that, um, of events that took place.*

Other teachers, such as CG and RV, colleagues teaching at a former Model C school, (the only two teachers I interviewed at the same time) asserted that learners are “*bored*”, “*apathetic*” with history; “*they have heard it*”. However, when teachers speak about their own experiences, learners ask questions, the two teachers asserted. These “*experiences*” confirm and make “*what really happened*” more interesting. The two teachers however strongly *othered* their learners and CG surprisingly wrote herself ‘out of history’ (my words) by responding to my question as follows:

*SG: How, how do you, how do you experience like the changing in education? Since '94/*

*CG: lots of work/*

*SG: /Because you've/been learners during Apartheid yourselves. Lots of, lots of work you say? [addressing CG who nods] Ja.*

*(long pause)*

*CG: Where I come from, I didn't really experience Apartheid. Because I come from (pause) from the, the rural areas. (RV: the rural areas) So there was no black people, there were no black people or white people, it was just us. So I can't really say how it changed.*

In this double interview, ‘Apartheid’ was up until this point dealt with as a historical topic, something the interviewees have to deal with in the class, in their roles as teachers. On a ‘factual’ level one might say that CG (who was classified ‘white’ during Apartheid and who previously taught in ‘white’ schools) did experience life during ‘Apartheid’, if one defines it as the historical period between 1948 and 1994 in South Africa. Therefore, from a disciplinary approach to history, one might say her account is not valid. Interpreting her positioning from a positioned approach to history, however, the teacher might have resisted the link the researcher made between ‘Apartheid’ and her personal history. She might have indicated that she wishes not to speak about this topic, by portraying it as not part of her reality. Interestingly, she described ‘Apartheid’ as “*black people, black people or white people*”, while this was not necessarily implied in my question to her at the time. (One could have interpreted my question as referring to other characteristics of education at the time, for

example ‘Christian’, ‘authoritative’.) Who represents ‘us’ when one lives during ‘Apartheid’? Maybe the teacher wanted to say that she had nothing to do with ‘Apartheid’ as the differentiation between ‘black’ and ‘white’. Later on in the interview, RV (who was classified ‘coloured’ during Apartheid and who previously taught in ‘coloured’ schools in the townships) expressed critique on the current educational system and said that under the previous regime teachers “*were taught to DRILL things into learners [...] not that it was always a good thing, but to a certain extent it does help a child*”. Both teachers situated ‘we’ and ‘us’ in the past and this contrasts with the way they talked about their learners in the present whom they implicitly and explicitly labelled as ‘black’, whose homes, they claimed, lack discipline because the social structure “*collapsed*” “*since ’76 and 1980 and all those years*”.

*CG: It's not the system*

*RV: It's not the system. It's [inaudible] different type of kid nowadays. And, and some of them are extremely difficult to work with, you know, I mean, just generally you know. And it's difficult to stay positive.*

*CG: Because you must remember that the parents of the kids that we are teaching now, are the parents who ran in front of the police during the riots. [inaudible] Ok. [inaudible] you're sitting basically with the [inaudible] uh, parent, who went through school without actually really going through school/*

*RV: and without any discipline at all.*

*CG: And without discipline from these parents/*

*RV: We have major disciplinary problems, and it basically stems from the fact that there is no discipline (CG: ja) in the homes.*

In this construction, ‘history’ only goes as far back as 1976, and is not part of the teacher’s personal experience. This contrasts strongly with, for example, several District Six Museum facilitators who go back as far as the first half of the nineteenth century and position themselves as descendants of the slaves and foreign hand-workers who, they emphasise, built Cape Town (SA, HA, and KH). This contrast might indicate uneasiness on the side of these two teachers in identifying with a history that goes further back than 1976; they cannot identify with clear ‘heroes’ or ‘victims’ as the District Six Museum facilitators do.

Another teacher who did not easily speak about her own experiences, even though she positioned herself as a primary witness of Apartheid, is MD. Together with GB, she is the only teacher I had the chance to interact with (and observe) over a longer period of time. At the time of the interviews and observations, she taught in a former Model C school with a majority of ‘black’ and ‘coloured’ learners. During our first interview, she talked about history in terms of “*the content matter*” and “*the way things were*”. The fact that she had lived in District Six remained an unrevealed aspect of her identity, until after some time she unexpectedly shared this with the interviewer (see also Chapter Eight).

### **“We’ve got to interpret history”: A disciplinary approach to history**

While the above description of teachers’ constructions of a factual approach to history seems to be straightforward, analysing and differentiating between the three approaches to history is in no way clear-cut. Several of the above-mentioned teachers defended an approach to history that seems to be a mix of factual and disciplinary approaches. This analysis might then be a nuance on Seixas’ original categories. As stated above, however, it seems that *in general* most teachers do not go into a disciplinary and/or positioned approach to history.

While the majority of the above-mentioned teachers spoke about factual history, some teachers did talk about the differing quality of *several* versions of the past<sup>9</sup> and employed categories of selection, which one could interpret as a form of disciplinary approach to history. Teachers from across a wide spectrum of institutions, for example JJ, AW, LH, KQ and BM asserted that teachers can only refer to books and that primary narratives have a different quality. They emphasised, as District Six Trustee HA did (see Chapter Four), the importance of the senses:

*[A] book cannot answer your question. [...] a person can answer all, all your questions. (KQ)*

*[B]ecause it’s REAL things that you’re talking about, it’s not (pause) learning about someone from a book. (AW)*

*[W]e NEED to expose them to these things [museums] where they could SEE, there has to be - I mean otherwise things are just theoretical, they must then SEE what these things are all about. You know, and maybe, by, by, by, by viewing these things, it could assist them or make them change their minds about things, you know. So that these things can, can become more MEANINGful to them. Uh, rather than just get things in the classroom, in textbooks, and (pause) [a role] of notes and write them on the board [...]*  
*(JJ)*

*It is one centre where they [the learners] can actually get ALL the information. (LH, reflecting on the District Six Museum)*

*I really believe in visual aid. [...] [It is] not easy to forget. (BM, reflecting on Robben Island and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre)*

While differentiating between primary and secondary narratives, these teachers, similarly to District Six Trustee HA (see Chapter Four), do not differentiate between narratives of primary witnesses. AW and GB, however, talked about the impact and speaking qualities of the

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<sup>9</sup> Seixas in his “Sweigen!” differentiates between the three approaches to history by pointing out that a factual approach to history assumes ‘one’ version of the past while the two other approaches assume ‘several’ versions. In Chapter Four, I nuanced this differentiation in my analysis of District Six trustee HA’s idea that several stories are ‘the same’.

primary witness. Similarly, MM while defending a factual approach to history, also said "we've got to interpret history" and, in his reflection on the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and the District Six Museum, warned against "the difference between history and propaganda" and cautioned that "we need to be careful about what we put out".

MM, but also FW, RT and AD, distinguished between "objective" and "subjective" versions of the past. They talked about "truthful" and "untruthful" narratives. Even though they mentioned these criteria of selection, in the end they seemed to defend the idea that there is 'one true' version of the past. MM and RT spoke about how "too personal" stories and "feelings" do not have a "real" place in history:

[...] dit is uiters belangrik dat 'n mens nie in 'n klas situatsie emosies kan opjaag nie. (long pause) Empatie kom uit jou eie ervaring met jou feite en kennis wat jy raak loop. En die onderwyser kan nie 'n groep opsweep [...] nie.

[...] this is crucial: one cannot stir up feelings in a classroom situation. (long pause) Empathy comes from your own experiences, the facts and knowledge you encounter. And the teacher cannot provoke a group] (RT)

[I]f you make it too personal then that comes through, instead of the history. You know what I mean. Um, then, then the history is from your point of view and that's too subjective I think. But if it is relevant, if you want to give them a practical example sometimes it is useful. (MM)

RT, teaching at a former H.O.A. school, defended not only a clear division between fact and emotion but also between past and present, and between the experiences, and feelings, of primary and secondary witnesses:

[...] vandag se kind het dit nie beleef nie dis vir hom net feite in 'n boek. GEEN kind is vandag betrokke by Apartheid nie. Hier is nie meer Apartheid in die land/ hier is nie meer 'n wet-Apartheid nie. So, jou (pause) mense wat nog geleef het of betrokke was in die Apartheids-era hulle gaan altyd so voel. Jy gaan dit nooit kan weg neem nie, maar die nuwe geslag hoef nie so te voel nie. (long pause) Want hulle het dit nie beleef nie en hulle het/ almal het vandag gelyke geleenthede. Maar dan is dit ook so, 'n mens vergeet nie dat jou ouers of jou voorouers deurgegaan het nie. En/en dit is die samelewing. [...] En ons mag dit nooit vergeet wat daar gebeur het nie. Maar ons kan nie met haat voortgaan nie. En, um, as ons vergeet wat gebeur het kan dit hom weer herhaal. So 'n mens moet dit in nagedagtenis hou, dit wat gebeur het. [...] Jy moet kan 'n eenheid vorm en kan voort gaan.

[Today's child did not experience it, for him this is solely a fact out of a book. NO child has been involved in Apartheid. There is no Apartheid in this country anymore, there are no Apartheid laws anymore. So, the (pause) people that have experienced it or who were involved during Apartheid, they will always feel like that. You will never be able to remove that, but the new generation does not need to feel that way. (long pause) Because they did not experience it, and they all have the same opportunities today. But a person does not forget what his parents or grandparents went through. This is society. [...] And we should never forget what has happened. But we shouldn't continue hating. And, um, if we forget what has happened, it

might happen again. So a person needs to remember what has happened.  
[...] You have to be able to unite and to move on.]

This construction contrasted strongly with that of for example TA, IN, LA and SS (see above) who presented a history or memory as (still) 'alive'. Both constructions, however, have in common the idea that unity in the present and future is a desired aim of history teaching. However, one can ask the question if the groups to which this unity applies, are the same.

I would argue that the above teachers be understood as following a *semi-disciplinary* approach, because the underlying epistemological roles allocated to the teacher and learners mirror those of a factual approach to history. In contrast, many teachers defended the idea of unity without necessarily defending an image of the learner as 'swallowing' and (uncritically) 'accepting'. This is then a third nuance on Seixas' (and my own) distinctions between the three approaches: 'Unity' is mostly associated with a factual, "enhancing collective memory" approach to history; while the idea of a questioning, investigating learner is associated with a disciplinary approach to history. TA emphasised for example the importance of assisting learners in the process of forming their personalities by giving many perspectives to an event:

*I feel, it's, it's a must, it's a must to take uh, uh learners of that uh, um age group to get that experience, to get more information because (pause) while we can still assist them in giving them all the facts obviously they will still have to make up their own mind. But it's better to make up your own mind, to FORM yourself, your personality with ALL the facts than just with (pause) the limited facts or only facts of one side because that is also something that happens and I think it's not a good thing, by giving only ONE side of the story instead of giving (pause) all the sides and then that person, with his or her background, can then form (pause) his or her own opinions and form his or her own personality.*

Similarly, throughout his interview, SF, teaching at a former H.O.R. school, stressed the importance of different actors in the mediation of the past so that the present generation knows where the past comes from and can establish its identity (much like other teachers, he positioned this generation as having no focus). He identified these actors as the parents (whom the learners ought to interview), educators, and museums (which the learner ought to visit).

*So um, we, the children need to understand and WE need to teach them that (pause) if we want to understand where we are today, we must know where we, where we've come from. And know where everyone comes from. We talk about diversity for example. We need to know where different, diverse groups come from. And how we as a nation can come together. Because after all, all education and all teaching is not only about the past, it's not only about the [here], it's about the future. And the future as a na/nation. To, to exist as a nation. To, to, um, to get along with the people in the country, for me, that's what it is about.*

MR, teaching at a private school, took a similar position in talking about the integration of generations through specific activities such as interviews and local history projects, “so that they also (pause) get a feeling for (pause) where they are and, and realising that history, what they’re looking at, is the END of a whole LINE of development and other people’s input and things like that”. Similar to SF, she employed disciplinary language, speaking about research, assignments, “finding”, “reproducing” and “representing” “information”. In addition, she positioned herself as ‘a learner’ as well, learning from learners’ research projects and using the school library as the learners do.

Also BD, teaching at a Jewish independent school, intensively employed a disciplinary language and explored at great length, the details of a project the teachers had planned for that year:

*[T]his year we’ve [had] it, for a couple of years now, but this year particularly we set our whole project on Forced Removals. We had three components. We did um, an overview and a timeline, just looking at, it was in the broader context. I find that the, the most difficult thing (pause) to do with this age group, is to get them to see an event within a context. Because conceptually they’re just (pause) simply not up to that level of (pause) abstraction where they can see the study per period or an event as part of a bigger whole. So I spent ALWAYS quite a lot of time contextualising, and then (pause) um, a second part of their project, we did an essay, it was basically a cause-and-effect thing, looking at the repercussions of Forced Removals and the effects it had on people’s lives. It was a personal response, but also very much a cause-and-effect. And then (pause) the third part of the [project] was personal response, empathy, and was looking at how museums [...] store memory, recreate and work with memory and (pause) um, (pause) they had to analyse 2 of the exhibits and show what, how those exhibits (pause) achieved those things, and how they as, as viewers were able to make contact with the memory that was (pause) in some ways not their own personally, but is part of their, their heritage and their, their bigger cultural and national memory. So they did a personal response component as well. Three sections. It was quite a big project, it was the big project of the term.*

JR, teaching at a former Model C school, and SF both explained in depth how they teach their learners how to use an oral source. Their explanation attests to an awareness of the social processes of forgetting and remembering, of silencing, exclusion and inclusion. JR, however seems to present himself on a *par* with the learners, while SF seems to distinguish more clearly between the roles of the learners and the teacher:

*I’ve told them “all sources are biased” [...] “And I’ve given you one version of the story and (pause) to really understand history and learn from it, you must be able to understand different people’s perspectives” And, “we LOVE biased sources as historians, but a good historian can see the bias and you can go to District Six and you can be told the story by (pause) a coloured woman, who glamorises the past, and you can go to the Holocaust Museum and be told the story by (pause) a survivor, um, of the Holocaust, who maybe*

*was only four or five years old when she was shipped out here or whatever. Um, but it IS valuable because it's, it's a side of the story you need to understand how people felt and responded at the time". And then I suppose the teacher's job is to (pause) try and fill in the gaps where she feels that no/not enough emphasis is been given. Or (coughs) or something has been left out. You know, it is far too (pause) you know, up its bum politically correct or something, that it actually left some things out. (JR).*

*[W]hen you use that (pause) oral history as a source, one has to be careful. And (pause) I tell them that, and I explain to them that people could leave things out, just like people write something down (pause) and tell the truth but not the whole truth. So when you speak you can tell the truth but not the whole truth, or (pause) you can just exclude things but the important thing, for me, um, when I talk to them about it, is (pause) you ask the questions, of the source, of the oral history, of the witness, of the person who lived through that experience. You ask a question, and you try to account for if there are things that are missing. Because the questions you're gonna ask about things that are not there (pause) and often the things that are not said are as important, if not more important than the things that are said. And uh, you (pause) try to establish and give answers for it, if you can't, try to account for why (pause) why is it left out. It's like accounting for why the (pause) the previous regime left out the resistance history. You know what I'm saying. Which is very important. [And understand today] [inaudible] I mean every country you go throughout the world, every, if they want to remain in power, they won't tell you certain stories, they will tell you things that's gonna make you feel that they are right, and that they need to stay in power. (SF)*

MD's motto during the interview was "We are history makers". She also hung up this sign for a while in her classroom. She stated that by telling the learners stories, the teacher makes them aware of not just what happened in District Six or during the Holocaust, "and the horrors of it", but also "how things start out", how mistakes are made in the past, and new mistakes will be made in the future. Much like other teachers, who defended the 'never again' imperative, she emphasised the agency of learners.

*[F]or me what's utmost in my mind is that, you know, not only are they historians, in fact I think I, I don't even go into the historian aspect of it really, um (long pause) definitely but my focus is very largely on the fact that they are history makers. That, that is really for me, FROM MY HEART, what is, what is important, that they realise that they, that they, you know, that they make a contribution MORE than, you know, than the cold sort of historian, analysing the facts. [...] I really believe that it is important for them to understand their contributions (long pause) to society. And maybe it is because when, when I was younger I didn't BELIEVE I could make a valuable contribution [...] they need to KNOW that wherever they are they must make that CHANGE, they must, you know, make a contribution [...] and that is what the link is with history, it's not just facts. It's about you know, it's, it's about issues that could come up AGAIN if we don't watch, if they don't speak up, if they don't take a stand, it will RESurface, because power, there is always a struggle for power, you know, abuse is, is, you know, it's just, everyone is capable of it.*

What distinguishes this group of teachers from the first group is, in my understanding, a stronger emphasis on *how* memory works and *how* one can critically investigate this, than on ‘*what* the past was’. These teachers stated that learners learn most by going out on their own, by researching and reading themselves (SF). The teachers also distinguished between, in BD’s words, “*the emotional context*” of the learners’ community and “*the greater context*” in which the learners “*remove*” themselves from their community’s interpretation of the past and investigate sources “*historically*” (i.e. critically).

**“It’s not easy to say ‘you’re right and you’re wrong’”: A positioned approach to history**

In my opinion, what is crucial in the above constructions is the idea that the past is the study subject, not the present. This contrasts with a positioned approach to history, which positions the past, in the words of Freeman, “in the present, in memory; it is not to be confused with the ‘past presents’ we formerly lived”.<sup>10</sup> As explained in Chapter Two, a positioned approach to history focuses on the present construction of the past and questions positivism and the idea of unproblematic progress.<sup>11</sup> It looks at the role of language and performance in constructing meaning through narratives. It also includes the idea that there is no definitive answer and that people, instead of having static identities and roles, take ever-changing positions (or “seats”) in ever-changing social relations.<sup>12</sup>

In comparison to the two previous approaches, it was challenging to identify this approach in the teachers’ constructions. A few teachers within a disciplinary approach (and a minority within a factual approach), however, reflected *at times* on the present construction of the past and the often sensitive character of teaching history in a country where past, present and future are constantly contested and re-constructed (see also, for example, BD and SF quoted above). At these moments, the teachers positioned themselves *closer* to the third approach to history, without however doing away entirely with one or both of the other approaches:

*[...] we actually SAW. It makes a big difference. It’s, it’s a different thing when you SAW something and where you are now. And you can’t be (pause) unbiased, in many ways we ARE biased when, when we teach that, that, that, because we were also involved in the, in the 80s. (JS)*

*I find myself as during Apartheid being in a difficult situation teaching history in the classroom, wanting to access the truth, wanting as far as I CAN access the truth, wanting to access as many sides of the story, um (pause) wanting to get as balanced views as possible, um (pause) stimulate as much critical thinking as possible. (BD)*

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<sup>10</sup> Freeman, *Rewriting the self*, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Seixas, “‘Sweigen!’”. See also Husbands, *What is history teaching?*; Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; White, *Tropics of discourse essays*; Jenkins, *On ‘What is history?’*.

<sup>12</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 150-157.

Teachers stated that sharing primary narratives is pivotal to enhance the learners' understanding of the past but also their present (IN, GB) and to warn the learners of the "cyclical" character of history (SF). Orientation to future and possible, or uchronic,<sup>13</sup> time and an awareness that the content and syllabus of history is, in the context of O.B.E, constantly reshaped and constructed is strong in the constructions of most teachers. As MR expresses it:

*[A]t the moment history is nightmarish! It isn't history! It's (pause) the future! Becau/ (laughs) uh, every time I think I know what I am talking about, things change!*

Some teachers were aware of the loophole in the pedagogical justification of remembrance. BD for example stated that the 'never again' imperative is "not a useful sentiment". Several teachers questioned the 'easy' and 'transformative' character or potential of first hand stories in the history classroom and teacher workshops in museums:

*I think [the visit to the Holocaust Centre and listening to primary narratives] [is] great, it's, it's informative, it's, it's revealing. It develops sensitivities maybe, develops listening skills, it develops abilities to empathise, all of that, but I DON'T think it teaches new behaviours. (BD)*

*[W]e don't want IT [atrocities such as Apartheid, Rwanda genocide, Holocaust] to be repeated. But I feel it IS repeated, [...] is it really that people want to (pause) KNOW what happened in the past and not make sure that it doesn't happen again, or do they want it to happen again? (AD)*

*[I]t's, to me it's a very, it's a deep frustration because it's kind of like (pause) we're learning this [at a workshop at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre] but we're not modelling it. So for the kids, they're doing exactly what we [teachers] do! They're SAYING it, and they can give you the whole thing but/(SG: they're not living it/) it's not gonna be lived. And so the truth of it is, it will be repeated. (GB)*

Some teachers also asked critical questions of the current status-quo, and bracketed positivism and the idea of unproblematic progress. JS, a teacher at a former H.O.R. school, for example, while defending a factual image of the history presented at the District Six Museum, added a critical note to the discourse of historical investigation by stating that "dialogue" and "arguments" are "fancy ideas" when learners have not yet mastered the language of instruction. Having taken a disciplinary approach to history throughout the interview, AW, a teacher at a former Model C School, nuanced positivistic claims at the very end of our conversation, by stating that both primary and secondary witnesses cannot grasp what happened, and that we need both fictional tools and "many different angles" to understand what happened, both "inside" and "outside" a person. After I shared with him how MP, one

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<sup>13</sup> A term coined by Portelli. Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*. See also Chapter Two.

of the Holocaust survivors, stated that neither primary nor secondary witnesses can fathom what happened in the extermination camps (see Chapter Four), he said the following:

*[Vivian Bickford-Smith] said a very interesting thing, like what you just said about um, (pause) not being able to, people won't be able to understand it. He said he was showing (pause) a group of Vietnam war veterans around, or he was giving them a bit of history about Cape Town, when they were on a tourist visit here. And he said, he said to them "as a matter of interest, I, I lecture on Vietnam, and war in film. And as veterans, which film do you think gives the most accurate representation of the movie [sic]?" And um they gave a very surprising answer. And they said: "Apocalypse Now". Which is a very, very surreal (pause) surreal look at the whole, the whole war. And they said that's most accurate you represent it, you don't have, we would look at it from the outside and say "it's a surreal movie", "it's not really based in reality". But they felt, ja, they felt that (pause) you can't have this surrealness of war, the craziness of it, the psychological (pause) going on actually (pause) that was the best representation of it.*

The veterans in this secondary narrative express uncanniness around the collapse of the boundaries humans construct between imagination and reality. As explained in Chapter Two, secondary witnesses to atrocities also experience this.<sup>14</sup> GB, teaching at a Jewish independent school, similarly, addressed seeming dichotomies. She questioned an unproblematised distinction between "the empirical" ('facts') and "feelings", while emphasising the importance of primary narratives, identification, but also analysis:

*[I]t's the cross-over between (pause) or not even the cross-over, it's exploring the link between the empirical "Hitler invaded" and (long pause) "this is the person's story who was on the receiving end of the Czechoslovakia, you know, [inaudible]". And it's the story that people can identify with but in a sense we examine, no, we, I suppose we've shifted a bit, cause we look at sources, but we want the kids not only to know about the story. We want them to have a sense of the sequence of events, or the chronology, we want them to have a sense of analysis etcetera, etcetera. So, so it's an interesting kind of (long pause) I won't even call it a dichotomy because it's not one OR the other, but how to LINK those things cause 15 year old kids identify with the story. (long pause) They don't really care about what year it happened.*

Warnings against the 'cyclical' character of history, and the pitfalls of moral messages such as 'make a difference' and 'never again', do not however situate the teachers squarely in a positioned approach to history. Many teachers reflected on their present position but did not necessarily construct this as something that needs to be understood and studied *as part of* history. The latter would situate them within a positioned approach, while the majority seems to stick with a factual and/or disciplinary approach to history. Nevertheless, there is a difference between teachers who reflected on their present position in relation to heavily contested historical topics in the present, such as slave trade, Nazi Germany, Apartheid, and

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<sup>14</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to ourselves*, 188.

the Middle East crisis, and teachers who did not do that, or just *stated* they do not teach those topics. The former group did reflect on and seemed to realise that that present contestation influences if and how they teach the topic, creating a general impetus to move closer to a positioned approach to history, while the latter hold onto the idea that there is ‘one version’ or ‘one objective, true version’.

*[I]t's not easy to say "you're right and you're or you're wrong". That it is um, that the, that the problem goes back so far that in, in the end, you can't take off the layers anymore! You can't, it's like an onion, you know! You do eventually get to the core of an onion, when you take off the layers. But (pause) in history often you don't! Because (pause) you just, it's just too complicated! (pause) And you're also dealing with people and their own emotions, and their memories, and so on. But, um, (pause) ja, there's, there's quite a, it's interesting to find the different (pause) like um, as a Belgian you would have different (pause) recollections of, uh, you know, um (pause) cultural recollections, not yours personally, necessarily. And, um, in, in any one class up there, there often are pupils from a WIDE variety of backgrounds and um, and I'm not talking just about the South African context (pause) where you have (pause) affluent blacks, very poor blacks, affluent coloureds, very poor coloureds, affluent whites, [...] or not so affluent. And, and then they all come with all of this and their different perspectives. There's, there's no (pause) homogeneity there. Which is also very interesting. Um (pause) to blend all of that. Or to get the information out about it. (MR)*

*I think it's a powerful thing [to share one's own experiences of Apartheid] (long pause) it's a powerful thing, and also I think with kids (pause) they appreciate honesty. If you, now I can remember at times in the past when I was teaching, particularly [name private school], it was a very conservative environment, so it was deeply challenging for me, and um (long pause) I can remember some times (pause) saying to them that I've been in a context where I felt uncomfortable, um, (long pause) when, and, and that, and spoke about as a white South African, MY discomfort. (long pause) um, (pause) and I think that helped them a bit, to say "it doesn't mean you have to stop doing that [sharing one's experiences], it just means (long pause) some of those things ARE uncomfortable". (GB)*

Overall, it seemed to be easier for teachers to take on a positioned approach to history while assessing the facilitators in the museums. BD, MR, SF, MM, JR and ED were especially outspoken on this matter. ED, teaching at a private school, explicitly stated that informing her learners about the ‘situatedness’ of the facilitators can only happen before or after the actual visit to the museum. In contrast, the other teachers positioned themselves as *wanting* to confront the facilitators with their (i.e. facilitators’) “*bias*” during the actual interaction, while one teacher claimed he had explicitly confronted museum facilitators.

*I, I don't actually (pause) in, in the, in the museum itself, I don't put any viewpoint across or interfere with the program been offered even if it is something that I hear that I wouldn't use myself, a term of whatever. I don't. I run with the program. AFTERwards, when we come back to the classroom and we have a discussion about what people said and, and children relate to*

*what affected them or what didn't, then we will debate say something which we might have find uncomfortable, or something like that. To give you an example, if I may. Um, I don't use any racial terms, um, I try not to, I should say. I always say "classified", people who were classified black, or classified white under Apartheid and I never, I believe in a HUMAN race, I don't believe someone is a coloured, or an Indian. And I did go to one of the museums, earlier on, and somebody said uh, well the facilitator turned up and said "well, I, I was a coloured man, living in District Six". And all the learners looked at me, because we have been debating whether one should use terms like "coloured" [inaudible] CLASSIFY coloured. And I just said to them, these are questions we raise later in the classroom, we're not going to EMBARRASS or challenge an outsider. They can challenge, if they want to, but it's not gonna come from me. Because then [they] can be indoctrinated, and they must be open to (pause) what, how people see themselves, and their identity. And that came out very strongly. If somebody decides that they believe that they are coloured and they want to accept that identity, well [where] is anybody to say, you know, "don't use that term". So that leads to quite a lot of debate, but only when we come out of the museum, you know. Um, ja. (ED)*

## **Conclusion**

Mapping teachers' views on the use of primary narratives in history education is enlightening and obscuring at the same time. The three approaches to history assist one to gain insight into the relative positioning of a teacher, namely in relation to other teachers. However, it obscures the inner complexity of the positioning or positionings of the same person. A first nuance the above analysis brings to the original categories as developed by Seixas is that a majority of teachers do not advocate one approach, but rather what seems a mix of two and sometimes three approaches to history.

According to the present mapping the majority of teachers (16 out of 26) follows or at least advocates a factual approach to history, the idea that there is 'one' and 'true' version or story of the past.<sup>15</sup> This 'one' and 'true' version needs to be brought across to the learners, who need to accept it, in order to show their respect and gratitude for the sacrifices made by previous generations. As mentioned above, Seixas calls this approach "enhancing collective memory".<sup>16</sup> The fact that quite a few of the teachers emphasise the unity of 'the group' (whatever its identity is) seems to confirm this. However, the advocacy for unity within a specific community might go together with exclusion of 'others'. The term "collective memory" then carries different meanings (which collective?) and these meanings can change

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<sup>15</sup> Teachers working at former H.O.R. (9) and former H.O.A (5) schools were in the majority within the group following a factual approach to history (in addition, 1 teacher in a private school and 1 teacher in a former D.E.T. school spoke in factual terms about history).

<sup>16</sup> Seixas, "'Sweigen!'", 20.

within the same conversation (who is 'we?').<sup>17</sup> Most of the teachers following a factual approach to history seemed to assume a unity across generations, but some of them strongly othered the learners, regardless within which community these learners are positioned by the teacher.

What does this interpretation of this first group of teachers mean in relation to the regime shift? One could argue that these teachers followed 'the book'; the 'old' book that is, namely a factual approach to history as advocated by the various Apartheid Departments of Education. This explanation, however, is simplistic and insufficient. There emerged what appeared to be feelings of resistance and frustration underlying these positionings. Teachers, regardless of their 'colour', strongly defended their 'own community' and its role in or relationship with the regime shift. Quite a few seemed to regret the changes in education and implicitly explained these changes by referring to the regime shift. Others, in contrast, strived to portray themselves as happy and coping with the change, resisting an underlying assumption that their group would oppose the change. These teachers nevertheless shared a strong defence of 'their' community; the characteristic that categorises them most strongly as following a factual approach to history. What characterised the latter group of teachers was an attempt to "enhance collective memory" within the present South African, 'new' nation.

A substantial number of teachers, however, advocated a disciplinary approach to history (16 out of 26). Out of this group, some teachers followed what I call a semi-disciplinary approach to history (9 out of 26).<sup>18</sup> These teachers distinguished different versions of the past but allocated different qualities to these versions, for example according to the narrator's 'distance' to the event (the closer the better), his/her eloquence, and according to the 'objectivity' of the narrative ('objective' meaning 'true' and 'factual'). These qualities however seem to attest to a factual approach to history, with the exception maybe of the mention of eloquence which indicates an awareness of discourse. This interpretation then offers, I would argue, a second nuance on the original three approaches to history: one can defend a factual approach to history and at the same time appreciate different versions of the past.

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<sup>17</sup> See also recent discussions in academic literature on the term "collective memory". Ashplant *et al.*, *The politics of war memory*; Green, "Individual remembering and 'collective memory'"; Hodgkin and Radstone, *Contested pasts*; Rogers *et al.*, *Trauma and life stories*; Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*, 106.

<sup>18</sup> A semi-disciplinary approach to history was prevalent amongst teachers working at former H.O.R (4), former H.O.A (3) and former D.E.T. (2) schools, while a closer interpretation of a disciplinary approach to history was almost equally distributed amongst teachers working at former H.O.R. (2), former H.O.A. (2) and private schools (3).

A smaller group of teachers (6 out of 26) seemed to be following a disciplinary approach more closely by talking about the activities one *does* in history. They focus on the ‘how’ and talk about history as a discipline. Their positionings are characterised by a disciplinary language. They speak about activities such as ‘research’, ‘assignments’, and ‘finding’, ‘reproducing’, ‘interpreting’, ‘responding to’, and ‘representing’ information. They position the learner as one that needs to question and investigate – a positioning that contrasts strongly with the one in a factual approach to history. The teachers position themselves easily as ‘learner’, maybe mirroring the Department of Education’s imperative for Life Long Learning. These teachers, however, also talk about the importance of ‘unity’, something that in the original categories is associated with a factual approach to history. This might be a third nuance on Seixas’ distinctions between the three approaches. The claim or appeal to unity within this group is orientated towards the inner community - implicitly defined according to the ‘race’ categories - but there is also the appeal to broaden the sense of community to ‘others’ in the wider society, to the ‘new’ South African nation. The learners have to be critical but also show respect for others, including the previous generations.

The attention to the creation of unity is strong across all three approaches, including the positionings of the teachers who, *at times*, advocated a positioned approach to history. These teachers (11 out of 26) talk about the present positionings that create one’s interpretation of the past.<sup>19</sup> They are sceptical of the idea that there is ‘one’ and ‘true’ version of the past, and warn against naively believing in progress and change. Shouting ‘never again’ is not sufficient they seem to say. Even though quite a few of the teachers expressed these reservations, they did not construct their present position as *part of* history and thus something to be studied. Nevertheless, they seem to want the learners to work towards national unity but also be aware of the controversies around past events because of present positionings of individuals and groups in a society and a world that has been and still is saturated with conflict and violence.

As stated above, it is difficult to apply a clear-cut differentiation between the three different approaches to history as developed by Seixas in the analysis of the interviews, because a majority of teachers combined at least two approaches to history. With the exception of seven teachers who spoke solely from a factual approach (KD, SS, IM, CC, RV, IB, LA), three teachers who spoke solely from a semi-disciplinary approach (LH, BM, RT) and one teacher who spoke solely from a positioned approach (ED), teachers followed at least two approaches to history. The majority of these teachers combined either a factual approach with

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<sup>19</sup> This approach was most prevalent in the private schools (4 out of 4 teachers), while in the former H.O.R. and former H.O.A. schools respectively 4 and 3 teachers advocated this approach.

a (semi-)disciplinary approach, or a (semi-)disciplinary approach with a positioned approach. Two teachers combined all approaches (BD and MM), and two teachers combined a factual approach with a positioned approach (JS and IN). The classroom observations, discussed in the following two chapters, seem to indicate more clearly that the ‘more complex’ approaches *include* and transcend the ‘less complex’ approaches.

Teachers’ approaches to history, as expressed in interviews, however, do not tell us much about if and how they *use* primary narratives in classroom interactions. In the following two chapters, I turn to the pedagogical practice of six teachers and a primary witness I observed in the course of 2005. The above-mentioned approaches to history and positionings of self and others in history inform the analysis. In addition, I employ Jacklin’s concepts of modes of pedagogical practice explained in Chapter Two. These lenses provide a context for the analysis of the teachers’ use of primary narratives and less organised forms of positioning self and others in history.

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## Chapter Seven

### The presence and absence of primary narratives

*Considered as a form of cognition, narrative is a vehicle to configure significant parts into more comprehensible wholes. As partial and politically invested social performance, narrative holes, rather than wholes, signal where moral lessons begin when that vehicle breaks down.<sup>1</sup>*

As discussed in Chapter Two, one can study the use of primary narratives, *together with* the teacher's approach to history and his/her pedagogical practice, as a 'window', however indirect and incomplete, into teachers' meaning-making processes of the regime shift, and of their role in "the three P's", the Past, the Present and the Possible.<sup>2</sup> I explained in Chapter Three that observing teachers was a challenge because a considerable number of teachers did not want to be observed, or when they did, they 'staged' what they thought was 'proper history'. The three teachers I described in Chapter Three as partly staging their lessons, namely JJ, BM and KQ propagated a factual approach to history during their interviews, while also speaking about a semi-disciplinary approach (see Chapter Six). The three teachers focused on an unquestioned transmission of historical content. Primary narratives - except for the interactions between CW, the primary witness, and her learners - were mostly absent and, *if present*, seemingly not treated as part of the subject content, i.e. historical knowledge. In this chapter, I address the practice of these three teachers and that of the primary witness CW because these four educators have a similar, i.e. factual approach to history and mainly practiced a repetition led mode of pedagogical practice. In the next chapter, I address the three remaining teachers MD, BD and GB.

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Before addressing pedagogical interactions with a dominant factual approach to history, however, some comments are needed regarding the process of analysis itself. These comments apply to both this and the following chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter One, I employed the Nvivo program to code both the interviews and the classroom observations. I coded the latter with codes already created during the analysis of the interviews. At first, I fine-tuned these codes, in an attempt to mirror the detailed descriptions of Seixas' approaches to history and Jacklin's modes of pedagogical practice. However, I learnt that I needed to detach myself to a certain extent from these detailed codes

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<sup>1</sup> Meyer, "A dialogue in narrative and historical consciousness", 204.

<sup>2</sup> Bruner, *The culture of education*.

and instead take on an eagle-view. A major reason for this is that I took hand-written notes during the classroom observations. These notes are not always literal quotes of people's speech and are rather ethnographic (writing down as much as I can) instead of following a strict structured note-taking procedure. Initially, I chose to take hand-written notes in order to lower the threat a teacher may feel when having an observer in the class. Only after some time did I ask teachers, who allowed me to observe over a longer period of time, if I could audiotape the interactions (see Chapter Eight). The observation notes nevertheless contain a great deal of information. For confidentiality reasons, however, I had to sacrifice biographical and school-specific information.

Another reason for moving away from detailed coding is that, as pointed out in the previous chapter, a clear-cut differentiation between the three different approaches to history as developed by Seixas was not only difficult to adapt to the analysis of the interviews, but also to that of the classroom interactions. Similarly, applying Jacklin's modes of pedagogical practice, I learned that coding sub-activities was inadequate for this study. I needed to interpret also the general purpose underlying these sub-activities. For example, sub-activities such as lecturing, reading, asking and responding questions can be part of each of Jacklin's modes. They can, on the one side of the spectrum, be a form of control of body and space, and on the other side of the spectrum, in a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice, they can be part of what Jacklin calls "complex, layered, multi-step internal structures".<sup>3</sup>

In addition, I coded in different gears depending on the texts at hand, as well as part of a larger emerging process of finding a workable coding approach. When the interactions clearly and continually focussed on a specific activity, for example regulation of body and space, I chose to run through the whole text with this code ('EvalBodySpace'). In other cases, where the interactions were more complex, or the interaction took place over only one period (as was the case with BM) I chose to code line by line or paragraph by paragraph applying different codes at once. In both approaches however, I repeatedly went over incidents that would be important for my research, especially moments where the teacher used primary narratives or clearly positioned self and others in history. This added the advantage of viewing crucial moments several times and from different codes or angles. I also read the interactions 'across the grain', namely I looked at instances that seemed to contradict my first coding to check if the teacher employed one particular or rather two or several modes of pedagogical practice and/or approaches to history. As mentioned in Chapter One, the Nvivo program was a tool used in the first layer of analysis. When writing the final

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<sup>3</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 143.

analysis, I relied more and more on the summaries and impressions of the coding I had jotted down in my Nvivo and handwritten journals (see Chapter One).

It is also important to mention that it was difficult to interpret and analyse classroom interactions in an informed way when access was restricted. This was the case when I could only observe, for example, one period and when interactions took place partly in a language I do not sufficiently speak. As explained in Chapter Three, I spent one period to several days in the classrooms of KQ and BM and their respective learners. The two teachers and their learners shifted between Xhosa and English. In these two classrooms, I did not have the opportunity to record the interactions, so I could not ask a third person to assist me in the interpretation. For these two case studies, I do not have any record of what the teachers said in Xhosa, or how the learners responded in their home language. Because of the language switching, it was not always clear how and why the teacher positioned himself and others during the interaction.

Lastly, as Figlio, talking about oral history interviews, argues, the researcher's self-awareness (which includes reflection on the researcher's "feeling-states and thoughts, probably even bodily states") assists in sharpening one's conscious perceptions and observations, by including – as far as possible – unconscious perceptions.<sup>4</sup> Analysing the teachers' practices according to Seixas' and Jacklin's categories made me more aware of my own positioning, namely in my identity as a history teacher. I became very aware of my own preference towards, and ease with, a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice and a positioned approach to history. This positioning influenced the way I interpreted and analysed the teachers I worked with. For example, in my note-taking on the interactions in MD's class, I easily slipped into writing down my surprise and even sadness that she did not seem to see the 'opportunities' for discussion I saw for example in the lessons where she showed her learners a video on the Holocaust.

In the case of JJ, I realised that the position of observer is not neutral. Both teacher and learners positioned me as a sound-board, a response-able one. The teacher often came over to me during the classroom interactions to complain about his distress. Learners did the same; they told me the teacher was "*crazy*". Learners also referred explicitly to my presence when the teacher or other learners 'misbehaved' by, for example, using vulgar language. As observer I did not explicitly respond to these pleas. However, in my notes (which were *not* shared with JJ or his learners), and more specifically the observer comments placed between

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<sup>4</sup> Figlio, "Oral history and the unconscious", 126.

brackets, I positioned myself clearly as a teacher with her own approaches to history and modes of pedagogical practice.

While observing GB, I was very aware of my feeling that her mode of pedagogical practice was more familiar to me because of my own upbringing and training, even though I have another teaching style. The analysis in the next chapter, however, indicates that this kind of ‘amiable atmosphere’ is only one dimension – a dimension, as Figlio would argue, that confirms the credibility of GB’s pedagogical practice. A more in-depth analysis, more particularly that of GB’s positionings of self and others in history, brought out another dimension which brought her closer to the other teachers’ positionings of self and others in history, than a first, superficial, reading suggested.<sup>5</sup>

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Now let me present an analysis of JJ’s, BM’s, KQ’s, and CW’s approaches to history, modes of pedagogical practice and their use of primary narratives and/or less organised ways of positioning self and others in history.<sup>6</sup> As will be clear from the analysis below, these modes of address have implications for what they perceive to be the role of teachers and learners in the classroom interactions, but also, I would argue, in society as a whole. Readers might want to return to Chapter Three to locate these teachers in the way I characterised them and to refresh the methodological challenges sketched there.

**JJ: “You do what Apartheid government did years ago”**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, JJ mostly employed an empty mode of pedagogical practice. In this mode, a clear, explicit positioning towards the subject history is - theoretically - absent. I derived his approach to history, by analysing not only the few instances where he taught (thus moving out of an empty mode), but also *the epistemological roles* he allocated to learners, both in the interview and the classroom interactions.

In the interview and in his interactions with the learners JJ did not only position the learners as *tabula rasa* (as a factual approach to history implies) but also as *tabula that cannot be wiped or inscribed*: He positioned them as being unchangeable because, as he explained, “*they are raised like that*”. The teacher created and sustained this positioning of the learners as ‘passive’ during moments where he followed a repetition led pedagogical practice.

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<sup>5</sup> Figlio, “Oral history and the unconscious”.

<sup>6</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, I analyse not only identifiable primary narratives (see definition in Chapter Two), but also, for example single utterances through which the teacher positioned self and others in history. This is of particular importance in this chapter because the teachers did not automatically construct and use primary narratives during the observed classroom interactions.

Repetition led activities included the teacher lecturing and asking closed, multiple-choice and/or 'worksheet' questions.<sup>7</sup> The teacher also read from copies and, if with learners, in a 'choir'-format. The teacher wrote notes on the board and the learners checked or copied 'right' answers from the board and/or each other's booklets, cut out copies and stuck them in their booklets. JJ described the copies handed out during the history lessons as "*sources*" despite them simply comprising a list of 'facts'.

Interestingly, during the few actual interactions on history, the teacher idealised the past before 1948, conflating (the origins of) racism with the inception of the Apartheid regime. More specifically, he stated, "*Before 1948 you belonged to ... the human race, you were a human being*", and, in another class, he claimed that everybody had the same education prior to 1948. Idealisation (or myth making) is characteristic of a factual, i.e. unquestioned, approach to history. Another characteristic of a factual approach to history seems to be present in his use of the impersonal 'you' and 'everybody', suggesting a conflation of generations. For example, the teacher said that Apartheid introduced Bantu education and then asked the learners "*What were your rights? Come, you're a human being*" (note the shift from past to present tense). Another characteristic was a recurring 'listing' of facts (a repetition led activity) by both the teacher and the learners.

In contrast to regulative comments directed towards the learners (see Chapter Three), primary narratives barely featured in JJ's class. At the end of a lesson on the Apartheid laws, he handed out a source about how Apartheid affected Ellen Kuzwayo and her family. He did not discuss this source during the actual period, but gave it as homework to the learners. However, during this same lesson, a female learner asked the teacher what he had experienced during Apartheid. This was the only (observed) instance where the learners positioned the teacher as a primary witness of Apartheid and where the teacher positioned himself as having experienced Apartheid.

*Female learner: "What happened to you during Apartheid?"*

*Other female learner: "Did Zulus and Xhosas fight?"*

*He responds to the latter. He explains where they fought.*

*He doesn't address first question, but then says (in 'we'): "All of us, all of us, all of us were affected by Apartheid. Everyone who was not white. Even whites cause they had to live this life". He refers to Mandela; songs were not allowed, you could be locked up. Only a small number of beaches were open to 'non-whites'. He lists beaches where 'non-whites' could go to. He asks the class: "What happens when you stand in the water?" (about a very rough beach).*

*Learners: "You die" and they laugh.*

*[...]*

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter Three, footnote 59.

He says there was a fence around Camps Bay beach. “That’s where we could go to.”

Male ‘black’ learner: “So we could go to ...” (listing some beaches) (interesting construction ‘we’!!!)

T: “Let’s proceed. It affected all of us ... I couldn’t go to U.C.T.” He explains he had to go to U.W.C., could only come to U.C.T. for courses they didn’t give anywhere else. ‘Blacks’ had to go to Fort Harare, ‘Indians’ to ...

Male ‘black’ learner asks T “Are you Indian?”

T: “I am a normal being.”

Male ‘coloured’ learner: “No, you’re coloured!” [Researcher’s observation notes]

The teacher did not respond immediately to the learner’s request to position himself deliberately in history. He seemed to circumvent the question at first by answering the second question. When he does answer the more personal question, he answers in a distanced, generalised way, by using the pronouns ‘we’ and (impersonal) ‘you’. He seems to bring across a ‘politically correct’ message, especially in the presence of the researcher, in adding that even ‘whites’ suffered. His use of irony (“*What happens when you stand in the water?*”), however, seems to lower the distancing positioning. When he does talk from the ‘I’ perspective, it is to point out he could not go to U.C.T. (a privileged institution ‘for whites only’ during Apartheid,<sup>8</sup> but also the institution the researcher works at) and to resist the way the learners positioned and re-positioned him according to ‘race’. Later on in the interaction, when he speaks about his ‘white’ friend from Newlands, with whom he could not share train or bench, he again employed the pronoun ‘I’ and seemed in first instance to address the researcher rather than the learners. This seems to suggest that the teacher shared this narrative *because* of the researcher’s presence. His recurring attempt, throughout this particular lesson, to redirect the attention “*back to the laws*” strengthens this impression. It suggests that the teacher perceived the sharing of primary narratives as deviation to lessons in which regulative discourse and at times repetition led activities are central. Moreover, it might suggest that the teacher did not perceive the sharing of these particular primary narratives (for example in comparison to the narrative of Ellen Kuzwayo and her family he gave to the learners as homework) as ‘factual’, i.e. historical knowledge.

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<sup>8</sup> Even though the Apartheid government tried to make the institution ‘for whites only’, there was a quota system for certain restricted courses allowing ‘non-white’ people to attend university. From 1968 U.C.T. staff and students were involved in protests against the regime and against the U.C.T. administration for submitting to the regime. For this reason, as GB, the teacher I discuss in the following chapter, explained, ‘conservative whites’ (my words) described the university as “*Little Moscow on the hill*” because of Left wing student activity (see Chapter Eight). In the Western Cape, the University of Stellenbosch provided for ‘white’, Afrikaans-speaking students, while the University of the Western Cape provided for ‘coloured’ students.

While there were some primary narratives present in JJ's interactions, even though he taught very little subject content, BM and KQ did teach, but made no use of primary narratives – at least not in English.

**BM: “We did Apartheid, so you know”**

While BM in comparison to JJ did teach, his approach to history was similar. There was an absence of contextualisation, namely a time frame specific to the history of Nazi-Germany and specific concepts and terms, at least in the teacher's speech in English. BM seemed to present the past as 'given', 'factual', 'one' (no change over time, no differences between different contexts) but 'knowable' because the learners had already seen Apartheid. In addition, the teacher heavily relied on what seemed to be comparisons with the present situation in South Africa. He also employed imaginative scenarios.

*T explains that those Jews who had businesses were charged levies. It was a trick, he says, instead of saying, “Get out of this business”.*

*(In general, he does use difficult words, assuming they understand).*

*He gives a (present, imaginative) example: imagine you have a shop (e.g. Checkers) and they charge you a levy of 10 000 Rand, what would you do? You would leave.*

*[...] “They failed to comply with paying levies”.*

*“Are we still together so far? Any questions? If no questions we can move on.”*

*“What I want us to do now ...” namely looking at ideas of clever people.*

*(‘clever people’ might be used here in a cynical way, given what he is about to say about their ideas).*

*“Let me ask a question about ghettos”. He asks what ghettos are.*

*“We did this in Grade 8”, he says when no learner can provide an answer.*

*Some of the answers given: “It was a concentration camp” (boy).*

*T: “No, no, I’m talking about South Africa.” [...]*

*Another boy: “squatter camps”*

*T refers to land act.*

*A boy explains land was taken away.*

*T’s uptake: and they were taken to far away and poor areas. Namely the home lands (he writes this down). “The home lands were ghettos”.*

*T asks what they call those ‘black’ areas.*

*Girl: “reserves”*

*T: “oh, oh!”*

*(kind of indicating ‘you forgot!’)*

*[...]*

*He says the areas were later on called home lands and that in Nazi Germany “ghettos” were perceived as the right word for the places where Jews were concentrated. “Do you think those areas were good?”*

*Learners: “no”*

*T: “How (did/does) it look like?”*

*Girl: “overgrazed”*

*(Interesting! Seems to answer in relation to the South African situation)*

*T: “Right, you need to know that one fourth of the Germans were Jews”. He says the propaganda was spread amongst the majority of Germans.*

*(He makes difficult jumps!)*

*He switches to Xhosa.*

He asks if it was “good” for Jews and for blacks, those areas.

“Can you draw me a picture of how they were” (switching to Xhosa) “Why do you say they were so bad?” “We did Apartheid, so you know.” “Now we’re doing the Holocaust.”

(Learners are not responding)

T talks about coloureds: now they say, “I am black” while in the past, during Apartheid, they said, “I’m white”. He writes “theories of people” on the board. And says that the inferior, weaker, poor group doesn’t need to be protected. Strongest group deserves to win, and needs to be in control or to be in leadership. (He is writing notes all the time.) He refers back to the beginning of the lesson (pointing at his writing on the board) namely propaganda: Jews were hated because they failed Germany in the war. “because they were inferior”. Namely even their brains. “They are – what?”

Learners: “stubborn”.

(In the beginning of the lesson, the teacher spoke about Jews not wanting to convert.)

T: “too little” “What does that mean to you?” “It was propaganda against the Jews.” “Innocent people were accused of having failed in the war.”

[Researcher’s observation notes]

As is clear from this extract, some of the questions in which BM asked for a comparison between the Holocaust and Apartheid, or maybe an application of the learners’ knowledge of Apartheid to the Holocaust, were lost on not only the learners but also the researcher. He seemed to assume/expect that *because* the learners had done Apartheid they would know answers to questions around the Holocaust, “*we did Apartheid, so you know*”. The difference between “*reserves*”, “*homelands*”, “*concentration camps*” and “*ghettos*” seemed unclear to the learners. Note also the historical mistake that not a fourth, but less than one percent of the Germans at the time were Jewish.<sup>9</sup> The teacher seemed to be focussing on a generic experience of discrimination, something both Jews and Blacks experienced over time. The *absence* of specific time frames, however, gives the impression *all* discriminatory actions in Nazi Germany happened at the same time and that it was the same as the discriminatory actions under the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

Primary narratives did not play a role in this positioning of self and others in history. Primary narratives, for example those of Jews who experienced the Nazi regime and/or the Holocaust, were absent. In addition, BM seemed to position himself and the learners as Christians relative to “*stubborn*” Jews who did not want to convert.

T asks what the second point in the propaganda is. And answers himself: Jews were blamed to have crucified Christ. “Would you love someone who killed Christ?”

Learners say “no”.

T: “Because we, we as Christians, Christ is our saviour.”

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<sup>9</sup> Silbert, *The Holocaust*, 8.

*He says Jews didn't perceive Him as the saviour; they said the saviour still had to come. [...] T says it was an accusation; it doesn't mean they did it. He says he hopes they understand that. He gives a (present, imaginative) example: "Mr. [his own surname] is a rapist! What will you do?"*  
*Learners say: "hate you!"*  
*Yes, T says, you will keep a distance from me, not wanting to be with me in the class. He returns to Jews: "They were so stubborn in (not wanting to) convert(ing)." He says the majority of them didn't convert. [Researcher's observation notes]*

This positioning in which the teacher gives a 'religious' explanation for why "*the Jews were hated*" was strong throughout the interaction, and, implicitly and partly, seemed to suggest Jews got a 'just' 'punishment'. However, the positioning had *ironic* overtones in that the teacher took on the voice of someone who believes Jews *are* "*stubborn*" and "*weak*".<sup>10</sup> It was, therefore, difficult for an outsider to read the teacher's religious positioning. A possible indication that his 'Christian' positioning was partly genuine, is that at the end of the lesson, the teacher added a critique on "*the scientists*" which the Holocaust Centre manual (speaking about "pseudo-scientists"<sup>11</sup>) did not mention, namely that "*[these] clever people ... cheat our minds ... [they state] that the planet came out of dust*". The learners reacted shocked and expressed disagreement when he said this.

Analysing BM's speech from a positioned approach to history, as done above, one could say that his present positioning as a person with specific religious ideas and convictions is creating the history he presents here. From a factual and disciplinary approach to history, however, one could say that his 'lack' of ('valid') historical knowledge is problematic.<sup>12</sup> Note that in the above interaction the teacher made a historical mistake in that Nazis did not ask Jews living in Germany to convert or become Germans. Jews living in Germany at the time *were* Germans but the Nazi ideology reconstructed them as belonging to a 'subhuman race'. BM's religious positioning during the classroom interaction (in English that is) contrasted with how he portrayed the aim of these lessons to the researcher. On our way out, BM explicitly said to the researcher that he wants the learners to compare Holocaust and Apartheid because it is important to understand that "*theories of people*", based on propaganda, are wrong. You cannot just give an "*introduction*", he asserted, they need to understand the theories to the core. I understand these theories to be 'race theories' but the teacher did not use this term during the interaction with the learners. In the interview, the teacher had said that the Nazis perceived Jews as "*not PURE white*" and only spoke about

<sup>10</sup> In relation to irony in subjects' discourse, see Yow, "Interpersonal relations in the interview", 135.

<sup>11</sup> Silbert, *The Holocaust*, 3.

<sup>12</sup> See also Taylor, "Curriculum 2005" and Taylor and Vinjevoold, "Teaching and learning" on the curriculum's demands on teachers' specialised and conceptual knowledge of their subjects, and on teachers' actual lack thereof.

“*race*” when talking about the Group Areas Act, and current feelings of superiority amongst ‘whites’ in South Africa.

I found a similar construction of the way Nazis categorised Jews (leaving out ‘race’) in the interview with KQ, who, though implicitly, expressed surprise to find out that Jews were ‘white’. One of the other teachers, GB, mentioned in a reflection interview that a colleague attending the Facing History, Facing Ourselves course asked her “*what did Jews look like?*” The colleague expressed surprise to find out that “*they look all the same [...] you can’t tell the difference*”. These teachers seem to interpret ‘racism’ solely based on the colour of the skin, which is the way the Apartheid regime used to segregate people; this in contrast to the longer and *changing* history of racism as an ideology. The ‘presentist’ interpretation of racism might indicate that these teachers are unaware of the linguistic difficulties of history and, being in that position, are not (yet) capable to assist learners herein.<sup>13</sup>

**KQ: “A book cannot answer your question ...”**

KQ’s mode of pedagogical practice suggested a factual approach to history. During the ‘class-discussion’, he asked individual learners to contribute an answer, but in the process, he seemed to imply there is ‘one right answer’.<sup>14</sup> He did ask the learners however to elaborate and explain their answers. During a lesson on the Forced Removals, he used conceptual language, talking about the economic, political and social causes and consequences of the Forced Removals (while looking at the mind-web in his hand). He did not, however, explain why one should look at the Forced Removals this way and the learners clearly struggled with the English terms “*victim*”, “*perpetrator*”, “*cause*” and “*consequence*” and (it seemed) “*economic*”, “*political*” and “*social*”. When learners gave a ‘wrong’ answer, the teacher explained the terms ‘victim’, ‘perpetrator’, ‘cause’ and ‘consequence’ in Xhosa. He also indicated when he was talking about ‘social’, ‘economic’ or ‘political’ factors.

It is interesting that the teacher did not initially explain the terms ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’ (at least not in English), and instead assisted the learners in *allocating* the labels according to the different ‘races’. It is unknown to the researcher whether the teacher then explained the terms in Xhosa. However, in the first lesson, he nuanced this allocation in his take-up of the learners’ responses by stating that “*the blacks, [and] also the coloureds*” were the ‘victims’ and that the ‘perpetrators’ were “*the Boers. Or one can say the ruling Party, the National Party was dominated by the Boers*”. This nuancing, in English that is, also happened in the other lessons where he seemed to state that the perpetrators were those in power, not

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<sup>13</sup> Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 35-42.

<sup>14</sup> See also Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 150-156.

necessarily 'all whites'. The teacher and learners, however, gave stereotypical and static definitions of 'victims' and 'perpetrators': internal contradictions or tensions were absent or rather not tagged.<sup>15</sup> Neither did they speak about choices people had to make at the time. However, KQ's definition of 'victims' shifted in meaning between the second and third (of the four observed) classes:

*T: "So who were the victims of force removals (sic)?"*

*Female learner: "The blacks".*

*T: "Good! The blacks or the Africans. The blacks were the victims of force removals. Or the Africans so to say were the victims of force removals."*

*[...]*

*T: "Who were the perpetrators?"*

*Female learner: "The whites".*

*T: "Good, the whites, or can one say the government of Apartheid were the perpetrators."*

*(He elaborates in Xhosa, more involved (?) learners laughing; did he make a joke?) He says, "Not all whites were involved". He explains in English. Government led by THEM, in Xhosa: now ANC, then NP. "So the whites in government regarded as the perpetrators. The Boers so to say." He elaborates in Xhosa. [Second group] [Researcher's observation notes]*

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*T: "I want you to tell me who were the victims."*

*The learners say: "whites", "government", "Boers", ... then a boy "black people."*

*T: "You must first listen carefully to the question." He repeats the question in Xhosa (They didn't seem to know the word 'victim'.)*

*T: "The black people were the victims" and he adds, "whether you're coloured, Xhosa, Zulu, ..." (listing the 'black' people).*

*[...]*

*T: "It were the Africans who were forced to move ..." "Now, who were the perpetrators of the force removals?"*

*Learners say "the Boers".*

*T talks in Xhosa. Then he says "The Boers or the Apartheid government".*

*He writes short sentences on the board: "Blacks [are] the victims of force removals", "Apartheid government [are] perpetrators of force removals."*

*Learners are chatting silently.*

*T takes out note from his bag (his mind-web) "I must follow this piece of paper!" [Third group] [Researcher's observation notes]*

Similar to BM, KQ did not clearly situate events in time and a disciplinary study of sources was absent. He located the removals "in the 19<sup>th</sup> century" and referred to the 1913, Natives Land Act.<sup>16</sup> This might be an indication that the teacher made (an often made) linguistic mistake in allocating centuries, and/or that he equated the Apartheid period with the earlier

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<sup>15</sup> Miemie Taljaard, an Afrikaans speaking English teacher and one of the proofreaders of this study, commented that "Boer" is a derogatory term for Afrikaans speaking 'whites'. Taljaard, Personal communication, 24 April 2007.

<sup>16</sup> The 1913 Natives Land Act made it illegal for 'blacks' to own or rent land outside designated 'reserves', with the intention "to effect a geographic separation between blacks and whites". The Act also forbade sharecropping, with the intention to push 'blacks' into paid employment. Welsh, *A history of South Africa*, 375-376.

colonial times. The absence of a time frame and ambiguous use of historical concepts characterised the interaction on a whole. At the end of a lesson on the colonisation of Africa, the teacher opened the floor for questions. The learners seemed to express confusion about whether colonisation still happens. Their confusion may have its root not just in the absence of a time frame but also of a historical understanding of concepts such as ‘colonisation’ and ‘neo-colonialism’:

*T: “So let’s end there. Does anyone have a question on this lesson?”  
A male learner asks a question in Xhosa. T repeats in Xhosa.  
Female learner asks if it is still happening.  
T: “No, it happened then and then it stopped.” He carries on in Xhosa.  
“Hence many people in Mozambique speak French”<sup>17</sup> he says, he also gives the D.R.C. as an example. He switches to Xhosa again. He repeats in Namibia people speak German. “It’s because they were colonised by Germans”.  
He is standing at the back of the room. (Sometimes he is looking at me.)  
He carries on in Xhosa about language. I hear the word “liberation”.  
“We are a democratic country now, we are no longer a colony.”  
Male learner asks a question in Xhosa.  
Teacher repeats the country is no longer a colony.  
“So many countries in Africa are democratic countries now. They had their liberation.” [Researcher’s observation notes]*

There were no primary narratives used during KQ’s lessons on Apartheid Forced Removals. This is surprising because, according to Seixas, a factual approach to history aims to build a collective memory. The main positioning in KQ’s class was subject-related, reflecting ‘appropriate’ roles of teacher and learners. One possible reason for this is the strong repetition led mode of pedagogical practice of the teacher: It focuses on routine activities and on the regulation of body and space. This explanation, however, is incomplete. Another possible reason might be that positioning of self and others in history happened in the interactions conducted in Xhosa. If this was the case, the teacher might have struggled with doing this in English, because the researcher is not an insider. The teacher and learners might even have emphasised her being ‘white’, something she shares with the (historical) ‘whites’ they talked about in these lessons on colonisation and Apartheid. The language switching, however, is important, in that KQ was very aware of my presence, and seemed for that reason to adapt his medium of instruction and his mode of pedagogical practice. He would have shared primary narratives in the English language, if he perceived the sharing of primary narratives as part of history (in his case ‘factual history’), and/or if he recognised and wanted to comply with the researcher’s view on primary narratives as historical knowledge. Therefore, a third possible reason may be that the teacher perceived positioning of self and others in history as separate from history, i.e. ‘factual’ history. In other words, the teacher has

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<sup>17</sup> Note that this is incorrect. Mozambique was a colony of Portugal, not France.

a different understanding of the presence or absence of the Past in Present-told narratives.<sup>18</sup> The lesson that the teacher gave on primary and secondary sources seems to confirm the latter interpretation. In this lesson, KQ merely lectured and wrote notes on the board; the learners copied the latter down in their books. The teacher did not explain *how* a historian works with sources, nor did he make use of the learner-centred exercises present in the textbook he used for the lesson<sup>19</sup> - at least not in this lesson. The absence of primary narratives, of ‘persons’ and ‘voices’, including those of the teacher and the learners, and his strong reliance on written material (for example his mind-web) seems to contrast with what he had said during the interview, “*A book cannot answer your question, [...] a person can answer all, all your questions*”.<sup>20</sup>

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The scenario in KQ’s and BM’s classes raises the question regarding how the young generation may begin to think about the Past, Present and Possible and interact with ‘the other’, both within their own communities and other communities in present South Africa, in a context where the teacher presents a ‘boxed’ and unquestioned history. This is not, however, ‘a proven finding’; the teacher might construct an unquestioned, ‘fixed’ history particularly in response to the researcher’s presence, not *wanting* and/or not *knowing how* to bring in primary narratives, which are potentially painful and uncomfortable. This might have been the case in KQ’s classroom interactions described above. That bringing in primary narratives is potentially painful and uncomfortable is clear from the interactions between CW, a primary witness, and the Grade Nine learners she took on a tour through the area where she lived before the Apartheid Forced Removals.

**CW: “*Nobody says how people died of heartache!*”**

Much like the above teachers, the primary witness CW’s approach to history was factual during the tours through the area from which she had been forcibly removed during Apartheid. She repeatedly checked if the learners had written down the ‘facts’ she had shared with them. Throughout her interaction, she told the learners to look up in books (“*when you*

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<sup>18</sup> Field, Personal communication, 12 February 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Bickford-Smith *et al.* explain the difference between primary and secondary sources (and between written, visual, oral, and object sources) by focussing on questions relating the learners’ personal history, by using examples of kinds of sources on the flu epidemic of 1918 and questions and activities relating these sources. The textbook – in contrast to KQ’s practice – does not ‘spoon-feed’ a theoretical definition but present it as *deduced* from the questions, examples and activities. Bickford-Smith, *et al.*, *In search of history*, 22-28 (Unit 6 “Kinds of sources”).

<sup>20</sup> Even though Taylor and Vinjevoold speak about other subjects, namely science, mathematics and geography, they also mention discrepancies between what teachers say they do and what they are observed doing in their classrooms. Taylor and Vinjevoold, “Teaching and learning”, 142-153.

are at U.C.T.”<sup>21</sup>) and to ask other people about this area and the Forced Removals. This instruction seemed to function as a truth-claim rather than a discipline-specific instruction to further the learners’ knowledge and skills. In the same vein, she told the learners that they could now tell other people that they have seen and walked through the area. The learners asked mostly ‘factual’ questions, and often checked if their notes were ‘correct’. Even though one of the accompanying teachers role-modelled asking questions relating to the experience of living in that era (“*how was it like to live during that era?*”), and some of the learners expressed empathy and surprise when CW spoke about her emotions, it is not clear if learners wrote down the latter. Some learners, however, did identify and showed empathy:

*A male learner to another boy: “I wanna come back” (to this area?).  
The other boy says, “You can’t”  
When CW tells about her husband being buried at the church, these boys say  
“Oh shame.” (They seem to be genuine). [Third group] [Researcher’s  
observation notes]*

I did not observe a reaction from CW on these learners’ positioning. When one learner, in the first group, asked a rather critical question, “*Did you fight?*”, CW did not respond to this either. During the tour, learners themselves often remarked on the fact that they do not know the area or when they knew people who did live there, they could not give details. One boy said the grandfather of a girl in Grade 11 used to live in the area. CW told me some days later that some learners walked up to her (often after the actual tour or a day later) and told her about their family having lived in the same area.

Even though CW applied what seemed to be a repetition led mode of pedagogical practice, the analysis of her use of primary narratives differs substantially from the teachers described above; this might be because she is a primary witness and not a teacher. Moreover, the interaction took place outside a conventional pedagogical setting. CW constructed her narrative mainly while standing at two buildings crucial to her story: her birth house and the church she attended. Standing at these buildings, her positioning of self *in history* was strong, most notably revealed by markers such as “*So now you have my history now*” and “*Here is history again*”. In her primary narrative, CW used iterative and generalised positionings using the constructions ‘people would’ and ‘you would’. However, at certain points she seemed to bring in her own person and feelings more explicitly by talking about “*hurt*”, and “[*being like*] *an uprooted tree*”. CW clearly struggled to express her emotions. During the second tour, she commented “*The saddest thing is: I show you around, and it brings out memories ... sad, hurt, I can’t even tell*” At the end of that tour, CW asked the learners what they had learnt from her.

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<sup>21</sup> Note the underlying assumption that U.C.T. holds ‘the truth’.

*T: "I hoped you learnt something."  
 "Thanks Mrs. CW" the learners say.  
 CW asks, "What did you learn? I want to know ... what can you tell me about what I told you?"  
 A female learner says that she learnt it was different compared to her own life, how they grew up.  
 A male learner says it changed a lot.  
 CW: "Nobody says how people died of heartache!" She says she is disappointed that though everybody cooperated, a few were "stupid" ([some boys had] pressed the bell [of a house in the area]). [Second group]  
 [Researcher's observation notes]*

The learners respond here from their position as secondary witnesses, having learnt that life in that time was different from life today. CW expresses disappointment and seems to expect the learners to talk about the pain, which, as she had said previously, she struggled to express herself.

Throughout the three tours, CW constantly compared past and present, and constructed an idealised, mythical past: there existed no gangs like they do today - gangsters were "gentlemen"<sup>22</sup> - and there were no internal tensions within the community. There are, however, a lot of 'others' in CW's constructed past and present. 'Others' situated in the past were the rats in the run-down houses and the drunkards on the street, but also the government who took the people away. Present 'others' were the researcher, 'black' learners and the "stupid" learners who rang bells and looked into people's houses. CW apologised to the researcher when she talked negatively about 'the whites' in the area and while the 'black' learners were mostly 'invisible' in the interaction, she implicitly apologised to them when she talked about "kaffir keppies".<sup>23</sup> She did not address the many 'white' and 'black' people we met on the street but to the group she often commented that the 'white' people did not pay good prices for the houses in the past and that now the houses are businesses and are worth much more. In contrast, she said, when she wants to come to church, she cannot, because she does not have transport, she does not have a car. When 'white' people living in the area addressed her, CW did not, could not, express this injustice. Instead, she positioned the learners as unknowing secondary witnesses.

*At the corner of a road, an old 'white' woman entering her house asks, "What's going on?" CW explains to her that she tells the children there used to be a shop on the site of her house. [...] CW also says (as if to*

<sup>22</sup> See for similar constructions of masculine myths - but then among men - and the role of nostalgia in evading anxiety, Field, "Disappointed men".

<sup>23</sup> CW used this term to refer to headwear of a church in the area that mostly 'blacks' attended. 'Kaffir' is a derogatory, racist, term referring to 'blacks'. She might have directed this careful positioning of her language not only towards the 'black' learners, but also towards the 'coloured' learners and the 'white' researcher - a 'present' generation that knows this discourse is not 'politically correct' in post-Apartheid South Africa.

*downplay the 'political' character of the walk) "Learners don't know [this area]." [Researcher's observation notes]*

CW's regulative discourse was closely linked with her positioning of self and others in history in a space, which, for her, is filled with painful memories. This is especially clear in the interaction that took place when the groups arrived back at the school. Her regulative discourse was so dominant at this point of the interaction, that, to me, it sounded like giving a sermon.

*CW addresses the whole class, saying she is disappointed in them. She says she hoped this talk (walk) would have drawn them together (Community/identity building!).*

*She refers to me again, saying "a visitor from varsity". (This is the first time she explains to the learners who I am. Early on during the walk I heard a boy asking the teacher what my name was, but he didn't get a response).*

*CW: [...] "Grow up!" "Stop acting like little babies!" (She is starting a sermon here!)*

*"Don't say things to hurt the next person". "Don't hurt the person's feelings! We're all human beings!" "I hope you're gonna pull yourselves together ... don't be hard on teachers ... it's plain rudeness ... stand up to those who're rude .... Stand up to them! ... Why? Why? I want to know why? Do you come from homes where things like this are tolerated? ... you come to school to LEARN ... why to suffer because of a few? ...."*

*She refers to the other groups who still have to do the walk: "Do you think I want to do it?" She says she doesn't do this as part of her job, it's not part of her job description, she doesn't get money for this. She does it because of her love for children. "You have to pull yourselves together ..."* She refers to township schools (she refers to 'coloured' areas only)

*"Maybe there they allow [you to do this]" (insulting!)*

*"Here we want doctors, lawyers from you guys!" "I wanna be proud of you people!" She says what she says goes one ear in and one ear out. (The learners look blank).*

*"Let your teacher also be proud of you." (so they don't talk about 'grade 9X' this and that). "She's not your mother, she's here to teach you." [First group] [Researcher's observation notes]*

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*She addresses the whole group, saying she's disappointed, she thought they were better than [name of another Grade 9 class].*

*"You didn't even bother [your teacher]", "Why not appreciate what we adults do for you?"*

*(She seems to make it a generation issue)*

*T comments it was not all of them, only a few.*

*CW says she thinks they have to go to [name 'coloured' township] high school.*

*"They corner you in the toilets and slit your throat!"*

*She asks them what they have learnt.*

*A girl thanks her in name of the class, saying, "even though some of us didn't behave". She says they learnt about the area.*

*CW echoes: "of the area, the area." [Third group] [Researcher's observation notes]*

In these ‘sermons’, CW’s positioning of self and others in history seemed to run strongly along generational lines. At the end of the first observed tour, she insulted and shamed the learners by positioning them as “*little babies*”<sup>24</sup> and by referring derogatively to the areas a majority of the learners come from as well as to ‘coloured’ townships schools. She repeated the latter insult at the end of the third tour. This positioning is complex. On the surface, it seems she is only talking about the present generation’s ‘discipline’. She positions the ‘ill discipline’ (or chaos?) within the learners but more importantly in ‘their’ areas. CW distances herself from the Cape Flats where she lives, and constructs it as solely ‘theirs’. Instead of allocating responsibility or agency within the Apartheid government who had created these areas - and had dumped ‘non-white’ people in them - she talks in a demeaning way about the learners, ‘their’ townships and the township schools.

Because of this shift in agency, I have the impression that CW has displaced her anger and the hurt caused by the Apartheid Forced Removals. In other words, CW seemed to split off her own, intolerable, feelings of anger and bitterness onto the ‘misbehaving’ children. It is easier (and more acceptable?) to be angry with the children, than to show anger and hurt towards for example the old ‘white’ woman we met on our way, or the even more distant Apartheid government. This interpretation, however, might be the researcher’s *expectation* of what ‘a primary witness would or should feel’.<sup>25</sup> Despite the fact that one can interpret it as an empowerment, to me, the act of going through the area, and re-inscribing it with history and with people who lived there in the past, seemed to be painful to CW.

## **Conclusion**

While it is important to study the relation between the teachers’ approaches to history and their modes of pedagogical practice, it does not tell us how and why teachers use primary narratives. Unnuanced identification in the form of conflation of time, contexts and generations is the main characteristic that these four persons share in their pedagogical interactions. While in BM’s and KQ’s classes, primary narratives were absent, they were present in JJ’s (though not central) and in CW’s interactions. CW conveyed primary narratives as ‘the best story’, which the learners had to accept and uncritically reproduce. The

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<sup>24</sup> For a membership categorisation analysis (M.C.A.) of this positioning, see Antaki and Widdicombe “Identity as an achievement and as a tool”.

<sup>25</sup> Miemie Taljaard, an Afrikaans-speaking English teacher and one of the proofreaders of this study said the following about CW’s ‘sermons’: “I would consider [it] normal [for] a certain generation and group. I have always associated it with the extended family and it might be a way of including the learners, a way of showing concern. The learners from another social standing and generation would not understand or accept it as such, but it could have been meant to be an “inclusive” sermon.” Taljaard, Personal communication, 24 April 2007.

three teachers similarly adhered to this particular ‘passive’ positioning of the learners, without necessarily involving primary narratives.

However, the mere presence or absence of primary narratives is not enough to open a discussion about change, or even history.<sup>26</sup> In the teachers’ multi-dimensional conflation, the Past seems absent because it is not treated as ‘foreign’. The language of time, change and historical description is an interpretive and epistemological difficulty: when the teacher conflates experiences across time and space, knowing and understanding another person’s experiences, listening to his/her primary narrative, engaging with the ‘otherness’ of history, is difficult.

This absence or non-foreignness might also apply to the Present and the Possible. Indeed JJ’s and CW’s practice seems to suggest there is no Possible, in the sense that they are not hopeful that the country and its people can *change*. Instead, they idealise and stereotype *the* past with the underlying assumption there is only *one* past and that Past (and thus the Present and the Possible?) is *closed*. Their underlying (unnamed) feelings of anger, resentment and bitterness, however, fragment this constructed closure.

In addition, KQ’s and BM’s practice suggest that a factual approach to history within an empty or repetition led mode of practice is problematic because of the epistemological roles allocated to the teacher and his/her learners. As explained in Chapter Two, narratives, *together with* the teacher’s approach to history and his/her pedagogical practice, then, play a role in the construction of “a cognitively and ethically responsible public sphere”.<sup>27</sup> The underlying epistemological roles allocated to teacher and learners in the observed interactions did not facilitate an analytic or constructive dialogue, which academics associate with the potential to change learners’ perceptions (see Chapter Two). Instead, the roles in JJ’s, BM’s, KQ’s and CW’s interactions are static and unquestioned. They position the teacher (and the teacher’s tools such as textbook and blackboard) as the centre and source of knowledge, and the learners as passive recipients of this knowledge. The observations indicate at the same time, however, that teachers do not have the confidence, or do *not* perceive themselves as the centre or source of knowledge. I say this because I observed teachers’ general unease with the researcher’s presence and their repetitive and deferential reference to and reliance on written sources such as the Cape Town Holocaust Centre manual in the case of BM, and the

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<sup>26</sup> Jacklin explains that the difference between the modes of pedagogical practice is not text *selection*, but text *mediation*. Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 137. Teachers following a repetition led mode of pedagogical practice then can select a historical text, but do not necessarily mediate it according to generative principles associated with the discipline of history.

<sup>27</sup> LaCapra, *Writing history*, 91.

history textbook and mind-web in the case of KQ. The absence of the teachers' primary narratives, might indicate that, as Winter and Sivan state, the voices of these teachers are "weaker than others [...] this is not only because they lack resources – or [to use] the metaphor of the choir – they are too far from the microphone. They may also be weak because of self-censorship due to lack of moral status in the eyes of others, or due to a low self-image".<sup>28</sup> This may also imply, as Modiba argues, that these teachers are not aware of (or believe in) the implications of their own role in forming, conserving or changing values in education.<sup>29</sup>

Given especially JJ's and CW's underlying, often *unnamed*, feelings, the interactions are potentially destructive when learners are not assisted in analysing the complexities within these interactions, enveloping both (pedagogical) subject-positions and positions of self and others in history. The observations in JJ's class, for example, indicate that when a teacher appears to be emotionally unstable, he/she is not able *to teach*, namely to reflect on social experiences and bring in primary narratives in a constructive way, let alone assist learners with reflecting on "the Past, Present and Possible".<sup>30</sup> Visiting and subsequently leaving JJ's school, I realised how education can potentially be a time bomb, especially when teachers are, in JJ's words, "*pessimistic about the future*".

In the next chapter, I address the remaining three teachers. These three teachers differ substantially from the teachers discussed above, not only in their modes of pedagogical practice and approaches to history, but also in their use of primary narratives. Readers might want to return to Chapter Three to locate these teachers in the way I characterised them and to refresh the methodological challenges sketched there.

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<sup>28</sup> Winter and Sivan, "Setting the framework", 30.

<sup>29</sup> Modiba, "South African black teachers' perceptions about their practice".

<sup>30</sup> Bruner, *The culture of education*.

## Chapter Eight

### Using primary narratives as historical knowledge

*He [Hitler] didn't have to bring and put Jewish [people] in the ghettos, he could have build (sic) a township for them.<sup>1</sup>*

*We lost all our dignity and we dug ourselves into a trap as we are now generalised as being racist.<sup>2</sup>*

In this chapter, I analyse the use of primary narratives by three teachers I could observe over a more extensive period in 2005. Access was relatively more negotiable with BD, GB and MD. I therefore have much more information about their respective practices, especially GB as I could spend a substantial amount of time in her classroom. In addition, I obtained permission to audiotape parts of MD's and GB's classroom interactions. This constitutes the major difference from the teachers described in Chapter Seven. Another difference is the pedagogical practice and approach to history that underlay their use of primary narratives. This was unique to each individual teacher, but also noticeably embedded within the culture of the firmly managed and academically orientated institutions. The three women taught at co-ed and, in post-Apartheid terms, 'advantaged' schools. MD, taught at a former Model C school, and BD and GB taught at the same Jewish independent school. A third difference is that all three women had followed the Facing History Facing Ourselves (F.H.F.O.) course at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. Lastly, I had the opportunity to interview four learners in each school about the interactions I observed in their history classrooms.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A Grade Nine girl's written response to teacher MD's reading from the Cape Town Holocaust Centre manual about the conditions in the Nazi ghettos at a former Model C school (Cape Town, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> A Grade Nine boy's written response to teacher GB's question "What are the consequences of Apartheid for us as South Africans?" at a Jewish independent school (Cape Town, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> I interviewed these learners in order to get an idea of how they perceived history and the use of primary narratives in the history classroom. I also asked them if they remembered any primary narratives the teacher had brought into the interaction. I selected these four learners in consultation with the respective teacher according to their active involvement in the classroom interactions and/or their family background. In GB's classroom, I selected Margot\* and Richard\* because they were the most outspoken learners during the observed classroom interactions. I also selected Cindy\* because she was one of the most outspoken learners during the visit to the Holocaust Centre (referring to her own and her family's visits to Holocaust museums elsewhere) and I selected Anna\* because she positioned herself in the classroom as a "third generation Holocaust survivor". In MD's class, I selected Oli\* and Vanessa\* because they were not only outspoken but also represented the diverse backgrounds learners at the school came from (Oli\* was born in a conflict-ridden European country, Vanessa\* came from another African country). In addition, I selected Leo\* and Lebo\* (both South Africans) because they were particularly outspoken during the discussion on the Holocaust documentary.

**MD: “We are history makers”**

As discussed in Chapter Three, MD’s mode of pedagogical practice was convention led. While the subject was clearly history, getting specific procedural activities done, such as reading a source or writing an essay, was central to the interactions. MD’s approach to history was factual, commenting to the learners “*You’re only gonna know if there’re factual errors, if you know the facts*” and “*You need to know the facts*”. During the lessons on Nazi propaganda and the Holocaust, however, she focused on *generalised ideas* of propaganda and genocide rather than on the history of these ideas or the historical context of Nazism. Similar to the interaction in BM’s class, MD and her learners continuously made links between the Holocaust and Apartheid and between the past and their own present with little distinction between the different historical contexts. There was little input of subject-specific content and approaches. In one of the periods, the teacher read out a piece from the Holocaust Centre manual on the conditions in the ghettos, concentration camps and extermination camps.<sup>4</sup> She asked the learners to write down their personal responses. I was not present during that period, but later MD gave me some learners’ responses (see also chapter quote above). As far as I understand, no discussion followed these written reflections.<sup>5</sup>

*I thought camp was fun!!! But not this one it was painfull. I wish I was there and did something about it. [...] I’m sure there no people called Jews in the world. (girl)*

- *Did he ever think of the families*
- *Why did he want blacks out of the country*
- *What did the other people who are not Jewish do to him*
- *Did he ever think that what if blacks were in charge and they did the same thing to him that he does to other people.*
- *(2 empty lines)*
- *How did the other families live in the ghetto*
- *When did all this end in that country (girl)*

*[...] I think that Hitler and Himler made people not wanted, (the Jews). The Jews were force to wear an eyecatching star on a cloth to wear on there clothes to say that they are not Germans and not wanted. It was also embarising for some Jews. Hitler and Himler did not care less about the Jews feelings and doesn’t care if they are rotted or starved which is a sad thing to think of. The end. (girl)*

*(crossed out: if Germans hadn’t) If Hitler hadn’t done what he did to Jewish people in South Africa their wouldn’t been Apartheid but I just want to say I forgive the white for doing what they did to black people.*  
*(empty line)*

*This person (Hiemler) is telling the story as if he’s forgiven them or it was a simple thing to stay inside. (boy)*

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<sup>4</sup> Silbert, *The Holocaust*.

<sup>5</sup> Note that I did not alter the original spelling or grammar.

*Personal response: I conclude that the South African Apartheid implenters were just shrude copy cats, copying the ways of the German leaders. (boy)*

*Jews were forced out of the German settlement by the Germans because they thought that because they are a different race they will make the Germans the same race. Jews were forced out by when soldiers used to come to their houses carrying guns and were told to go out of the house, if you don't they would just kill you with their guns. Jews were then taken to Soweto in a gettho. Jews were treated very badly as if they weren't human. (boy)*

*1. It seems as though that the Jewish were treated the same way that black people were treated. The reason why I saw this is because that they were sent to the GHETTO and were not allowed to live in curtain places. The Germans are not very nice people, because of the way they treat people who are not Germans. My mom was telling me the other day that Jewish people are more or less like black people, because when they get married they have to wear long skirts and something on their heads.*

*2. I use to think that all white people were wrong and cruel in the past, now that I have found out how white Jewish people were treated, I really regret that I thought about each and ever white person. They were not all bad like the Germans. (girl)*

It is clear from the above reflections that learners interpreted what the teacher read out through the lens of what they already knew. This is a natural part of interpretation.<sup>6</sup> The teacher - similar to BM and KQ - did not seem to be aware of this, nor did she provide a disciplinary framework to assist learners in becoming aware of this linguistic and interpretative process.<sup>7</sup> Instructions for activities, such as writing an essay from the point of view of “a survivor from Nazi Germany”, were particularly revealing.

*T writes on the board:*

*(Planning)*

*Research project*

*1. you are a survivor from Nazi Germany*

*2. You can choose to be*

*1. any age*

*2. male or female*

*3. Jew or German*

*3. Write a short story of about 1 ½ pages in which you have to express some*

*1. THOUGHTS*

*2. FEELINGS*

*Regarding any circumstance between 1934 and 1939.*

*USE INFORMATION YOU REMEMBER FROM*

*1. Weimar Republic*

*2. Nuremberg laws*

*3. Propaganda*

*4. Youth in Nazi Germany*

*5. Holocaust.*

<sup>6</sup> Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 33.

<sup>7</sup> Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 41-2.

Note, for example, the choice “*Jew or German*” (Jews living in Germany at the time *were* Germans); and the historically incorrect location in time of the Weimar Republic and the Holocaust. Also note the absence of any reference to texts or sources; instead the learners had to use information they “*remember*”. Lastly, MD did not explain what “*Survivor from Nazi Germany*” means. Learners were confused and asked the teacher questions like “*Were Jews the evil ones?*” and “*Did they have a pass/passport?*” MD commented: “*Use the information that is somewhere in your mind*”. When a girl said that she would make up a story, MD said that the learner had to mention the historical context. The teacher, however, had not provided the latter. While the learners were working in silence, she commented to the researcher that she did not know what the purpose of this activity was.<sup>8</sup>

This kind of pedagogical interaction is understandable given that MD had not had a professional training in history or in high school teaching. In addition, MD’s preoccupation with routine tasks and portfolios is not unique in the present O.B.E. environment. Internationally and nationally, assessment literature and Education Departments are preoccupied with measurement and focus on rubrics, performance tasks and portfolios. In this way, (history) education is “emphasising the mechanical rather than the substantive challenges involved in eliciting, valuing, reorienting students’ understanding”.<sup>9</sup>

The observations also indicate that in MD’s class general ideas and moral lessons were more central than the discipline of history, which she solely defined in factual terms (see Chapter Six).<sup>10</sup> This was especially clear during the lesson where MD shared her own experiences of being a teacher in 1976 (see also Chapter Three). Similar to previous interactions, the teacher’s confirmation of the learners’ worth seemed to drive the sharing process and might explain why she idealised and conflated the present generation with the generation of 1976 saying “*I have an incredible amount of respect for young people cause I know your potential [...] I’ve seen you people*”. This conflation of certain generations resonates with the ‘cohesive’ function of history as understood within a factual approach to history.

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<sup>8</sup> See also Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 168-169.

<sup>9</sup> Boix-Mansilla, “Historical understanding”, 414. See also Nystrand, “Dialogic instruction”; Husbands, *What is history teaching?* 93-94; Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 104-106. Ellsworth strongly criticizes this ‘illusion’ that “we can predict, control, measure, and track the experience of the learning self”. Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, p. 166. See also Chapter One and Two in this study.

<sup>10</sup> There was only one statement in all the observed periods that referred to the subject as a discipline, and to the class and teacher as ‘being historians’: “*As historians we know pictures are not reliable*”. The teacher did not explain what this statement, which seems to adhere to a disciplinary approach to history, implies. See also Jacklin who explains that within a convention led mode of pedagogical practice “[e]valuation or imparting criteria for appropriate or inappropriate learner productions [...] [are] either completely absent or [...] dispersed, weakly articulated and incoherent”. Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 148.

The lessons in which MD used primary narratives visibly appeared different to her other lessons, in that the learners were more directly involved with history as a discipline, in the sense that they *actively responded* to the narratives.<sup>11</sup> In most of the lessons, learners asked the teacher questions relating to the activities, not the subject *per se*. However, when the teacher shared a primary narrative of her own life, the story of Hector Petersen, or a video on youth who tried to escape an extermination camp, learners asked specific questions about the experiences of the teacher, the South African youth and the concentration camp prisoners. They even responded to *each other's* questions. The interaction, however, quickly returned to expected performance when learners asked, “*Is this part of the exam?*” MD herself seemed to perceive the sharing of primary narratives, especially her own, as separate from ‘history’ - explicitly signalling that the researcher’s presence prompted her to think about her own life - and quickly returned to procedural activities. During one of our informal conversations outside the classroom, MD said that although she knows primary narratives are important, they are “*at the end of my list*”.<sup>12</sup> During our first interview in 2004, she said that she does not think spontaneously about sharing her own experiences:

*[T]hat's never crossed my mind to tell them [about my experiences in District Six]. Unless, what I do is, I probably do refer to it. I refer to it. I'm sure I do. But I, I can't consciously say that I prepare a lesson around my experiences of District Six.*

I had the impression that during the classroom interactions where MD shared primary narratives, there were opportunities to open an analytic or constructive dialogue, an opportunity the teacher did not take; it is likely that she did not recognise it. During the last two (audiotaped) observations, MD showed learners a documentary about Mala Zimetbaum, a young Polish Jewess, and Adek Kalinski, a Polish political prisoner, who tried to escape from Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944. When she introduced the video to the first group, she said that it was “*background*” and that it would give them “[*an*] *understanding [of] what was going on*”. After having seen the video with this group (she was watching it for the first time too), she introduced it to the second group as “[*a*] *cute little love story*”. With this label, the teacher adhered, as she did before (see above), to the literary but also historical assumption that a story or event follows a particular trope with clear-cut ‘baddies’ and ‘goodies’.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>11</sup> See Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination*.

<sup>12</sup> Later on in the first semester, the learners had to interview someone who had experienced the Apartheid laws and write an essay about this interview. However, the teacher and learners approached the activity in a procedural way: the essays read in a fragmented, superficial and factual way. The teacher did not take up a discussion on how and why one should interview primary witnesses.

<sup>13</sup> See White, *Tropics of discourse essays*; Friedlander, *Probing the limits of representation*, 1-21 and 37-53; Levi, *The drowned and the saved*; Wertsch, “Specific narratives and schematic narrative templates”, 57-60. See also Eppert’s analysis of the limitations of liberal humanism in Eppert, “Entertaining history”. That this story had made an impact on some learners, was clear from the interview with Leo\* who spontaneously re-told the story of how “*the one lady*” (Mala Zimetbaum)

episode also indicates that the teacher did not have an in-depth, historical knowledge of the extermination camps. Interestingly, Levi mentions exactly this couple as an example of how *exceptional* escape was. He also mentions how young learners reacted to his testimony, claiming - similarly to MD's learners (see below) - that *they* knew how he/they could or should have escaped. According to Levi, this kind of interaction does not only indicate the gap between what happened *then* and how popular media represents it *since* then.<sup>14</sup> It also indicates the universal human "difficulty or inability to perceive the experience of others [...]" we are prone to assimilate them to "related" ones, as if the hunger in Auschwitz were the same as that of someone who has skipped a meal, or as if escape from Treblinka were similar to an escape from any ordinary jail".<sup>15</sup>

"It is the task of the historian", Levi claims, "to bridge this gap, which widens as we get farther away from the events under examination".<sup>16</sup> MD, however, was not a trained historian, and could therefore not assist the learners in becoming aware of the above described human tendencies and the linguistic and interpretative challenges.<sup>17</sup> Instead, once the documentary finished, MD promised to show the learners the music clip that was on the same tape, provided they would first contribute to the discussion. When time ran out and the first group of learners reminded her of her promise, she quickly engaged them in guessing the phrase she wanted them to remember for the rest of their lives.

*T: [Does] anyone else [want to contribute]??*

*Learners say no, they want to see the video. Learners talking.*

*T: "One last thing. One (pause) VERY last thing. I'm gonna ask you to (long pause) to give me the, I'm looking for THREE words. (Learner: three?) [inaudible] but I want that word to be SOAKED into your minds, so that for the rest of your lives, you never forget."*

*Boy: "War is not good."*

*T: "No. Three words."*

*Learners talk at same time, [inaudible]. "Kill the Jews"; "Die"*

*T: "No it's got nothing to do with Jews. It got to do with the first word."*

*Girl: "Murder"*

*T: "Murder. Good clue, good clue."*

*Learners say, "killings."*

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killed herself. Lebo\* also spontaneously re-told the story about "that lady and that guy" and elaborated on what they *could have done differently* (see also below).

<sup>14</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 155-158. See also Clendinnen's discussion on resistance, Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*, 56-61.

<sup>15</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 158. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 7-8 and 82-85; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 134. It is because of the opening up of an awareness of linguistic and interpretative challenges ("how are we to hear and to remember [these] stories?") that Simon argues that these kinds of "symptomatic obscene questions in the face of testimony hold enormous pedagogical potential". Simon, "The pedagogical insistence of public memory", 195.

<sup>16</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*, 158.

<sup>17</sup> Note however that I nuanced this kind of causal relationship between a person's training and practice in Chapters One and Two by indicating that a university diploma does not guarantee that a teacher follows a particular mode of practice and a particular approach to history.

T: "What is murder?"  
Learners talk at same time.  
T: "What is another word?"  
Boy: "Homicide". Other learners [inaudible]  
T: "Ok. Crime. You got one word. Crime."  
Girl: "Peace"  
Boy: "Nazi"; "a clue?"  
T: "No it is a preposition."  
Boy: "doesn't"  
T: "It's a preposition."  
Girl: "What's a preposition?"  
T: "It's a preposition."  
More learners say now "What's a preposition?"  
T: (teasingly) "It's a preposition!"  
Learners ask again, "What's a preposition?"; "Give us a clue!"  
T: "Prepositions are those little words, they show a preposition 'in front of', 'under' 'up'."  
Girl: "CRIMES!"  
Other learners speak at same time [inaudible]  
Boy: "below"  
T: "Crime is the first word. Second word?"  
Boy: "under."  
Other learners say "up", [inaudible], "around", "in" (they start screaming)  
T: "Ok, it starts with an 'a'. It's a good guess."  
A learner: "Against"  
T: "You got two."  
Learners talk at same time, "Americans", "Nazis", "Crime against Humanity."  
T starts clapping and other learners follow, "huhuhuh."  
T: "Listen to me. Look at me and listen to me (Learners talk). The longer you talk, the less time you will have to watch this video. (Learners say 'shsh') I'm quite happy to stand [here] [inaudible] I think. I think if anything (long pause) from your Grade Nine history here (pause) one word that you need to take with you, into life, three words you need to take with you to life, that you need to become aware as you WALK YOUR WALK through life, is the word?"  
Learners say in choir (with teacher leading) "Crimes against Humanity."  
T: "Again, [say] what the words are?"  
Learners: "Crimes against humanity."  
T: "The words are?"  
Learners: "Crime against Humanity."  
T: "The words are?"  
Learners: "Crimes against Humanity."  
T: "Until you say it properly without any jokes, [come on, then we put the video on]. Let's say it one more time."  
Learners: "Crimes against Humanity."  
Learners clap.  
[...]  
They now watch the music clip. (Hip-hop)  
(This is a very strange jump to me)  
Intercom. [End of the period]

With this promise, it seemed that for MD the activity of guessing and repeating the slogan "crime against humanity" was important, rather than trying to understand what had happened at the time of the Holocaust. With this move, she seemed to slide into a repetition led mode

of pedagogical practice. “*Crime against Humanity*” hung in the air. There was no clear connection with the video or with what they did in previous periods or with the teacher’s mantra “*We’re history-makers*”. The learners’ input in both groups, however, shows that learners did respond emotionally (and sometimes critically) to the primary narratives - including the comment “*kill the Jews*” to which the teacher did not explicitly react.

Some learners, however, seemed to ask “authentic questions”.<sup>18</sup> This indicates that a teacher monologue - or in this case a documentary - is not necessarily a problem.<sup>19</sup> However, as Nystrand and Gamoran would argue, when the teacher, as *facilitator* of this documentary, does not relate authentic questions to discipline specific content and skills, learning does not or might not take place:<sup>20</sup>

Boy: “*I think Hitler, man, I think Hitler, even though he is [bad] miss, [he threw] the Jewish people in the camp, and [didn’t kill] he is still a mad man.*”

T reformulates: “*So he’s still a [inaudible] in your mind. Ok, are you still persuaded in your mind that he didn’t carefully think this through, and that he [wasn’t prepared]. Why do you say that? Why do you say that?*”

Boy: “*I think there is no reason of killing the Jews.*”

T: “*Ja there is no reason to kill people.*”

(She reformulates ‘Jews’ to ‘people!’)

Boy: “*The Jews were innocent. They didn’t do something wrong.*”

(long pause)

Another boy, Leo\*: “*Ma’m, I don’t think he was mad.*”

T: “*Ok go on, let’s just, shhh (to other learners)*”

Leo\*: “*Because a person who is mad doesn’t have CONTROL of what [inaudible] as the Nazis, those people, why did they elect a mad person to run the country? And also ma’m, that/*”

T: [inaudible] (asking the others to listen)

Leo\*: “*You can’t say he was wrong, you can’t say he was mad. He was wrong. His doings, his intentions, everything that he had done, it wasn’t psychologically mad.*”

Learners talk.

T: “*Guys let’s just respond to the group.*” [Another question follows] [...]

[First group]

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Lebo\* asks, “*Why didn’t they fight?*” [...]

Learners talk at same time.

T: “*One at the time. One at the time.*”

Lebo\* makes link to South Africa: “*South Africans did, miss, we, we FOUGHT for our freedom, miss, we never stood there, and waited for them to do something to us, miss. We actually DID something against them [inaudible].*”

T: “*Ja. That is, that is such an interesting question. Right? That is such an interesting question. Anyone with, with a response?*”

Boy: “*Miss?*”

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<sup>18</sup> Nystrand *et al.*, *Opening dialogue*.

<sup>19</sup> See also Taylor and Vinjevoed, “Teaching and learning”, 143-4.

<sup>20</sup> Nystrand and Gamoran, “The big picture”, 58.

T: "Yes?"

Boy: "Were the British and the Americans WITH the Germans, miss, it was, they were the Allies and they did NOTHING!"

T: "Um, Can I answer that question, can you hold onto yours? Can I just explain that? This is, this is such an interesting question, I, I am just amazed at how much you actually picked up over the past few years. [...] [T explains in length the position of the British and the Americans; they knew what was happening]

Boy: "Miss, there was, there was MORE prisoners than guards there, miss (T: mm) so why didn't they attack all those guards [unarmed]?"

T: (takes a deep breath) "That's a good question! They were armed, and a number of the prisoners were!"

(Learners are talking at the same time, inaudible)

T: "One at the time, one at the time."

The boy: "There is only a number of bullets in a gun miss.' ... They're not going to shoot everybody there with one gun." [inaudible; other learners talk at same time]

T: "I think you, I think one needs to understand that (pause) ja, I'm just offering some sort of explanation, all right, and maybe you can assist with this [addressing the researcher?]. (pause) I think one also needs to understand that when the prisoners were taken to the death camps, it was the END of a LONG process of being dehumanised, (pause) of fear, of intimidation, of separation, of hunger, of degradation, of suffering, and of pain. And (pause) it's, it's probably like being in an abusive relationship. You know, eventually you're in the abusive relationship and you think well this is probably better than nothing."

Girl: "um."

T: "And, the, I think there was so much POWER and CONTROL by, by the Nazis in Germany at the time that (pause) um, (long pause) that you know this example of this couple that wanted to, to escape. I am sure that this is one story of many others who DID try and escape, and, and maybe there are stories of those who DID try to resist, and maybe those stories haven't come out yet or we haven't come across them yet, so you know I think maybe there are those kind of stories somewhere as well of people who DID resist and you know what happened to them, and maybe they were put off by what they saw, what had happened to them." [...] [Second group]

Both teacher and learners seem to steer the discussion to 'who did it?'; 'who is responsible?' - and learners commented, "Why didn't they fight?" and said, "We FOUGHT for our freedom".<sup>21</sup> With this conflation of generations, time and space, the past is not treated as 'strange' and the aim of the interaction seems to be closure. Similar to KQ's learners who reportedly responded to his narratives about the Apartheid era, calling the previous generation "stupid" and "not strong enough" and providing "some tips" (see Chapter Three), MD's learners seem to construct a "shadow text"<sup>22</sup> here. With this text, "we FOUGHT for our freedom", MD's learners avoid painful questions around their parents' involvement in

<sup>21</sup> One of the interviewed learners, Oli\*, compared Apartheid with the Holocaust, stating that the difference was that in South Africa "it could have gone further, but because of the resistance here it stopped from going further into that (pause) stuff".

<sup>22</sup> Simon and Eppert, "Remembering obligation", 183-186; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 97.

Apartheid and search for heroic meanings – according to Hartman, a form of over-identification.<sup>23</sup> Even though the teacher initially asked for the learners’ “*gut responses*”, she did most of the talking. There was little direction to the discussion. MD merely seemed to collect responses; she did not take them up, unless she did not understand what the learner said and except for her explanation of the involvement of the British and Americans and the presentist explanation of prisoners’ behaviour. An othering of Hitler as ‘mad’ and ‘evil’ and the heroic presentation of the agency of specific individuals during the Holocaust (“*I am sure that this is one story of many others*”) but also that of the ‘we’-group (“*We, South Africans*”) seems to be strengthening rather than questioning a mythical past. This is also a finding in international research on history (and English) education.<sup>24</sup>

The interviews with four learners at the end of the observation period, confirmed, however, that learners, while adhering to a factual - “enhancing collective memory” - approach to history, *actively responded* to the primary narratives. The learners said that the stories made history more interesting. Oli\*, originally from a conflict-ridden East European country, said that it was especially interesting when you “*have something in common*” with the people in the stories. When I asked him which stories he remembered, he mentioned the teacher’s personal story of experiencing the student uprisings in 1976. Lebo\*, a learner born in Cape Town, stated that personal stories are “*first hand information, a first hand resource*”; they help you to find out what ‘really’ happened. Vanessa\*, originally from another African country, referred continuously to religion, saying that it is “*sad*” and “*a shame*” that there was and still is prejudice and violence in South Africa. “*I used to see in TV when I was in my country, I used to see the big dogs biting the black people and I say ‘WHY does this happen?’ [...] God made you [referring to the researcher] white because (long pause) God, He KNOWS what he does, so we like (pause) I don’t know what is the difference you know!*” When I asked her which stories she remembered from the history classes, she referred to the story of Mandela, who stood out for “*the POWER he had to forgive*”. While Leo\*, originally from a South African province in the North, spontaneously re-told how Mala Zimetbaum killed herself,<sup>25</sup> he stated that sharing personal stories in the classroom is “*ok*” and “*allowed*” as long as you don’t tell “*your WHOLE life story, even the parts that are not supposed to be told.*” It is “*ok*”, he explained, when you tell “*things that will educate your fellow classmates [...] and [when] we got the proof this HAS happened and might not happen again*”.

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<sup>23</sup> Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 142.

<sup>24</sup> See Nystrand *et al.*, *Opening dialogue*; Wertsch, *Mind as action*; and contributions in Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*.

<sup>25</sup> See above, footnote 13.

History in MD's classes, then, focussed on convention led activities, and was mostly unrelated to historical texts and disciplinary approaches. In contrast to Seixas' definition of a factual approach to history, MD placed heroic constructions of the *present* generation as central to her teaching method. However, she did not have and did not share discipline-related tools with the learners to *become "history makers"*. Even though three out of the four learners I interviewed said they would not continue with history in Grade Ten, they adhered in their interaction with the researcher to the *generalised ideas* MD shared in her classroom. Lebo\*, for example, described history as follows, confirming the 'never again' imperative:

*History [...] it's what makes us miss. If we didn't have a past, because the history is the past, right? If we didn't have a past, we wouldn't be able to go back to our roots and like understand where we are today because you can't say you're a person and you don't know where you started from. You see, you have to know (pause) where your parents started from, where your grandparents started from, THEN you can make choices about YOUR future. And the other people's future around you ma'm. That's what I think about history. It's what makes us live. (SG laughs) If we wouldn't have history then we wouldn't say we are people, we would just be (pause) SOMETHING, I don't know what. [...] it makes the future much clearer miss. Then we'd understand what happened in the past, then you can prevent that from happening again. Because if we didn't know about (pause) like Hitler's [propaganda] that miss, we, maybe it could occur again, so now we, we acknowledge that now, we know what happened so we're gonna do something to change that, so it doesn't happen again.*

It is likely that *some* form of learning took place in MD's classes given that the learners remembered and reflected upon the classroom interactions during the interviews. It is, however, not a form of learning defended by academics that propagate an analytic, constructive dialogue in order to change for the better the nation, the learners, but also ourselves (see Chapter Two and conclusion below). As the remaining two sections of this chapter indicate, the Jewish learners, taught by BD and GB, similarly sought the seeming comfort that the 'never again' imperative gives, despite the attempts of especially GB to have a dialogue that, at least in parts, resembled an analytic, constructive dialogue.

**BD: “[The learners] didn’t understand [...] where I was coming from ...”**

As explained in Chapter Three, BD employed a discourse led pedagogical practice. Finding and completing the learners' portfolios seemed to be important, but discipline-related activities such as investigating and discussing primary sources or constructing knowledge together on what a 'victim' and a 'perpetrator' is, clearly dominated the lessons. The discipline-specific activities were diverse, for example reading sources, question-answer

sessions, class discussion, individual and pair-tasks. These activities followed a structured sequence.<sup>26</sup>

BD's regulation of body and space was weak (as it was in the school as a whole) - as long as teaching and learning happened.<sup>27</sup> Learners' input was slotted in, reformulated, followed-up and appreciated. BD did not always say why a certain answer was incorrect; she seemed to take on most answers, and correction often came from the body of learners. Learners easily asked questions and, at times, they expressed their disagreement with the teacher. The time pacing was strong unless the teacher saw they did not understand (repetition followed then) or when the learners asked questions which might assist in their understanding.<sup>28</sup>

BD made use of everyday knowledge and referred to past and future lessons and to other, related subjects, such as the novels on Apartheid they were reading in English. In concordance with a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice, BD explained not only the recognition rules but also those of *realising* history.<sup>29</sup> BD showed the learners the realisation rules of being a historian when she, similar to the life skills teacher and GB, referred to research she had done at home and to the F.H.F.O.-course she had followed. By doing this, she also taught the learners that (disciplinary) knowledge resides in different places (thus not exclusively in the school environment) and that it constantly grows and changes. In addition, BD presented historical knowledge and learning as 'spontaneous': During the last observed lesson, BD used the derogatory term "*kaffir*", which was still on the board (written there by the life skills teacher the period before). She linked it to the history lesson, by explaining why it is important to discuss it in the context of stereotyping and discrimination, but pointing out that using the word to offend a person is not acceptable.<sup>30</sup> BD's approach to history then was clearly a disciplinary one.

There was easy access to primary narratives about the Holocaust and Apartheid at the school. Before the observation period, the school had invited Holocaust survivors (Jewish learners' grandparents or other members of the Jewish community) to come and speak to the learners. Throughout the year, the school organised visits to various museums in Cape Town, including

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<sup>26</sup> See Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 143.

<sup>27</sup> While disciplining, she consistently told the learners that they ask good questions and make good contributions, but that misbehaviour has consequences for their learning experience. This is in line with a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice. See Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 142 and 165.

<sup>28</sup> See Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 140.

<sup>29</sup> See Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 139.

<sup>30</sup> See Butler, *Excitable speech* for a discussion on advantages and disadvantages of using and mentioning – without the aim to offend - derogatory terms in educational and legal settings. For an application of this debate in museum studies, see Witz, "Transforming museums".

the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and the District Six Museum. During English lessons, learners read novels and testimonies on the Nazi and the Apartheid regimes. In addition, the school had a well-resourced library, with specialised sections on the Holocaust and on Apartheid. That the school as a whole perceived primary narratives as part of pedagogic interactions, is clear from the learners' positionings of self and others in history. Learners easily brought in their own and other people's narratives during the English classes. During the history lessons, learners identified with the Jews that lived in Nazi Germany. Interestingly, some learners also apologized for Prince Henry who wore a Nazi uniform at a friend's costume party in January 2005:

*T refers to British prince in Nazi uniform. He had to apologize.  
Learners comment that he knew it; other learners say that he didn't know it,  
"He was born afterwards", says a boy. [Researcher's observation notes]*

It is possible that the learners offered this apology because they perceived the Prince foremost as a peer and this part of their identity, at this point of the interaction, outweighed their Jewish identity. The teacher seemed to use primary narratives as illustrations/comparisons and as moral lessons, and only sparingly as a deliberate positioning of self and others in history. When talking about Nazi-education, she told the learners that, during Apartheid, she had to sign a paper as a teacher, promising to teach according to the National Party's norms. She also told them that government accused her husband of being a communist teacher. As in MD's class, the teacher's positioning of self, assisted in engaging the learners. A ripple of follow-up questions followed: "why did they [the government] care so much?", "So wasn't he [a communist]?" While this was an invitation to the teacher to position her self deliberately, the teacher did not take it on. She rather 'othered' the hatred between 'white' and 'black' and positioned herself as 'a resister' at the time, taking her learners onto the balcony of her classroom so they could see the burning townships. When the learners again asked a more personal question, "Were you a hippie?", she generalised her experience - "all students were at the time" - and quickly brought the attention back to the lesson. With this move, she seemed to give the impression that this deliberate positioning of self is not really part of the learning and teaching process, rather an aside, or something one does not (or can not) spend too much time on.

During the last two observed lessons, the teacher asked the learners to de- and re-construct the Swastika symbol (an activity from the F.H.F.O. course). She described this as a sensitive task and engaged imaginative thinking.

*T: "Any response before I move on?"  
A girl asks why Hitler used it, namely in a bad way, while it was originally good.*

*T says he didn't perceive himself as bad. "Imagine I start a new movement", she says and she draws a circle inside another circle on the board.*

*Boy: "Boring"*

*T says she did it randomly, didn't think it through.*

*"What is missing?" she asks.*

*Boy: "Colours"*

*T: "What comes to mind if you look at it [swastika]?"*

*Boy: "Evil"*

*T: "That's a connotation."*

*Same boy: "It's something that happened afterwards". (He comments here on "connotation" - - - they are building knowledge together!). He says it's movement.*

*T: "Excellent!" And she tells that Hitler wanted a reactivation of Germany. She compares the swastika with a tilted wheel. She writes on the board the various learners' and her own input: simple, moving, energy, evil.*

*T asks why it is plain and simple. She asks individual learners*

*Girl says something (I did not pick it up) T reformulates her answer: it is easily reproduced.*

*T: "If you would be an advertising executive ... nobody can dispute Hitler's excellent campaign. ..."*

*Girl: "It is easily recognizable"*

*T refers to the Israeli flag. She says it gives a sense of identification. Now you can't put the swastika on the wall. Who would react? She asks.*

*A boy says, "Jews, and normal people, Muslims"*

*Other learners make mocking comments on "normal people" (something along the lines of "There are Jews and there are 'normal' people" implying as if Jews are not 'normal').*

*T: "Why?"*

*Same boy: "It's emotional. Hitler destroyed six million of us. So when there is a new little Hitler, they want to kill it." (Interesting language "us" "they" "it", "little")*

*T: "How do we call them?"*

*Learners say "Neo-Nazis" [Researcher's observation notes]*

During these lessons, there were several moments where the learners identified with Jews in the past (Nazi-Germany) and with Israel. The following interaction took place when the teacher and learners discussed the de- and re-construction of their individual swastikas (drawn and decorated by the learners):

*T asks individual girl [to talk about her design].*

*Others talk.*

*T: "Please listen, someone's sharing"*

*The same girl says that red reminds her of blood, what the Nazis did to the Jews.*

*Another girl says she still feels anger even though she used blue, which is a kind, calm colour.*

*T reformulates her answer: so it shows it didn't change your feelings.*

*Boy: "It is a turning point in history"*

*T comments on talking boys.*

*Boy: "So many were killed"*

*T: "Weren't people killed before?"*

*Other boy: "It's our brothers!" (He repeats this a bit later). One third of the Jews were killed, he says.*

*T reformulates: the Nazis intentionally whipped out a particular group of people. "Do you want to say that?"*

*Boy: "Yes"*

*T: "Good"*

*Girl in the back: she softened it, so it doesn't make her think of Nazis anymore. It's like a bomb, fusing out, she says (impressive imagery!)*

*Boy: every colour gives you an idea, e.g. black stands for hatred, red for fire,*

*...*

*T: "Ok, let's look at colour choices". She asks girl to read text [in F.H.F.O. course] on colours, which says that it were the same colours used during the time of the Kaiser in Germany, before WWI. [Researcher's observation notes]*

In this activity, the teacher worked with the learners' emotional responses and their perceptions of the symbol. It is a highly disciplinary interaction, engaging the higher cognitive skills. The focus in her pedagogical interaction with the learners was, as it was throughout all observations, on history as a discipline. The teacher did not seem to perceive her own and the learners' *deliberate* positioning of self as a central part of doing history. At the beginning of the exercise, however, she had made explicit positionings of people not directly involved in the exercise: She asked the learners to cover the symbol when carrying it around and told them that they needed to be aware of possibly negative reactions of people who were not part of this activity. The positionings of the teacher and the learners, in contrast, were *implied*, and BD seemed to keep them closely in check. For example, when, in the above interaction, learners talked from the level of their religious and cultural community ("our brothers"), BD reformulated their positioning to the level of "a particular group of people". This contrasts with a more easy marking of her positioning of self during the interview and informal conversations with the researcher, in which she reflected on the challenges of teaching about this totalitarian regime, which has an emotional significance in the school community. During the interview the year before, BD had talked about the interface between a disciplinary approach to history and her own and the learners' positioning of self and others:

*I found, um, teaching the topic [the Holocaust] initially extremely difficult. Because of the emotional content of the material, uh, and because, um, while empathy is one of the (pause) the AIMS in, in teaching the subject, it kind of was overwhelming here at the school because of the, um, the national sense of grief (pause) associated with the incident. And I've find that in the beginning I don't think I was success/successful. Because um, I didn't point out to the pupils that I personally was not Jewish, and so it was not part of my personal history.<sup>31</sup> And they didn't understand, um, much of the time (pause) where I was coming from, analysing historically an event which previously they'd only ever, um, talked about in an EMOTIONAL context. Either (pause) in, um, the Yom Hashoah cerem/ceremonies where they were*

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<sup>31</sup> That learners easily assumed that adults working at the school or visiting the school were Jewish is clear from the interviews with four learners: they told me that they had assumed I was Jewish and that I had family members attending the school.

*commemorating the event OR family stuff where (pause) people, um, had memory or had, had stories passed on to them. And, um, here was somebody (pause) um, even though I was approaching the subject SENSITIVELY, they, they didn't understand that now we're be going to study it as a HISTORY. And, um, I th/I think I now learned how to introduce it in the right kind of, um, way where they, where they understand, where they trust and, um, where they see the value also of removing oneself, um, and learning about it within a greater context.*

The teacher did not explore this awareness and (self)-reflection in the (observed) interactions with the learners. Depending on how well the learners knew the teacher (she might have positioned herself in relation to the subject more deliberately earlier on in the year), this approach might be interpreted as a radical alternative to the 'emotional' approach to the Holocaust in the learners' homes. If the teacher did not make this meta-characteristic explicit with this particular group of learners, however, it might, as the teacher's reflection indicates, be or become an impediment to the learning process.

**GB: "I did nothing"**

Similar to BD, GB followed a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice. The teacher made clear to the learners what the bigger picture was by making regular cross-disciplinary and cross-period references. She referred to older grades, the learners' future careers, and other sources of knowledge, such as the media, other disciplines (medicine, law, and business) and the learners' (Jewish) religion. GB explained the recognition and realisation rules of the discipline of history.<sup>32</sup> She explained at length how she evaluated their work and during one particular lesson, she explained the working of moderators. Her regulative discourse supported her instructive discourse more strongly than BD's. From the beginning, and likely because she was a new teacher, GB constantly clarified her expectations and talked about the learners' "responsibility".

Similar to BD, GB repeatedly positioned herself as a professional historian by referring to activities outside school such as doing research, going to extra-curricular courses and furthering her education. She explicitly talked about the discourse of history, not just its activities but also its way of thinking,<sup>33</sup> comparing it to law, journalism and medicine. Throughout her interactions with the learners, the teacher made statements such as "You're trained as a historian", explaining that history is about substantiating your arguments and using sources. She explained to them that becoming a historian is a process: "You'll get better in it"; "It takes time".

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<sup>32</sup> Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*. 139.

<sup>33</sup> Bain would say that GB "[made] thinking explicit". Bain, "Into the breach", 335.

Even though GB presented her self, but also primary witnesses, as an authority, she regularly pointed out her positioned approach to history and commented that learners have to be critical even of their own teacher (GB differs here in approach to BD). While discussing a primary source written by a woman who lived during Nazi Germany (before the war), the following interaction took place:

*“Can we trust her?” T asks.*  
*Girl says she’s biased.*  
*T “That’s not the question, that’s not the question!”*  
*Another girl and a boy repeat the author is biased. (There is excitement).*  
*Another boy says they can trust her because she was there at the time.*  
*T: “We can trust her, but it is not about truth, of course it is biased ... we can’t see what we can’t see”. She gives South Africa as example and her self, “As a white woman I’ll look from a different perspective ...” She also says they will look at things differently. She says the author does not mention positive things. “Are there positive things?”*  
*A boy says, yes, poverty levels were brought down.*  
*T: “You as a historian, you know that ... it’s the same when you watch the news. There is no objective reporting.” (She links study of the past with study of the present).*  
*Boy at the back comments: “That’s why my father watches ETV news, not SABC”.<sup>34</sup>*  
*T laughs warm-heartedly and says, “I hope you watch the news”.*  
*Some learners say they don’t, but that they listen to the radio. (Different channels to access knowledge).*  
*T: “But seriously, if you don’t think about what people say, you’re an ideal victim for Hitler”. She also says they need to look at other (different) sources. Then she asks “Why is it that you believe me by the way?” (!!!!)*  
*A girl says she knows more than they do and she is the teacher.*  
*T laughs! “Now listen, imagine I come in and I start saying things, - this is now Nazi Germany - ... same as Apartheid in South Africa ... saying that Jews were vermin ...Learners did not have opportunity or did not CHOOSE to question ... so Don’t believe [me] ... question me.”*  
*Learners protest with a lot of talking/commenting.*  
*T continues: “It’s about being critical ... now let’s go on.”*  
*[Researcher’s observation notes]*

GB also followed a positioned approach to history by pointing out that, from our present positions, we cannot fully understand what people went through in the past. In reflection on George Brady, a Holocaust survivor and Hana’s brother who testified in the “Hana’s suitcase” video shown at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, she said the following to the learners during one of the audiotaped lessons (see also Chapter Five):

*And hopefully, you will never, we will never experience such kind of event, so that we can identify with it. I hope that it’s never none of our experiences. But he does. We do need to be, I think we need to think about the empathy,*

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<sup>34</sup> SABC is government owned while ETV is a commercial channel. The latter is perceived to be more critical.

*we need to understand that talking about these things is not a small thing.  
It's not a small thing. Ja.*

GB's approach to Nazi Germany, the Holocaust and Apartheid laws differed from that of other teachers. Most of her lessons are a combination of a positioned approach to history within a discourse led mode of practice and discussions on morality and the learners' responsibility in present South Africa. For example, she employed the unexpected visit of the life skills teacher to the class (with a newspaper-article on racism) and the learners' spontaneous singing of the South African anthem as sources of knowledge to start a discussion on racism and nationalism.

An important observation is that the learners strongly resisted her positioned approach to history.<sup>35</sup> For example, the learners did not accept her attempt to point out that 'races' and 'superiority' are social constructs. The discussion on 'superiority' would carry on throughout the two terms I observed GB and her learners. The first discussion on the topic took place while the teacher and learners were analysing sources on Nazi Germany:

*T: "Race doesn't exist."*

*Learners: "It does!"*

*T: "It's a social construction."*

*T to girl: "Do you want to get out?" (not paying attention, chatting?)*

*T: "Why do I say there is not a thing 'race'?"*

*Girl says there are different cultures*

*T: "There is not such a thing as race! It's constructed."*

*Another girl: but there are different physical features. ...*

*T: "There is only one race. Which one?"*

*Learners: "The human race."*

*Boy says that a lot more [people] believe there are different races. It is the Jews who believe that there is only one race.*

*T challenges this, saying more people think this, thus not only Jews.*

*T: "I want to come back to cultures and physical features."*

*Girl: "It's like dogs!" She explains about different breeds of dogs.*

*T laughs.*

*Girl: "It's a fact, you're born like that."*

*T: "But you give Hitler the latitude to exterminate Jews ... it's a little step to saying that one race is superior to another."*

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<sup>35</sup> The interviews with four learners seem to confirm this, in that they took a disciplinary approach to history. GB's modelling of a positioned approach to history did therefore not seem to rub off on them, - perhaps her approach even confused them. Anna\*, for example, spoke about how history teaching has changed over the years (comparing her mother's with her own education), and said that present history education is "unbiased", "you HAVE to differentiate between someone's opinion and someone's/and the truth and the facts". Later on in the interview, she referred to the stories her grandmother, a Holocaust survivor, told her, which she described as part of "the opinions" in contrast to "point-form [...] ACTUAL history" about the Holocaust. Important to mention, however, and this in comparison to the interviewed learners of MD's school, is that the four learners said they would continue with history in Grade Ten.

*(During this conversation, T refers three times to a book written by Rabbi Goldberg, as if she wants to claim authority by referring to a person with (assumed) status amongst the learners.)*

*T comments that the “animal thing” is confusing. “Let’s stay with humans.”*

*Girl: “You can’t compare, say one is better than the other ... it’s the same with culture. ... So there is race but it doesn’t have to be competitive”.*

*T: “But if there are different races, how do you categorise them? Skin? Language? facial features? ...”*

*Girl: “Language is not bad.” She says she wouldn’t feel bad if people call her ‘English’ because she identifies with that.*

*T asks if they think these labels carry values. Namely some being considered better [...]*

*Boy: “I think there are races but I wouldn’t want to be put in ‘Jews’ and someone else saying ‘we are Christians’. ... So there are races but it’s not a good thing ...”*

*Girl comments that T perceives it as negative because of Apartheid (Pointing at personal background/history of T!) “It doesn’t have to be negative.”*

*T: “Are Jews a different race? Are Jews a different race?” T laughs (as if nervous about this question, or aware of the irony of the question)*

*[...]*

*T: “So am I not African?”*

*Boy: “No, you’re white.”*

*Girl (to the boy): “She’s born here.”*

*T says races have been used and are still used to justify certain practices such as colonialism. .... “I want you to think about this ...” She explains it comes from Darwin, Darwinism. “In your embracement of race, you hold the potential of exclusion, killing .... Some of your ancestors in Europe were killed ...” (strong positioning!) She refers to TV and magazines, saying they can’t deny that the media DON’T say that everyone is equal. “We are buying into that idea that some people are better.” She refers to Judaism, stating that we all come from the same father and mother. (See also above, reference to Rabbi Goldberg – she tries to ground it in their religion, but they don’t seem to buy into that).[...] [Researcher’s observation notes]*

GB repeatedly tried to mobilise the learners’ religion by referring to Rabbis or the Torah. The learners resisted this by asking why there has been so much emphasis on the Holocaust “*since Grade Six*” and by pointing out that they “*are through it [Apartheid]*”.<sup>36</sup> For the teacher, these discussions were all-important. As she said in the reflective interview, other teachers do not see these discussions as part of the discipline, part of “*academic rigour*”, but she is, as she said, “*on a mission*”. As she explained in the reflective interview, this “*mission*” was often the main guideline of her teaching. Her “*mission*” (note the religious but also military connotations) is primarily focused on racism which she does not only locate within learners, but also “*untransformed*” teachers.

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<sup>36</sup> Compare with young Germans making similar comments about learning about the Holocaust in Krondorfer’s study of encounters between third generation non-Jewish Germans and American Jews. Krondorfer explains this as a form of emotional detachment in an educational context where “nobody taught us how to relate to the Shoah emotionally”. Krondorfer, *Remembrance and reconciliation*, 31-37 (quote from 35).

When the interaction was, in GB's words, "*a volatile conversation*", the teacher's discourse led mode of pedagogical practice seemed to disappear. A strict regulation of time and the discipline specific and multi-layered activities such as working with sources, textbooks and the board, made room for discussions on the links between past and present and the teacher's and learners' responsibilities as advantaged, 'white' South Africans. Teacher and learners often continued after the bell already had gone. During these "*volatile conversations*", the teacher allowed learners' questions to come in and often answered these in depth. It seemed important to her to get a message across, and to make the learners express their views and reflect on their own thinking. During one of these "*volatile conversations*", the teacher challenged the learners' ideas around Affirmative Action (AA), which they had expressed during their visit to the Holocaust Centre (HC) the day before. She explained that government not only put it in place for 'blacks' (as the learners thought) but also for two other disadvantaged groups, namely physically challenged persons and women. During this discussion, she compared Apartheid twice with Nazi Germany and introduced the statement "*WE are perpetrators*" for the first time (during the observed lessons).<sup>37</sup>

*T refers to Verwoerd, "His ideas [are] still in your mind. I worry his ideas are still in my mind." She comments yesterday (in HC) only colour (first group) AA mentioned.*

*Boy at the back (Richard\*) complains/defend that they only knew about colour! Also when people told them about Apartheid, they talked only about colour. He says that he didn't know about the other two groups that were disadvantaged. (there is lots of excitement in the class!)*

*[...]*

*T indicates how rest of the time will be spent: one last comment and then she wants to ask them about assembly this morning (but in the end she doesn't come back to this point)*

*Boy middle: it should be about competencies*

*Boy front: No! no! Blacks don't have opportunities education. Have to study at candle light.*

*Boy middle: "Two wrongs don't make life right" ... that's how life is ... also with animals ... why put on other people? We're through it (Apartheid) ... if we just say sorry ..."*

*Other boy in middle (to the boy who is speaking): "Why do we have to say sorry?"*

*T (to the last boy): would you apply same rule to Jews after WWII? Namely reparation by Germany and other nations. Did they have that obligation?*

*The boy says, yes.*

*T: "Ok" (accepting his view but showing she disagrees with it). She tries again: would you do it if you were a politician?*

*The boy sticks to his point of view: it is an individual choice, not something you can force a whole group to do.*

*Girl: all black adults didn't have proper education during Apartheid. AA can help, but when will it stop?*

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<sup>37</sup> In this and following excerpts, I only give pseudonyms to the few learners that I interviewed afterwards. Margot\* and Richard\* are the main contributing learners.

*T refers to memorialisation Auschwitz. "It's us we're talking about, that's more difficult." "WE are the perpetrators" (pointing at her own chest) "I was a perpetrator, because I did nothing." She says she thinks being a bystander is not less (bad) than being an inactive perpetrator. (She is holding up her hands as if to hold back their voices, while she is saying all this.)*

*Boy at back gives example university: what if the person is not a good person (being allowed to become doctor with AA)*

*[bell]*

*T: ok, tomorrow is disagreement hour. [Researcher's observation notes]*

As is clear from the above, an explicit positioning of self and others in history was part of GB's positioned approach to history. She regularly mobilised primary narratives of her own, primary narratives from the F.H.F.O. course, the Holocaust Centre, the visiting 'coloured' teacher who was forcibly removed from District Six, and the learners' grandparents. When teaching about Apartheid, she asked the cleaning personnel of the school to come to the class and illustrate *toi-toing* for the learners.<sup>38</sup> She also regularly used imaginary scenarios, acting as if she was a *Blockwache*, for example, checking on Germans' flats to see whether they had their Nazi Party card, Nazi flag and a picture of Hitler. Even though she said during the reflective interview that, *because* of my presence, she did more easily use primary narratives in the class, this did not seem to *alter* her unique style of teaching. All four learners I interviewed at the end of the observation period, said that they found the personal stories interesting. For example, Cindy\* stated that "*it makes everything so much more real and it's more effective [...] personal stories [are] more believable*", and Richard\* said "*it's a good way to like, to know what people think about it, rather than just a (pause) outsider's look saying FACTS*".

Recurring themes in GB's positioning of self and others in history is the conflation of generations, time and levels of responsibility in "*we are perpetrators*" ("WE are the perpetrators. I was a perpetrator, because I did nothing") and the appeal to the learners' responsibility in present South Africa. She shares the conflation with teachers who take a factual approach to history, but she differs with them in that she takes on the 'bad' role instead of the more common positionings of 'heroes' (freedom fighters), 'victims', or 'bystanders' ('we did not know'). I interpret her statement "*we are perpetrators*" primarily as a reaction to the exclusive positioning of the Jewish community and the larger white South African community as '*we* [the present generation] are not perpetrators' - namely she points out that the present generation has a responsibility *because* of their forefathers' experiences as

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<sup>38</sup> *Toi-toing* is a form of dance and singing used in past and present South Africa to express political protest. *Toi-toing* mostly takes place on the streets, in front of governmental buildings, but also for example at universities during protest actions by students and/or workers.

'victims', 'perpetrators' and 'bystanders'. The underlying motivation, however, seems to be her personal concern about her *own* position, as someone who has lived through Apartheid. At times, this seems to overshadow her teacher subject-position in relation to her learners. During the above quoted interaction on Affirmative Action and "Verwoerd ideas", she moved from the second personal pronoun to the first personal pronoun in the same sentence ("His ideas [are] still in your mind. I worry his ideas are still in my mind.") However, when learners said, "We're through it", they seemed to adhere to and, however partly, accept this conflation. The learners, surprisingly, did not emphasise the 'secondary witness' aspect of their identity, namely that they were not alive during Apartheid, but rather asked, "Why do we have to say sorry?" and "We're through it".<sup>39</sup> They seem to be taking a similar position towards Nazi-Germany, asking why they have to study this "since Grade Six"; but, at the same time, stating that they were "our brothers", "six million of us" who were killed during the Holocaust (see also the interaction with BD above). In addition, they strongly resisted the comparison between Nazi-Germany and Apartheid South Africa.

While the teacher called learners by their first names, and learners responded as individuals (often speaking from the 'I') during the class interactions, 'dissident' voices and internal disagreement within the group rarely occurred. The teacher did not facilitate this, nor did the learners 'volunteer' disagreement. This might indicate a strong 'us, learners' identity, but it also challenges the label of a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice and a positioned approach to history. As she explained in the reflective interview, GB clearly pointed out her own positioning in regard to morals. This was especially obvious in the discussion the teacher and learners had on 'superiority': The learners claimed that they, as 'whites', were 'superior' to other, 'non-white' communities in South Africa, because of the Western heritage of technology and education. GB vehemently resisted this positioning, questioning the underlying exclusiveness and absence of an appeal to the positioning of 'we, humanity'; a positioning she emphasised was part of their very own religion. In the words of Ellsworth, there was a clear "positive reference" in the teacher's practice and approach.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, while heavily relying on references to the (assumed) religious positioning of the learners, she tried to counter a static positioning by the learners of her self by not sharing certain aspects of her identity. During one of the "volatile conversations" on racism, the teacher said she did not see any change in their behaviour after the visit to the Holocaust Centre. The following (audiotaped) interaction developed:

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<sup>39</sup> During the interview, Margot\*, however, clearly took a secondary witness position. "I know Apartheid was bad, like it was, it was a shocking thing to do, but, but I didn't do it, why do I have to be punished for it? You know, like my ancestors did it, I didn't do it. And I, I don't think that because (pause) now that like, with all this Affirmative Action and things like that, it REALLY gets to me [...]"

<sup>40</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 150-157.

T: “[...] [Y]ou’ve got to examine yourself. I’ve got to examine myself! [Learners have their hands up while she is talking.] Do we believe it [that whites are superior]? Do our parents believe that for you? I know my parents are both deeply racists. And you often hear discussions about that. And that, you know, I can remember when I was at university, I was at U.C.T., and I can remember [distinctly] my mother, after watching the program in 1980s, about South Africa and it was propaganda from the National Party, it was APPALLING! And I was raging like a [inaudible] in front of the TV set. My mother told me I was turning into a communist! Because I was at U.C.T. and U.C.T. used to be called ‘Little Moscow on the hill.’ Ok? In other words, people who went there, would start thinking in a, in a WAY (long pause) that the government didn’t like, so you must be becoming a communist, cause supposedly communism was bad. (long pause) Ask your folks, they’ll tell you [this], some of THEM probably were used to the same thing. (long pause) So what I am saying to you is, people (pause) we, it worries me that this [past] two days, and time in history, looking at these issues, that it hasn’t changed your behaviour. What are you doing? What am I doing as an educator?” [...]

Learners are commenting that she doesn’t give them the space to defend themselves. Margot\* points out they have the right to respond.

T: “I can. I am the teacher!” (laughs)

Margot\*: “Firstly, you say our behaviour hasn’t changed through all these [inaudible] the thing is that, like, um, the Holocaust happened, right? It’s, it’s a different period now. (long pause) People are horrible, you see, people have greed, people want just as much as [inaudible] they can, people, like, do things that [inaudible] [is not acceptable] and that’s how we see it. We watch movies like that. That’s how life is. This is how 2005 is. Our behaviour is not gonna change, and if it does change, we will start to be inferior, we will start being, we will lose you know! Like this (clicks with finger) like, we will lose out on (long pause) cause everyone around us isn’t like that. So, it’s not gonna, it’s not gonna work. You know. Our behaviour will most likely not change because everyone around us is like we are.”

T: “Ok, I hear you”

Margot\*: “So/”

T: “Very, very insightful comment! Thank you for that, that’s very, deeply insightful. Ok. [inaudible] it’s true and what you are saying is (pause) deeply profound.”

Margot\*: “I can’t explain it.”

T: “I know exactly what you’re saying. I know exactly what you’re saying. I want to give the others a chance. But I think it’s deeply profound and it does [inaudible] show something about what we have done in the program.”

Margot\*: “I mean you know the thing is also we said we need to be aware of it and pass it on. That is what we are going to do. That we might not change our behaviour, but we will make sure that, that, that, people are [inaudible] and that it doesn’t happen again. And that is probably what we need to learn [inaudible]”

T: “Ok, I’ll come back to that. Ok.”

Another girl: “[inaudible] it has been passed on from generations before. And we, I think everyone [inaudible] from it but you can’t see it straight away. I don’t think you can. It’s just not visible, maybe you’ll think about it, whenever you do, but it’s not (pause) it’s not like, our character isn’t based on what happened yesterday. [inaudible]”

T: “No, ok, good point. [inaudible] two things from yesterday, that will impact how you behave in the future, but you won’t see it today.”

Girl: “No, you won’t. [...] We’ll teach other people.”

T: “Ja.”  
Margot\*: “Ja, exactly.”

While GB’s positioning in this interaction might open up a potential identification between teacher and learners as having both “racist” parents (“Do we believe it? Do our parents believe that for you? I know my parents are both deeply racists”), it contrasts with the teacher’s positioning of the learners’ parents as ‘witnesses’ or even ‘bystanders’ or ‘resisters’ (“Ask your folks they’ll tell you [this], some of THEM probably were used to the same thing.”). This ambiguous positioning of the learners’ parents might have unnerved the learners who identified rather with the ‘superior’ group and explained its behaviour. Margot\* explains to the teacher that this is a different period to that of events such as the Holocaust and that “people” are horrible and greedy. She explains that ‘we’ cannot change because then ‘we’ would become inferior, would lose out because everybody around ‘us’ behaves in that (“superior”) way. Nevertheless, she asserts, ‘we’ can and have to play a role in being aware of it, and passing it on so that events like the Holocaust and Apartheid do not happen again. Margot’s\* comment indicates that thoughts of ‘superiority’ and ‘inferiority’ are closely linked.<sup>41</sup> Fascinating is the fact that the ‘we’ seems to be all-inclusive in both teacher’s and learners’ contributions. The teacher does not take on nor advocates an empathic position, which would take into account the differences between their (generational) positionings. The learners do not position themselves as secondary witnesses; they do not describe the previous generations (living in different periods) as ‘they’ (or ‘you’). The category “people” seems to bridge the different generations, and any differences between and within these generations. In contrast to what the teacher and the Holocaust Centre facilitators say, the learners assert that they cannot (and do not have to) change their behaviour, but they can be aware of it (atrocities?) and pass it (the stories?) on. Interestingly, the other girl in this interaction points out the role of time; something also some primary and secondary witness facilitators at the Holocaust Centre did (see Chapter Four).

In this same interaction, Richard\* tried to convince the teacher that “the majority of the world is racist”. This might have been a reaction to the teacher’s implicit positioning of self as ‘not racist’. Richard\* tried to convince the teacher by appealing to her personal life using an imaginative scenario. GB, however, did not share personal, autobiographical elements and

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<sup>41</sup> During the interview, Margot\* vehemently defended the ‘never again’ imperative by saying that “when we SEE what, what we CAN do to stop it, that’s what we learn about too, like how can we save, how can we, how it can be stopped and how we don’t have to be bystanders and how someone will, will, not, like we can’t see someone gaining as much power as [let’s say] Hitler did or the white people, the white government. I can’t see it happening again, there [are] too many (pause) you know, now that ALL children, our generation, are all learning about objective history and actually learning about history, that I doubt it will happen again.” I then asked her about this episode (“we will lose”). She said she did not remember it.

rather questioned the learners' assumptions, implying her personal life to be different to what they assumed it to be:

*Richard\**: "I think the majority of the world is racist." [...]  
He asks T if she has children.  
T says, "You're my children."  
He gives hypothetical situation: someone's child comes home with a black boyfriend. "honestly" – nobody can honestly say they didn't think twice about it. "everyone."  
T reformulates: so you are saying if my daughter would come home with a black boyfriend, I'm gonna think 'she could have done better'?  
*Richard\**: no, no, not necessarily, [but] "I bet you will think twice."  
Learners talk at same time.  
T says they don't know if her husband is black or not.  
(Learners seem to be taken back here!)  
A learner: "Is he?"  
T doesn't respond. "So I might choose a black man. I might have chosen a black man ..."  
*Richard\** gives other hypothetical example: Two people on the street, if they're both white you won't look twice, if they're Nigerian and English, you'll look.  
T repeats her point: I might have married someone black because I LOVE him.  
*Richard\**: "Ja maybe, I don't know."

In reality, the teacher is single and does not have children. As she explained in the reflective interview, the teacher tried to pre-empt the learners' stereotyping of 'we, whites think all the same' by positioning her self as 'the other', namely as having married a 'black' man. This positioning as 'the other within' seemed to throw off the learners. It is likely that because of this positioning the teacher challenged their assumption that 'we, whites think and act the same', but at the same time, she closed the door to a potential honesty about being racist in the conversation. During the reflective interview, she explained her choice not to disclose certain aspects of her personal identity by referring to the impediments in post-Apartheid interactions stating that *because* of the Apartheid past, people easily "box" someone, and she did not want to be boxed (in, for example, 'the Christian faith'). At the same time, she refers to an idea in the Jewish faith, namely that "*within every person is a whole universe*" – an idea that is not yet internalised:

*IF you teach that, then how does that relate to you calling someone (long pause) a derogatory term? How does that rate/relate to your racism?*

This reflection contrasts with the teacher's *performance*: 'being racist' and 'superiority-and-inferiority' thoughts, both positionings being part of 'the world' (as being outside the self) and of 'the world enveloped within the self', are othered.<sup>42</sup> Observing GB interact with her

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<sup>42</sup> Later on in the term, the teacher and learners had a discussion on xenophobia and on putting up (electric) fences. The latter is central to (even iconic in) the present image of South Africa as a crime

learners, one could ask the question of whether one *does* challenge learners' 'boxing' by *not* disclosing one's personal positioning. As mentioned above, Margot's\* comment indicates that thoughts of 'superiority' and 'inferiority' are closely linked. During one of the following classes, the teacher took this up by asking Margot\* if she felt inferior to Germans. This question was embedded in a discussion in which learners argued that the superiority of 'whites' resides in their technological advancement. When the teacher compared Apartheid with the Holocaust, the learners first resisted the crossover but then applied the same reasoning. The discussion mainly took place between the teacher and Richard\*; towards the end Margot\* joined in, while the majority of the learners listened, though now and then expressed what seems agreement with Richard\* and Margot\*. The (audiotaped) discussion started when the teacher asked Richard\* if he perceived the technological societies as "better":

*Richard\*:* "I never said it's good because it proves that you're better. In a way it does. Because look some Jewish guy and look at, look at Hitler, right?" [...] "So he [the Jew] is there [in an extermination camp], like half-dying, [inaudible] choices. And Hitler is like, like Germany is like there with thousands of people like saluting him like he is a divine figure. [inaudible]."

*Girl:* "It's not better; it's just [the way it is]."

*Richard\*:* "It's not more ethical. But he [Hitler] managed to come on top, you know."

*T:* "So is that something we aspire to?"

*Learners:* "No".

[...] [Teacher and learners cross over to Apartheid.]

*T:* "Is that a good thing that we [as 'whites' in South Africa] will always be there or should we not attempt to counter that?" [...]

*Margot\* says every generation will see whites as superior. Most [people] closer to the time of Apartheid will have more difficulty with letting go that thought.*

*T:* "I mean, let me say this: I'm, I'm, I'm worried now. I'm worried now because [what] I am hearing you say is that you – and correct me if I'm wrong- that you are NOT appalled and disgusted (pause) with the Holocaust, that for you?"

*Margot\* disagrees – [inaudible].*

*T:* "No, I'm crossing over because your, your arguments fit to both, because, because Apartheid was and has been recognised as a crime against humanity. Ok? That what was carried out by white South Africans, MY ancestors in South Africa, was, and it's not a small thing, a crime against humanity. What the Nazis did to the Jews was a crime against humanity. Ok? Six million Jews and at least five, or six million other people, exterminated! (pause) with supposedly superior technology, [we know] that's a debatable point. BUT (pause) if you're saying to me that the Germans should actually just say 'ag, ja, we're superior to the Jews, [if we would get another opportunity]' [inaudible] we're, we're learning about, or learning about the Holocaust should make you, as JEWISH children, feel

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ridden, unsafe country. The teacher positioned herself explicitly as xenophobic towards Zimbabweans who put up electric fences. In contrast to the discussion on 'superiority', GB did not explicitly position the learners as xenophobic; she stayed with her own positioning. Because of this, I assume, the discussion was less heated.

*inferior to the Germans. [...] because Germans dominated your ancestors [...] similarly when black children are taught Apartheid, they will end up feeling inferior because once South Africans/”*

*Margot\*: [inaudible]*

*T: “Do you feel inferior to a German?”*

*Margot\*: “No”.*

*T asks her to explain.*

*Margot\*: “It’s a long time ago, I didn’t live then. [...] It was a mass genocide [...] I will be protected by other people [...] cause everyone knows about the Holocaust [...] I don’t know how to explain it.”*

*T: “But what about inside? [...] as a person from what you feel inside, that you are not inferior to anybody. You, yourself, have (long pause) value, significant value SIMPLY BECAUSE you are human and simply because you’ve got a contribution to make and that contribution will aid some, will, will aid humanity, however small or large it is.” [...]*

*Margot\* says thoughts won’t lead to a new Apartheid. (This contrasts with what the Holocaust Centre facilitators said, namely attitudes lead to behaviour!)*

The teacher’s positioning of the learners as “*you, as JEWISH children*” and the inclusive positioning of “*[we] as South Africans*” did not convince the learners. The teacher made an assumption here that clearly did not ‘work’, namely that *because* the learners are Jewish, they would identify with the Jews who perished in the Holocaust and be “*disgusted*” with Hitler. There are two impediments to this identification: (1) the learners, as the teacher seemed to realise later on in the term, do not necessarily believe in a God and practice the Jewish faith as a religion – for a substantial number of learners, it seems, being Jewish is a cultural marker, not necessarily a religious one. (2) The learners at times identify with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust (as they did in BD’s classes), and at other times - as Richard\* in the above conversation - cast these Jews in a position of ‘weakness’ and ‘inferiority’.

This paradoxical positioning of self and others in which learners identify with the ‘we’ group as ‘victims’ but at the same time distance themselves from the ‘weak’ individuals within the group, resonates partly with KQ’s learners’ alleged positioning of self and others in history, mentioned in Chapter Three. In the interview, KQ had said that his learners used “*to laugh*” at first hand stories about the Apartheid regime: “*They just see us, the people who were living by then, as we were stupid. [...] not strong enough [...] to challenge those laws. [...] [giving] us some tips [...]*”. MD’s learners, in their encounter with Mala Zimetbaum and Adek Kalinski, also seemed to attempt to dissolve *uncanniness*. They did this by negating the existence of ‘weak’ individuals in their own ‘we’ group: “*South Africans did, miss, we, we FOUGHT for our freedom, miss, we never stood there, and waited for them to do something to us, miss.*” In addition, one could explain the reaction of GB’s learners along more group-

specific lines: Loshitzky sees this double, internal contradiction as being part of Zionist ideology.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the time of my observations at the school, the learners often positioned themselves as going to or wanting to go to Israel, which they seemed to portray as a better place compared to South Africa. As BD and GB explained during interviews, Zionism is part of the learners' community, though not exclusively. Loshitzky explains that the Jews who perished during the Holocaust, mostly *Ashkenazi* (East European Jews) were and still are perceived as 'others' by *Sabra*, the 'new' Jews living in Israel. This othering was particularly strong just after the war and before the Israeli state appropriated the Holocaust as a *national* disaster after the 1961 Eichmann trial and the June 1967 war.<sup>44</sup> The 'negation of exile' and the portrayal of both *Ashkenazim* and *Mizrahim* (oriental) Jews as 'old', 'unproductive', 'weak' and 'passive' justifies the existence of Jews in Israel.<sup>45</sup>

It seems that there is a "*residue*" (to use GB's term<sup>46</sup>) here of Zionist ideology, namely there is identification with the Holocaust as a whole - as an attack on the Jewish community (possibly identified with the Zionist *nation*) - but a distancing from the individual Jewish victims, who the learners described as 'weak'. This mirrors the dominant collective memory in Israel and contrasts with what Loshitzky calls the third stage in Israel's memorisation process that started in the 1980s among a critical minority, in which the memory of the Holocaust fragmented into individuals and an uncomfortable mirroring with the Palestinian Other.<sup>47</sup> The South African Jewish learners do not (want to) identify with the powerlessness of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. They do not want to question the so-called superiority of the 'we'-group, and thus continue to make use of the 'Black Other' stereotype. If they would, "*we will lose out*", as Margot\* put it. For this reason, it seems, the learners strongly resist the teacher's attempt to personalise both Holocaust and Apartheid. Instead, they argue that both a new holocaust and a new apartheid will not happen again. They explain this by referring (in the case of the Holocaust) to protection by other people and (in the case of Apartheid) to their own role in educating the future generations, even though their own

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<sup>43</sup> Loshitzky, "Postmemory cinema".

<sup>44</sup> Loshitzky, "Postmemory cinema"; see also Wieviorka, "From survivor to witness".

<sup>45</sup> Loshitzky, "Postmemory cinema", 183.

<sup>46</sup> GB used this term in the discussion under analysis to talk about racism in present South Africa. She defined it as "*left over stuff from the past that makes us respond in a way that makes us as white South Africans think we are superior!*"

<sup>47</sup> Loshitzky, "Postmemory cinema".

thoughts and attitudes might not have changed.<sup>48</sup> As Field puts it, the learners seem to have internalised the ‘never again’ imperative as a comforting mythical truth: as long as we pass on the stories, we will be safe.<sup>49</sup>

During one of the following (audiotaped) discussions, however, the learners themselves made the link between Apartheid and Nazism. This was the first time (in the observed lessons) that the teacher, while she still relied heavily on a ‘we’ perspective, talked more clearly from the ‘I’ perspective, in the sense that she differentiated between her own and the learners’ generations and between her self, her ancestors and the learners’ ancestors.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, at this point, the learners came to, what seems to be, her rescue, by stating that she should not “*blame*” herself nor her parents:

*T: “WE made LAWS. YOU, MY ancestors, and your ancestors, if you’re South African, made laws. [...] WE made laws, MY ancestors, and yours, made laws, that consistently prevented anyone who was black, coloured or Indian, from (pause) getting an education, be able to find a job [...] you were allowed to be a manual worker, full stop, nothing else! [...] I can name the laws, I won’t do it now, we’ll do it when we do Apartheid.”*

*A learner says it’s the same as during Nazism.*

*T: “Exactly” and she refers again to “your ancestors” (Jews in Nazi occupied Europe). She says that Jews were herded into the concentration camps. Why? Because the Germans said, you were inferior. “Were they (Jews) inferior? No. Are black people inferior? Sorry guys to burst your bubble, no!”*

*Learners make disagreeing sound.*

*T: ‘Are some black people in a terrible condition? Yes. Who is to blame? WE are to blame.’*

*Learners don’t agree, “No! no!” (Excitement in the room!)*

*T: “Yes we are!”*

*A boy says that government is to blame.*

*T lists all the Apartheid governments. [...] “We sit in a classroom of 20 people [...] I went to [a former Model C school], to U.C.T., got a car, got to get everything. Why? Simply because I am white!”*

*Boy: “No!”*

*Learners disagree; they talk at the same time.*

*Same boy: “The thing is: don’t blame yourself or blame your parents” (to T) “Yes they voted for the government, that doesn’t mean, they didn’t know the government was going to become corrupt [...]”*

*T acts as if she is a perpetrator, saying that the ashes in the sky are “not proof of my superiority, but of my evil, that I am evil” [...] “[It is] nothing to*

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<sup>48</sup> See also Barton and Levstik who discuss research done in Northern Ireland indicating that learners are not willing to apply lessons of the past to more recent history and to the present, their own lives. Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 239-240, see also 219-221.

<sup>49</sup> Field, Personal communication, 13 October 2006. In the interview, Margot\* spontaneously started talking about how “*we need to listen to people’s testimonies [...] it’s the only way we’re gonna advance and overcome it.*” See also above, footnote 35.

<sup>50</sup> Note that in the previous quoted interaction, the teacher already said “*my ancestors*” and addressed the learners as “*Jewish children*” comparing them to “*black children*”. In the interaction under discussion, however, she emphasised the *difference* between her own and their generation more strongly.

*brag about [...] I'm deeply, deeply grateful for the comforts that I have, (pause) I not for a second think that makes me superior, I am NOT better than any black South African, MY South African, my fellow South Africans [...] I'm not better than you, you're not better than me! The moment we start to believe that, people, we are on a down road spiral to NO-WHERE [...] certainly not to a better place." She is pointing with her arms to the sky, and to the ground. "I know you don't believe in a place hell." [...]*

The positioning of self and addressee (the learners) is strong in the teacher's statement, "WE made LAWS. YOU, MY ancestors, and your ancestors, if you're South African, made laws". She lowers the conflation of generations twice by clarifying "my and your ancestors". She also uses the impersonal (empathic) 'you' while talking about "anyone who was black, coloured or Indian". I have not witnessed these two forms of positioning (lowering the conflation and using the empathic 'you') in any of the lessons observed previously. It is possible that the strong resistance from the learners made the teacher re-position. However, her conflation of generations (and their respective responsibilities) quickly dominates the discussion again. While her 'we' in the first lines *might* include the learners ('you'), she clearly includes the learners when she talks about "who is to blame?"

The learners visibly disliked it when the teacher talked in these terms about their own (present) responsibility. At one point, the teacher instructed the learners to individually answer five questions relating to Apartheid. The fifth question was "What are the consequences of Apartheid for us as South Africans?" The following are some excerpts from the learners' answers on this question (see also chapter quote above). The learners responded differently to the 'we' positioning in the question ("us as South Africans").<sup>51</sup>

*We have had to live with it, witch I think so one of the worst punishments, people all over the world no about the apartate. Black people now have like all the same rites as us and even some more rites. (girl)*

*Well, there is more crime; people have been scarred; it has left many unemployed and uneducated; I know for me, even with non-racist parents or background, I am more scared if a black man approaches me than a white man; a white man stands less of a chance of getting a job against a black man. (girl)*

*There is a great imbalance in the economy, because we have citizens ranging from very poor to rich with no middle income. This is bad, because the poverty stricken (which are mostly black due to Apartheid) do not have the money to afford an education resulting in good jobs and a steady income. Therefore the rich get richer and the poor poorer. (boy)*

The learners' answers express discomfort, a bleak and fearful present and future, and a feeling of injustice and punishment. As in the class interactions, the learners do not differentiate

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<sup>51</sup> Note that I did not alter the spelling or indicate spelling mistakes.

between their own and the previous generations. Overall, both teacher and learners do not question the older generation explicitly or distinguish between the generation of the learners and the teacher (who belongs to the generation of the learners' parents). Both teacher and learners keep the conflation of generations intact. Margot's\* comment, "*That's how life is. This is how 2005 is*", a girl's comment, "*It is a long time ago; I didn't live then*", and another girl's comment that the teacher perceives 'race' as negative because she experienced Apartheid (see above), come the closest to challenging GB's conflation of generations. The learners do not challenge the conflation 'head on', not even when the teacher makes the distinction herself. GB mentions the learners' parents as 'witnesses' (or potentially 'bystanders' or 'resisters') and implies them in "*we are perpetrators*", while a more explicit questioning is absent. The moment GB talks *from* the 'I' and from her own generation, without including the generation of the learners, the learners apologise for her. It seems that, for the learners, the intertwining of past, present and future is threatening - as is, maybe, the self-positioning by the teacher from the exclusive 'I'.<sup>52</sup>

### **Conclusion**

As indicated in the previous chapter the *mere presence* of primary narratives does not assist us in analysing their import, unless we look at teachers' approaches to history and modes of pedagogical practice as well. While a factual approach to history is 'standard' within (an empty and) repetition led mode of pedagogical practice, teachers following the convention led and discourse led modes engage with *at least* a factual approach to history. In other words, the teachers do not do away with a factual approach to history but *combine* it (or attempt to) with a disciplinary and/or a positioned approach. The interviews support this, in the sense that all teachers adhered to the ideal of nation building, regardless of how critical or self-reflective they might have been. This is also clear from the observations. The relationship between modes of pedagogical practice and approaches to history seems therefore not to be one-dimensional (as common sense would suggest). A factual approach does not *only* appear in repetition led modes of practice and a disciplinary approach does not *only* appear in a convention led mode. The case studies seem to suggest that teachers adhering to the convention led and the discourse led modes of practice, engage with both factual and disciplinary approaches to history, and – in the case of the discourse led mode – make additional use of a positioned approach to history. The question remains, however, whether a teacher's ability to use multiple approaches to history within a convention led or a discourse led mode of practice aid the use of primary narratives to facilitate constructive, analytic dialogues between a teacher and the next generation.

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<sup>52</sup> According to a psychoanalytical explanation, this might be "an ego-defense". See Britzman, "A note to "identification"", 50. See also Britzman, "If the story cannot end", 44.

GB and BD used primary narratives within a discourse led mode of practice, within a school culture that celebrates the individual. MD did bring in primary narratives, but these were unrelated to the other activities in her convention led mode of practice within a group-g geared school culture. BD, in contrast, adhered mostly to a disciplinary approach to history, which is mainly concerned with subject-specific method. BD also engaged with a factual approach to history by promoting cohesion, for example when stating that people other than Jews have been killed as well. While primary narratives were present in her practice, BD treated them mostly as historical evidence, *in order to* teach the learners how to be disciplinary historians. When these primary narratives were her own or the learners', however, the teacher seemed to perceive them as separate from the discipline of history.

MD's practice contained anachronism, decontextualisation, presentism and simplification. Boix-Mansilla states that this kind of practice creates "illusions of understanding" which "fall short of disciplinary standards of historical understanding".<sup>53</sup> The danger of presentism<sup>54</sup> and simplification is that it brings with it dogma and moral lessons. GB behaves similarly, however, when she, in her 'sermons' on the relationship between past and present South Africa and her own and the learners' present responsibility, conflates "*we whites*" across the different generations, into the category (or, in her words, "*box*") of 'perpetrators'.<sup>55</sup>

One could argue that a teaching device such as presentism is therefore problematic. As Wineburg explains, however, "'presentism' - the act of viewing the past through the lens of the present - is not some bad habit we've fallen into. It is, instead, our psychological condition at rest, a way of thinking that requires little effort and comes quite naturally".<sup>56</sup> Presentism happens in the form of borrowing terms and contexts from the present day world to think about, describe, or fashion (a context for) the past events instead of "fashioning a context from the raw materials provided by these documents".<sup>57</sup>

The analysis of especially MD's and GB's practice and positionings raises some important questions: How can teachers and learners be "*history makers*" when history, as an

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<sup>53</sup> Boix-Mansilla, "Historical understanding", 390-391.

<sup>54</sup> Kurasawa explains present 'presentism' as follows: "The advent of mass media valuing distraction, the 'live' and immediate over historical and mnemonic depth sustains the intense temporal self-referentiality of our times, an extreme presentism where very little exists outside of the horizons of a perpetual now". Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> By 'sermoning', she might be promoting a factual approach to history that nears 'shoulding' ('there is only one way') - something she actually reacted against during the interviews. See also Seixas, "'Sweigen!'", 30-31.

<sup>56</sup> Wineburg, *Historical thinking*, 19. See also LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 35-41.

<sup>57</sup> Wineburg, *Historical thinking*, 18. See also Lee, "Understanding history", 134.

“otherness”,<sup>58</sup> is absent? How can they be response-able when they conflate generations and positions? Conflation of generations is a form of identification. Britzman reports that educators assume that identification assists in establishing social justice.<sup>59</sup> Simon, while warning of the dangers of “conservatism and potentially reductive violence” in practices of identification, states that “such connections seem an inescapable element of sociality, something that cannot be – nor would we want it to be – completely wished away”.<sup>60</sup> He also states, however, that remembrance does not only need to engage with identification and affiliation, but also with difference and the un-ordinary, the Other.<sup>61</sup>

MD’s practice shows that the presence of primary narratives, even though it seems to raise learners’ interest, does not guarantee that teacher and learners discuss past and present agency and responsibility *within a historical context*. Nor, as GB’s practice shows, does the presence of primary narratives *and* an explicit discussion on past and present agency and responsibility within a historical context guarantee that learners (and teacher?) *want to* reflect on and change their own thoughts and practices.<sup>62</sup>

A possible mid-way might be one in which we not only balance presentism with a discourse led practice<sup>63</sup> but also with a positioned approach to history in which we perceive the past but also the other’s position as ever strange.<sup>64</sup> LaCapra would locate his “empathic unsettlement” in this kind of practice.<sup>65</sup> To be able to explain the relevance of this, I need to unpack GB’s positioning of self and others in more detail.

GB seemed to attempt to uncover and deconstruct power relations in past and present South Africa by “interrogat[ing] the basis for [the] intelligibility” of the dominant narrative of ‘superiority’ and racism current amongst the learners and teachers.<sup>66</sup> In this, she took a unique position in that she dared to ask ‘difficult’ questions. I say ‘unique’ because GB

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<sup>58</sup> Husbands, *What is history teaching?* See also Simon, *The touch of the past*, 101-103.

<sup>59</sup> Britzman, “A note to “identification””, 49. See also Cunningham, “Empathy without illusions”, 26. GB mentioned she shared this assumption during a meeting in which GB and BD gave feedback on my analysis of their classroom interactions. GB and BD, Personal communication, 22 June 2007.

<sup>60</sup> Simon, “The paradoxical practice of *Zakhor*”, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Simon, “The paradoxical practice of *Zakhor*”, 12-13. See also Eppert and Britzman on the dangers of identification. Eppert, “Entertaining history”; Britzman, “If the story cannot end”. See also Carr, “War, history and the education of (Canadian) memory”.

<sup>62</sup> See also Simon, *The touch of the past*, 4-5.

<sup>63</sup> See Boix-Mansilla, “Historical understanding”, 402 *passim*.

<sup>64</sup> See also Simon, *The touch of the past*. Simon traces this meeting ‘the other’ instead of “an eternal return to the self” to the work of Emmanuel Levinas. Simon, *The touch of the past*, 12. See also his “Innocence without naivete” and Eppert’s work, for example her “Entertaining history”.

<sup>65</sup> See also Simon’s interpretation of “the paradoxical practice of *Zakhor*”, *Zakhor* being Hebrew for “both an imperative and an obligation: “remember”” (10). Simon, “The paradoxical practice of *Zakhor*”.

<sup>66</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 21.

differed considerably in her approach when compared to the other observed and interviewed teachers. The complexity of her and her learners' positionings resonates with the complexity described in the case study done by Simon and Rosenberg on B.Ed. students who engaged in different ways regarding the question how one could and/or should remember and learn from the Montréal massacre.<sup>67</sup> In addition, GB explicitly 'crossed' from Apartheid to the Holocaust in what seems to be an attempt to render Apartheid, and more specifically its present legacies, as 'strange'. By bringing together narratives about the two regimes, she attempted to explore the present generation's response-ability to these narratives.<sup>68</sup> This form of anachronism, in this context, is therefore not merely something to be avoided, or as explained above, tolerated as "our psychological condition at rest",<sup>69</sup> but something that teachers and learners can actively work *with*.

However, there are three impediments to an analytic, constructive dialogue (see Chapter Two) when GB's main message is, "*We are perpetrators. I was a perpetrator because I did nothing*". Firstly, this positioning seems to imply that when a person does not (claim to) fit into the categories of 'victim', or 'resister', he/she is (automatically) a 'perpetrator'. Secondly, it seems to imply that these categories are static and that one cannot hold more than one position at the same time, or shift from one to another position, or be in limbo. GB's diverse positionings throughout the two semesters actually indicate that she does take different positionings without perhaps consciously being aware of this or explicitly signalling this to the learners. Lastly, it seems to obstruct the teacher's appeal for change because of "the hatred or fear of one's own implication in what's being taught".<sup>70</sup> It is daunting to be cast in a (static) perpetrator role. How can one question one's "*box*" and 'step out' without, in Margot's\* words "*los[ing] out*"? Margot\* expresses here a universal fear, namely the fear of refusal and break in continuity.<sup>71</sup> While GB states that "*we are perpetrators*", her primary narratives present a 'non-perpetrator' position which she seems to claim or desire for herself. Her learners seem to desire the same for themselves and their ancestors - as did MD's and (reportedly) KQ's learners in constructing or advocating 'resistor' or 'hero' roles for their respective inner 'we' groups, which seemingly encompassed all generations. The "*box*" of 'perpetrator' is undesirable because it threatens continuity and belonging; it evokes the

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<sup>67</sup> See Simon with Rosenberg, "Beyond the logic of emblemization", 65-86.

<sup>68</sup> See Simon, *The touch of the past*, 99.

<sup>69</sup> Wineburg, *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts*, 19.

<sup>70</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 57. See also Eppert who discusses in detail the complexities of the 'perpetrator' position in a pedagogical setting where "entertaining Holocaust texts, whether as film, art or literature, can signify an invitation to toy with the past, to explore, (re)imagine, and rethink the events of history". Eppert, "Entertaining history", 74. See also Britzman, "A note to "identification"", 50.

<sup>71</sup> See Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 88.

question “*who is to blame?*” alongside feelings of guilt and shame. The above-analysed interactions seem to suggest that both teacher and learners feel uncomfortable and threatened having ancestors, who were implied as ‘perpetrators’ in the Apartheid regime, regardless of whether or not they actively took part in suppression, racism and other ills. This might be more widespread amongst ‘white’ South Africans. During one of the 2004 interviews, ED, a teacher at a private school with a majority of ‘white’, upper-class learners, spoke about the learners’ excitement and discomfort around questioning one’s own parents’ involvement in Apartheid.

At the same time, even though they seemed to engage with “authentic questions”,<sup>72</sup> both GB and her learners did not have the language or knowledge to talk about the different positionings, and how these relate to each other. Identification between the different generations was strong (as in most of the interviews and observations). The interactions where the learners seemed to be more relaxed were interactions in which the teacher made a distinction between the generations. However, the threat of having ancestors ‘as perpetrators’ did not dissolve with this distinction. The teacher constructed ‘the other’ within the self and/or within the community of the self. The attention of the interaction was focused on ‘our’ responsibility and this was interpreted as ‘blame’ rather than a “response-ability”<sup>73</sup> to an absolute, unknowable ‘Other’ outside the self; answer-ability to, for example, the teacher from District Six or the cleaning personnel who were asked to perform *toi-toing*. These visitors seemed to be merely used as (anecdotal) ‘examples’. There was no dialogue *with* these ‘others’ as potential teachers; there was no questioning of positionings, or of *assumptions around* positionings, in relation to the regime shift.<sup>74</sup>

Teaching about totalitarian and other oppressive regimes is a challenge. It invites us to see ‘the other-within’, as GB reformulated Jewish oral law, “*within every person is a whole*

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<sup>72</sup> Nystrand *et al.*, *Opening dialogue*.

<sup>73</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 163.

<sup>74</sup> Compare with Simon, *The touch of the past*, 15-31 and 87-103. The teacher seemed to assume the cleaning personnel knew how to *toi-toi* presumably because they were ‘black’. She did not ask them, at least not in the (observed) classroom interaction, to speak about their experiences of Apartheid, and whether this included the experience of *toi-toing*. When the ‘coloured’ teacher from District Six spoke during assembly, there was a *potential* opening to a discussion on positionings and assumptions around one’s own and others’ positionings. In his speech, he talked meta-language; he explicitly indicated that he was in the process of constructing his story *while standing in front of them*. This self-reflection is also called upon in relation to Holocaust historiography. Stone claims that “it is the task of any critical historiography of the Holocaust to analyse its textual organization in order to ascertain what and whose needs are being served by the way in which that history is written”. Stone, “Narrative theory and Holocaust historiography”, 232.

*universe*".<sup>75</sup> As Levi explains, trying to be only one pole of our existence and denying the other, makes the latter loom larger.<sup>76</sup> Both GB and her learners tried to emphasise the one pole and forget or deny the other. There is the potential of balance in the moment we see, i.e. acknowledge, the polarity in each relationship (from that between teacher and learner to that between our selves and historical events and figures) and real-ise we cannot cancel one of the poles out because we carry the world within us.<sup>77</sup> GB's learners embodied this ambiguity in identifying with their inner *group* ('Jews') as being 'victims' of the Holocaust, while, at the same time, distancing themselves from the 'weak' *individuals* of the older, primary witness generation. This ambiguity entails both identification *and* differentiation across generations.<sup>78</sup> The reality seems to be, therefore, the *balance* between the poles, not the *having-to-make-a-choice*. This reality is, however, not only uncomfortable but also unpredictable and therefore always unknowable to an extent. It is for this reason, I understand, that Ellsworth has stated that education is "save[d] from being perverse" because it "repeated[ly] fail[ed] [...] to come up with definitive solutions to its own problems".<sup>79</sup>

This and the previous chapters analysed ways in which history teachers and museum facilitators use and construct primary narratives, and less organised ways of positioning self and others in history, during their teaching about the Holocaust and Apartheid Forced Removals. In the following, concluding chapter, I summarise the findings of this research and entertain potential topics and approaches for future research and interventions.

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<sup>75</sup> Not being versed in Levinas' philosophical and Judaic thought, I wonder whether one could interpret GB's take as different to or rather a specific reformulation of what Simon and Eppert, in reference to Levinas' work, call "a particular *kavannah* – a particular embodied cognizance within which one becomes aware of, self-present to, and responsive toward something/someone beyond oneself"? Simon with Eppert, "Remembering obligation", 58 (Simon and Eppert's emphasis). See also Simon, "Innocence without naivete".

<sup>76</sup> Levi, *The drowned and the saved*. See also Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 256 and 265; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 168-169 and 218-219. Portelli in his discussion of "uchronic dreams" also mentions the idea that a struggle we situate 'out-there' (between, in the case of Portelli's study, "irreducible rebels and passive conformists"), is actually "run[ning] within each individual in ever-changing shapes and terms". Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 109.

<sup>77</sup> This resonates with Wertsch's discussion of Bakhtin's analysis of alterity being within the individual. Wertsch, *Mind as action*, 116-117. See also Wineburg, *Historical thinking*, 24; Eppert, "Entertaining history".

<sup>78</sup> See for a discussion of individuals' and groups' "pressures towards identification" and "need [...] to expel and destroy, in an external receptacle for these projections, any sense of disharmony or badness", Figlio, "Oral history and the unconscious", 128-129. In the case of GB's learners, the "external receptacle" includes the older, Jewish generation that experienced the Holocaust. In the case of MD's class, the learners allocated clear 'hero' roles to their South African forefathers who, they stated, fought during Apartheid, this in contrast to their 'Holocaust Other' (my words), the Jewish concentration camp prisoners who, according to the learners, did not fight.

<sup>79</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 12.

## Chapter Nine

### The empathy imperative

International literature on oral history, history education and the Holocaust provides us with a conceptual language to talk about and reflect upon the challenges of intergenerational transmission of primary narratives about atrocities. National and international literature presents the sharing of primary narratives as something that needs to happen, in order to prevent the atrocity from happening again. At the same time, literature (especially international literature) questions this imperative, pointing out that we need to investigate *how* this ‘never again’ happens or can happen. Some primary witnesses are painfully aware of this challenge. In an afterword to essays honouring his seventieth birthday, Elie Wiesel reflects on the state of the world and asks a daring question to Holocaust survivors:

[I]s it perhaps our fault that the world remains unchanged? If two or three generations have ignored or rejected our message, could it be that it was poorly and inadequately handed down? Should we have chosen other words, another language to speak the unspeakable?<sup>1</sup>

Simon in his *The touch of the past*, similarly, warns against the belief that remembrance leads to redemption: practices of remembrance were used, for example in Bosnia in the mid-1990s, in order to remove or annihilate ‘the other’. This, however, he claims, does not release us from the obligations of remembrance.<sup>2</sup>

The central claim of this study is that, in the context of South African education, there is an additional challenge to the above imperative namely the paradoxical, *multiple*, positionings South African educators find themselves in, being both teachers *and* primary witnesses to the Apartheid regime. How does one teach about an authoritarian past in a “quasi-democratic”<sup>3</sup> country where the majority of teachers and museum facilitators have directly experienced that past in one way or the other, a country where the past has visible traces in the present? How does one teach or learn to be empathic when we (as teachers and learners) easily conflate self and others in intergenerational dialogues?

In this concluding chapter, I argue that answers to the above challenges are not easy and predictable. I became aware of this thanks to the feedback from teachers GB, BD and MD on Chapter Eight and thanks to the feedback from the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators who responded to the analysis in Chapter Five. As a result, I

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<sup>1</sup> Wiesel, “Afterword”, 161. See also Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 1-2. See also LaCapra, *Writing history*, 39 and 98-99.

<sup>3</sup> Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 4.

substantially re-wrote this concluding chapter, shifting it away from the (very attractive) idea that I might have found *the* answer. This ‘final answer’ took the form of solely focussing on the role of the high school history teachers, and how we (trainers and lecturers) *should* teach/train them. This answer did and does not work in that it ignored the question that originally sparked this research and which emerged out of my own experiences as a facilitator at a travelling Anne Frank exhibition in 1998 (Ghent): ‘How do we teach about an atrocity like the Holocaust, when we have not experienced it ourselves?’ It ignored my experiences as a lecturer of history and education students, in which I was sharing and trying to embody the theoretical ideals while also observing different, multiple, responses to this attempt, both within myself as well as in the students. It ignored my own uncanniness around writing Chapters Five, Seven and Eight, and the uncomfortable, albeit dynamic, feelings teachers and facilitators had after reading the analysis in these Chapters. It also ignored the question why GB and BD asked, in response to my analysis, when I would organise ‘the workshop’; and why I felt uncomfortable with that question and answered saying I do not believe in workshops.<sup>4</sup>

The crux of my present argument is that *the* answers do not arise out of this study. More likely, they arise out of an analytic and constructive dialogue between the different groups of educators that are involved in South African history education.<sup>5</sup> These groups do not only include the high school history teachers, but also the museum facilitators, teacher trainers, subject advisors, lecturers and researchers in historical studies and education. The role then of this small-scale, qualitative study based on ‘snapshot’-impressions of teachers’ and facilitators’ perceptions, practices, fears and desires, is not to generalise and to prescribe ‘the right way’. Its role lies in sharing its findings, suggesting future research and advocating for an analytic and constructive dialogue between these different groups of educators. It is apparent that even when teachers have access to, or have been trained in, well-developed pedagogical theories (which all represent multiple and valid ‘right ways’), these still do not necessarily translate into practice. I would thus argue that another ‘right way’ or pedagogical theory is not the answer. However, advocating for an analytic, constructive dialogue is of course a truth claim in itself – something one cannot fully escape in academic and daily language.

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<sup>4</sup> GB and BD, Personal communication, 22 June 2007.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapters One and Two for a definition of an analytic and constructive dialogue. Below, I return to this definition.

### **What is the intergenerational dialogue about?**

My analysis in Chapter Four focussed on interviews with museum facilitators who, because of their subject-position, propagate the use of primary narratives in history education. I situated their positionings within recent academic work with the aim to establish a perception of the intergenerational dialogue that focuses on the *characteristics* of this dialogue and presents an awareness of discursive boundaries as enabling, rather than impeding, the interaction. This perception can be summarised as follows: An intergenerational dialogue about past atrocities takes place between a self and a generational Other, whether it be the primary witness learners meet in the museum, their teacher, their (grand)parents, or - in the position of the primary witness – young learners or his/her very own (grand)children. Understanding, or rather interpreting,<sup>6</sup> in this context is a challenge for all parties involved because it entails experiencing, conveying and listening to past atrocities. Moreover, it is social, involves imaginative empathy *and* is disruptive. It entails not only a paradigmatic knowing, it entails also a listening to other people's narratives. It entails practices of imagining, but also of forgetting and not wanting to know what is said and/or what is left unsaid by the generational Other. Lastly, understanding/interpreting is not just about (primary or secondary) experiencing, it demands extension and re-interpretation, and as Simon *et al.* explain, it summons one "to teach others".<sup>7</sup> It entails the realisation that the reality of the generational Other differs from one's own and that understanding might lie in respecting this difference or the 'unknowability' that makes up the mode of address of the two parties.<sup>8</sup> It also entails the realisation that as much as 'the Other' is part of the world outside the self, the self, within its own being, also has unknowable or unconscious characteristics, which one does not always want to, or is able to, address.<sup>9</sup>

### **What is history and what is history education about?**

While the above construction of the intergenerational dialogue took place during, and through reflection upon, interviews with especially primary witness museum facilitators, Grade Nine history teachers did not easily position themselves as primary witnesses nor reflect on the intergenerational dialogue *as being part of history education*. In addition, the analysis in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight showed that the interviewed and observed Grade Nine

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<sup>6</sup> Ellsworth, referring to Felman and Lacan, advocates using the verb 'interpreting' rather than 'understanding' to avoid "the fancy of understanding" or the possibility of full understanding. Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Simon with Di Paolantonio and Clamen, "Remembrance as praxis", 155. See also Simon and Eppert, "Remembering obligation", 178.

<sup>8</sup> See also Simon with Di Paolantonio and Clamen, "Remembrance as praxis", 147-148; Simon, "Innocence without naivete", 53.

<sup>9</sup> See Levi, *The drowned and the saved*; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 256 and 265; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 168-169 and 218-219; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 129 and 133 *passim*; Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 109; Wertsch, *Mind as action*, 116-117.

history teachers and museum facilitators have particular perceptions and practices that do not necessarily run parallel to expectations and assumptions expressed in academic literature on the intergenerational dialogue and in documents of the South African Department of Education.

Chapter Six presented views history teachers hold of what history and history education is about. The chapter concluded that a majority of teachers mostly spoke from within a factual approach to history with its particular underlying epistemological roles: there is one, best, story about the past that teachers must tell and the learners must accept and reproduce. Chapters Seven and Eight, looking at teachers' practices, indicated that a majority of the observed teachers told this 'one, right version of the past' *routinely*, following a repetition led mode of pedagogical practice. This contrasts with what the Department of Education envisions as a pedagogy that focuses on not only disciplined historical skills but also learning outcomes around historical consciousness, citizenship and democracy. Only a small group of teachers seemed to engage with the Department's vision by advocating not only a factual but also a disciplinary and sometimes even a positioned approach to history within a convention led or a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice.

I mentioned in Chapter Six, however, that the curriculum documents I refer to in this study seem to be unclear and potentially confusing regarding which approach to history the teachers 'should' follow. I would thus suggest that future research needs to be done on the Department's stance towards approaches of history and modes of pedagogical practice.<sup>10</sup> In addition, more research on how teachers put the South African curriculum statement, as well as their tertiary education in history and in education, into practice within particular spatial and institutional contexts, using theoretical frameworks such as Jacklin's for example, is an additional area from which much benefit could come.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) social sciences*, 4-6 and 92-93. More specifically, research done by Kros, Siebörger and Bundy needs to be taken further. Kros, for example, points out the curriculum's pre-occupation with skills and outcomes, and suspicion of 'content'. She is sceptical about whether this safeguards, what I call, a disciplinary approach to history. Kros, "Telling lies and then hoping to forget all about history". See also Siebörger, "History and the emerging nation" and Bundy, "New nation, new history?"

<sup>11</sup> As mentioned in Chapters One and Three, Barton and Levstik point out that teachers' *knowledge* of the discipline and of pedagogic practices does not automatically translate into classroom *practice*. Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 246-260. See also Chisholm, "The making of South Africa's national curriculum statement"; Harley and Wedekind, "Curriculum 2005"; Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 205-206; Kros, *Trusting to the process*, 4-6; Bain, "Into the breach". Jacklin rightly points out the importance of studying spatial and constitutional contexts in which teachers' practice takes place. Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*. The absence of a detailed analysis of the contexts in which the interviewed and observed teachers worked is a limitation of the present study.

### **What is the role of primary narratives and other forms of positioning self and others in history education?**

In addition, only a small number of teachers used primary narratives in their classroom interactions, an activity which the Department encourages.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, the case study of GB's and MD's classroom practices, in advantaged schools, is able to illustrate the *potential* of using primary narratives. The presence of primary narratives in MD's class seemed to influence the way her 'black' and 'coloured' learners interacted: They actively responded to narratives brought into the interaction, even though the teacher (similar to teachers described in Chapter Seven) did not provide a discipline-specific space to support this. GB, one of the more educated teachers, and the one whom I could observe the longest, did provide the latter, inviting her 'white', privileged learners to question their perspectives and identities, but conflated generations in her positionings of self and others in history. Her learners took on this conflation, but also resisted its implications, both in the context of the history of Apartheid South Africa and the history of the Holocaust.

The teachers that I observed in this study, expressed their experiences of Apartheid in various ways, and not always, it seemed, to the benefit of the learners, the teachers or the 'never again' imperative. While not all teachers constructed clearly *distinguishable* primary narratives, they did position themselves and the learners in history in the form of, for example, addresses and regulative comments. Teachers can be primary witnesses to Apartheid, but do not therefore automatically speak from the 'I'. The 'absence' of free speech and of a belief in an ever-other future, and, as some would put it, a 'lack' of educational quality, involves not merely a material concern (in the form of material resources and one's professional training), but also, and maybe more importantly,<sup>13</sup> the teachers' self-image and their moral status in society.

This seems especially pertinent for the teachers I analysed in Chapter Seven, teachers who are part of previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa. The voices of these teachers are "weaker than others" because, as Winter and Sivan would state it, "they lack resources – or [to use] the metaphor of the choir – they are too far from the microphone. They may also be weak because of self-censorship due to lack of moral status in the eyes of others, or due to a low self-image".<sup>14</sup> How can these particular teachers assist future generations in actively taking part in life, and in creating change, when, as Modiba suggests, teachers are not aware

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<sup>12</sup> Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) social sciences*, 4-6 and 92-93. Department of Education South Africa, *Revised national curriculum statement grades R – 9 (schools) teacher's guide*, 29 and 36.

<sup>13</sup> See Taylor *et al.*, *Getting schools working*.

<sup>14</sup> Winter and Sivan, "Setting the framework", 30.

of the implications of their own role in forming, conserving or changing values in education?<sup>15</sup> And how can researchers and teacher trainers, like myself, not to mention history curriculum advisors, assist and work with these teachers, when both parties might perceive these encounters as ‘difficult’, and as generating anxiety? The observations discussed in this study seem to suggest that teachers’ primary experiences are ‘an excess’ that non-the-less seeps through, even when teachers try to avoid them, for example by *not* sharing their own primary narratives.<sup>16</sup> This seeping through happens in uncanny ways in forms of regulative comments for example or when learners specifically *ask* the teachers about their own experiences.

The challenge, however, lies on a deeper and more inclusive level. Educators *across the wide spectrum of institutions* shared a similarly deep yet differing investment in not only the ideal of nation-building, but also the epistemological roles, underlying a factual approach to history. This finding challenges theory in important ways.

Firstly, while Seixas interprets the factual approach to history as “enhancing collective memory”,<sup>17</sup> the interviews with the teachers showed that teachers hold onto an exclusive sub-group identity while adhering at the same time to an inclusive, redemptive ‘new South Africa’ identity. The adjective ‘collective’, therefore, requires qualification. In addition, the observations showed that teachers conflated the agency of generations (speaking from an undifferentiated ‘we’<sup>18</sup>), as GB did, and often also the historical time and contexts in the case of JJ, KQ, and BM. A majority of the teachers conflated generations when teaching about the Holocaust and/or Apartheid, regardless of whether they shared primary narratives in the interaction or not. GB expressed this conflation in an unexpected, challenging way. Not only did she challenge her learners to question the ideology of their inner group (‘white’ South Africans), but also to take up a responsibility as members of a community that has for centuries benefited from an oppressive regime (a positioning that seems to adhere to the ideal of an analytic, constructive dialogue). In addition, she also positioned her self *and* the learners as “*perpetrators*”.

While learners mostly adhered to a conflation of generations, especially when positioning their forefathers as ‘heroes’, ‘freedom fighters’ and ‘victims’, some learners also showed

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<sup>15</sup> Modiba, “South African black teachers’ perceptions about their practice”.

<sup>16</sup> For a similar argument, see Gutierrez, “Making connections”, 360.

<sup>17</sup> Seixas, ““Sweigen!””

<sup>18</sup> Levstik in her research on history teachers in the U.S.A. also mentions the use of the first personal pronoun as a form of establishing/confirming a collective community. In contrast to my approach, she does not speak in terms of generations. Levstik, “Articulating the silences”.

anxiety around potential 'other', less desirable, positionings and remedied this in diverse, seeming paradoxical ways. MD's and KQ's learners either held up an unquestioned 'hero' image of their forefathers, or, as KQ reported, differentiated the generations, stating that the older generation was "*stupid*" and "*not strong enough*" victims of the Apartheid regime. GB's learners responded similarly in their interpretation of the Jews that perished during the Holocaust. In the classes on Apartheid, however, they expressed anxiety by not questioning the conflation of generations and seemingly wanting to protect or excuse the older generation (including the teacher).

Secondly, while a conflation of generations never or rarely happened in the interactions in the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, the allocation of specific, 'fixed', positions of both past and present agents, disquieted learners. This can be interpreted in different, seemingly contradictory, ways: Chapters Five and Eight showed that especially in regards to the discussion on racism in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre learners responded in meaningful ways both during and after the museum interaction. During the workshop in the Holocaust Centre, while they first resisted but then accepted the *moral* imperative of standing up in the face of an atrocity, they pointed out that taking positions is a *social* endeavour that takes place within a specific context.

After the museum visit, both teacher and learners took the discussion further in their class interactions. While GB questioned an 'authoritative' position, she personally used it, when speaking (much like the museum facilitators) in terms of what one *should* do or be. Her positionings of self and others in history, especially with the statement "*We are perpetrators. I was a perpetrator because I did nothing*", however, challenged the 'fixed' positions propagated in the Holocaust Centre. Her positionings of self and others in history seemed to show an awareness of the messy, chaotic and ambiguous social context that might have been absent in her and the facilitators' 'sermon-like' comments.

These responses form a potential challenge to Ellsworth who argues, in the context of teaching about justice in classrooms and in museums, against allocating 'fixed' positions or what she calls "teaching with a positive reference".<sup>19</sup> GB's case study seems to indicate that "teaching with a positive reference" is not necessarily 'negative' given the 'other' approaches to history to which the learners are exposed. This finding suggests that it might not have to be our primary concern (as teachers, facilitators, subject advisors, trainers and lecturers) to find and pursue *the* right way of teaching about atrocities and using primary narratives in history

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<sup>19</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 150-157; Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 99-115.

education. Our audience (learners but also teachers) take these interactions home, in different, *multiple*, ways. ‘Home’ in this instance needs to be understood as ‘to the self’ as well as ‘to other contexts’, such as the teachers’ and learners’ own (present and/or future) classroom, museum, family, and friends. In addition, as some museum facilitators pointed out, the passage of time might play an important role in this.<sup>20</sup>

Future research then needs to inform us on how and why certain kinds of interactions, and *combinations* of interactions, influence the learners’ sense of what is “virtuous good” and in how far they (will) admire a “virtuous good” in others and/or enact it themselves.<sup>21</sup> In addition, in-depth research is needed on the role and positionings of primary witness museum facilitators in pedagogical interactions with the younger generation, and how one can theorise these kinds of pedagogical interactions. Also, a more in-depth and long-term study on the role and positionings of learners across different schools (with different ‘cultures’ in regards to learners’ participation in the interaction) in intergenerational dialogues could add significant value to this area.

Theories such as the ones developed by Seixas and Jacklin and by academics working on the ‘ideal’ intergenerational dialogue are useful in this kind of research, but also need to be *elaborated upon* by these future studies. As my study suggests, pedagogical interactions are far more complex than these theories suggest. In addition, teachers’ approaches to history and modes of pedagogical practice are not one-dimensional and straightforward, and the ‘more complex’ approaches and modes (as the theories do suggest) *include and transcend* the other approaches and modes.

The study indicates that, on the one side of the spectrum, a factual approach to history – if not accompanied by a disciplinary and a positioned approach - might impede a constructive, analytic dialogue, regardless of how laudatory the building of a ‘new’ South Africa, a ‘new’ nation, may be through exclusively ‘redemptive’ narratives.<sup>22</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, teachers adhering to the convention led and the discourse led modes of practice, engage with both factual and disciplinary approaches to history, and – in the case of the discourse led mode – make additional use of a positioned approach to history. The question

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Four. See also Cunningham, “Empathy without illusions”, 27.

<sup>21</sup> As Eco’s quote (at the beginning of this study) indicates, considering something as a “virtuous good” does not necessarily mean one will “do something just as meritorious”. Instead, we might “recognise that the thing is good but, out of egoism or fear, we would not like to find ourselves in a similar situation. We recognise this as a good, but another person’s good, which we look on with a certain detachment, albeit with a certain emotion, and without being prompted by desire”. Eco, *On beauty*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Compare with the discussion in section II “History education and historical consciousness” in Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 103-211.

remains, however, whether a teacher's ability to use multiple approaches to history within a convention led or a discourse led mode of practice aid the use of primary narratives to facilitate constructive, analytic dialogues between a teacher and the next generation.

A crucial question that we need to address in future is how and why we as educators interact with, include and exclude, these different approaches and modes of practice, *and* the intergenerational dialogue. How and why are the epistemological roles underlying a factual approach to history, placing the teacher in an 'authoritative' position and the learners in an 'accepting and reproducing' position, so attractive while they, simultaneously, contrast with the ideal of changing for the better the nation, the learners, but also ourselves? Why do teachers and facilitators across different institutions invest highly in a conflation of their own and the children's generations? When and why do learners adhere to and resist this kind of conflation? Why does the District Six Museum facilitator describe his interaction with the learners as "*a lecture*" and expect it to take that form, when, as he explained, the teacher would have already introduced him as a former District Six inhabitant and a primary witness?<sup>23</sup> Would the interaction take another form if the facilitator had positioned himself more clearly as a primary witness - speaking from the 'I' - as, it seemed to me, the learners were inviting him to do? Would other groups of learners react differently to these various scenarios and would the same group of learners react in different ways according to 'where they are at in their own lives' - at times for example desiring to simply be 'spoon fed'?

As I argue below, an analytic and constructive dialogue between the different groups of educators needs to address these questions. This kind of dialogue is *analytic* in its acknowledgment and reflection upon feelings of estrangement and uncanniness raised during the telling and listening to primary (and secondary) narratives about atrocities.<sup>24</sup> It is *constructive* in its "different" listening, because, as Simon explains, it holds the potential "to renew a reconstructed living memory for a community".<sup>25</sup> This is a living memory "that dialectically presses on the sense of one's future purposes and possibilities"<sup>26</sup> and in which

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<sup>23</sup> The facilitator said that he speaks as a representative of the displaced community of District Six - which in itself represents the displaced communities across South Africa. In addition, he said, "*I am not trying to tell a District Six STORY ... it would take forever ... where are you gonna start and when are you gonna end?*" District Six museum facilitator, Personal communication, 19 July 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*; Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 130-145; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 1-13 and 14-31; LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 185-188; Nystrand, "Dialogic instruction".

<sup>25</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 32. Simon with Eppert explain the relationship between witnessing and living memory as follows: "Central to witnessing is either the re-presentation to others of what one has heard or seen, or the enactment of one's relationship with others so as to make evident that one's practice has been informed by the living memory of prior testimony". Simon with Eppert, "The remembering obligation", 53.

“we can come to a recognition of the ethical relationship between self and other in the narratives we tell [and listen to]”.<sup>27</sup>

### **What is the role of the educator?**

It is clear from the above, that the specific academic contribution this study aims to achieve relates to the *epistemological* role of the history educator.<sup>28</sup> As I pointed out in the introduction, the South African Department of Education does not describe teachers as persons, having a personal history that might positively or negatively (or both) influence the pedagogic interaction. Even though the Department describes teachers as “learning mediators”, “leaders” and having a “community, citizenship and pastoral role”,<sup>29</sup> how exactly teachers become or learn this is not specified. As mentioned above, a factual approach to history is strong amongst educators. This mirrors a process present on a larger, societal, level. We might have changed laws and policies, but changing practices and attitudes remains a daily struggle.<sup>30</sup> While defending an anti-Apartheid and anti-Holocaust pedagogical stance, stakeholders in the field of education drew and still draw on the rich histories developing since the 1970s as various alternatives to the Apartheid controlled school history. However, within this process, these stakeholders might be tempted to create “official histories, histories of victors, of great men and of grand narratives”,<sup>31</sup> without reflecting on the tension between education’s illusion of understanding and the actual performativity and the undecidability of teaching.<sup>32</sup> More concretely, the danger of these kinds of unreflective ‘replacement’ histories might be that, as Simon explains, in only engaging with suppressed narratives of resistance and discrediting dominant narratives of supremacy, exclusion and otherness, we “[fail] to interrogate the basis for their intelligibility”.<sup>33</sup>

This interrogation of “the basis of the intelligibility” of dominant narratives needs to happen within *all forms* of history education and research. It includes an interrogation of the theories as well as the language we use as teachers, museum facilitators, lecturers and researchers. For this reason, a workshop for high school history teachers on, for example, the intergenerational dialogue, the complexities of the ‘never again’ imperative, or the relationship between the knowledge and confidence of the teacher and the learning amongst

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<sup>27</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 23. Simon speaks about “the practice of a transactive public memory”, Simon, *The touch of the past*, 88-89. See also Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 133.

<sup>28</sup> See also Bain, “Into the breach”.

<sup>29</sup> Department of Education, *National education policy act*, 13-14.

<sup>30</sup> See Harley *et al.* “the real and the ideal”; Hindle, “Textbooks in the classroom”; Jeppie, “Africa: Whose history? Whose memory?”

<sup>31</sup> Chisholm, “The history curriculum”, 179-180.

<sup>32</sup> See Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*.

<sup>33</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 21. See also Kros, *Trusting to the process*.

the learners,<sup>34</sup> would not necessarily assist the teachers to change. Nor would a professional training, focusing on a discourse led mode of pedagogical practice and a positioned approach to history, necessarily impact on the teachers' practice. Even though, as an academic, one could argue that this mode of practice and approach to history, while including and transcending the other modes of practices and approaches to history, arguably provides the most flexible and professional context in which to share primary narratives about "the three great P's".<sup>35</sup> These workshops and trainings do not necessarily help teachers to change, as long as the lecturer/workshop facilitator 'tells them what to do'.

As GB's practice seems to suggest, the discourse led mode of pedagogical practice and the positioned approach to history do not *automatically* guarantee an openness, which Bar-On, Ellsworth and others are speaking about, even though the interaction was experienced by the learners and teacher as engaging and heated.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, I (as a lecturer/teacher and workshop facilitator) might attempt to argue for all the above, but in the act of doing so, create a 'dominant' narrative against which teachers, students and/or learners might resist, or which they might take on without questioning it.

To be able to work with the several challenges mentioned above (we are not merely talking about 'never again' in relation to a past atrocity) I argue for an analytic and constructive dialogue between educators active in the different forms of history education. I perceive these kinds of dialogues as important, dialogues that invite us to consciously reflect on (the interrelatedness of) self and the world, and our desire for *both* closure (historical certainty, emblemization and identification) and openness (fragmentation, otherness).<sup>37</sup> However, I am aware of the challenge of this task. The challenge, more specifically, lies in the danger I described above in my reflection on GB's and BD's request for a workshop and my desire 'to quickly fix them'.

Education researchers have suggested that many teachers are not proactive citizens i.e. they expect initiative to come from elsewhere.<sup>38</sup> As educators, we easily forget that to change is to learn and that we might have more in common with the people we teach (and research) than

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<sup>34</sup> Taylor and Vinjevoold, "Teaching and learning", 156.

<sup>35</sup> Bruner, *The culture of education*. See also Nystrand, "What's a teacher to do?"; Bage, *Narrative matters*, 76-81; Seixas, *Theorizing historical consciousness*, 106- 201; Simon and Eppert, "Remembering obligation".

<sup>36</sup> See also Felman, "Education and crisis".

<sup>37</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 33 and 77. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies* and Friedlander, "Trauma, memory, and transference". See LaCapra who states that empathy plays a role as a counterforce to victimization, scapegoating and unproblematic identification. LaCapra, *Writing history*, 218-219. See also the conclusion of Chapter Eight.

<sup>38</sup> Taylor and Vinjevoold, "Teaching and learning", 161.

we might want to admit. If a history teacher wants to assist his/her learners to change, he/she needs to change as well. Similarly, if we (as teachers/lecturers, trainers and researchers) want to assist teachers, museum facilitators, and students to change, we need to change as well. As Corey argues in relation to group counselling, group leaders need to *live*, and not merely promote, growth-oriented lives themselves, in order to encourage growth in the group members' lives.<sup>39</sup> GB attempted to do this by modelling being a historian and by mentioning the ancient spiritual idea that “*within every person is a whole universe*” in her interactions with the learners.<sup>40</sup> She referred to this idea again in the reflective interview with the researcher, in which she also spoke about teachers' roles in (often unconsciously) modelling racism. Her choice not to disclose certain aspects of her personal identity, however, impeded her appeal to the learners to disclose aspects of their identity.<sup>41</sup>

For GB a growth-oriented life meant to challenge her own and her learners' assumptions around history and particularly one's personal responsibility in present South Africa.<sup>42</sup> She did this both in her “*volatile conversations*” with the learners and in the very act of being-observed by the researcher. For other teachers, a growth-oriented life might mean leaving either temporary or permanently the teaching profession. Two teachers, analysed in this research, made this choice: BD left the profession for six months to recover, while MD left the profession in order to pursue tertiary studies and a new career.

A growth-oriented life is, however, a significant challenge, because it involves taking risks, moving beyond comfortable boundaries and assumptions. This may take the form of unsettlement, conflict and pain, which many see as “unproductive, anti-pedagogical, and [...] in need of therapeutic intervention”.<sup>43</sup> This idea also seems prevalent amongst South African historians. After a seminar presentation of this thesis at the University of Cape Town, a member of the audience stated in a one-on-one conversation that sharing primary narratives about the Apartheid regime is “*uninteresting*” and not adhering to “*good teaching*”.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Corey, “Group leadership”, 53.

<sup>40</sup> See also Khalil Gibran's quote from his *A Treasury*, in the beginning of this study. The quote is taken from Gibran, *The essential Khalil Gibran*, 69.

<sup>41</sup> This, however, does not necessarily mean that the learners did *not* (learn to) reflect on their own identity making and their own assumptions.

<sup>42</sup> This makes GB an exceptional teacher. Barton and Levstik state (in the context of history education in the U.S.A. and the U.K.) that “we know of few, if any, teachers who emphasize the origins of present-day values, attitudes, and beliefs”. Barton and Levstik, *Teaching history*, 219. Also compare with Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 202.

<sup>43</sup> Simon with Rosenberg, “Beyond the logic of emblemization”, 79. See also Simon, *The touch of the past*, 80.

<sup>44</sup> History lecturer, Personal communication, 24 May 2007.

Below, I argue that educators might benefit from telling and listening to, their own past and present experiences of the Apartheid legacy in a ‘safe space’ outside the classroom. This might take the form of individual professional counselling outside the school environment as well as the form of an analytic and constructive dialogue amongst educators practicing different forms of history education (high schools, universities, museums),<sup>45</sup> and possibly – similar to the approach in the caring professions – with the assistance of ‘supervisors’ who would facilitate this kind of dialogue.<sup>46</sup>

### **What is the role of an analytic and constructive dialogue between educators?**

As educators and researchers, we might agree on the underlying naivety in the ‘never again’ imperative while holding onto the imperative that we need to share primary narratives with the next generation in an attempt to change for the better. To real-ise this, however, we might have to let go the underlying assumption of closure (‘if we tell the stories, the atrocities will not happen again’) while, *at the same time*, acknowledging its attractiveness.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, we might have to investigate how and why we (as lecturers, museum facilitators, teachers and learners) tend to conflate generations; why we at times move towards conflation, and at other times resist it. The question how and why educators and learners allocate more ‘authority’ to a factual approach to history is equally important to address.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, we need to investigate *how* a pedagogy, which entails reflection on “the difficult problems of hearing, understanding, and knowing” might offer a “remembrance as a hopeful practice of critical learning”,<sup>49</sup> an alternative to a ‘total(itarian)’ understanding of past and present.

As educators, I argue, we might need to interact with not only the challenges of the ‘never again’ imperative, but also with what I call ‘the empathy imperative’ and its own challenges. This imperative concerns *a sensibility to engage simultaneously with multiple positionings*. I interpret the latter as nuancing an unquestioned conflation of generations on three levels: (1) an empathic (unsettling) and *historical* differentiation between generations, between the self and the Generational Other, (2) an empathic (unsettling) differentiation between the self and the ‘racial’/social... Other, and, (3) an empathic (unsettling) differentiation and acknowledging of the Other *within* oneself. The latter paradoxically brings together the first

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<sup>45</sup> Compare with Krondorfer’s cross-cultural “spontaneous communitas”. Krondorfer, *Remembrance and reconciliation*, 87-91.

<sup>46</sup> See also Bar-On, *The indescribable and the undiscussable*, 202. Compare with Jones’ advice on “coping strategies for interviewers”. Jones, “Distressing histories and unhappy interviewing”, 55-56.

<sup>47</sup> See also Field, “Beyond ‘healing’” on letting go of the underlying assumptions of closure on a national level (in the discussion around the T.R.C. for example), as well as in the practice of oral history.

<sup>48</sup> See Kros, *Trusting to the process*, 5-6.

<sup>49</sup> Simon *et al.*, *Between hope and despair*, 6. See also Simon, “The pedagogical insistence of public memory” and Simon, *The touch of the past*, 4.

two differentiations and, to an extent, expresses a 'checked' or careful appreciation of conflating the self and Other. It also resonates with the ancient spiritual idea that "*within every person is a whole universe*", mentioned by GB in interactions with her learners (see above).

I want to argue that this empathy imperative can play a role within an analytic and constructive dialogue amongst the various groups of history educators. This kind of dialogue might enable educators to provide a 'safe place' for their learners/students, as well as a 'container' in which this kind of dialogue can take place. The words 'safe' and 'safe place' are important; this is what the clinical child psychologist Winnicott calls "a good-enough holding environment". While Winnicott developed the latter notion in the context of parenting, Ellsworth (amongst others) applied it to pedagogy. "A good-enough holding environment", she explains, provides "some measure" of continuity, reliability and hospitality so that we dare to take risks to "break continuity", question and move beyond the known, beyond tradition.<sup>50</sup>

To use primary narratives in constructive ways (ways which invite us to reflect on our desire for *both* closure and openness<sup>51</sup> and on (the interrelatedness of) the self and the world), we need not only awareness of and training in different approaches to history, modes of pedagogical practice<sup>52</sup> and the characteristics of intergenerational dialogue. As stated above, theoretical knowledge does not guarantee one will *practise* it. In addition, while the sharing of primary narratives is important from a historical, sociological and psychological point of view, this kind of engagement is insufficient as long as the teacher does not safeguard the learners' well-being. As Field argues, the teacher's empathy in the first instance must lie with the learners and in the second instance with the primary witnesses of the previous generations.<sup>53</sup> This is especially pertinent when the primary witness is the teacher his/herself. We need, therefore a constructive and analytic understanding of empathy. This means that, similar to the principle followed in group counselling,<sup>54</sup> and applying LaCapra's

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<sup>50</sup> Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 70. Compare with how Simon and Eppert define "communities of memory", Simon and Eppert, "The remembering obligation", 186-188. The difference between their "communities of memory" and the kind of space I am talking about here is the paradoxical, multiple, positionings of the history educator, being a teacher *and* primary witness at the same time. The 'safe space' encompasses not only the classroom but also safe spaces outside the classroom *for the teacher* to enable him/her to provide a 'safe space' inside the classroom *for the learners*.

<sup>51</sup> See also Friedlander, "Trauma, memory, and transference", 260-262.

<sup>52</sup> See also Jacklin, *Repetition and difference*, 228.

<sup>53</sup> Field, Personal communication, 13 October 2006.

<sup>54</sup> In drawing interdisciplinarily from psychology, I do not advocate the revamping of a pedagogical interaction into a counselling session. Rather, I wish to avoid a situation in which a pedagogical interaction becomes an 'unhealthy', i.e. uncontained, counselling session in which roles and boundaries are blurred.

understanding of “empathic unsettlement”, the teacher takes the authority and final responsibility for the interaction by focussing on and being aware of the learners’ position. The teacher expresses this awareness by involving her imagination to sense what it must be like to be the learner (a stage of identification), without, however, disregarding her own position and the awareness that that position is different to that of the learners and that she cannot reach ‘full’ understanding of both her own and the learners’ positionings.

For teachers who are in this sense ‘balanced’ and able to reflect, the empathy imperative is the overarching imperative that holds together, as it were, the teacher’s modes of pedagogical practice and approaches to history. The empathy imperative involves the teacher’s intuition in deciding *if, when and how* it is beneficial to the interaction to share his/her own and others’ primary narratives. In this case, a teacher can only share narratives about his/her own (ever-changing and ever-strange) positionings only as far as it relates to what is taking place in the pedagogical interaction at that moment and as far it does not impede the learners’ wellbeing. In this situation, the self-disclosure of the teacher must be for the learners’ well-being, not for the teacher’s, for example, to get empathy (or some would say sympathy<sup>55</sup>). The learners, therefore, do not *have to* empathise with the teacher. However, one does not easily *measure* learners’ well-being (some discomfort within a “good-enough holding environment” can be conducive to reflection and change<sup>56</sup>) and *how* the empathy imperative translates into actual pedagogical practice, and other kinds of interactions, where an analytic and constructive dialogue is held, needs to be researched in more detail in future studies.

The dialogue amongst educators might benefit from including an engagement with the complexity and characteristics of intergenerational positionings, “empathic unsettlement”, and a reflection on discursive boundaries when listening to and talking about atrocities.<sup>57</sup> This kind of support might assist educators in reflecting upon the question often raised in the context of traumatic histories, namely “How does one teach a traumatic history without increasing inappropriate psychological defenses?”<sup>58</sup> Other questions especially pertinent in the present South African context are: how does a history teacher balance his/her ‘two hats’ of being a history teacher and being a primary witness? When and why does a history teacher prefer to be ‘silent’ about conflicts, avoid unsettlement, conflict and pain, and instead

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<sup>55</sup> See the discussion on the complexities of empathy in Chapter One.

<sup>56</sup> Learners’ refusal to empathise with the teacher, for example, can be taken further within “good-enough holding environments”. Eppert explains the potential of “pedagogies of refusal” and “learning through crisis” as ways to address one’s own (the learner’s) emotional wall as a protection against disturbing histories. Eppert, “Entertaining history”, 90-93.

<sup>57</sup> Compare with Simon with Eppert, “Remembering obligation”, 62-63.

<sup>58</sup> Hartman raised this question in *The longest shadow*, p. 24. See also Simon and Eppert, “The remembering obligation”.

emphasise a positive image of nation-building?<sup>59</sup> A space in which these questions are actively explored might help teachers to find not only a critical and ethical language and ways of dealing with sharing primary narratives, but also an (intuitive) awareness of when and how they can use self-disclosure in the form of primary narratives in their classrooms.<sup>60</sup> In the words of Simon and Eppert, it might enable a learning that entails two forms of attentiveness: not only a “learning about” but also a “learning from”, not only discipline-specific *judgment* but also *apprenticeship* in witnessing the performance of another person’s experience.<sup>61</sup> The listener/learner, in other words, approaches the primary narrative not only as historical knowledge, but also as a summoning.<sup>62</sup>

On a practical level, this kind of analytic and constructive dialogue amongst educators might assist in helping us to develop analytic and constructive dialogues with our learners/students on, for example, both telling and listening to narratives about domination (to dominate and to be dominated).<sup>63</sup> The space might also enable teachers to provide the learners with a context in which they prepare for an encounter with a primary witness, such as a grandparent, CW or the primary witnesses facilitating at museums. It might enable them to assist learners in dealing with feelings of anxiety when telling and listening to narratives about the Apartheid regime, a regime their parents and grandparents have experienced first hand in different, ever-changing, roles and positionings – roles and positionings parents and grandparents might not necessarily or easily speak about with the younger generation. In addition, it might provide teachers with tools to engage with our disappointment regarding the impossibility of closure or healing. This may give insight into the complexity of forgetting,<sup>64</sup> and the emotional wall we put up when hearing a testimony we cannot approach as if it were merely fiction.<sup>65</sup> It

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<sup>59</sup> See Kros, *Trusting to the process*, 12-13.

<sup>60</sup> Compare with Corey, “Group leadership”, 58-60.

<sup>61</sup> Simon and Eppert, “The remembering obligation”, 179-182. See also Simon with Rosenberg, “Beyond the logic of emblemization”, 85. Simon and Eppert argue that this “doubled attentiveness” enables what Friedlander and LaCapra have called a “working through”, described by the latter as “including mourning and modes of critical thought and practice”. LaCapra, *Writing history*, 22. See also LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*; Friedlander, “Trauma, memory, and transference”; Simon and Eppert, “The remembering obligation”, 180-182; Eppert, “Histories re-imagined”; Britzman, “If the story cannot end”.

<sup>62</sup> Simon and Eppert, “Remembering obligation”, 178-182; Simon, *The touch of the past*, 92-93 and 101-103; Simon with Di Paolantonio and Clamen, “Remembrance as praxis”; Rosenberg, “Intersecting memories”. See also Langer, *Holocaust testimonies*, 38; Felman, “Education and crisis”; Kurasawa, *A message in a bottle*, 5-6 and 22-23.

<sup>63</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 19. See also Eppert, “Entertaining history”.

<sup>64</sup> In her case study of students’ interpretations of Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Eppert explains how forgetting is part of working through (the witnessing of) trauma. In this context, forgetting is not understood as involving “indifference or oblivion” but as being “a dynamic movement directed toward a goal intimately connected with remembrance-learning”. Eppert, “Histories re-imagined”, 190. See also Passerini, “Memories between silence and oblivion”.

<sup>65</sup> See also Field, “Beyond ‘healing’”, 34; Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 139; Eppert, “Entertaining history”, 90-91.

might also offer teachers a space in which to interact with other stories that these narratives elicit in the learners and teachers (for example through free association<sup>66</sup>) in order to explore the present generation's response-ability to these narratives, instead of merely branding the latter as a presentism which needs to be avoided.<sup>67</sup> By deliberately looking at these unsettling dynamics, learning might take place. This learning is more likely to be strange for both speaker and listener, but opens the possibility of unknown and hopeful futures.<sup>68</sup>

Having said all this, an analytic and constructive dialogue suggests that ambiguities, complexities, contestation, inequalities and hurt are *not* avoidable.<sup>69</sup> Instead, these are part of the dialogue, being characteristics of the processes of democracy, education, and the process of being human.<sup>70</sup> A teacher can fight constructive struggles in the form of this kind of dialogue explicitly and purposefully without being able to (and wanting to) predict or control if and how his/her learners take this kind of dialogue home.<sup>71</sup> This implies, then, that the above-described suggestions do not, cannot, offer closure or name and ultimately pursue the Possible, because teachers, museum facilitators, lecturers, researchers, students and learners are simultaneously open to ambiguities, and wanting closure. Within this performative process, however, using a language (and space) of the kind described above might enable us to move *towards* the Possible, towards constructive agency and change.

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<sup>66</sup> Simon mentions reflecting upon our free associations in relation to atrocities as a moment of learning. See Simon, *The touch of the past*, 99. Simon with Eppert, Clamen and Beres exemplify an alternative practice of remembrance in their associative reading of traces of the Vilna Ghetto. Simon with Eppert, Clamen and Beres, "Witness as study". Eppert addresses the question how, in teaching about the Holocaust, teachers (should) include 'entertaining histories' (movies, novels, ...) that learners bring into the class. Eppert, "Entertaining history". While writing the final version of this thesis, I came across Britzman's most recent work, *Novel education*, in which she addresses free association, but also the role of fiction, interpretation and "the emotional experience of learning and not learning". One could ask if 'free association' falls under what Hartman warns against, namely the "opening toward popular culture [which is] as ominous as Pandora's Box". He depicts this opening toward popular culture as potentially trivialising the Holocaust. See his *The longest shadow*, 12. One might argue, however, that in a dialogue as described in this chapter, one can engage with reflection on associative meaning making processes of learners and teachers in 'checked', careful ways namely as 'a disciplined community' of historians and, as Eppert explains in relation to teaching about the Holocaust, as part of an "ethical remembrance". Eppert, "Entertaining history". See also LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 64-66. Hartman himself states that despite the "charged nature" of testimonies, "Historical knowledge can reenter [in the classroom], and all sorts of hard questions about the How and the Why". Hartman, *The longest shadow*, 140.

<sup>67</sup> Sonja Niederhumer, one of the proofreaders of this study, pointed out that the same could be said about 'pastism', the conscious and unconscious responses to present interactions of the older generation *through the lens of their past experiences*.

<sup>68</sup> See also Ellsworth, *Places of learning*, 31-36; Simon and Eppert, "The remembering obligation", 186-188.

<sup>69</sup> See also LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 64-66; Jagodzinski, "A strange introduction", xiii-lx; Schlender, "Sexual/textual encounters".

<sup>70</sup> Simon, *The touch of the past*, 61; LaCapra, *Writing history*, 60.

<sup>71</sup> Ellsworth, *Teaching positions*, 54-55 and 93-94, see especially her conclusion, "Pedagogy in the making", 151-175. See also Portelli who describes how his students were willing to learn to recognise ambiguity and openness in literature, but not in their own conversations. See his chapter "Absalom! Oral history and literature" in *The death of Luigi Trastulli*, 270-282.

### **A practical note**

I put subjects' quotes in italic, in order to distinguish between the subject's and the author's voice. According to international transcription standards, the subjects' speech has been reproduced as closely as possible. This means that the researcher has not 'corrected' vernacular.<sup>1</sup> I use the following transcription conventions:

- '(pause)' and '(long pause)' stand for short and somewhat longer pauses taken by the interviewee/speaker.
- Words in capital indicate that the interviewee/speaker raises his/her voice.
- Underlining indicates the author's emphasis.
- The author's editing and cutting interventions are of two kinds:
  - Cutting out the 'um's' and 'uh's' when this is not of discursive relevance is not indicated.
  - Cutting out long pieces of talk, due to repetition or irrelevance to the issue focussed on, is indicated by '[...]'. In situations where the speakers' words are unclear or not discernable, I indicate this by placing the word or phrase between straight brackets.
- I do not always include the (researcher's) question preceding the selected quote from the interviewee's response. I only include the question if this is of discursive relevance, for example, when I analyse the specific positioning or mode of address of the researcher and interviewee during the interview.
- While I tried to provide space for the voice of each interviewee, I am aware that some of the interviewees said more, or expressed themselves more succinctly. For these reasons, I quoted them more extensively.

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<sup>1</sup> See Yow, "Transcription".

## **Interviews, observations and personal communication**

### **Interviews**

#### Cape Town Holocaust Centre

AH, Interview on 15 September 2003, Cape Town.  
EW, Interview on 3 October 2003, Cape Town.  
IL, Interview on 24 May 2003, Cape Town.  
MG, Interview on 18 September 2003, Cape Town.  
MP, Interview on 2 June 2003, Cape Town.  
MS, Interview on 3 October 2003, Cape Town.  
PB, Interview on 17 June 2003, Cape Town.

#### District Six Museum

GC, Interview on 15 May 2003, Cape Town.  
HA, Interview on 1 July 2003, Cape Town.  
JA, Interview on 30 April and 8 May 2003, Cape Town.  
KH, Interview on 30 September and 23 October 2003, Cape Town.  
SA, Interview on 29 May and 5 June 2003, Cape Town.

#### High Schools

##### *Teachers*

AD, Interview on 24 February 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
AW, Interview on 13 September 2004 at a former H.O.A. school, Cape Town.  
BD, Interview on 21 September 2004 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town.  
BM, Interview on 3 May 2005 at a former D.E.T. school, Cape Town.  
CG, Interview on 20 August 2004 at a former H.O.A. school, Cape Town.  
CW, Interview on 18 April 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
ED, Interview on 13 August 2004 at a private school, Cape Town.  
FW, Interview on 2 February 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
GB, Interview on 17 June 2005 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town. Follow up interview on 5 September 2005.  
IB, Interview on 17 August 2004 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
IM, Interview on 8 March 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
IN, Interview on 10 March 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
JJ, Interview on 9 September 2004 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
JR, Interview on 6 August 2004 at a former H.O.A. school, Cape Town.  
JS, Interview on 14 September 2004 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
KD, Interview on 23 September 2004 at a former H.O.A. school, Cape Town.  
KQ, Interview on 22 September 2004 at a former D.E.T. school, Cape Town.  
LA, Interview on 14 April 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
LH, Interview on 12 September 2004 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
MD, Interview on 6 September 2004 at an ex-Model C school, Cape Town. Follow up interview on 12 October 2005.  
MM, Interview on 14 September 2004 at a former H.O.A. school, Cape Town.  
MR, Interview on 23 August 2004 at a private school, Cape Town.  
RT, Interview on 11 August 2004 at a former H.O.A. school, Cape Town.  
RV, Interview on 20 August 2004 at a former H.O.A. school, Cape Town.  
SF, Interview on 6 August 2004 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
SS, Interview on 15 March 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
TA, Interview on 10 March 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.

##### *Learners*

AD (Anna\*), Interview on 15 September 2005 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town.  
CS (Cindy\*), Interview on 15 September 2005 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town.

LM (Leo\*), Interview on 21 September 2005 at a former Model C school, Cape Town.  
 LR (Lebo\*), Interview on 12 October 2005 at a former Model C school, Cape Town.  
 MF (Margot\*), Interview on 1 September 2005 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town.  
 OM (Oli\*), Interview on 21 September 2005 at a former Model C school, Cape Town.  
 RA (Richard\*), Interview on 1 September 2005 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town.  
 VA (Vanessa\*), Interview on 12 October 2005 at a former Model C school, Cape Town.

**Observations**

BD, Observations April 2005 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town.  
 BM, Observations May 2005 at a former D.E.T. school, Cape Town.  
 CW, Observations April 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
 GB, Observations May – September 2005 at a Jewish independent school, Cape Town.  
 JJ, Observations February 2005 at a former H.O.R. school, Cape Town.  
 KQ, Observations February 2005 at a former D.E.T. school, Cape Town.  
 MD, Observations February – September 2005 at a former Model C school, Cape Town.

<b>Interviews Grade Nine teachers//Observations</b>	
<p><b>City –ex-H.O.R.</b> (5 schools contacted; 3 positive)</p> <p>School I: <b>IB</b>            School II: <b>JJ</b> (moved to school VI during research period)            School III: <b>JS and LH</b></p>	<p><b>City – ex-H.O.A.</b> (3 schools contacted; 2 positive)</p> <p>School XI: <b>MM, CG &amp; RV</b> (ex-model C)            School XII: <b>RT</b></p>
<p><b>South Sub ex-H.O.R.</b> (5 schools contacted; 5 positive)</p> <p><u>School IV: SF, LA &amp; CW</u>            School V: <b>FW</b>            School VI: <b>JJ</b> (moved from school II)            School VII: <b>AD</b>            School VIII: <b>SS</b></p>	<p><b>South Sub ex-H.O.A.</b> (3 schools contacted; 2 positive)</p> <p><u>School XIII: MD</u> (ex-model C)            School XIV: <b>AW, JR and KD</b> (ex-model C)</p>
	<p><b>City –Private</b> (3 schools contacted; 3 positive)</p> <p>School XV: <b>MR</b>  <u>School XVI: BD &amp; GB</u>            School XVII: <b>ED</b></p>
<p><b>Cape Flats ex-H.O.R.</b> (3 schools contacted; 2 positive)</p> <p>School IX: <b>IM</b>            School X: <b>TA and IN</b></p>	<p><b>Cape Flats ex-D.E.T.</b> (6 schools contacted; 2 positive)</p> <p><u>School XVIII: KQ</u>  <u>School XIX: BM</u></p>

**Personal communication**

Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators, Personal communication, 17, 19 and 23 July 2007.  
 Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitator, Personal communication, 24 July 2007.  
 District Six museum facilitator, Personal communication, 19 July 2007.  
 Field, S. Personal Communication, July 2006.  
 Field, S. Personal communication, 13 October 2006.  
 Field, S. Personal communication, 12 February 2007.

GB and BD, Personal communication, 22 June 2007.  
History lecturer, Personal communication, 24 May 2007.  
Jacklin, H. Personal communication, 23 March 2006.  
Soudien, C. Personal communication, 8 August 2006.  
Soudien, C. Personal communication, 2 March 2007.  
Taljaard, M. Personal communication, 24 April 2007.

University of Cape Town

**Correspondence Cape Town Holocaust Centre, 26 July 2007**

*Attention Sofie Geschier*

*Thank you for showing us your 2007 draft, as you will see from the following comments I think your study-sample of groups here at CTHC is too small to allow for conclusions of value to be drawn. Your extracts were small sections lifted from a four hour programme which had the effect of 'setting up the straw man'. It is not a fair reflection of our programme content or our presentation and it is demeaning to us as educators.*

*Teachers from across the spectrum of schools and tertiary institutions we serve have found our programmes helpful in terms of Departmental aims and a sound learning experience for their Grade 9s. We have these comments on record and you are, and have been welcome to review them at any time.*

*Extracts from comments are as follows, on 03/08/06 a teacher at a private school comments "You bring home the reality of human suffering by focusing on individual stories. The general message of the dangers of prejudice is well presented. The centre has so much to offer and teach students about human rights." On 05/05/06 another says "(of the Holocaust centre) a wonderful 'learning space' is provided for thinking about things, the pupils are sensitively guided and have an amazing experience" On 07/02/06 another says "The knowledgeable guides involved the students and encouraged them to think and feel about people affected by the Holocaust". These comments are repeated often enough for us to attach importance to them and teachers book for group visits twelve months in advance so they must think some educational good comes out of the visit.*

*On the 18 July a student from a tertiary institution commented "I would like to thank [name facilitator] for telling me more about this tragedy. She was amazing and really helped me understand what happened and made this an experience instead of another lesson. She put us at ease and encouraged discussions and questions'. There are many more student evaluations you could have perused in order to gauge student opinion and reaction.*

*Unfortunately we think your analysis is a distortion as it involves 60 learners, who have a specific position to the topic. They were a weak group, and are atypical of the 60 000 learners who have attended our programmes. It was not pointed out that we often have large groups (70) of Grade 9s (particularly difficult stage in the learners' development) and we have little idea before their visit of their intellectual ability, the actual level of preparation*

*undertaken by the teacher which might help them deal with this complex period of history, or their social/political attitudes.*

*I have looked at the feedback from your chosen group. Judging from their ability to communicate in writing they were a very weak group.*

*If you had attended more sessions you would have notice[d] that there is no ONE RIGHT VERSION. If the text appears fixed, it is because the topic is fixed, many learners have no content knowledge, and therefore, it is difficult to highlight problem areas for discussion. It is not clear in your writing that we serve as a window of differing methodologies from those the learners experience at school – this in itself sparks interest. During time with us learners are encouraged to think about the ‘causes’ and ‘enablers’ of the Holocaust. They empathize with the experiences of young children when watching films on Hanna Brady and Anne Frank. The exhibition is rich in visual sources and we invite them to interpret these. Many of the sources available to historians are exhibited here and these are pointed out to them.*

*Another constraint not mentioned is that the programme is often rushed due to time constraints worsened by the fact that often schools arrive late and have a fixed time for bus returns. The opportunity to open up to the floor is very limited. Do you really expect us to include discussion or question sources within the short time available? The Holocaust is a multi-faceted study with aspects of the unfathomable. By definition the key witnesses are absent, it is impossible for us to present it as you suggest. As to the question of dictating a moral stance, in different circumstances one would not dream of being in any way prescriptive. During your time in South Africa you probably gathered that youngsters receive too little moral guidance and to insist that they respect other people should not be considered and infringement of liberty.*

*I do think your small sample invalidates any conclusions you may draw and hope that you will discuss this with your supervisor. If you had attended a programme for [x] (a private school) or one of the ex- Model C schools your perspectives may have been different. We have built a great deal into the programme and work with limited staffing, limited space and very few volunteers. The constraints are an important part of the ‘qualifiers’ which are missing from your account.*

*[name museum facilitator]*

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