

CURRENT MANIFESTATION OF TRAUMA EXPERIENCED DURING  
FORCED REMOVALS UNDER APARTHEID:  
INTERVIEWS WITH A FORMER “VLAKTE” INHABITANT

By

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Cape.



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## DECLARATION

I declare that the *CURRENT MANIFESTATION OF TRAUMA EXPERIENCED DURING FORCED REMOVALS UNDER APARTHEID: Interviews With A Former “Vlakte” Inhabitant* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



Full name: Renee Allison Hector- Kannemeyer

June 2010

Signed .....

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Patrick Hector, who has experienced the trauma of forced removals, and to my wonderful children Sarah – Jo and Daniel, who will never know such trauma.



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TRAUMA OF FORCED REMOVALS**

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MA mini-thesis, Institute for Social Development, University of the Western Cape

Much has been researched in South Africa about the trauma of losing one's home, one's community and rebuilding one's life in a new environment. Several books have been published tracking the lives of the forcibly removed and their responses to leaving District Six. My research focuses on a different group namely those who had been forcibly removed from the centre of Stellenbosch, called "Die Vlakte" during that time. Living and working with and among people who have experienced this removal, I was keen to research whether the impact of the trauma is currently manifesting in this specific community and if so, what the symptoms would be.

This qualitative inquiry focuses on one particular individual, Mr. Hilton Biscombe. I selected him because he, who experienced the removal as a teenager, spent most of his later life determinedly collecting stories and documents relating to this incident. Mr. Biscombe is also the only person of whom I am aware who responded personally through compiling a book, making a DVD, writing poetry as well as an autobiography relating to this event. My inquiry into the ways trauma manifests in a narrative, will be based on two interviews: one conducted by a white man from the University of Stellenbosch thirty years after the event; and another interview, six years later, conducted by myself.

Our understanding of trauma is usually associated with a death or injury or the possibility thereof, but it could also include the victim's response to extreme fear, serious harm or threat to family members. According to van der Merwe and Vienings, people also become traumatized when witnessing harm, physical violence or death or the sudden loss or destruction of a victim's home (van der Merwe & Vienings, 2001).

So the issue of trauma is not in question, nor the fact that forced removals cause trauma. I am exploring testimony in the form of interviews for possible current manifestations of this trauma thirty-six years down the line.

**Key words**

Trauma, Stellenbosch, testimony, memory, forced removals, coloured community, Apartheid, healing, language, current manifestation of trauma, District Six

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## Chapter One: Introduction

The aim of this research is to identify the ways in which trauma caused by forced removals could still manifest today. Through the experience, documentation and response of one inhabitant of “Die Vlakte”, I want to determine the ways in which signs of trauma could be distinguishable in personal narrative. Although the incident of forced removal from “Die Vlakte” happened many years ago and it is assumed that people more or less have continued with their lives, I want to establish whether any “fingerprints” are left of the past and if so, how they present themselves.

There are two reasons for selecting this topic. The first is that the “coloured” people and “coloured” identity” are of great interest to me. I have been actively working in “coloured” communities for the past twelve years and have become passionate about this group who appear to have different histories and vulnerabilities. The second reason is of a personal nature as both my late father and his mother, my grandmother, were forcibly removed from “Die Vlakte” in Stellenbosch to during the late 1960s.

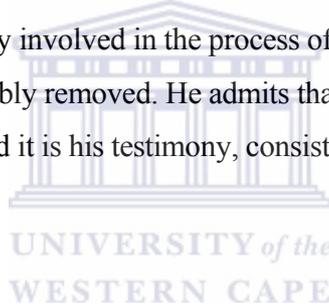
Hart says: It has long been recognized that people are place and place is people. Interpersonal relationships play a central role in the making and meaning of place. In the history of South Africa however this intricate relationship has been persistently and willfully damaged. People other than whites are either denied the freedom to define their own places, or those places which they have come to know and love are wrestled from them” (in Jeppie and Soudien, 1990:137)

A lot of information has been gathered about forced removals, but not much has been written about possible current manifestations of trauma due to these removals under the Apartheid regime. This account will focus on the possible current manifestations of trauma in narratives of people who have lost their home and community. Through an in-depth analysis of one person’s testimony I want to determine any similarities with the stories of other “coloured” victims who have testified how the trauma of being forcibly removed has left them with vulnerable self esteems, fragile identities and despondency about the future. As the

Abrahams' family, ex District Six residents, put it "No matter where we are, we are here."  
(Rasool & Prosalendis, 200:161)

The primary focus is to investigate the oral testimonies of an inhabitant who experienced the removals under apartheid as a teenager and later wrote a book, called *In Ons Bloed*, which aimed to capture the stories of those residents of "Die Vlakte". This focus will happen through an investigation of language: first, the possible effect of trauma on the language, rhythm and tone of the testimonies; second, the possible effect of trauma on content; third, the possible meanings of the silences; and lastly, the possible effect of this trauma on future generations. We suspect that the impact of the listener forms a catalyst for unlocking potential trauma in the narratives.

The collator of the book *In Ons Bloed*, Mr. Hilton Biscombe has been selected to share his testimony as he has been actively involved in the process of memory retrieval with regard to stories of people who were forcibly removed. He admits that the collating of the book was a personal assignment for him, and it is his testimony, consisting of two interviews, which will form the basis of my analysis.



The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 gives the introduction providing a brief description of the problem to be researched and the reason for selecting the topic. In Chapter 2 the history of "Die Vlakte" is discussed as well as the development of the "coloured" community there with its three thousand five hundred residents until its drastic removal. The chapter also looks at the impact of forced removals in the greater Western Cape, and various accounts of removed communities are summarized. Chapter 3 focuses on the design used to collect and interpret data as well as a definition and discussion of trauma and the influence of trauma on language, including the content and silences within testimonies. Chapter 4 looks at the various themes identified during the First Interview with Mr Biscombe conducted by the University of Stellenbosch while Chapter 5 identifies new and old themes in a recent Second Interview conducted by myself. Both themes are analysed and compared in Chapter Six followed by a concluding Chapter 7.

## 2. Chapter Two: The History of “Die Vlakte”

According to Giliomee (2007) the Stellenbosch community was a good example where “coloured” and white people lived peacefully as a kind of community, sharing the same values, language and traditions. Since the year 1838 with its abolition of slaves, the number of “coloured” home owners grew steadily in the area between Victoria, Bird, Banghoek and Joubert Streets, until it had grown to an established community called “Die Vlakte” in 1850. Ninety percent of the inhabitants were “coloured” and in 1960 it had grown in number to 3500 residents (Giliomee, 2007:xiii).

“Die Vlakte” has been described as a vibrant community where people knew each other well, with established local trade, strong cultural and spiritual values, deeply rooted in the churches that provided church schools to serve as the backbone to the community (Biscombe H, 2006:22). With the apartheid government’s excuse that the slum area in Stellenbosch needed to be cleared, all “coloured” residents, most of them home owners, were forced to leave their homes and relocate to find residence outside of central Stellenbosch in areas such as Idas Valley and Cloetesville. According to Giliomee “Die Vlakte” was anything but a slum area, with no overcrowding and unclean conditions and no real reason for commissioning such a traumatic relocation of thousands of “coloured” residents (Giliomee, 2007:xiii). Besides the removal of 3500 “coloured” families and 50 Indian families, the heartbeat of the “coloured” community located in “Die Vlakte” was affected by the destruction of six schools, four churches, a mosque, a cinema and ten businesses (Giliomee, 2007:204). Many properties had large grounds which stretched over three or four plots. One resident indicated that her garden was so large that weddings were held there (Biscombe H, 2006). The book collated by my informant, Mr. Biscombe, vividly describes life on the property of his family:

*“Beatie Laurence describes the Biscombe family property in die Vlakte in the following quote, Agter die stalle was twee hoenderhokke. Op ons erf was ook ’n eendedam, ’n varkhok, en ’n gedeelte wat gebruik was vir die maak van room en botter...Die tuin agter was baie groot, dit het op een erf amper tot in Andringa straat gestrek. In die middel was twee stap wingerde waar my pa wingerde geplant het. Ag, daar was allerhande soort*

*vrugtebome. Ons het op 'n kleinhoewe gebly, maar die munisipaliteit wou nie daardie status aan die grond gee nie, want dit was te na aan die dorp. Maar ons was taamlik selfonderhoudend. Imagine vars eiers, hoender, botter, room, varktjops en van die beste groente en vrugte. Ons het selfs 'n perdekar gehad wat daai tyd rondegery het op die stofpaaie van die Vlakte” (Laurence, B in Biscombe, 2006:7)*

Another description says: *“Ons het in 'n veertienvertrekhuis in De Villiersstraat gebly. Ons sewe kinders, vier seuns en drie dogters was baie gelukkig daar, want ons familiehuis was baie ruim... Die agterplaas was taamlik groot, want my pa, omdat hy 'n vervoerkontraakteur was, moes hy voertuie in die agterplaas parkeer...” (S Pool in Biscombe 2006: 20)*

In the introductory paragraphs of his book, *In Ons Bloed*, Mr. Biscombe says that people were keen to tell their stories, and forty years after the removals residents were still grieving as they expressed their sense of loss:

*“Ons het al drie jaar voor die tyd geweet, dat ons moet uit, maar toe die tyd nader kom, was ons baie hartseer. Ons het die Saterdagoggend getrek, want daar was geen ander uitweg nie. Jy moes maar, anders het jy nie 'n huis gekry nie. Vir ons moet jy nooit vra of ons terug wil trek na die Vlakte nie, jy moet liever net sê, wanneer ons moet terug trek. Die Vlakte was ons alles.” (Bergstead F in Biscombe 2006:211)*

*“Ons is nou al 33 jaar hier in die Dal (Cloetesdal) en ons sal hulle nooit vergewe vir wat hulle aan ons gedoen het nie. Hulle moet ons kompenseer, maar ek weet nie of dit genoeg is nie .... Hy kan jou nie teruggee wat hy weggehaal het nie en dit is baie sad.” (Appolis A in Biscombe 2006:210)*

*“Dit was maar 'n sad afêre. Die manne was weg van hul dorp af, hul bioscope, hul skool, hul kerk, hul sport en hul familie. Dit was soos een groot begrafnis. Jy was baie geworried, want jy het nie geweet langs wie jy in Cloeteville gaan bly nie. As jy dan daar vir die mense wat nog moet trek gaan kuier op die Vlakte was jy baie bedonnerd om te sien hoe die huise platgestoot is.” (Anonymous, in Biscombe, 2006:210)*

Due to the discriminatory history of South Africa under the Apartheid regime, there is hardly any mention in official records of this community who were forced to leave their homes during the late 1960s under the Group Areas Act.

Giliomee's work stresses that it is important to bear in mind that "Die Vlakte" differed quite substantially from, for example, District Six: "Die Vlakte was Stellenbosch se Distrik Ses. Die enigste verskil was dat dit rustiger, veiliger en netjieser as sy Kaapse eweknie was." (Giliomee H, 2007:xiii). B. Langeveldt formulated the close connection as follows:

*"Hel daar was mos nie'n probleem op die Vlakte nie, want so twee huise van ons af het die Roux-familie en die Steyn-familie gebly. Hulle was blank en ons het goed met hulle klaar gekom. Die kinders was ons maats. Ek kan sê dat hulle huis-kinders was, want ons was in en uit by mekaar se huise"* (Langeveldt B in Biscombe, 2006: xxi)



## 2.1 Descriptions of Forced Removals within the Western Cape

Daa wassie net klip en concrete nie ...

Mure sonner mense? Nai ...

Daa was oek ons

Ons, dja

(Small, 1973) in Jeppie and Soudien, 1990: 137

Forced removals were marked with various extremes of violence, and have been a part of South Africa's history for well over three hundred years. Vast populations of indigenous people were forced to leave their possessions, land, homes and communities in order to satisfy the violent inhumane, dehumanizing colonial policies of the government at the time (Jeppie S & Soudien C, 1990). Residential segregation according to race has led to the forced removal of up to four million South Africans from their homes between 1913 to 1989:

The history of District Six and the forced removals are very much a part of the broader history of the struggle against racism, prejudice and segregation in South Africa ( Field, 2001:)

District Six, or Kanaladorp as it was known before 1867, was, as the name indicates, the sixth district of Cape Town. Previous residents recall the place as a very integrated and diverse community where people from different cultures and countries lived side by side, intermarrying, practising their own religion which created a very cosmopolitan and dynamic community, housing artisans and workers from different backgrounds. This multi-ethnic culture of the area posed a major problem for the rulers of the Apartheid government when full segregation was legally enforced in 1948 through two Acts: the Population Registration Act, Act 30 of 1950, which classified people into different racial groups according to skin colour, and the Group Areas Act, Act 41 of 1950 which forced residents into demarcated areas. These acts also moved black people out of the city centre, under the guise of “community development”, which was promised to benefit all racial groups (Field, Meyer & Swanson, 2007).

To be close to work and the city centre, people moved in growing numbers into District Six. The housing conditions depreciated and this created the “reason” for the National Party government, to declare the area a slum. In 1966, the area was declared white and forced the removal of 65 000 people over the next fifteen years to the outskirts of Cape Town. Suddenly these residents incurred costs to travel to their work, places of worship and schools as their community was demolished individual home by individual home. People found that their families, friends and social networks were broken up and destroyed as they were relocated to places largely underdeveloped with very little infrastructure. Today the area of District Six is a vast open space: “The Community of District Six no longer exists. Today, it is a place that remains an open wound on the city landscape” (Field, 2001).

In her book, “*The House in Tyne Street*”, author Linda Fortune motivates why she is writing her own painful testimony of being forcibly removed from District Six. She recalls the memories of her life there with great sadness. Years after the forced removals,

she still experiences the ache of a deep sorrow, which serves as her inspiration for writing her book. She dedicates her story to her parents, brothers and sisters, who were born, grew up and forced to leave their culturally rich community. Growing up in the same home in which her parents lived as children, she presents a generational account of the life and character of Tyne Street, the games children played, the close relationships, the informal trade in the community, the celebrations, the sense of history, belonging and togetherness. She also describes the sense of helplessness, hopelessness and anxiety they felt when they were told to leave their homes due to the Group Areas Act, the frustration they felt at the lack of explanation for the move, and the anger toward the bulldozer determined to do its job of demolishing their community shops, gathering places, sports club and later their own homes and entire streets (Fortune L, 1996). Fortune also shares her feelings of being demoralized, of feeling unworthy, depressed and constantly wondering what was wrong with her – as if the removal was somehow her own fault. She says that for her the battle was in the mind (Field S, Meyer R & Swanson F, 2007). This reminds one of Steve Biko's statement, "the most powerful weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed" (Biko, 1960).

It appears that the sense of helplessness and loss of control is a common thread, which runs through the testimonies of those who have experienced the trauma of forced removals. Testimonies of those who were forced to leave their home and community also speak about loss of identity in the newly-formed community, the loss of safety, of moral decay, of once-closely-knit communities forced to live between neighbours who were strangers (Fortune L 1996, Biscombe 2006, Field 2001 & Jeppie S & Soudien C, 1990.) The afore-mentioned scholars warn that the often embellished, and dreamy descriptions residents have of their life in District Six should not be disregarded, but should bring a renewed focus on the significance and the value of those descriptions when listening to testimony (Field S, Meyer R & Swanson F, 2007).

In the area of Simons Town, the forced removal produced a similar recollection of a safe community, living within strong social networks next to their white neighbours. It was described by former residents as an integrated community, who built their lives around the church and places of worship, trek netting, fishing and work at the naval dockyard.

The community was more than fifty percent “coloured”, with a small percentage of white and fewer black residents. Like District Six the removal was met with shock and horror by the community as sixty-five percent of the local residents who had been living there (some for up to four generations) were relocated to areas such as Ocean View. In many cases fairer skinned “coloureds” had themselves re-classified white to remain in the area and retain access to better work opportunities. Others had to rebuild a life and community in the rough area of Ocean View where the life of this lively coastal community, described as easy going and not politically active, was permanently altered ( Thomas, A in Field 2001:85) Other communities who were forcibly removed included Harfield in Claremont, Tramway Road Seapoint, Fishhoek, Kalkbay, Muizenberg, Wynberg, Kenilworth, and Claremont, Belletjebos, Newlands Village, Mowbray and others (Field, 2001). The removal of the black community from “coloured” and white areas was part of the strategy of the National Party to remove black people from the city centre and the Southern Suburbs in what was called the ultimate elimination of natives from the Cape (Goldin, 1987).

The removal of black people was much harsher than that of “coloured” people as most black people who were moved from areas such as Windermere etc. were put in compounds, where six foot walls enclosed them. They lived in overcrowded shacks or in what was called bachelors, which were single quarters for men only. These men were mostly married but forced to be separated from their wives and children. The health conditions in the compounds were sub-standard and led to the outbreak of disease such as cholera and other water-borne diseases because there was no sanitation, electricity and clean water. Black people were forced to buy water from a nearby tap for their needs. In many cases “coloured” women who lived in the Kensington area were married to black men and they were forced to leave their families to live in the compound (Field, 2001:25).

All the accounts by forced removal residents mention that they were given a letter stating that the area in which they live has been declared white and that according to the Group areas Act of 1950, it was illegal for “coloureds” and “blacks” to occupy a residence in

that area and illegal for the Government to allow them occupation. They would therefore have to vacate their property by a certain date.

A family in Tramway road in Seapoint was given only six weeks to vacate their home. Another Tramway resident who had lived in the community for decades, raising his children there, became ill and started losing interest in daily activities when he was told to move. He became depressed and his body was found somewhere between Campsbay and Bakoven after he committed suicide. Other families told how husbands and wives were forced to separate, and children often had no choice but to live with other community members as the new houses could not accommodate the whole family. One lady, who was forcibly removed at the age of nine, testified that at the time of the removal it seemed exciting for a child to move to another house, so she never spoke about the removal until she found herself in a workshop which focused on looking at childhood memories, and started to weep bitterly years after the event. Only then did she realize that she had all that pain buried inside her. The Government bulldozed the area called Tramway Road, and changed it into a recreation park reserved for whites only (Paulse M in Field, 2001).

The Claremont community of Harfield Village appears also to be a uniform community, with no real class distinctions, where the community of “coloured” Christian and Muslim people lived together. Gang activity is mentioned, but it seems that the community was not living in fear of them. They were described as guys smoking on the street corners and residents maintained that they still felt safe as the gang members never harmed any person from the community and no one had reported having violent encounters with them. Residents also knew the gang members well as they were all children who grew up in the communities. According to testimonies there was a feeling of peace, security, safety, with community members leaving their homes unlocked at night. (Daniels, K, 2001).

The community had a strong collective identity and referred to themselves as Claremonites, rather than Capetonians. The community of 19 000 “coloured” families was well established with, forty businesses, owned by Indians, Muslims and others. It

also had a cinema and other community gathering places, several churches, mosques, a primary and a high school. Residents were forced to leave and were paid a fraction of what their property was worth. If they moved a year later a 25% penalty was charged, which meant a 25% reduction in what the government intended as compensation. A two year delay warranted a 50 % penalty. Poorer people were forced to move even when alternative accommodation was not provided, which resulted in families splitting up when other relatives could not accommodate an entire family. Other families were relocated to Bonteheuwel into cramped “temporary” accommodation until “more suitable accommodation” could be found, only to be informed years later that no such accommodation was found. The majority of residents who have been living in the area for over thirty years had to leave with no other place to go to. Businesses were the hardest hit, with small general dealers, shoe shops, dress makers and other industries losing their clientele and not able to start over (Taliep, W 2001).

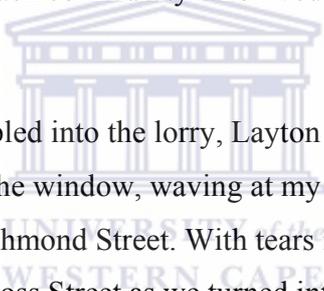
In an article by Uma Dhupelia- Mesthrie (2000) she describes the community of Black River also as a loving community, where residents assisted each other. The community consisted of working-class people with many brick layers, artisans, plasterers, dress makers, builders, factory workers, together with middle-class people such as teachers, nurses, shop owners and entrepreneurs. One resident described the feeling in the community as intimate and supportive, and statements such as the following clearly relayed this feeling in the community:

You're my friend and I say come and build my house (...) I'll feed you  
one day when your brother builds a house I'll come and help you E.  
(Toefy in Dhupelia- Mesthrie, 2000:37)

For the residents of Blouvillei, which was an area near Retreat in the Western Cape, the removal also destroyed relationships between especially black and “coloured” residents who lived together. Black residents were forced to move to the Langa area because Blouvillei was declared a “coloured” area. In an article by Kamish there appears to be resentment from black residents towards “coloured” residents who were allowed to stay. Although there was no real difference in the economic situation of the residents as most

of them lived in shack dwellings, there appeared to have been a class distinction between black and “coloured” residents as “coloured” residents enjoyed more privileges under the Apartheid Government (Kamish, 2008).

In the book, *Sala Kahle District Six*, Ngalwane (1998) says that the only documentation of District Six are accounts of “coloured” people, and almost no mention is made of the many black residents who called District Six their home for many decades. She says that the black people also hold the same sentiments about the lost community and that her memories of living in District Six for twenty years also needed to be recorded. She recalls her memories with great detail in her book, but adds that although the community was vivacious and close knit, the development for black and “coloured” was already separate, with separate sports and other recreational activities. She says that when the forced removals were instituted, the black community who lived in pockets in District Six, was removed first:



My mother and I scrambled into the lorry, Layton was going by bus. I sat squeezed in next to the window, waving at my friends as the lorry slowly moved down Richmond Street. With tears in my eyes I took a last glimpse at No 22 Cross Street as we turned into Stuckeris Street.  
*Sala Kahle, District Six, I whispered (Ngcelwane N, 1998:133)*

In a review of the book *Lost Communities, Living Memories* it is concluded that in accounts of forced removals the term “community” is not explored fully as different members of a community might have varying experiences of what “community” is (Dooley, W 2003). However the term “community” appears to indicate in general the euphoric description of life in the pre-removed communities as being idyllic and perfect, with very little or even no conflict. It appears that when memory is recorded residents only focused on remembering the good things while negative experiences are often not retrieved. As Field remarks: “The sense of community that was remembered from before forced removals was probably a mixture of both fact and fiction. However, what is significant is that interviewees live these myths as their truth” (Field, S in Zimitri 2001:103).

## 2.2: Forced removal of “Die Vlakte”

Stellenbosch is tot vandag toe nog ‘n verdeelde dorp. Daar is die wit Stellenbosch van Mostertsdrift en die Boord. Daar is die bruin Stellenbosch van Cloeteville en die Vlei. En daar is die swart Stellenbosch van Kayamandi en die Brug. Maar voor dit alles, op ‘n tyd, was daar Die Vlakte. Daar was ‘n tyd, en ‘n plek waar mense uit verskillende agtergronde en gelowe ongedwonge deurmekaar was hier op Stellenbosch. Binne twee straatblokke van waar die Universiteit vandag setel, was daar ‘n gemeenskap waar rasseskeidslyne minder strak was en wat in embriovorm reeds die tipe gemeenskap verteenwoordig het waarna ons vandag streef in hierdie land. En daar was ‘n tyd waarin Die Vlakte se mense doelbewus en brutaal uitmekaar gehaal is, om te pas by die aparte kompartemente wat toe gereken is, die oplossing van ‘n “problem” te wees.

*(Prof, C Brink, Rector and Vice Chancellor: University of Stellenbosch, in Biscombe, H 2006: iv).*

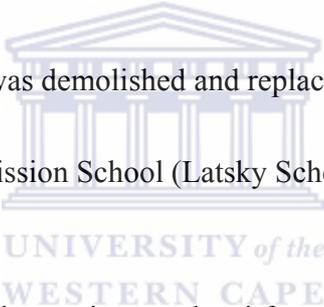
Although the forced removals in Stellenbosch have not been widely researched, similar characteristics indicating forms of trauma come to the fore in the available material. At the same time it seems that the forced removal of this group is unique in many ways as the community of Stellenbosch had distinctive characteristics described below.

The people from “Die Vlakte were moved out of the city centre, but not out of Stellenbosch so their identity as “Stellenboschers” was not affected. Residents were displaced to two major areas, Idas Valley and Cloeteville, and not all over Cape Town such as the case with District Six. However, there were no facilities erected for coloured and black people in the city centre, no places where they could eat and no restroom facilities, and no

restaurants who would serve them, unlike the rest of Cape Town, where separate amenities were erected (Giliomee H, 2007).

The financial loss for the community of Die Vlakte was great, not only due to the fine quality of some houses but the sharp rise in property value near the university as well as the business centre of Stellenbosch. Most homes were large and some properties were over a 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. Professional people who lived in “Die Vlakte” were the most severely affected as they had larger properties and thus much more to lose. The Group Areas Act made no distinction between the different socio-economic classes within the “coloured” community.

The use of the following buildings after the Stellenbosch removal is an indication of the harshness of the forced removal:

- 
- The Volkskerk School was demolished and replaced by a local white business.
  - The Dutch Reformed Mission School (Latsky School) was destroyed to make way for a white restaurant.
  - The James Higgo School was given to the airforce in Stellenbosch.
  - The Methodist school was used for a white pre-primary school, named De Kleine Bosch.
  - The Anglican school was used by the Stellenbosch traffic department.

The following congregations lost the use of their buildings:

- The Volkskerk became St Paul’s church with a majority of white members.
- The congregation of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church was moved to Idas Valley in a church building in Rustenburg Road

- The congregation of the Methodist church in Plein Street was moved to Idas Valley in Bloekom Street (Giliomee, 2007: 205).

### 2.3: *Lack of Protest during Forced Removals from “Die Vlakte”*

According to Adhikari the identity of the “coloured” person was infused with that of the white person, so much so that “coloured” people dared not contest what the white people decided (Adhikari M, 1992). He says that “coloured” people desired to be enveloped into the white community and also feared that if they did not comply that they would be treated as harshly as black people in South Africa. It can be deduced that when the homes of “coloured” people were destroyed by the very people whom they identified themselves with and aspired to be like, it was a tremendous betrayal, especially in Stellenbosch, where “coloured” and white lived in the same community. When their homes were taken from them, they complied, without protest. “Die boere gaan maak wat hulle wil. Hulle gaan hulle nie eers aan ons steur nie” says one of the community leaders in Biscombe’s book (Biscombe, 2006:212).

When the Group Areas Act of 1950 was introduced and black people of Khayamandi were not allowed access to the Stellenbosch city centre, they protested and large numbers of up to 1500 black people were met with police resistance. The “coloured” community of Stellenbosch did not par in anticipate in resistance movement, protest or opposition. There were comments in *Die Eikestad*, the local newspaper, suggesting that if there was a people who could be counted upon, it was the “coloured” community of Stellenbosch as they did not “lower themselves” to actions of protest and resistance (Giliomee H, 2007:). According to Biscombe 2006, many meetings were held in the community before and during the time of the forced removal, in which the community seemed to have accepted their lot and complied, without a fight, to leave their homes and community never to return (Biscombe H, 2006:212).

In a report by the Group Areas Committee of Stellenbosch, an all-white committee who invited “coloured” leaders to the meeting to state their concerns, the committee said that they were open to negotiation. Although the government took “Die Vlakte” without any

negotiation, they were planning to remove residents from other areas as well and more residents outside of Stellenbosch to the Vlottenburg area. The “coloured” community leaders then made a case to keep Idas Valley. The meeting held in 1956 appears to be a formal meeting where community leaders were able to voice their concerns and unhappiness about the removals and their dissatisfaction with the possibility of losing yet another “coloured” community to white Stellenbosch. In the report Mr. Cupido says the following: “Nou in verband met die opofferings. U sal sien, Mnr. voorsitter dat die kleurlinge, of hulle nou G2 (a demarcated area which included Idas Valley and a few other “coloured” communities) gaan kry of nie, of hulle gaan behou, die opoffering sal wees in die gebied wat ons ten suide van die Krom rivier het. Dit behels daar die NG Kerk, Volkskerk, Evangeliekerk, die Apostoliese en dan ook ons liefdadigheidssaal, behalwe nog die NG Skool, die Volkskerk skool, die Rynse skool, die Methodiste skool en die Engelse skool. Dit is alles eiendomme wat behoort aan die kleurling gemeenskap en behalwe daardie eiendomme is daar ook heelwat huise, ander eiendomme wat ook aan kleurlinge behoort. U sal sien Meneer die Voorsitter ons het nie eers daarvoor gepleit nie, vir daardie deel nie, en dat ons almal daardie huise prysgee. Dus die opoffering van die kleurlinge se kant is al reeds baie... Nou voel ons Mnr. die Voorsitter as daar enigins ‘n opoffering moet kom van die kant van die blankes dan is dit die minste wat ons kan vra dat Kromrivier (the area between Stellenbosch city centre and Idasvalley) *dan as skeidslyn moet wees tussen blank en gekleurd*” (Cupido, A in Verslag, Groepgebiedsraad, 1956).

What is interesting from this quotation is how Mr. Cupido is using the astonishing sacrifices of his community to negotiate a somewhat better deal than the raw one presented to them. Despite everything he felt empowered enough to at least negotiate to stay in Idas Valley. It is also noticeable that although the two “coloured” leaders were invited to represent their community, they did not at any stage of the negotiation attempt to fight to keep “Die Vlakte”. There was a total acceptance of the fact that they had to leave their home and community. However in the meeting, Mr. Cupido acknowledges the tremendous loss the community will suffer and highlights them, naming every building in addition to their homes, but does not at any stage say that they will not move or that they

would like to negotiate their removal from “Die Vlakte”. He says, “*ons het nie eers daarvoor gepleit nie*” (we have not even pleaded for that area). During the negotiations not even one of the leaders voiced the community’s dissatisfaction, unhappiness or even anger about the forced removal. The community complied, without objection, not considering the possibility that they did not have to move at all (Cupido, A in Verslag, Groepgebiedsraad, 1956).

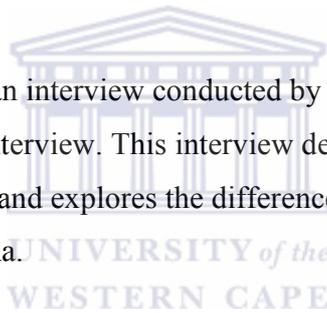
This raises the vexed question of lack of protest. Reverend David Botha of the Dutch Reformed church in Wynberg said that it was understandable that the “coloured” community did not engage in protest against the Apartheid laws as they felt that they were part of the white community. To stand up against the white community would cut them off and turn them into an enemy of the white people and therefore to themselves. According to Prof S. P. Cilliers and other prominent members of the Stellenbosch community as well as the writer N.P. van Wyk Louw, the “coloured” community formed an integral part of the white community. Cilliers said that the survival of the white race, was not threatened by the political and economic integration with “coloured” people and that Apartheid will make a huge mistake to separate white and “coloured” people as it will only strengthen a union between “coloured” and black (Giliomee, 2007).

## Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

The research uses a qualitative method of data collection and relies on primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are two interviews conducted with Mr. Biscombe, the secondary source is the book *In Ons Bloed*, collated by him.

The first transcribed text which was analyzed is an interview with Mr. Biscombe, which was conducted six years ago, thirty years after the forced removal, for the purpose of collating the book. The fact that the interview was conducted by an Afrikaner based at the University of Stellenbosch directly impacts on the content and psychological positioning of Mr. Biscombe, which places him, as I will show, in a vulnerable place. Sharing his testimony within the relationship of this power dynamic unlocks much of the current manifestation of trauma.

The second transcribed text is an interview conducted by myself with the same author on issues highlighted in the first interview. This interview delves more deeply into the issues identified in the first interview and explores the differences in an attempt to determine possible manifestation of trauma.



### 3.1: *Data Processing, Analysis and Interpretation*

The first interview, conducted by an academic from the University of Stellenbosch, was recorded using a tape recorder. This recording was used for the purpose of writing the book *In Ons Bloed* and was archived at Mr. Biscombe's home. Mr. Biscombe made the tape recording of the first interview available to me, which I transcribed and analysed. Mr. Biscombe had requested that the name of the interviewer be kept anonymous. The second interview was conducted by myself using a structured set of questions in an informal discussion, which was recorded and transcribed. Both transcriptions were analyzed and compared as testimonies about a forced removal. Both testimonies revealed current manifestations of trauma. The design used was interpretative.

Due to the sensitivity of the material, I have discussed it with and gained written consent from Mr. Biscombe to analyse and document his testimony. It is important to emphasize that the aim of the study is purely research focused, and no follow-up psychological intervention was entered into between myself and the subject as a result of the trauma revealed in the thesis.

### *3.2: Definition of Trauma*

In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association first gave full recognition to the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which was previously termed: shell shock, or: delayed stress syndrome. Into this all-encompassing diagnosis, other experiences such as a response to rape, child abuse and violence were included. Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) is a person's delayed response to an event or trauma which is outside of the "normal" human experience. The response is often overdue and links the present reality to the past experience through dreams, hallucinations, thoughts and behaviours which originated from the event and are often associated with a numbing at the thought of the event or an avoidance of stimuli which trigger it. The event is often not fully experienced at the time it occurs and thus the trauma with the accompanied stress the event evokes, is delayed. The truth/reality presents itself as too overwhelming for the person to experience at the time it happens and the victim holds a part of history which they have not been able to fully process yet (Caruth, 1995).

According to van der Merwe and Vienings (2001), the term trauma is defined as a response to an event of an extraordinary nature. This traumatic event renders the victims helpless and unable to cope with what is happening and therefore filled with feelings of being overwhelmed and powerless. Our understanding of a trauma is usually associated with a death or injury or the possibility thereof, but it could also include the victim's response to extreme fear, serious harm or threat to family members, witnessing harm, physical violence or death or the sudden loss or destruction of a victim's home.

Felman and Laub describe trauma as follows:

Officially trauma is regarded as something which takes place *outside the parameters of 'normal' reality*. It has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after and it is outside the range of comprehension and recounting. Victims live with an event that is still continuing into the present and is current in every respect (my emphasis, Felman & Laub, 1992:69).

Danieli says:

Trauma is also defined as that of a shock that is deemed emotional and substantially damages over a long period of time, the psychological development of the victim often leading to neurosis. (Danieli, 1998:356)

### *3.3: Talking about Trauma*

I will investigate three levels of trauma manifestation: the effect of trauma on the language itself, the telling and the tone; the effect of trauma on the content of the narrative, what is being said, how, as well as the silences; and lastly the effect of trauma on the listener and the next generation.

The work of scholars who investigated the effect of Holocaust trauma on narratives (Yael Danieli, Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman) as well as the effect of pain on language (Elaine Scarry) will mainly guide me in this investigation. It will be supplemented by local research into trauma such as that done by van der Merwe and Vienings as well as Warner and Erasmus and Sean Field.

### *3.4: Three Narrative Focuses of Investigation Identified.*

#### *3.4.1 The Effect of Trauma on Language and Tone*

Although Elaine Scarry worked on the physical pain suffered by torture victims, many of her findings hold true for other trauma and are regularly used to analyse testimonies e.g. those delivered before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Scarry says that one of the capacities of physical pain is its ability to destroy language. The moment one describes pain (or hurt), language begins to falter. This is the reason why it is often

difficult to listen to a narrative of pain as the narrative is often unconvincing (Scarry, 1985:54)

Before destroying the language, pain usually monopolizes language, says Scarry and eventually displaces coherence by the sounds interior to learned language. In other words pain first takes control of the language, then turns it incoherent and finally changes it into nonverbal sounds – moans, sighs, shouts, groans. Pain firstly resists expression and then destroys the capacity for speech (Scarry, 1985:54). She says that the ceaseless, self-announcing signal of the body in pain contains the feeling “my body hurts me” and often the body falls victim to illnesses.

“Another dimension of physical pain is its obliteration of the contents of consciousness. Pain annihilates not only the objects of complex thought and emotion, but also the objects of the most elemental acts of perception. It may begin by destroying some intricate and demanding allegiance, but it may end by destroying one’s ability simply to see (Scarry, 1985:54).

“Pain turns a person into not being “oneself” and ends by having eliminated all that is ‘not itself’. Scarry says that pain at first occurs only as an appalling but limited internal fact, but eventually (it) occupies the entire body and spills out into the realm beyond the body, takes over all that is inside and outside, makes the two obscenely indistinguishable, and systematically destroys anything like language or world extension that is alien to itself and threatening to its claims. Terrifying for its narrowness, it nevertheless exhausts and displaces all else until it seems to become the single broad and omnipresent fact of existence” (Scarry, 1985:55).

#### *3.4.2 Conspiracy of Silence as a Symptom of Trauma*

Apart from helplessness and feelings of unworthiness, another characteristic of the presence of trauma in a narrative is the silence or what Yael Danieli famously coined as the “conspiracy of silence”. Yael Danieli, the Director of the Group Project for Holocaust Survivors and their Children in New York, and an expert in the field of recording trauma,

describes the response of society to the horror of the trauma of the holocaust as negatively affecting the willingness of the victims to talk.

An even stronger reason to prevent people talking is that survivors have found that it is very difficult for those who have not experienced similar atrocities to fully understand their experience, so they often choose to be silent (Danieli, 1998:4). Another cause for silence is comments from people implying that the survivors could have taken some action in preventing what has happened, a reaction often described as “blaming the victim”. Victims of atrocities are criticized for not doing anything to save him/herself and for simply complying with what the government dictated at the time (Danieli, 1998:4).

This leads to further trauma as it places responsibility for what had happened upon the victim (Danieli:1998). Many societies which have experienced trauma have encouraged survivors to just move on with their lives and to accept what has happened. The result is that it often became more traumatic for the victim to share their stories which leads directly to avoidance and a conspiracy of silence established between the victim and society. The consequences of a seemingly unsympathetic society have often led to feelings of mistrust, isolation and loneliness particularly by survivors who wanted to share (Danieli, 1998:5).

Trauma can also present itself in the use of memory in the testimony of trauma manifestation. Danieli listed ten forms of traumatic memory in which survivors respond to trauma, of which two of the most frequent experienced ones are discussed below.

The first one is described as *not knowing*: the survivor has lost all memory of the traumatic event and is unable to locate him/herself in it. He/she might also forget close relatives who shared the trauma with him/her, lest they trigger the painful memory he/she is trying to suppress.

The second form of traumatic memory is termed *screen memories*, where the survivor only recalls specific events of the trauma, but blocks out the more painful memories. These more intense memories could also be distorted, fragmented or fabricated to avoid addressing the more painful experiences of trauma (Danieli, 1998:30).

My research will show how these forms of traumatic memory manifest itself in the interview I had with one of “Die Vlakte” victims.

#### 3.4.3: *The Effect of Trauma on the Next Generation.*

The study of the intergenerational impact of trauma has only recently been explored, and interest was first sparked by the large number of children from Nazi victims who sought treatment in Canadian clinics in 1966. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder has also been recorded by the children of Vietnamese war veterans through experiencing secondary trauma (Danieli, 1998:3)

Doing research on First People, Duran, a psychologist working primarily with the children of the surviving American Indians, has coined the term “soul wound”. He talks about healing the soul wound as an inner healing of the root cause of the oppression or trauma: “...when trauma is not dealt with in previous generations, it has to be dealt with in subsequent generations....therefore, there is a process whereby unresolved trauma becomes more severe each time it is passed on to a subsequent generations (Duran, 2006:16) Although victims have survived the oppression the anger and pain are carried with them as if they come from their ancestors, passed down through history (Duran, 2006: 16).

In the foreword to her book on multigenerational trauma, Danieli traces the generational effect of trauma as far back as Biblical times, quoting verses in which God declares that the sins of the fathers who disobey Him will rest upon the sons up until the fourth generation and that the blessings of those who love Him will be enjoyed by future generations. This transfer of sins and blessing is thus predicted to affect future generations. In the book of Numbers where the Israelites were led to wander in the desert for forty years after being set free from slavery, it was really only their children, not exposed to slavery and free from trauma, who were allowed entry into the new land so that they could have a new beginning, without passing down the trauma of slavery to future generations (Danieli, 1998:1).

The willingness for the victims of trauma to share their story is found in the sensitivity of the society they form part of. In order for trauma to be healed in the present generation and not to become cumulative as suggested by Duran and Danieli, the society needs to listen.

According to Felman and Laub, the role of the listener to the traumatic event plays a significant role in the willingness of the survivor to share their story (Felman & Laub, 1992:57). Danieli says that the Israeli society appeared to be rather cold and disbelieving of the shared horror stories, which propelled many survivors into silence. However with the second generation of survivors the society had become much more sympathetic to Holocaust stories and thus there have been a large number of people coming forward to share their testimony and consequently increase the account and analysis of the holocaust literature (Danieli, 1998).

It is through these changes in the second generation that the role of the listener has become part of the focus: as with all experiences of trauma, be it severe human violations such as experienced during the holocaust or the sudden loss of one's home or community, most people need to tell their story. However, at the risk of stating the obvious, the primary encouragement for victims to share is a good listener (Felman and Laub, 1992).

Warner argues:

At the core of the struggle for home lies the struggle for the way the story of place is told. Between what is remembered and what is forgotten, the self takes its bearings home. The question is no longer who is to guard the guardians, of what, but who's to tell the story, what story? Who can bear witness? (in Erasmus Z, 2001:98)

When examining testimony as an account of history, there should be no doubt that testimony plays an invaluable part in recording historical events, and has been widely relied upon to record great historical experiences such as the Holocaust, the second world war, the nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and other gross human violations. The use of testimony alone as a record of historical importance is debatable as events are

relayed from a personal frame of reference. However the use of testimony in literature has become increasingly popular (Felman S & Laub D, 1992:5).

The connection between the listener and the teller of testimony becomes crucial in the process of reconciliation and healing, which places the listener as an active player in the sharing of testimony. The feeling of being listened to is more crucial than merely relaying an event in history. It is that connection between the hearer and sharer, which serves as the catalyst for linking the past with reality (Felman S & Laub D, 1992:70).

The listener goes through the trauma with the victim, goes through the reality that the loved ones are not coming back, time has been lost, what has been destroyed or taken cannot be replaced, living with the unfulfilled hope that things, people, time etc, will be restored. The only difference in this trauma is that the victim is not alone, that his/her pain and loss is valued and acknowledged, because s/he is listened to. The listener has now become the witness (Felman S & Laub D, 1992:58).

In order to be an effective witness and be able to identify with the victim adequately the listener has to be prepared for the interview, by researching the event, knowing the place and the undercurrents and the potential loopholes and gaps in the testimony. The listener also has to let the interview flow naturally, being especially aware of the reflective space in silences and respecting those silent moments (Felman S & Laub D, 1992:58). It is true that silences are not easy to analyze as they indicate that there is an absence of testimony on a specific event. These silences could be an indication of severe loss or trauma suffered under an oppressive regime and should not just be discarded as amnesia as a way of labeling it a psychological disorder, but they should be treated with care (Field, S in Erasmus Z, 2001:98).

### *3.5: Choice of Language and Testimony*

Mr. Biscombe has written a book and a substantial number of poems in Afrikaans, the language of the group who legislated his removal and possibly also the language he heard around him the day that he was removed. This signifies a complicated relationship with

the language in which he artistically expresses himself. Felman and Laub explore the work of one of the best poets to ever work in the German language, Paul Celan, who was traumatized by the loss of his parents and his subsequent suffering at the hands of Nazis, yet chose to write his poetry in the language that ordered the execution of both his parents. In one of his earliest poems *Nähe der Gräber* (Nearness of Graves) Celan asks his dead mother: “Und duldest du, Mutter, wie einst, ach, daheim, / den leisen, den deutschen, den schmerzlichen Reim?” (Celan, 1952 in Felstiner J, 1995). Translated it says, “Do you endure patiently, mother, as once, oh, at home, German’s soft and painful rhyme?” (Felstiner J, 1995). Celan is quoted as saying that in order to write the truth, one needs to communicate in one’s mother tongue, for any other language would communicate “untruth”. In order to write in the language whose speakers had rejected him a Jew and a non-German, he developed a unique and nuanced kind of German that is in opposition to that of the official German canon. According to Felman and Laub, Celan tries to separate German from Nazism, as he writes in a different, and deliberately altered German (Felman & Laub, 1992:28). Celan himself said:

Reachable, near and not lost, there remained in the midst of the losses this one thing: language. It, the language, remained, not lost, yes in spite of everything. But it had to pass through its own answerlessness, pass through frightful muting, pass through the thousand darknesses of deathbringing speech. It passed through and gave back no words for that which happened; yet it passed through this happening. Passed through and could come to light again, "enriched" by all of this (Felstiner J, 1995: 114).

This analysis of Felman and Laub made me aware of the ways in which Mr. Biscombe was using language during the two interviews. For the interviews, he spoke his mother tongue which is Afrikaans, but like Celan, chose to use his community’s own kind of Afrikaans. During the first interview, as I will show, he uses his kind of Afrikaans to separate himself from his first white Afrikaans speaking interviewer and the official Afrikaans from Apartheid. In the second interview Afrikaans was used as bonding and a linking gesture to the Afrikaans of the “coloured” interviewer. This intentional use of a specific variety of Afrikaans as a form of rebellion reminds one of the work of the poet

Adam Small, who uses the Afrikaans of the oppressed in his poetry and plays. He expressed his form of activism as follows:

The area (careless description of the District!), was ‘declared white’ in the year of our Lord, 1966. And shortly afterward the bulldozers and other demolition machines were executing their terrible mission, and the Seventies became the bitter years of our resentment of this particular ‘resettlement’... I recall the time before the coming of the bulldozers when I was writing poetry about the District. I was writing in one of the languages spoken here, not Afrikaans but an Afrikaans of sorts - one that is not ‘the language of the oppressor’: after all, here ‘the people’ are speaking the language. (Small A & Wissema J, 1986:6).

### *3.6 Specificities and Limitations to the Scope of this Study*

Firstly my study does not aim to provide an historical account of the forced removals of the residents of “Die Vlakte” during the late 1960s. The thesis consists of an analysis of only one person’s personal experience of the forced removal as a teenager.

Secondly the thesis does not in any way deduce that all residents who experienced forced removals exhibit current manifestations of trauma.

Thirdly I have focused this research solely on the testimony of one person in relation to his experience growing up under the Apartheid regime and living through forced removals. However, it cannot be deduced from this that all “coloured” people who would have experienced forced removals will have issues of low self esteem, anger and other related emotions as described in the thesis.

Fourthly the thesis does not aim to collect factual information about the forced removals or life on “Die Vlakte”, but rather to determine whether and, if so, how the event has left traces of trauma in the narrative of one ex-resident.

Fifthly the thesis looks at the forced removal of the Stellenbosch community through the eyes of one resident and no assumptions about forced removals in other areas around the Western Cape and the greater South Africa can be made with accuracy.

Lastly it has to be noted that although there could be many ex Vlakte- residents who could have provided a rich testimony of their life on “Die Vlakte”, and their experience of the forced removals, Mr. Biscombe was selected because of the fact that he collated a book on the life on “Die Vlakte” and it is solely on that basis that his testimony was selected for analysis. This selection does by no means indicate that other testimonies from Stellenbosch residents are less valuable and no disrespect is intended.

The central focus of my research question is based on the fact that the sudden destruction of one’s home and the loss of community causes trauma. I try to detect current manifestations of this trauma in a single narrative.



## Chapter Four: Analysis of First Interview

Five emphases of investigation have been identified and explored in the comparative analysis of the two texts. The analysis will focus on the following:

- (1) The possible effect of trauma on language and tone;
- (2) The possible effect of trauma on content;
- (3) The possible effect of this trauma on future generations;
- (4) The possible effect of trauma on the listener;
- (5) Attempting to interpret the silences.

The analysis compares the two interviews in terms of the five criteria outlined above by highlighting the similarities and differences in the interviews focusing on the criteria above. The two interviews will be distinguished by referring to the First Interview (conducted by the University of Stellenbosch) and the Second Interview (conducted by myself). Selected events in the dialogue will be discussed. Direct quotations will be used to illustrate the significant events shared, and to provide colourful informative text for the analysis of the focus areas outlined above. The first text is divided into themes, which were identified during the first interview. The second interview is based on similar themes, with a more in-depth discussion. The headings in the following chapter indicate the themes which were discussed during both interviews.

### *4.1: The Following Themes were Identified in the First Interview*

#### **Sexual Desires for White Girls**

Mr. Biscombe: *Ek kan onthou... eh... dis miskien (softly) nou, man... mens moet dit sê, jy weet, (slowly) ons seuns, opgeskote seuns het maar gestap in die dorp en die mooi blanke meisies gekyk, jy weet... right en ook, ek (soft giggle) kan nou nie sê verlang het om verhoudings met die mense aan te knoop nie, maar geadmire het (hard and sharp) ghee whiz, but you are beautiful, jys 'n mooi vrou, kyk die mooi meisies en so, maar jy*

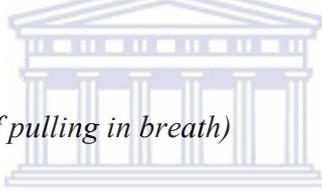
*kon (normal tone) niks... jy kon nie eens skuins kyk nie, want dit dit het mmmoeilikheid veroorsaak.*

*Interviewer: Jy kon nie eers natuurlik...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hoe sê jy?*

*Interviewer: Jy kon nie eers natuurlik wees...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Jy kon nie eers natuurlik wees nie. Kyk dit was 'n aparte wêreld gewees... ah... ah dan sou jy ... ek gaan nou nie sê wat ons... Ek gaan... ek gaan sê wat ons gesê het, ons het 'n sê-stukkie gehad - ons was baie stout gewees - ek gaan dit nou sê (fast) ons het nou die blanke meisies gekyk dan het ons gesê .... Huh ... wat het ons nou weer gesê? ... huh die polisie kan maar kom, hulle kan maar kom met hulle knuppels, ons gaan nie uittrek nie...*



*Interviewer: Huh huh (sound of pulling in breath)*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dis wat ons gesê het fine... fine (hard) want dit was ook 'n tyd van seksuele ontwaking en ... huh (sigh) dis mos maar human nature, right?*

*Interviewer: Dan is daar ook iets anders wat... eh... eh (pause) ek jou wil vra ... eh daar is twee goed, dis... eh... eh... die een is die een is ... die... eh... een is ek wil meer praat oor ... eh ... eh ... jou tienerjare, want jou tienerjare is ... eh... het ook gepaard gegaan met die band van die mense se beweging vanuit daai area...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja.*

*Interviewer: Is ek reg? Dit sou, dit sou die laat sestigerjare gewees het met die mense.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Jjjjjaaa*

## **A Different Kind of Afrikaans**

*Mr. Biscombe: (Die) winkel was altyd silwerskoon, en hulle sou ... daar sou altyd snaakse nuwe produkte sou daar wees, ek het nou my eerste goemahare ook daar gekoop.*

*Interviewer: Jou eerste ...?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Goe- ma-hare (hard) jy weet wat goemahare is?*

*Interviewer: Nnee ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Spookasem, jy weet candyfloss,*

*Interviewer: O ja-ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dit was goemahare.*

*Interviewer: (Very soft) Goemahare...*



*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, goemahare (laugh softly) seker maar omdat dit so uiting gee, dis een van daai lekker woorde. So het ons, so het ons baie spontaan geleef, ja.*

*Interviewer: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja ons het baie spontaan geleef. Nee daar was nie nog van aansitterigheid nie.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ons sou elke Saterdag en Sondags, veral Sondagsoggende, ons sou koesisters gaan koop het by die mense.*

*Interviewer: Jaa ....*

*Mr. Biscombe: Jy weet sodat 'n mens, sodat ek ... eh ... ek kan net nie op 'n Sondag regkom met die gewone ou breakfast nie. Ek wil my koesisters hê, maar jy het, jy kry hom nie meer nie, jy moet hom ver gaan soek. Jy moet nou al die pad Cloeteville toe ry om*

*jou koesters te kry. Maar dit was 'n family favourite gewees, die koesters (softly) dan sou ons ...*

*Interviewer: Weet jy, jy sê iets interessant vir my. Jy sê koesters, jy sê nie koesters nie.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nee koesters, koesters.*

*Interviewer: OK.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dit is hoe ons dit gesê het...*

*Interviewer: Nee ek vind dit baie interessant, want hulle sê dis hoe die woord ontwikkel het, nie koesters nie.*

*Mr. Biscombe: He ... eh, nee hy was 'n ander ...*

*Interviewer: Nie koesters genoem word nie ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hy was 'n ander koester, maar 'n spicy tipe ding. As jy hom oopbreek dan sou jy die spice daar binne in sien, jy weet hulle het een geheim gehad. Hulle het nartjie skille daar-in gesit, gerasperde nartjieskil, dit het hom 'n ander soort lekker flavour gegee en dan sou jy nou Sondagsoggende in die lyn staan. Kyk daar was 'n lyn gewees nê en daar was seker nooit minder as twintig mense in daai lyn nie.*

*Interviewer: Om te kom koesters koop ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja nou staan jy in die gang van die van die motjie, het ons gesê, dan sou jy nou jou se koesters of jou halfkroon se koesters koop, dan kry jy nou die bakkie met die koesters, maar daar was klapper oor gewees jong, nie soos vandag wat hulle cheap is nie, klapper oor en dan het jy nou die koesters huis toe geneem, maar terwyl jy die koesters huis toe geneem het, het 'n sekere Mev Kraus, ... melk kom aflewer ...*

## **Conflicts with White Youth**

*Mr. Biscombe: Aan die ander kant, na Paul Roos se kant toe, was daar baie ... eh... baie ... eh ... (pause) blanke kinders, met wie ons gedurig deur fights gehad het, klip gegooi. Dit was mos maar ... eh ... katterkwaad gewees, you know.*

*Interviewer: eh ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Moet niks evil daarin lees nie, dit was maar nou net, hulle was anders en ons was nou net die group.*

## **Longing for “Die”Vlakte: Description of Community**

### **Cinema**

*Mr. Biscombe: Gayiety was 'n ... was 'n plek waar ... kyk daar was maar net twee soorte van entertainment - dis nou behalwe die kultuur aspek - dit was nou die ... die gewone danse wat jy gekry het in die stadsaal in die Volkskerk en by mense se huise het jy ook nou danse gekry en dan is dit nou die cinema. Nou die cinema was nou 'n groot hoogtepunt van die week gewees, veral naweke ... hmm ... kyk daai tyd sou da nie soos vandag net een prentjie speel nie, jy weet da sou twee prente speel en daar sou 'n serial (excited and fast) wees ok? Nou die serial was die groot attraksie (loud) dit is mos nou die broertjie ... hy ry mos nou in sy motor, dan ry hy nou hier by die cliff af en dan stop hy net da.*

*Interviewer: Dan moet jy ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Moet jy volgende week (giggle) gaan om volgende week verder te kyk , eh ... (soft) die gees wat geheers het in daai cinema jy weet, is nie soos vandag waar mense so koud sit ... eh teenoor mekaar nie en ... eh ... niks praat met mekaar nie. Daar het mense bymekaar gekom en ... eh ... daai energie jy weet, en die week se gebeure (excited) al daai goed. Jy sou daar staan in 'n lyn l- a- n -g lyn want die mense moet nou eers hul kaartjies koop en dan kan hulle eers ingaan in die cinema en die prente wat daar gespeel het was baie lekker interessante prente - ek kan ook nou 'n paar name opnoem.*

## **House in Ryneveldt Street**

*Mr. Biscombe: My familie het basies gebly in Van Ryneveldstraat, die huis is sewe en sestig Van Ryneveldtstraat, dit is waar .....(pause) die Ryneveldt Lodge is nou, daai groot pillar-huis, daa (slowly) het ek gebly.*

*Hmm ... wat die Hector-familie betref ... die eiendom het gestrek vanaf Van Ryneveldtstraat tot in Andrigastraat, okay? En toe dit nou eindelijk geforseer verkoop was, was dit maar teen 'n ... was maar eh ... 'n klein bedraggie, klein bedraggie gewees ... jy weet en ons is nou juis besig om daai eiendom ... err ... ek weet nie, jy weet die regering maak so lank en (softly) om na daai storie te kyk, hy wil nog nie lekker gel nie.*

## **Feelings towards White People**

*Mr. Biscombe: Nou die Plaza cinema is daar wa die Woolworths ... was daar waar Woolworths nou vadag is en daar het ek ... ek nou 'n baie groot voorreg gehad, want die blankes sou onder sit, dit was die reel in die dag, hulle MAGGIE (sharp) bo sit nie, okay? Dan sal ek by die sydeur inkom, direk na die gallery toe.*

## **Forced Removals**

*Mr. Biscombe: Die verskuiwings ... die verskuiwings het nie plaasgevind eenklaps nie. Dit ... dit ... kyk oor 'n tydperk ...*

*Interviewer: Ja ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dan ... dan sien jy da gaan daai gesin weg, da gaan daai gesin weg, maar soos ek vir jou sê dit het nie so 'n impak op my gemaak nie. Ek kan nog onthou die lorrie wat voor die huis staan ... ons het nou die goed opgelaai en soos ek onthou my mm-a was baie huilerig en snotterig en kan daai onthou ... ma wat vir my ontstel dit. Ek ... ek ... ek ... ek het nie die implikasies besef nie. Laat ek dit so stel, ek was nog te jonk, ek het nie daai sort implikasies besef nie: dis my hele toekoms, my hele ... you know it just was one, one big huge adventure. Ek kan vir jou sê dat die ... dat die ... jy was wel bewus van die gees ... eh ... eh ... eh ... the spirit of sadness ... jy ... jy ... jy was wel bewus, maar hier*

*is iets aan die gebeur. Hoekom is die ou mense dan so snaaks, hulle praat nie, hulle is nors, ... eh ... sommige huil, sommige ... eh ... pa en ... eh ... eh ... ma moet nou vanaand na 'n vergadering toe gaan, wat, wat, wat gaan aan - jy weet daai tipe ding.*

*Interviewer: As jy later met jou ouers gepraat het, het hulle so ...het hulle gesê wat eintlik aan die gang was op daai stadium of het dit net...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dit het verby gegaan, jy het nie daai soort ... daai soort groot filosofiese vrae (loudly) gevra nie of hoekom en 'n mens se menswaardigheid en daai tipe ding. Kyk, kyk, kyk met die die soort van opvoeding, want ...kyk jy meng nie met grootmense se goed nie.*

Van der Merwe and Godobo-Madikizela conclude that if traumatic events are not incorporated into community conversation or communal spaces of sharing pain, individuals as well as a society will stay traumatized. On the other hand, research has shown that those who have been traumatized find it difficult to communicate their trauma and most opt to remain silent about it. Those who work in the trauma field often encourage those who have been traumatized to document their experience in order to aid the process of healing. This documenting of trauma stories is also used to assist others in their healing in similar areas where it is difficult to share. This healing technique is called bibliotherapy, where victims read other's stories and respond to them, rather than going through the painful and often long process of telling one's own story. (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007).

In the above mentioned quotations from the First Interview it is clear that the forced removal was not spoken about by the Stellenbosch community; there was no shared pain or dialogue about an event so traumatic. Not even in Mr. Biscombe's own family was there any discussion and he says, "*dit het verby gegaan*". He admits that he was aware that something was wrong in the emotional responses of the community and his family, but nothing was shared. In the understanding of Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela, no individual or collective healing can take place when the community chooses to remain silent in the midst of trauma. It is also noticeable how impossible Mr.

Biscombe finds it still to talk about the event. He uses half sentences and stutters conveying a mixture of the inability to talk about it and the shame he clearly feels for not being able to realize at that stage that it would probably be the most decisive and traumatic moment of his life.

However, the need to revisit and narrate the trauma clearly never left him. He chose to write a book about the forced removal in which all the stories from the community were included: a book on the collective experience of a past community. Although people happily shared their stories about life on “Die Vlakte” as a kind of restoration act, very little was shared about the forced removal itself. Mr. Biscombe provided former Vlakte residents with an opportunity to document their stories or to “narrate their healing”, but they chose, like Biscombe himself in the First Interview, to remain silent and to focus largely on the good times shared on “Die Vlakte” (Biscombe H, 2006)

#### *4.2: Trauma and The Impact of the Listener in the First Interview*

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual or DSM4 (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) the following could be regarded as symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress: insomnia, re-living the past, seeing faces, depression, lack of motivation to fully engage in activities with loved ones, other health related illnesses, as well as anger, pessimism and hostility. Victims also can experience low self esteem, and feels dehumanized, worthless and lacking confidence (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

It is important to note that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual is a guideline not to diagnose the person, but to diagnose the symptoms which the person is experiencing (American Psychiatric Association, 1994)

When assessing Mr. Biscombe’s testimony for symptoms of trauma, it is of course not always clear which are symptoms of being a victim of Apartheid or purely of forced removals - although these two experiences cannot be divorced as forced removals were a result of the apartheid regime. Mr. Biscombe, when asked to make this distinction, observed that the forced removal made things so much worse and that in his own

diagnosis he would have been healed about seventy percent by this stage if he had only experienced Apartheid. Currently he feels thirty percent healed.

Mr. Biscombe uses language very powerfully during the First Interview. He talks in his mother tongue, however he does not use the same kind of language as the Afrikaner who interviews him; those who represent the oppressors under the Apartheid regime. As has been said before: the role of the listener has an immediate impact on the way a story is told and the content in it. In this interview Mr Biscombe uses words that only he and other “coloured” people will understand, like the word “goemahare” for candy floss. The word “goema” interestingly originated on the Cape Flats, and is described as a rhythmic music style played by the Cape Minstrels and other local “coloured” musicians. The word thus has a strong link to “coloured” culture. Mr. Biscombe has a whole discussion about the word, even spells it for the interviewer, in order to “educate” him. He also spends quite a bit of time discussing the word “koesisters” instead of “koeksister”s in order to differentiate between “his” food and those of the Afrikaners. He emphasizes that it is how “ons dit sê”. This conversation appears trivial in the light of describing his life and the forced removals he had experienced, yet one senses how he on the one hand skirts the issue of the removal and on the other hand is busy insisting an opposing position to the white interviewer.

In the First Interview that Mr. Biscombe has with the University of Stellenbosch he appears to dominate the conversation, deciding what to share and what topic to focus on next in the interview. He also warns that he is going to talk about a further topic, without being asked or prompted to speak about it. He says, “*Ek gaan nou sommer praat oor die skool*” (I am now going to talk about the school) , and “*Ek sal later weer terug kom na die kerk toe*” ( I will come back to the church later).

Despite this apparent domination, there are several times in the conversation where the interviewer asks him questions which render him vulnerable. These questions focus on issues such as the forced removals, his relationship to white people, his career, his attitude toward the University of Stellenbosch (an institution which previously excluded

people of colour). When faced with these questions, and one suspects especially their coming from a white person, Mr. Biscombe's previously eloquent speech turns to stutter and pauses, which seems to affect his self-esteem. He then diverts to specific language uses which seem to restore his self-esteem. These uses range from a specific "coloured" vocabulary, through what is known as "Kaaps", to English. It is especially English which gives his narrative an impersonal distance – probably because in his own understanding as a "coloured" person it is a superior language to that of the interviewer and the oppressor. He speaks English. He substitutes the use of his own mother tongue, which he is more comfortable with, with a second language, which according to poet Celan quoted by Felman and Laub, makes the teller vulnerable to untruth. After Mr. Biscombe shares in English for a few lines, he evidently regains his composure and returns to speaking in his mother tongue.

During the First Interview the most prominent aspect of the conversation is when he talks about his sexual desires for white girls and rebellion toward the Apartheid regime. Under a regime which criminalized sex across the colour line, sex and apartheid were linked. There was a deep resistance to what was classified as illegal, and he felt a need to express to the white man his decision to disobey even if it meant physical hurt, being arrested or worse. He tells the story spontaneously, completely unprovoked, as if he needs to share that information as a sign of his rebellion against the past Apartheid government. But it is also more: in the absence of any shocking resistance against the forced removals, or any haunting memory of the removal itself, it is as if the teller wants to take revenge on the listener; to shock him, anger him, and to defy him and his laws.

This moment in the narrative presents a specific and later to be repeated pattern. The teller shows clear hesitation in sharing a specific story. He first says that he does not want to share it, then changes his mind and says that he WILL share it, then when he is about to speak, it is as if he cannot get the words over his lips, the words are gone, but when he finally shares it, the ball is in the other court. Now suddenly the listener is at a loss. He responds by audibly holding or pulling in his breath – perhaps in shock or as a sign of disapproval. As he is sensing this, the teller draws back: he switches into English and writes off what he has just said as something as general as: "fine...fine - human

nature right?" But the listener has not recovered and also starts to stutter. Worse, he seems unable to even respond to the teller's comments and tries to change the subject taking the conversation into a completely different direction as if what was shared with such difficulty was never heard!

Great significance is placed on the role of the listener to a traumatic event, when positioning oneself as a witness to testimony. The connection between the listener and the teller of testimony becomes crucial in the process of reconciliation and healing, which places the listener as an active player in the sharing of testimony (Felman and Laub, 1992:90).

The listener also has to be aware of his/her own emotions to the trauma, his/her own experience of shock, horror, disapproval and anxiety that s/he experiences whilst serving as a witness. S/he places himself in the traumatic event, but also has to maintain and gain control over his/her own emotions, thoughts and ideas, if he wants to fully embrace his/her role as a listener and witness (Felman and Laub, 1992:58).

The power dynamic of the relationship in the First Interview is evident when the listener, who is a white male, a representative of the oppressor, appears to disapprove of what is shared, and for a moment the conversation is unstable. The teller who clearly has dominated the conversation before and has steered the topics in the way he sees fit is suddenly being steered by the interviewer. So although there may have been a moment of revenge for the teller, he is unable to make full use of it and immediately withdraws into harmless generalization. It is also important to note that once again the sharer switches his language from Afrikaans to English. This restores his former dominant position in the interview to such an extent that he can share the story of throwing stones at the white youth. But again, he retreats into generalization saying it was just being mischievous and that the listener should not read anything evil in that account. Again, he switches to English.

According to Bock (2008) who examines the use of linguistic markers of evaluation such as varying language tenses and switching from speaking one language to the other, those

who share their story use these markers to create a position for themselves within the dialogue (Bock, 2008:53). She uses the term “code switching” and in the case of the First Interview it follows a specific pattern. Mr. Biscombe initially positions himself as the dominant partner within the Interviewer/Mr. Biscombe relationship, however when sensitive issues are addressed or he feels vulnerable, he appears to lose that dominant position and uses a different language, in his case English, to regain that position. It becomes clear that another language is used to restore his self esteem, or ego. He deliberately uses English because he believes it to be superior to Afrikaans, and also knows that many Afrikaners do not readily speak English. English is thus used to ensure that the dominant position Mr. Biscombe holds in the interview is maintained, and to re-establish the power dynamic within the interview when he becomes vulnerable.

The identified pattern of trying to overpower the interviewer, the immediate withdrawal, and the repeating of the attempt is an indication of Mr. Biscombe’s deep-seated anger about how he was disadvantaged by the removal and his shame that he did not resist it.

According to Felman and Laub, language is described as a personal vehicle to go deep within the self to engage the trauma, get mastery over it, in order to move on. (Felman S & Laub D, 1992). As a direct result of what the interviewer represented to Mr. Biscombe and his consequent suppressed emotion, he could not use the offered opportunity to engage the pain of his past and to leave it behind as my research on the Second Interview will show.

## **5. Chapter Five: Analysis of Second Interview**

The Second Interview, thirty years after the removal, was done by an interviewer who was not only “coloured” and female, but also known to Mr. Biscombe. He was one of my high school teachers and knows my family as they also formed part of the community that was removed from “Die Vlakte”. Of the many factors that could have influenced the interview itself, time and the change of interviewer must count as two of the most important. Several differences between the two interviews were immediately noticeable when one compares the same themes.

### *5.1 Discussion of Themes in Second Interview*

The same themes have been identified in the second interview and compared with those of the first. As regards they were often treated in greater depth in the second interview.

#### **Sexual Desires for White Girls**

During the Second Interview the only reference made to the sexual desires for white girls, described with such detail in the First Interview, was that it was forbidden to even look at white girls. Something in the white interviewer obviously triggered the overwhelming need of Mr. Biscombe to share such intimate details with a person who represented and maybe still represents the oppressor to him.

#### **Conflicts with White Youth**

The instance of conflict with white youth is not mentioned at all during the second interview and it appeared as though the story was insignificant in the light of other discussions.

#### **Use of “Kaapse” Words**

Mr. Biscombe himself explains the code switching during the Second Interview and seems to use it no longer as a personal strategy against the interviewer, but as part of his own wrestling with his mother tongue : “*Jy moet my verskoon as ek so Engels en*

*Afrikaans deurmekaar praat. Dit is ook 'n teken van my eie rebelsheid ten opsigte van die taal wat ek my eie probeer maak."*

The struggle to own Afrikaans as a "coloured" language is found in the origin of the language itself, which always portrayed the ideals and identity of the white South African as Afrikaans literature was largely synonymous with white literature. During the early nineteenth hundreds if "coloured" people were to articulate themselves in Afrikaans in a formal setting, a white interpreter was used and white people spoke on behalf of the coloured. The Afrikaans language was thus taken away from them (Adhikari, 1996:165).

### **Longing for the community, and Description of "Die Vlakte"**

In contrast to the First Interview, the memories of life on "Die Vlakte" flood to the fore.

*Renee: The onderhoud is opverdeel in tien temas. So die eerste een is... is eintlik oor die verhouding met die mense oppie Vlakte. As Meneer nou terug dink, hoe het die mense geleef, hoe het hulle, hoe was hulle verhoudings met mekaar. Hoe het hulle tyd saam gespandeer?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja... ja... hmm.*

*Renee: Wat het hulle gedoen?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Right I got the picture, moet ek praat daarvan? Ja, wel die boek sê dit alles nou ... 'n baie belangrike, ... eh ... nou 'n woord wat ek baie voor lief is, ... nou die woord is dinamies, ...ehh dinamiese interaksie van mense. Jy weet as ek nou praat van dinamiese interaksie van mense dan beteken dit altyd lewendig, 'n lewendige belangstelling innie een en ander se doen en late...*

*Renee: ...ehe ...,*

*Mr. Biscombe: So met ander woorde as jy seer kry, kry ek ook seer. As jy 'n ... mm... behoefte het aan kos, dan sal ek die ekstra moeite doen soedat jy daai kos kan kry. Ek weet dit klink baie idealisties, but that is exactly how it was... (pause)*

*Renee: 'n Noue gemeenskap...*

*Mr. Biscombe: 'n Noue gemeenskap wat mekaar se doen en late geshare het, jy weet daai tipe ding ...eh en eh... en daar was baie pret en da was baie plesier en dit is al die ... eh hoe kan ek dit nou stel, en dis 'n woord wat ek nou baie gaan gebruik; nou hoe kan ek dit stel, want my kop moet ek orden hie bo, dis maa nou hoe dit is ...te doen met al die drama, (kom ons sê maar drama in aanhalingstekens) van mense se lewe, want dit was alles da gewees dit was nou die pyn en die hartseer tot by die groot plesiere en jy weet seker wat ek bedoel?*

*Renee: Ja...*

*Mr. Biscombe: ... as ek nou praat van al daai goed. Want mense maak maar daai deur, ma oppie Vlakte was dit soveel meer intens aanvaar gewees en ervaar gewees. ... Hmm ... mense het ... ooooh (pulling in breath) mense het ... ehh hoe they lived in the moment en die spontaniteit van die oomblik. Ja, ja, dit-dit-dit was die groot storie daar gewees oppie Vlakte en dit is iets, een van die dinge wat my ... oooh (pulling in breath) (sharp intake of breath) baie laat terug v- e-r-l-a-n-g ( emphasized) na daai tyd maar hulle sê ook dat as a mense nou ouer word en u gaan nou past fifty dan is 'n mens geneig (laughs softly) om te neig na jou kinderjare toe.*

*Renee: So is die lewe heeltemal anders op die Idasvallei as wat dit was oppie Vlakte?*

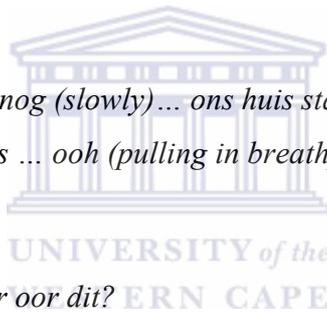
*Mr. Biscombe: Ja. Ja, natuurlik definitief. Dit is definitief anders. Ek meen hier's jou neighbours langsaan nou - ek ken darem so bietjie van die mense langsaan, maar dit is nie soos dit oppie Vlakte was nie. Op die Vlakte was dit intiem in die sense dat jy enige tyd by daai mense kon kom sit ... ooh (pulling in breath) 'n koppie sop kon geniet, 'n koppie tee of wat ook al jy kon ... eh... eh jy het baie kere geslaap by die mense ek praat nou as kind...*

*Renee: Ja ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Eh ... eh... eh... they know your ins and outs. Hulle het jou ma, jou pa, jou hele familie geken, jou hele familie geken, so dit was 'n hele ander storie. Nou in Idasvallei is alles so ietwat koud en 'n mens probeer, jy wil weer daai gees terug hê en dis een van daai groot frustrasies, jy probeer om daai gees trug te kry en ... eh ... jy, jy, jy, jy vat dit maar nou altyd trug na ... omdat jy ... ooh (pulling in breath) ag ek wil nou nie die woord victim gebruik nie, maar ek is seker maar 'n victim van 'n victim, van 'n victim, van 'n victim: Apartheid. Ooh (pulling in breath) jy wil dit maar altyd toeskryf aan daai storie dat ... dat ... dat dit die rede is hoekom die blerrie wêreld lyk nou soos hy nou lyk, veral in Suid Afrika, maar meer spesifiek hier in Stellenbosch omdat Stellenbosch die geboorte plek van Apartheid was in die ... in die sin dat die ministers en die mense nou hier opgelei was en so....*

### ***House in Ryneveldt Street***

*Mr. Biscombe: By the way nou nog (slowly)... ons huis staan nou nog nê, ons huis waarin ek gebly het, staan nog, die huis ... ooh (pulling in breath) en dit sê ek nou vir die rekord, is nou 'n gastehuis.*



*Renee: En nou hoe voel Meneer oor dit?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ek gaan nou vir jou sê 'n gastehuis en word nou bedryf deur die groot kapitaliste wat nou baie geld maak uit ons huis wat my oupa baie swaar bekom het ... ooh (pulling in breath)) ... ek maak ... en dit beskou ek ook as deel van my heling ...*

*Renee: Ahe...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ek... ek ry met my motor spesifiek by... deur daai straat, verby daai huis dan draai ek my venster af dan sê ek julle ma se 'poe...(mumbles the last letter, softly)*

*Renee: Okay. (laughs)*

*Mr. Biscombe: I'm doing it, it sounds funny...*

*Renee: Hmm.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Maar dis 'n ontlading vir my.*

*Renee: En Meneer doen dit gereeld?*

*Mr. Biscombe (voice changes into a plaintive tone) En nou gaan jy vir my sê moenie so sensitief wees ... dou, dou, dou , that type of thing en jy moenie nog vir my sê dit is Apartheid se skuld nie , a-lankal verby al. Die punt is dit het vir my so geaffekteer and I must deal with it on THAT (emphasis )level.*

*Renee: En dan voel Meneer beter as Meneer dit klaar gedoen het?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, definitief! Definitief.*

*Renee: Hoekom het Meneer gekies om, om die huis te skryf?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, watter boek praat jy nou van?*

*Renee: Ek praat nou van die autobiografie In My Bloed.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Die een wat ek nou mee besig is?*

*Renee: Die een wat nou unpublished is.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Waarom ek dit nou so geskryf het?*

*Renee: Ja, so om die huis?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Well (hoë stemtoon) ...( pause) dit het te doen met omdat ek praat van in MY (emphasis) bloed ... dis wat EK ... by the way ek is gebore in daai huis, ek is nie gebore in 'n hospitaal nie (slowly) so die bloed het nou da begin loop, so dit het te doen met assosiasie, dit het te doen met ... eh die vertrek, die muur, die lig, die gordyn, die portret (very softly) teen die muur afset point, sets off certain memories ...*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Waaroor ek skryf, so die huis is in my bloed (soft) en ek gee uiting in MY bloed oor wat ek perceive het. En dan gebruik ek ook die taal wat ek in die boek gebruik ... is Engels en Afrikaans deurmekaar... (pause)*

*Renee: Okay.*

*Mr Biscombe: (pause)... cause that is a sign of taking back what is mine.*

### **Locating Himself back in the Vlakte**

*Renee: En... en die verskillende rituele wat mense gehad het op “Die Vlakte” ... wat het hulle gedoen soos byvoorbeeld naweke en op Vrydae?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ooh (pulling in breath) (excited) naweke was mos nou, en dit word nou alles in die boek uitgebring, maar naweke was dit nou die groot plesier van sport, die sport. Dan het jy nou natuurlik jou bio... bioskoop gehad wat natuurlik 'n baie groot deel van mense se lewens uitgemaak het... (pulling in breath) dan het jy nou ... ehe ... eh dan het jy nou jou danse gehad wat sportklubs gereel het en dan jou kerk aktiwiteite was baie groot en dan ... eh ... na ... naweke, die kerke was 'n baie samebindende faktor, want die kerke en die skole, want die kerke en die skole het ook baie naby mekaar geoperat.*

*Renee: Ja, daar was baie kerkskole.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Baie kerkskole gewees en ... eh dan het jy nou gekry dat baie van die ... eh kerke hulle eie funksies gehad het, veral kulturele funksies en eh ... ja, ja, selfs hulle het hulle eie sport ook bedryf as-as, as, as, as, as ...*

*Renee: As ontspanning?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, as ontspanning - sokker en netball. So dit was 'n hele klomp goed bymekaar, so jy het altyd soort van 'n keuse gehad, waarin jy wil participe.*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: As jy nou vat jy's nou in Idasvallei en jy wil graag bioskoop toe gaan, nou moet jy ook weer in terme van die blanke, wel ... miskien is dit onregverdig (laugh softly), maar ek wil dit so sien, seker omdat ek uit daai era uit kom. In ...in ...in my analiese is dit...*

*Renee: Ja, dit is Meneer se frame of referen...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ek ... ek moet nou gaan central dorp toe. Waar dit my 'n minuut geneem het om te stap na die bioskoop toe, moet ek nou of die taxi vat of ek moet petrolgeld uitgee ... eeehh (pulling in breath) dan kom ek nou op die dorp, dan moet ek nou parkering soek en ... en ... en ... en ... en ... Right?*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nou moet jy bioskoop toe stap en nou het jy ook ... ook altyd die problem van hulle gaan inbreek of wat ook al. Okay, dis maar nou 'n algemene ding ... ooh (pulling in breath) maar al daai goed kon uitgeskakel gewees het ...*

*Renee: Ja ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Maar dit kan ook gedien het as 'n manier hoe ek my vrye tyd bestee ... nou verkies ek om nie bioskoop toe te gaan nie.*

*Renee: Te veel moeite nou di...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nou wat doen ek nou in daai vrye tyd? Dis maar nou E-E-N van die issues: jy was naby jou skool, jy was naby jou kerk en ... eh dit het net, dit het net ... eh goed uitgewerk. Nou's jy helemal ... eh dis 'n hele ander storie nou, jy weet (sighs).*

*Renee: En die rituele wat die mense daai tyd gehad het, kon hulle nie weer gedupliseer word in Idasvallei nie?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nee, ek sal jou sê hoekom. Een van die redes is: jy weet Idasvallei sal ek nou sê ... ooh (pulling in breath) is... eh taamlik ge-establish, met ander woorde as jy nou oppie, op 'n stuk grond kom bly, was da miskien al klaar neighbours gewees.*

*Renee: Okay.*

*Mr. Biscombe: En jy kon miskien nie lekker met daai mense nie ... jy moet maar 'n verhouding opbou ten opsigte van dit.*

Mr. Biscombe describes the relationships which people had on “Die Vlakte” as intimate and characterized by intensity. He says that people lived in the moment and that at any time they felt welcome to go to the neighbours to visit, for food and even as children stayed over at the neighbours. He stresses the word LONGING when he says that he misses the life of an intimate community who really loved each other. In Idas Valley, to where they were relocated, he describes the atmosphere as cold, that he did not really know his neighbours well and that one of the biggest frustrations was to get that community spirit back to the way he had experienced it on “Die Vlakte”. He says that he always thinks back and calls himself a victim of Apartheid. It is noted that he uses the word victim four consecutive times when describing himself. He says he is a victim of a victim of a victim of a victim: Apartheid. Acknowledging his victim status also brought out direct statements about depression and problems with faith.

### **The Church**

*Mr. Biscombe: Maar jy kan dit ook toeskryf man, ek is SEKER man, ek is honderd persent seker daarvan dat as daai kerk nog daar onder was, dan sou die geestelike lewe van mense - ek praat nou van Volkskerk mense...*

*Renee: Ja ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: ...ook anders gewees het want eh ...dis nou moeilik om die vinger nou presies daar op te lê maar vir my het dit te doen met die feit dat die man ... Die Volkskerk oppie Vlakte het gestaan, ek kan nou amper sê hy het gestaan op heilige grond. Daar was*

*groot respek vir die feit dat die Kerk staan gemaak was deur die ouer mense en die respek wat daarmee gaan ...*

## **Trauma**

*Renee: Maar ek wil weer terugkom by daai oomblik wat Meneer beseef het ek kan nie terug gaan huis toe nie.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja...*

*Renee: Ek bly nou in Idasvallei, my huis, my kamer my bure, my straat, dis dis verlore vir my nou.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hmm.*

*Renee: Wanneer het daai oomblik gekom?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Man ek sal nie sê dit het so duidelik gekom soos jy dit nou stel nie, jy weet dis nie soos Paulus wat nou sy mind heeltemal gechange het sommer dadelik nie, dis 'n geleidelike proses ooh (pulling in breath) ek meen dit het gekom met 'n klomp ander goed wat saamhang daarmee. Ek, dit het ek maar altyd terug gevat na die trauma wat ek ervaar het en die vrae wat ek begin vra het. Daai vrae wat ek begin vra het en eh... daai trauma was in ... in ... in ingebou indaai storie was die... die... eh... vergelyking om te v- e- r -g -e- l- y -k.*

*Renee: Ehe.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Jy sien die wit mense, hulle bly da waar jy gebly het... (pause) hulle lyk asof hulle lekker bly. (softly)*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: So what is the issue here, daai vergelyking, nou sit jy, hulle ry grand karre ... nou begin jy aan die hele dorp te kyk, jy kyk na die Universiteit, kyk na bevoorregting. Jy weet in standard nege is mens mos maar 'n bietjie ...*

*Renee: Rebels.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, (softly) nou begin jy lees jy begin rondkrap in boeke ... (pause) jy begin kyk na, ek gaan nou sê vreemde idees, jy begin kyk na China, kommunisme, jy begin kyk na al daai goed, jy begin kyk na Jesus as 'n revolutionary. I have been through those stages ooh (pulling in breath) eh.... sensitiwiteit ten opsigte van jou reg self om om te participate in die dorp. Selfs as ek nou daar gaan na die poskantoor toe. Hoekom is daar nou twee rye en twee uitgange? Hoekom is daar twee rye? Hoekom kan ek nie daar bioskoop toe gaan nie? Daai soort tipe vrae. Jy kan nie na 'n wit meisie kyk nie, dan is daar problem. Daai soort tipe ding het jou begin hinder en het daar iets binne in jou het jou begin sê, maar dis nou nie reg nie.*

*Renee: Ja, nou vir wie het Meneer die vrae gevra? Was dit in die kerk, in die skool met maats, in die familie?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Man jy het nie daai vrae gevra nie, dis jou gewete wat jy mee mee meen struggle en jy jy jy... (pause) Ek kan nie onthou dat ek vrae gevra het, spesifiek vir mense nie. Ek weet nie of ek dit eers vir my ma dit gevra het nie, dis maar net die woeling hier binne-in jou. Why is that like that and why is that like that, so ... so ... so dit is trauma (emphasis), wat jy binne toe gewerk het.*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Né, en dit is wat jou, dit is waar ek die regering ook blameer. Hulle kon heel aan die begin, hulle het natuurlik nou wel nou die ... eh... eh... waar Antjie Krog nou ook betrokke was die ...,*

*Renee: Die TRC.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja hulle het nou wel, dit was te min gewees, te min mense gedek ooh (pulling in breath) in any case en ... en ... en mense moes trauma counseling gekry het. Daai is iets wat op basiese groot skaal moet gebeur het, trauma counseling (slowly) en ... ehe ... eh dit was nie gedoen gewees nie en nou pluk ... eh ons die wrange vrugte, wel ek*

*glo dit en jy kan dit sien. Dit is my verklaring hoekom die dinge so deurmekaar is mense het, die mense het nie trauma counseling gehad nie (emphasis)*

*Renee: Die mense sit nog met hulle ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Die mense sit nog met hulle issues. Ek sit nog met my issues. Dit lyk of my issues nou eers op sy ergste woed. Dit was nie veronderstel om so te wees nie, want na 94 het alles mos nou verander so ek is nie ... ja,*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Kom ons sê so: ek is nou veronderstel, veronderstel om nou 90% geheal te wees en is nie ek trek seker nou nog by 30% jong...*

*Renee: Daar is nog 'n pad.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Daar is nog 'n pad om te stap. Die skryf van die boek en die goed is deel van my eie helingsproses. I'm doing it consciously, because I'm trying to help myself here to get (pulling in breath) out of this mindset, ek ... ek ... ek gloe nie ek gaan ooit daaruit kom nie, nou klink dit vi-vi-iv-vi-vir. Nou mag dit vir jou klink ... eh wel, jyt nou baie gelees en so aan nou klink dit vir iemand anders dat eh ... 'wel die man het seker baie swaar gekry in die lewe.' (voice like an old man) Hel ... (emphasis) ek het nie swaar gekry in die lewe nie, it's just that I'm sensitive for my own worth as mens...*

*Renee: Menswaardigheid was aangetas.*

*Mr. Biscombe: En daai menswaardigheid is iets wat hy ... hy ... hy is iets wat ... wat ... wat, hy krap aan jou self-esteem.*

*Renee: En hy krap nog altyd.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Jy weet as 'n mense nie selfesteem het nie is dit vir jou moeilik om te ... om te doen ... (pause) wat jy nou byvoorbeeld doen, 'n dissertation ...*

*Renee: Hmmm.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Want jou confidence is geknak en jy sukkel nou om daa' uit te kom. Nou nog as mense vir my uitvra om iets te doen dan's ek skugter. Jy weet ek werk nou aan 'n nuwe boek en ek het nog slapelose nagte, can I or can I not ...*

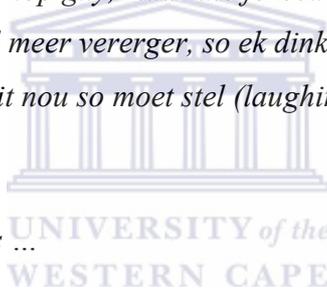
*Renee: Is dit nou direk, sê nou forced removals het nou nie gebeur nie en Apartheid het nou gebeur en die mense het nog gebly oppie Vlakte, voel Meneer dat Meneer nog altyd geaffekteer was, hmm?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Tot in a mate jaaaa ... (pause), maar dit het tot veel meer te doen met die wêreld se beskouing van die wit man.*

*Renee: Heh.*

*Mr. Biscombe: He is always the top guy, maar die forced removals en ag daai goed het dit soveel erger gemaak, soveel meer vererger, so ek dink ek sou redelik seker nou, 70% 80% heling gewees het, as ek dit nou so moet stel (laughing softly) as ek nog in die dorp moes gebly het.*

*Renee: Want die gemeenskap is ...*



*Mr. Biscombe: Die gemeenskap is nog daa, die bure en al daai goed, ek dink dit sou bietjie anders gewees het right, right.*

*Renee: Ek wil weer terug kom na die huis toe want Meneer se storie is anders as ander mense wie se huis afgebreek was, die huis staan nog, party... (pause) en daai huis word nou gebruik deur ander mense om geld te maak uit Meneer se ouers se handewerk en Meneer se kamer. Het Meneer ooit gaan inboek by die Ryneveldt lodge?*

*Mr. Biscombe: I will never do that! Ek sal nooit dit doen nie. In die eerste plek dit is nie meer dieselfde nie en in die tweede plek, dit sal te PYNLIK wees vir my en ek gaan nie daai selfde vibe kry in any case nie en ook dis ooh (pulling in breath) dis Elitisties.*

## Depression

*Mr. Biscombe: Jy kan nie 'n pil neem daarvoor nie, dis 'n lang proses*

*Renee: Van heel word ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: En die skryf ... (pause) een, van die middele wat ek nou probeer om te heel, maar selfs daar het ek probleme want ek haak vas. Jy skryf in 'n sloot in. Ek werk nou aan 'n ander ... ek werk nou aan 'n boek oor sokker op Stellenbosch, dan werk ek nou aan 'n boek *In My Bloed*, my eie persoonlike ervaring en da haak ek by bladsy honderd en vyftig. Dit lyk ek kan nie verder as bladsy honderd en vyftig nie.*

*Renee: Is dit as gevolg van die issues waaroor meneer skryf as...*

*Mr. Biscombe: As gevolg van die issues en as as gevolg van die saak wat ek deurwerk hmm eh ... (pause) ek het depressie ... ek... eh sukkel met depressie, ooh (pulling in breath). Dit lyk of ek daaruit kan kom right, ma ehe ... eh ek skryf die feit dat ek eh daaruit kan kom, of besig is om daaruit te kom aan die feit dat ek alternatiewe terapie aan skryf en nie die eh nie die psigiatriest wat nou vir jou hoe kan ek dit sê happy clappy tablets gee nie .... heh ... eh 'n professor hier op Stellenbosch wat saam wat wat wat eh dit is nou persoonlik maar ok, ek gaan dit maar nou noem, wat saam met my deur hierdie issue werk en snaaks genoeg Renee, hierdie ding het begin toe ek klaar is met die boek (high tone).*

*Renee: Hy werk seker om issues na die conscious te...*

*Mr. Biscombe: That should be significant to you, (excited) ek weet nie wat jou leermeesters daarvan gaan maak nie , but it started immediately with, say a week or two after the book has been published, toe die boek uitkom daarna (laughs very softly) toe begin my storie ...*

*Renee: En toe hoe het die storie begin, was dit slapelose nagte?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Slapelose nagte, slapelose nagte*

*Renee: En drome?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nie sodanig drome nie, net slapelose nagte, kan nie slaap nie, nou nog sukkel ek daarmee ...*

*Renee: Insomnia?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, ja maar nou saam met die insomnia, NOU kom die vrae en die gesigte.*

*Renee: So dan dink meneer aan al daai voor meneer gaan slaap?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nee, nee dit werk nie so by my nie. Ek raak aan die slap, maar kort, vir 'n uur of twee dan word ek wakker, then it's nou ... nou sê so vir 'n jaar of twee na dat ek dit nie gehad het nie. Nou is dit people of the Vlakte, dit lyk asof ek elke gesig sien van die mense wat oppie Vlakte geleef het en nou praat ek nie van heiti-teiti mense nie, ek praat nou van die ou wat die straat gevee het.*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ek sien hom, ek sien die Milky wat die melk kom aflewer het, ek sien hom voor my...*

*Renee: Yo.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ek sien die mense wat in die agterbuurtes gebly het, die snot neus klonkie, ek sien hom en ek kry sy naam ook, so ek gaan deur daai hele ooh (pulling in breath ) proses in my kop, so daai is veronderstel om onaangenaam te wees.*

*Renee: Hmm.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Maar die onaangenaamheid, dit issie meer daa nie.*

*Renee: Dis weg?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dis weg en ... en ... en ... en dit is hoekom ek skryf.*

*Renee: En voel meneer hartseer daaroor, as meneer dink aan die gesigte en die ervaring?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Man ek voel nie so danig hartseer as wat ek bedonnerd voel nie.*

*Renee: Ok...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ek is nou jammer dat ek moet vloek ma ... ma ek kan nie 'n ander woord kry as om dit te sê nie.*

### *5.2: Power Dynamics between Interviewer and Interviewee: The Impact of Who-is-Listening*

The role of the interviewer has been of crucial importance right through this exploration into trauma and narrative. Sean Field quotes Bhavnani (1990) who points out that “(e)ven if the identities of both the researcher and the researched are the same, there will still be unequal power relations and the strive toward a power-free relationship is unrealistic” (Field, S in Erasmus, 2001: 99).

During the first interview the power dynamic between the white interviewer from the University of Stellenbosch is evident in the often uncomfortable responses by Mr. Biscombe. This power dynamic was created by the Apartheid regime, and the fact that the interviewer was an Afrikaner male meant that he occupied the highest possible status and power level within Apartheid South Africa. During the interview Mr. Biscombe is aware of the power the interviewer holds, which appears to trigger his desire to take back some of the agency he felt he lost through living with the consequences of forced removals, so he tries to take control of the interview process. The interviewer allows the dominance, but when Mr. Biscombe is confronted with issues which are too painful or uncomfortable, he becomes vulnerable and feels himself falling back to the previous state of powerlessness. He then switches to a language which he perceives the interviewer is less comfortable in than himself, in order to restore his position in the power game. The

differences in identity between the interviewer and Mr. Biscombe clearly influence the content, tone and language use of Mr. Biscombe.

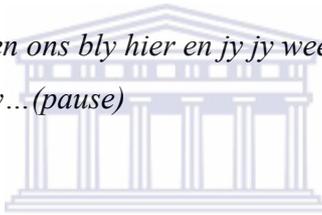
*Mr. Biscombe: Mm aan die ander kant, na Paul Roos se kant toe was daar baie eh baie eh ... (pause) blanke kinders, met wie ons gedurig deur fights gehad het, klip gegooi, dis was mos maar eh katte kwaad gewees, you know?*

*Interviewer: Eh.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Moet niks evil daarin lees nie, dit was maar nou net, hulle was anders en ons was nou net die group.*

*Interviewer: Hulle bly daar.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hulle bly daar en ons bly hier en jy jy weet die fight, jy, jy, jy het maar hierdie storie gehad. Dan het jy... (pause)*



During the Second Interview the identity of myself being a “coloured” female with my roots in “Die Vlakte” and the fact that Mr. Biscombe was an ex teacher of mine, also produces a power dynamic of teacher/ pupil relationship. This is clear from the start in the way I address Mr. Biscombe indicating that my role was that of his pupil and him assisting me with research. When I approached Mr. Biscombe to ask if he would be willing to allow me access to his testimony I automatically stepped into the role of pupil and Mr. Biscombe in to the role of teacher. He and I are also connected by the fact that my late father was his ex-teacher and we also spoke about my father as part of establishing common ground. Although Mr. Biscombe and I are also related. (he is my father’s second cousin) I do not refer to him as uncle during the interview. He is “Meneer”, my Standard Five maths teacher and I am his pupil. He appears to be comfortable with me addressing him as “Meneer’ and does not at any stage of the four meetings we had ask me to address him by his name. This secures the power dynamic between us. The similarity between us, both being classified as “coloured”, having roots in “Die Vlakte” and the shared past relationship of teacher/ pupil does put Mr. Biscombe

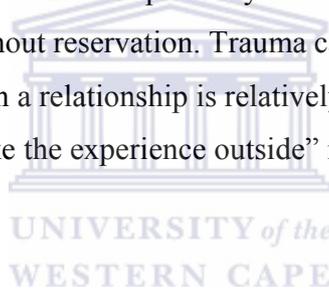
more at ease when sharing intimate details and the interview changes from a structured interview to an informal discussion around selected topics:

*Mr. Biscombe: ... wat nou vir jou sê Renee soos jy nou hie inkom, dit is vir my baie significant dat jy nou dit doen, want dit lyk of vandat ek die boek begin skryf het was jy nou deel van die storie gewees.*

*Renee: (Laughs) Ehe.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Want dit is nou weer wat jy gaan doen, dit is nou weer jou fokus.*

My entangled relationship with Mr Biscombe could have been a problem because of the unequal power dynamics and the expectations that he may have of what I am supposed to find in this research, but I believe that it is precisely because of this relationship that he felt free to express himself without reservation. Trauma can be hidden so deeply that it is difficult to unearth so that when a relationship is relatively safe and stress free, the interviewee could begin to “take the experience outside” into language (Scarry, 1985).



## 6. Chapter Six: Comparative Analysis of Interviews

### 6.1: *The Effect of Trauma on Tone and Rhythm*

The tone in the First Interview is marked with stuttering, pauses and the switching from mother tongue to second language and back when faced with questions which, as I have showed, make the interviewee feel vulnerable and insecure. In the Second Interview the tone is remarkably different. There are very few pauses and stuttering, intimate issues are freely shared, especially his anger towards white people, which is not mentioned at all in the First Interview. In the First Interview he presents his comments about white girls and the fights with white youth. He stutters when sharing it and immediately switches to English as he justifies it. There appear to be no feelings of anger or hostility toward white people in the First Interview which is in stark contrast to the Second Interview.

In the Second Interview Mr. Biscombe is very vocal about his anger toward white people and in response to most of the questions asked he makes reference to how he feels about them in terms of the white university, white schools, his daughter performing in front of white people etc. He admits that he compares his situation to the relative wealth of white people, in terms of what they drive and the fact that they live where he used to live. He makes no excuses for the way he feels about white people and does not justify his comments because he knows that his interviewer is not only also a “coloured” person, but has roots in “Die Vlakte” as well, so he uses expressions such as “ons eie mense”, “ons taal”.

In die First Interview he is very idealistic about the life on “Die Vlakte” and often provides romantic descriptions about his life there, whilst in the second interview he is more philosophical and also more realistic. In both interviews there is a deep longing to go back to the life on “Die Vlakte”, the way things used to be, the people, community, especially his home. Throughout the interview he locates himself back in “Die Vlakte” and stresses the easy access he and his daughters would have had to the University, cinema, shopping and parking in comparison to the current arduous task of driving into central Stellenbosch.

For the purposes of his book, Mr. Biscombe conducted an interview with two elderly people from “Die Vlakte” who he said started to cry when they described their loneliness. He immediately concluded in the interview to me that it would not have happened if they were still living on “Die Vlakte” because there would have been a neighbour to visit and the houses were built in such a way to ensure close contact between community members.

In the Second Interview, when sharing his feelings about the church, there are several pauses, and Mr. Biscombe changes his tone to a high pitch. He becomes excited and loud and it is clear there is a lot of emotion about the fact that the original Volkskerk building was now being used as a church building for a white church. He is frustrated and sounds almost cynical about God and Christianity. His tone only returns to normal when the next question is asked.

Mr. Biscombe’s tone of voice changes several times during the interview as does the rhythm. When asked about his life on “Die Vlakte” his rhythm slows down and he speaks softly when he uses a word like “v-e-r-l-a-n-g” and when he talks about his neighbours and the area he lived in. He also becomes excited and speaks with a fast pace when talking about community activities such as dances, sports and the cinema. His pace slows down when he talks about the activities and rituals which could not be duplicated in Idas Valley and how much effort and costs it takes for him to enjoy not only those activities, but normal things like dropping one’s children somewhere or buying groceries. When talking about his home in Ryneveldt Street Mr. Biscombe exhibits a lot of anger and hostility and pronounces his words very slow and deliberately, as if he has to exercise a lot of control.

### *6.2: The Effect of Trauma on the Next Generation.*

Although, as we have said, the study of the intergenerational impact of trauma is quite new, there has been enough evidence to verify that the children of both perpetrators and victims (therefore Nazis, holocaust survivors and First People) suffer from substantial trauma that they picked up from the previous traumatized generation.

In terms of passing on future trauma to his children, Mr. Biscombe does say that he cannot help the way that he has raised his children. He shares that he had lost his spontaneity which impacted on his ability to fully participate in activities with his own family. He also admits that he has passed on his feelings of prejudice against white people to his children and always warns them not to associate with whites. The mistrust is a symptom of his fear that the same thing would happen to his children that had happened to him. Prejudice against his children (as with him) would create low self-esteem, fearing white people and feeling devalued among whites. He admits that when in close contact with white people, he experiences physical symptoms of sweating palms, stuttering, not being able to articulate what he would like to express and a general feeling of low self worth. Some of these feelings are captured in the following:

*Renee: Dit nou, dis nou, 'n meer persoonlike vraag, die dat meneer nou deur die verskuiwing gegaan het op vyftien jaar. Hoe het dit meneer se familielewe nou geaffekteer? Is daar simptome van terughou, wat uitspeel in die familie?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ooh (pulling in breath) Ja, spontaniteit, spontaniteit om spontaan met die lewe om te gaan. Dis amper asof jy as ouer nooit spontaan... (pause), full heartedly in processes wil deelneem nie.*

*Renee: Ehe.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Amper asof jy jousef terug hou om jou eie potensiaal ... (pause) ten volle na vore te bring, en dit werk deur na die kinnere toe (pulling in breath)*

He says that he is not spontaneous with his family, though he says in both interviews that he once lived very spontaneously in the community on “Die Vlakte”. He goes on to emphasize the word spontaneous:

*Mr. Biscombe: So het ons, so het ons baie spontaan geleef, ja.*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, ons het baie spontaan geleef.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hmm mense het ooooh (pulling in breath) mense het ehh hoe they lived in the moment en die spontaniteit van die oomblik. Ja. Ja, dit dit dit was die groot storie daar gewees oppie Vlakte en dit is iets, een van die dinge wat my (pulling in breath) baie laat terug v- e-r-l-a-n-g (emphasis) na daai tyd.*

Mr. Biscombe uses the word “spontaneous” three times in response to how people lived on “Die Vlakte” or how he lived in the past compared to how he now lives with his own family. He also responds without hesitation as to what feelings he retained as a result of the forced removals and says “spontaneity” and uses the word four times in one sentence as a response to the question of what is different now.

It becomes evident that the forced removals still have recurring effects on those who left their homes and communities as their character and personality were also altered. They were no longer the same people as before.

The places where people worked and lived, the spaces where children played, are fundamental to the development of both a community and an individual identity. It is the sense of belonging, togetherness and collectively participating and sharing activities which is a crucial element in the formation of identity. In order to maintain a sense of self and identity, memories need to be shared with others in a storied form (Erasmus. Z, 2001: 98). One can therefore deduce that if you are removed from your community or these memories of the once energetic and spontaneous community are not spoken about or documented, the sense of self and identity will be affected.

### *6.3: The Effect of Conspiracy of Silence on the Next Generation*

When Mr. Biscombe’s family was forced to leave their home, community, church and school, no one in the family spoke to him about why they had to move, nor about why other people were living in their home. Also issues of Apartheid and its impact such as separate amenities were never discussed. Mr. Biscombe says that he immediately knew that something was wrong, when he saw his mother and other people in the community cry when they were preparing to leave, but it was never discussed afterwards. The same

conspiracy of silence was passed down to Mr. Biscombe and his own family. He acknowledges that he never discussed with his children the family home where he grew up and which held such pain for him, although he spent five years writing a book about his life in “Die Vlakte”, and is currently busy finishing his autobiography focusing on the house in Ryneveldt Street. All the research and feelings the book and autobiography evoked were never discussed with his children. Although he drives past the Ryneveldt lodge often to swear at the new owners, he has never taken his children there nor told them his story.

(I have also encountered a conspiracy of silence in my own family. The story of the forced removals has also never been told to us as children. My grandmother who was forcibly removed from “Die Vlakte” only on one occasion pointed to the street and said there was where she lived, but never once spoke about being forced to leave her community and home. She did however mention that they had one of the first houses in Idas Valley, but that was the extent of the conversation, and we as children, even in our teens, were never told (and we never asked) about her experience. In my family the silence about the forced removal was interpreted as an instance that held no emotion, no pain and no bitterness. Life carried on as normal and I cannot remember any moment in which my grandmother reflected on how she felt about what happened.)

In her book on transgenerational trauma, Danieli talks about how often communities prefer to keep silent about large scale trauma, but how it is precisely that silence that affects the next generation. Either the next generation begins to fearfully imagine what is behind the silence of the parents or they are experiencing inexplicable upsetting behaviour from their parents such as overprotectedness, pressure to survive at all costs, or obsessions with enough food in case of famine.

Whether silent or talking, children of Jews in Nazi Germany have reportedly said that the psychological trauma of the Holocaust was always present in their homes, and that they have even experienced similar symptoms to their parents especially on the specific dates on which the trauma occurred. In spite of the decision to normalize the situation in the home and to remain silent, the children grew up anxious, due to not understanding the

unspoken anguish in the family. Danieli concludes that what is left unspoken cannot be healed and that which is left unhealed is passed down to future generations (Danieli, 1998:5).

In my discussion with Mr. Biscombe he does say that some time afterwards he started to question in his own mind the apartheid regime, why they had to move, why there were white people living in their home, why could they not participate equally in activities or use the same facilities, why were there two entrances and two exits at the post office for example, why were there two rows for people to queue and why was it wrong if he looked at white girls. He started questioning these new laws and knew that they were not right, but that he never verbalized these questions, not even in his own household. No one spoke about them. He was raised in a very protective way as a child and, being the youngest, he was never involved in any discussion about what happened. He saw people cry on the day of the removal, but he did not ask; they knew that he saw, but they did not explain. It was as if there was a line drawn which none of them wanted to cross for fear of being destroyed by anger and shame.

In the book *In Ons Bloed*, not much space is dedicated to the forced removals. In the book the author reports that people were reluctant to talk about their experience as it still was painful for residents to share. Others only made minor comments, whilst there were some who feared renewed persecution by the government. Mr. Biscombe admits that the writing of the book was not enthusiastically supported by the community and although there was praise, he experienced much criticism. The book also did not sell well in the community.

This could be attributed to many factors, one of which could be denial of the truth, which in the writings of O' Loughlin was very evident when he researched the trauma in Ireland of the major famine of the nineteen hundreds. According to O'Loughlin the decision to remain silent about trauma and to hide the emotion as well is because the event that caused the trauma is linked in their minds to shame. People who have been through a trauma are ashamed of what they have experienced (I will return to this later) and try to

repress the event, but the unconscious has a way of revealing the trauma through dreams, depression, anger, and other more traumatic symptoms (O'Loughlin, 2010).

In the First Interview Mr. Biscombe's only comment about the forced removals was that it was like a building where the lights went out one by one. The interviewer also did not push him to elaborate on that comparison and swiftly moved on to the next question. Mr. Biscombe never articulated any emotion associated with the removal, compared to the Second Interview where his anger is shared without reservation. He also reveals other symptoms such as insomnia, depression, dreams and other health problems.

Mr. Biscombe admits that many people in the community told him that every thing cannot be Apartheid's fault and that he should just move on with his life and not try and pull everybody back into remembering. Mr. Biscombe was experiencing the well-described characteristics of trauma survivors: feelings of mistrust, isolation and loneliness when met with a society which does not welcome the sharing of the traumatic experience. Although the family often did provide a sympathetic environment for survivors, they may not be equipped to deal with the symptoms of the atrocities which has happened to their loved ones and therefore become vulnerable themselves to secondary trauma. It has been reported that the secondary victims of trauma have also suffered from feelings such as hopelessness and helplessness and even health problems if the issues are not resolved (Zehr, 2001).

This silence had a profound influence and was clearly carried over to the second generation:

*Renee: En het Meneer, praat Meneer met hulle (die kinders) oor wat gebeur het dit oor die Vlakte se lewe?*

*Mr. Biscombe: ... eh... eh... dis net ...eh ... he... eh (mumble) die beïnvloeding lê maar meer in jou eie lyftaal... (pulling in breath) en weerhouding van sekere goed en ook natuurlik ehe ... (pause) remarks wat jy pass oor ander rasse groepe, veral oor die wittes wat hulle optel.*

#### *6.4 The Effect of Trauma on the Content of the Interviews*

When comparing the First Interview with the Second it is clear that in the First Interview Mr. Biscombe focuses mainly on providing an historical account of his life on “Die Vlakte”. There is no real emotion attached to these accounts, especially when he talks briefly about his home and the forced removals. Felman and Laub highlight the fact that there is a difference between relaying an historical account and bearing witness. As a witness you position yourself geographically in that point in history. Your testimony is your experience of what happened, your account. They quote Caruth who says:

“If someone else could have written my stories, I would not have written them. I have written them in order to testify. My role is the role of witness. Not to tell ... or to tell another story, is ... to commit perjury” (Felman & Laub, 1996: 204).

In my analysis it appears that Mr. Biscombe did not experience the First Interview as a safe space for him to share his testimony and thus focused more on providing an historical account of life on “Die Vlakte”. It is only in the Second Interview conducted by someone who is of the same racial group as he and who also comes from Stellenbosch, that a space was provided for sharing emotion, an account of a testimony and witness to trauma.

In the First Interview when Mr. Biscombe is asked about his family and his home, he only shares the address of his family home, when asked about his home; in the Second Interview he gives a wide range of details. What appears to be different in Mr. Biscombe’s account compared to others who were forcibly removed from District Six is the fact that the house stands as a monument to his pain, unfair treatment, trauma, racism, Apartheid, loss of financial income and happy memories as a child. Although Mr. Biscombe himself mentions that the trauma for those whose homes were destroyed was much greater than for those whose homes are still standing, yet it might hold true that those with the demolished homes could at least move from anger to grief after the destruction.

In the book, *In Ons Bloed*, one lady describes how heartbroken she was when the authorities demolished their home, and how she was unable even to pass that street again (Biscombe H, 2006). However, in Mr. Biscombe's account of the forced removal he never expresses his feelings of helplessness, sadness, hopelessness and loss of control which are often experienced by victims of trauma (Erasmus Z, 2001).

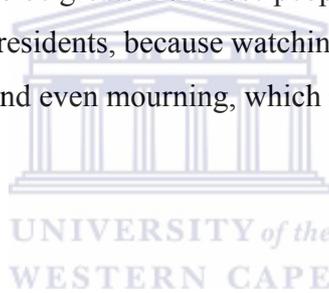
In my analysis it appears as though Mr. Biscombe is in denial about his feelings. There is no doubt that his current confession of depression is directly linked to his feelings of sadness, helplessness and hopelessness, much like other victims of forced removals. The difference in Mr. Biscombe's case is that he is in denial of what he is feeling and prefers rather to express anger toward the injustice of losing his home, than to admit to feelings of despair. Mr. Biscombe is left with strong feelings of anger because when the removal took place there was no safe space for him, nor his family, to effectively deal with their anger as neither his parents nor family or community ever discussed the removal. He is then left with all the emotion until the writing of his own book more than thirty years later, where he creates his own space to finally share his feelings.

In an attempt to find a safe space in which to talk, he asked somebody to interview him for his own book, so that he could include his own story as heard by somebody else. He needed someone to listen to his story. But in my analysis, the safe space which he longed for was not safe at all as the interviewer represented the oppressor to Mr. Biscombe and thus actually increased his vulnerability in the interview. Although Mr. Biscombe does share personal accounts of his life on "Die Vlakte", he is largely aloof when he is asked about the forced removal.

Mr. Biscombe then decides to write his autobiography, which he titles *In My Bloed*, focusing only on his own account of his life on "Die Vlakte" and his family home. It could be argued that the reason why Mr. Biscombe appears to be so hostile toward white people is due to the fact that this is really the first time he has someone who shows empathy for his loss, and he shares his anger almost as though he had lost his home only recently. But one can take the analysis further. He could feel ashamed for not resisting the removal, not resisting it when he became aware of the enormity of it, not resisting it

when talking to the white interviewer, and worst of all, deeply ashamed for not being able to come up with a proper account of the removal. Neither he nor his community could give a powerful District Six or Sophiatown account of the day of the removal. This perhaps drives him to say that the removal was a personal choice.

With regard to his family home, Mr. Biscombe clearly voices his fury toward white people in general and toward the new owners of his family home in particular who up until today use it to generate income. Mr. Biscombe thus cannot grieve or mourn the loss of a home still standing, and his rage and trauma are thus ongoing. When observing the stages one has to work through in order to accept shocking and traumatic loss, death or illness, Elizabeth Kübler- Ross has identified: denial; anger; sadness; grief and mourning; and lastly, acceptance (Kübler- Ross, 1969:123). In my analysis the anger at the injustice of the forced removal appears to be greater for those people whose homes are still standing and occupied by new residents, because watching your home being demolished compels you to sadness, grief and even mourning, which are stages closer to accepting your trauma.



#### *6.5: Duplication of Rituals*

O'Loughlin, who has been studying the effects of colonization among the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, speaks about forced relocation being linked to loss of identity. He highlights that it is not the activities that are important but the meaning the activities held. He cites an example of the North American Crow tribe who would prepare ritual meals when the men went off to battle or have conquered a particular challenge, and that the meal in itself did not hold meaning but that within that context it carried a very particular meaning. When the context was removed, so was the sense that informed those activities. It is not the loss of social activities that impacts on the loss of social belonging, but the meaning of those social activities (O'Loughlin, 2008). Although some activities might be continued in the new community, the meaning of those activities has been lost and an attempt to bring back cultural and ritual practices in order to recreate what has been lost will be a futile experience (O'Loughlin, 2008).

In the interview Biscombe describes how his family and community tried to duplicate some of the activities they once had in “Die Vlakte” such as window shopping, going to the cinema and church, but these activities were not the same. It felt as if they had lost their meaning because the community was dispersed and the activities no longer held any significance. Other discontinued activities were milk being delivered at the home and enjoying koesisters on a Sunday morning. The powerful church of “Die Vlakte” has lost its influence over the community.

#### *6.6: Shame and a Question of Agency*

It is well known among those who were forcibly removed that some families simply refused to move and stayed on in their houses. Mr. Biscombe’s explanation of why his family moved from “Die Vlakte” and discussion of why one family chose to stay is formulated as follows:

*Renee: Maar nou, as daar mense was wat besluit het om te bly, kon kon Meneer se familie ook besluit het om te bly?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nee, ha ah nee, dit was nie so maklik nie. Kyk daai man het ’n battle ook gehad né, hy het ’n battle gehad. Kyk as daar is mense eh... (pause), dis nogal ’n goeie vraag wat jy nou vra ek het nog nie, nog nie daa aan gedink nie (pulling in breath) en sal dit nou vir jou moet beantwoord volgens nou my opinie dede de...(pause) dit het nou te doen met...(pause) kom ek stel dit nou so...(pause) ek wil dit nou nie so stel nie, kom ek stel dit nou so. Hierdie man was ’n Meneer van Soonen...*

*Renee: Ehe.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Nou meneer van Soonen het gelyk soos ’n wit man, ma ma ek gaan nou op ’n terrein wat ek nou nie wil gaan nie.*

*Renee: Gaan maar, dis oraait, ehe?*

*Mr. Biscombe: En sy rebelsheid het gelê in die feit dat dit so is, hy was ook ’n baie ryk man.*

Renee: Ok.

Mr. Biscombe: My oupa, as ek nou sê die teenoorgestelde ...(pause) maar my oupa kan ek nou sê was ook taamlik lekker in die sak gewees...[his grandfather also had money]

Renee: Ok.

Mr. Biscombe: Het te doen m- e- t , soos dit maar vandag ook is, jy sien die regering sê iets, maar daar is mense wat dit sal doen en daar is mense wat dit nie sal doen nie.

Renee: Ja.

Mr. Biscombe: En my oupa het maar nou net besluit “It is time”, onder protes but “it is time”.

Renee: Heh.

Mr. Biscombe: Dié man het maar net twee kinders gehad, my oupa het twaalf, tien kinders gehad, hy moes nou voorsiening maak, gelukkig het hy huise hier in die vlei gehad wat wat hy by kom bly het, ok?



Renee: Ok.

Mr. Biscombe: So dit was veel makliker vir hom gewees... ( pause) wat sê ek twaalf, dis agt dink ek, eh any way, eh so by the way sy van was mos nou Hector gewees, so ek kan dit daaraan toeskryf...(pause) ek mag verkeerd wees en en ek dink ek is verkeerd (smile, with funny expression).

Renee: (Laughs, at Mr. Biscombe’s expression).

Mr. Biscombe: So wat ek gesê het is nou klomp nonsense (smile)

Renee: (Laughs)

Mr. Biscombe: (Laughs loudly)

*Renee: Dit maak nie saak nie, dis meneer se opinie. Daar is niks nonsense nie.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Maar ek dink as ek dit nou vinnig moet sê dan sou ek sê persoonlike keuse.*

*Renee: Om te gaan?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ah aah aah Jja en eh en om te bly. I will fight the buggers. You know daai ... dit was 'n persoonlike keuse gewees.*

*Renee: Want baie mense, baie van ons mense het nie besluit om te bly nie, hulle het gegaan.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hulle het gegaan ja (sag) hulle het gegaan... (pause) veral die moeslems. Ek praat nou nie van die huise nie, snaaks genoeg, die Moeslems wat in huise was, het gegaan, maar hulle het nie hulle kerk prys gegee nie, hulle kerk staan nou nog.*

In the above conversation there is huge inconsistency in what Mr. Biscombe replied to the question as to why his family “decided” to move from “Die Vlakte”. He initially answered by saying that it was the personal choice of his family to go as a desperate clinging to some semblance of honourable autonomy. But this drops him in a (false) quandary: is his position due to whites and apartheid, or is it due to his family’s decision to leave the area?

He says repeatedly that it was a personal choice. Then he suggests that Mr. Van Soonen’s stay was made possible because of his wealth and fair complexion. Then he contradicts himself by saying that his grandfather was also wealthy, but had twelve children, which becomes ten, then eight. There are many instances of stuttering, and pauses in this paragraph, also lots of laughter and smiles as he acknowledges that he has spoken “nonsense” according to his own understanding and confession.

When interpreting this very significant paragraph of transcribed text, it is evident that it provides the very impetus for shame for not using the agency he claims to have to change his life. On the one hand he wants to be recognized and recognizes himself as a victim,

one who had no choices under a militant state and lost costly things which were then used to put others far ahead in life. On the other hand he wants to lay claim to some kind of agency in which he could choose whether he wants to leave behind a house that would be worth millions now. And this is where the shame comes in. It was never a personal choice, it was always forced. The law forced people to leave their homes and community and start over. Yet, because of the awareness of lack of protest and the knowledge that certain people devised ways to escape their fate, he is filled with shame and guilt for his family or himself for not using the agency that at times seemed to have been possible.

The fact that Mr. Biscombe still feels that the removal was a personal choice his family made denies the truth of what really transpired and does not set him free to grieve his loss of home and community. This prolongs his trauma and delays his healing. The second form of trauma according to Danieli is termed “screen memories”, where the survivor only recalls specific events of the trauma, but blocks out the more painful memories. These more intense memories could also be distorted, fragmented or fabricated to avoid addressing the more painful experiences of trauma (Danieli, 1998).

#### 6.7: *Delayed Response to Forced Removals*

*“It took the war to teach it, that you were as responsible for everything you saw as you were responsible for everything you did. The problem was that you didn’t always know what you were seeing until later, maybe years later, that a lot of it never made it in at all, it just stayed stored there in your eyes”* Michael Herr, *Dispatches*:  
Caruth, 1996:10

During both interviews and in the book, *In Ons Bloed*, Mr. Biscombe makes reference to the fact that when the removals happened it was just one huge adventure for him as a teenager and that his response to the removal was a delayed response. It was only later that he realized what had happened and with that realization came the accompanied feelings (Biscombe, 2006:209, Second Interview):

*Mr. Biscombe: Hmm... ja, toe ek die trauma deurmaak van my broer wat dood is in die motor-ongeluk het dit vir my laat vrae vra oor die dood, die mens se rol in die lewe ...*

*Renee: Ja ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: ... en obviously het jy gaan kyk na jou eie ... (pause) integriteit en jy het gaan kyk na jou eie ... en gaan kyk na jou eie ..... (pause) wie jy is, wat is jou rol in die lewe, wat jou rol veronderstel is om in die lewe ... eh... en ... en ... met daai het jy jou verbintenis ... het EK my verbintenis gemaak met Die Vlakte en het tot die beseef gekom, 'Julle boggers, julle het mos vir ons nou', nie dat dit nie voor standard nege 'n issue was nie ...*

*Renee: Hmmm.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dit was maar altyd 'n issue, maar tot in 'n mindere mate, maar hie ... hie ... in standard nege toe hit dit my ...*

*Renee: Tot die beseef gekom ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: ... begin ek die groot vrae vra. Jy moet ook onthou, Renee, ek is ... eh ... ek is die baba in ons huisgesin en ek is tot in 'n mate ooh (pulling in breath) baie BESKERMEND grootgemaak ... eh ... jy weet (softly) daar is 'n vyf, ses jaar verskil tussen my en my suster en ek was op op... my ma was plus minus forty ... ooh (pulling in breath)) toe ek gebore was, so ... eh ... ek was ... eh baie beskermend grootgemaak.*

Many of the writers on trauma state that a traumatic incident has a paralyzing effect; the event renders the victim totally immobilized to act in defence or in order to change the outcome of the event (Caruth, 1995: 175).

### *6.8: Differences between the Two Interviews*

One of the stark differences in the two interviews is the way Mr. Biscombe refers to white people. In the First Interview he does not mention it at all. In the Second Interview he constantly makes comments about white people and his feeling of inferiority toward them. He also expresses his anger toward them and the previous regime. In almost every question asked, he talks about his animosity toward them even when answering seemingly neutral questions such as, “do you still continue the rituals of having koesisters on a Sunday morning?” He describes the koesister and says that the white people also have tried to make their own koesisters but they are not as good as the one he came to know. He also voices his anger at the new owners of his childhood home and calls them white capitalists. He talks about a white church he visited and that he was deprived of visiting the church as a child and young man. In all of the questions asked, he answers by referring to white people and his anger toward them. With regard to the question of sending his daughters to a previously white University, he comments that one Professor had a profound impact on how he viewed the University and therefore approved of his daughters enrolling there. He also comments about the schooling system and although he feels that the “coloured” schools have not adhered to the same standard of education” as in the past, he will not place his youngest daughter in a white school. He also says that in the writing of his book he deliberately orchestrated it so that the book is published by the University of Stellenbosch - a previously white university - to compel close interaction with white people in order for him to deal with his issues with white people.

In the Second Interview there is a clear identification between Mr. Biscombe and the interviewer and it is apparent that he sees the interviewer as understanding his issues with white people, even agreeing with his anger, resentment and bitterness toward them. He feels that the interviewer can completely identify with him for also having a past of being forcibly removed and fully understanding his loss. He makes no apologies for this towards her.

This is in sharp contrast to the First Interview where he softens everything that may seem like rebelling and almost asks permission for his feelings, saying “right?, right?” He

never once speaks negatively about white people and does not criticize the Apartheid regime at all.

When sharing about his home, in The First Interview which was such an emotional issue during the Second Interview, no comments about his feelings are made and the discussion about the forced removal is shared casually as noted in the quotation below.

*Interviewer: ... want jou tiener jare is eh het ook gepaard gegaan met die verband van die mense se beweging vanuit daai area.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja.*

*Interviewer: Is ek reg? Dit sou, dit sou die laat sestiger jare gewees het met die mense.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Ek kan dit vergelyk met eh helder verligte gebou en en die liggies gaan so een vir een uit (softly and slowly) jy kan dit so vergelyk.*

What does one make of this? That the boldness is there when the speaker is safe within a sympathetic “coloured” environment but completely absent when he is with a white person? Mr. Biscombe could also have experienced complete intimidation by the white interviewer when sharing his story and feared criticizing the past regime in the company of one who represented and benefitted from it. The white person could have been viewed as an authority figure and a representative of the law, which cannot be challenged especially by a “coloured”, second class citizen, one that was forced to leave the city centre of Stellenbosch due to the colour of his skin.

Mr. Biscombe could also have been feeling embarrassed about what had happened to him and his community at the hand of the white man. The Apartheid government said that he was not good enough to live in his own home. His repressed anger toward the past regime might have influenced his lack of emotion when sharing his personal account of the removal, especially with a white man.

According to theory about “blaming the victim”, as well as that of O’Loughlin, this reponse suggests in the first place shame, but I would like to suggest that what one sees

here is a doubled shame, the kind that rape victims are familiar with. One feels ashamed of what has happened. One feels even more ashamed that one perhaps unconsciously “asked for it”, or did not fight back hard enough to ward it off. Taking the rapist to court or confronting him simply fixes one once more in a doubled shame: because of your shame you cannot bring yourself to openly rage against the rapist; this doubles the heap of shame you feel for not responding as bravely as you feel you ought to. In this way the shame simply accumulates over the years.

These feelings of shame are acutely linked to white people and almost renders Mr. Biscombe immobile:

Mr. Biscombe: *Weet ek kom uit 'n wêreld uit wat, wat wat geoperate het op vrees ... (pause) as ek 'n blanke man kry en ek begin met hom praat (pulling in breath) dan word my, word my hande nat van sweet ... (pause)*

Renee: *Ja.*

Mr. Biscombe: *Jou stem is bewerig, want dit is nou die wit man.*

Renee: *Ja.*

Mr. Biscombe: *Dis die wereld waarin ek uitkom en ... eh ... baie lank by my gespook. Ek was al 'n groot man toe spook daai ding nog altyd by my. Ek praat nie maklik met 'n wit man nie, ek voel sommer... (breath intake) minderwaardig. Man al het daai man ook minder kwalifikasies (emphasis) as ek, net die feit dat hy wit is. Dit wys jou nou net hoe diep die ding geseep het hier in jou kop, hier in jou kop, maar toe sê ek vir myself eendag, hey, dis tyd. Dis tyd om jouself te heal, whatever it takes.*

The shame of the removal especially for men who were powerless to protect their families led many respondents to say nothing. One resident who shared freely about the forced removals, forgetting for a moment that the conversation was recorded, forced the interviewer to erase the entire dialogue and to play back the blank tape (Dhupelia-Mesthrie U, 2000).

### 6.9: Similarities in the Two Interviews

In both interviews Mr. Biscombe talks with longing about the life on “Die Vlakte”, the neighbours who were close friends and part of the close community where people shared their joys and sorrows, parties, funerals, sport events, church outings, dances and special events. The desire to go back to the way life was on the Vlakte is evident and there is a deep sorrow about the past which could not be replicated in Idas Valley within the new community where the neighbours were now strangers.

In both the interviews he speaks at length about the church outings, the special times and picnics, and even gives a detailed account of what they ate on the outings and the speeches made by the ministers. He also speaks about the vibrancy of the church and the strong influence it had on its members.

In the Second Interview Mr. Biscombe however goes further by again venting his anger about the use of the old church. He says that they were having church in the Volkskerk, though it is not clear if it was the new or old building. It was obvious that he still saw the old building, which they were forced to evacuate as their property, and could not understand how another church, especially a white church, could have services in “their” church. He calls this exchange blasphemous and says that he is not able to be a follower of such Christianity. He also expresses his disgust about the fact that a white church is using a church building, which “coloured” people built who were then forced to leave. He called it being built on others misfortune. In fact he cannot find a word for it, but utters the sound: *GGRRRRAAA HHHH!!*, making it clear that he does not have the language to express his hurt, disgust and anger toward the white church congregation. This diverting into sounds before language expresses how the trauma of loss was responsible of what is called as “the undoing of the self; and as a loss; loss of control, loss of one’s identity, loss of the ability to remember and loss of language to describe the horrific event” (Mitchell J, 1998:121). Mr. Biscombe describes the experience as follows:

*Mr. Biscombe: Ja, nou jy sien, dit is wat vir my bedon... mal maak (pulling in breath) van die Volkskerk (sigh) want op die oomblik met die Volkskerk bedryf 'n ander kerk sy besigheid daarin .... (pause) nou sê jy nou vir my hoe op Gods aarde kan ek nou vir jou met eerlikheid sê dat ek so 'n soort godsdienst aanhang. Ek is nie te vinde daarvoor nie... Daar's 'n ander Kerk da en dis BLANK en hy doen sy ding daarso en hy glo wat hy doen is die regte ding wat hy doen, maar hy is gebou op ander mense se ongeluk en die dieselfde met die DRC kerk.*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: Wat daar by Pick 'n Pay staan daar ook 'n kerk, die Baptiste kerk is da ooh (pulling in breath) hulle glo... eh... God is aan hulle kant en ... eh hulle is op God se kant en dinge is nou net soos dit is .*

*Renee: So waar is die ander kerk, in die Volkskerkgebou of in die...?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hoe sê jy?*

*Renee: Die ander kerk.*



*Mr. Biscombe: Die ander kerk is die Volkskerk, die Volkskerk, soos die Volkskerk was ...*

*Renee: Ja?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dis net die mense wat vervang is. Dis 'n ander kerk binne in die ...verstaan jy wat ek wil sê?*

*Renee: 'n Ander ja ...*

*Mr. Biscombe: Dis weird ne! Nee, die gebou staan, die kerk ...*

*Renee: Ja?*

*Mr. Biscombe: Hulle bedryf die kerk in die gebou. Die gebou is die kerk, soos hy daar staan.*

*Renee: Ja.*

*Mr. Biscombe: (pulling in breath) Nou kan jy jousef indink hoe dit is vir MY. Dit lyk of dit, lyk of dit lekker maklik is vir ander mense. Vir my is dit een van die, vir my is dit Godlastering, dis GGRRRRRAAA HHHH !!! (mumble)*

In my opinion there are two emotions present in the above outcry. The first one conveys the disappointment in the old church congregation who has done nothing to prevent or to stand up to the whites, for having church in their old church building. I suspect that there are also masked feelings of helplessness, which are experienced twice: firstly, when the white government originally took the church building as part of the forced removal; and secondly, when they took the building a second time for their own purposes. It is almost like a double helplessness at a double loss of the same building, a sacred building. The second emotion conveys his disgust at the hypocrisy of the new occupants of the building. How can they worship God in spirit and in truth if they are doing it in a building which was stolen from the “coloured” people? The right Christian thing would be to give the stolen building back to its original owners and not to use it for worship. That is what he calls blasphemous. They are now claiming to worship a just God, whilst benefitting from a regime which was unfair and unjust.

Before destroying language, pain usually monopolizes it, says Scarry (Scarry, 1985: 54). In the entire interview, this is the only point where Mr. Biscombe’s language falters completely and he even screams when talking about the fact that his old church building is used as a place of worship for the oppressor.

He voices his frustration, extreme anger and disappointment at the church and consequently his response to not support Christianity because of how it is practised by the white people. This seems to be one of his greatest struggles apart from his home: nothing is being done about the injustice that took place in the name of the church. He adds that these white people think that what they are doing is right in the sight of God and that God is on their side.

This is clearly a personal defeat for him, “*nou kan jy vir jouself in dink hoe is dit vir MY*”  
(Second Interview, 2009)



## 7. Chapter seven: Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that my research has supported the argument that losing your home and community does lead to trauma (Van der Merwe & Viennings, 2001). It also supports the claim that the symptoms of the trauma could also be part of a delayed response (Caruth, 1996). Through comparing these narratives, I have shown that the trauma of losing one's home and community is still ongoing and current.

My research has shown that Mr Biscombe is suffering from at least two forms of traumatic memory as identified by Danieli. He “did not know”, in the sense that he was too young to fully understand the consequences of the removal. On the other hand, he did know because he was being forced to move within a visibly distraught community.

Secondly, he displays a form of memory trauma called “screening of memories”. He deliberately screens his memories as he is talking to the two interviewers. He chooses what to say in order to conceal what is too difficult to talk about. Mr. Biscombe has “forgotten” some of the details of the removal when asked why his family moved when others chose to stay. He does recall the removal, but it is clear that he does not wish to discuss the fact that his family was *forced* to move. The screening of the memory of the removals highlights his loss of autonomy, contributing to painful shame and ongoing trauma.

One can conclude that the trauma caused by forced removals is very much present in those who are supposed to have recovered sufficiently to continue with their lives. The “fingerprints” of the event are more than evident in just these two narratives.

What does this mean for those working in development?

When engaging displaced “coloured” communities, there needs to be an awareness that the identities of these communities are vulnerable. Due to the fact that identity is linked to place, removed residents were suddenly forced to develop a new identity. Therefore,

when focusing on community development it becomes crucial to take time first to build a sense of community and social identity through various activities before any development project is implemented.

When asked what advice Mr. Biscombe could provide to others who have experienced similar removals, he suggested that they join an organization which focuses on memory retrieval. It can therefore be concluded that the need and desire to preserve the beauty and happiness of the pre-removed community is an essential element in the healing process.

According to Danieli the survivors of trauma can respond to the trauma in two contrasting ways: they can be overwhelmed with the trauma, or they could display resilience. When trauma survivors become resilient, they often focus on achievement in a career or the creation of a family structure. Both of these are seen as a survival strategy to cope with the trauma experienced and seek to satisfy the search for contentment (Danieli, 1998:10). In the Second Interview Mr. Biscombe responds to those issues as follows:

*Renee: Meneer vir enigiemand anders wat nou hierdie dokument gaan lees, wat ook miskien gegaan het deur 'n gedwonge verskuiwing, miskien nou nie in Stellenbosch nie, miskien in PE of miskien in Distrik Ses. Watter hmm bemoediging of raad kan Meneer vir daai person gee, wat miskien dieselfde soort issues het wat Meneer nou deurwerk?*

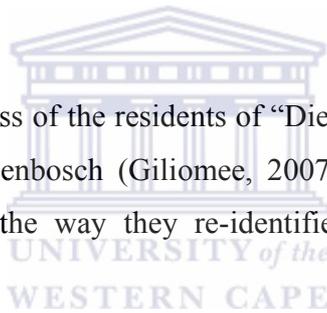
*Mr. Biscombe: Gaan deur... (pause) dieselfde proses waar deur ek gegaan het, ek ek ek ek wil my verstout om te se dat ek hierdie ding aanpak op 'n heel dieper vlak eh join 'n organisasie van jou eie gemeenskap of begin self 'n organisasie wat hom beywer om memory te retrieve. Hoe meer memory jy retrieve, hoe gesonder gaan jy raak, hoe helend gaan dit inwerk op jou, want dis wat met my gebeur op die oomblik (pulling in breath). Dit werk helend op my ten opsigte van dit of dit waar ek wil wees, daai memory retrieval, maar wees gewaarsku die proses gaan vir jou deur donker waters laat gaan.*

Mr. Biscombe shared that he is currently involved with a local organization, representing the demolished community of “Die Vlakte”, and has fought with great effort for the

community of “Die Vlakte” to be represented in the Stellenbosch museum in the form of a documentary on the forced removal, which Mr. Biscombe has recorded himself. He has also passionately shared that after much negotiation he directly contributed to a plaque which was erected in memory of the ex-residents of Die Vlakte, which now occupies a space in the Stellenbosch city centre, symbolic of the space which was once a community.

This brings me to identity. The removal has touched the very core of who people are, their identity. The very minds of those who have been forced to leave their communities have been affected. Added to this is a feeling that there must have been something wrong with them, for the Government did not deem them GOOD ENOUGH to live in their own homes! That is the impact of forced removals.

Giliomee stresses the uniqueness of the residents of “Die Vlakte” – their integration into the larger community of Stellenbosch (Giliomee, 2007). I want to suggest that this uniqueness played a role in the way they re-identified themselves after the forced removal.



Research has shown the direct link between forced removals and the development of gang activity especially on the Cape Flats. In all those areas, where people were forced to make new communities after previous authority was emaciated, gang activity started to emerge. Areas such as Bonteheuwel, Hanover Park, Mitchells Plain, Lavender Hill, Ocean View, Atlantis and Manenburg are notorious for their gang activity, violence, and crime. The root desire for the development of gang activity is the search for *social identity* (Foster, Louw & Potgieter, 1991) (my italics).

The removal of residents from “Die Vlakte” created a new search for belonging, and the answer to the question, who are we? It is therefore very insightful to discover the appeal by Mr Aaron Cupido in the meeting with the Group Areas Committee back in 1956. He said that “*the community did not want to loose their identity as Stellenboschers*” (my

italics) when they were asked to move out of Stellenbosch. The committee did not understand and suggested Vlottenburg (outside of Stellebosch) would be inexpensive in terms of travel, but it was *the identity as Stellenboschers* which was important to retain and which Mr Cupido was adamant to hang on to.

Today there is no known gang activity in the “coloured” areas of Stellenbosch and it still is a safe community in direct contrast to other communities which were relocated. I want to suggest that there is a direct link between the people from “Die Vlakte” being removed but retaining their identity as Stellenboschers and the lack of gang activities in the area. One might say that the larger community was therefore stable, keeping authority reasonably familiar and accepted so that residents could forge a new personal identity. Perhaps that is also why it had been so hard for people like Mr Biscombe, the shame and anger came down on the individuals alone.

Let me end with the story captured by Noor Ebrahim about his life in District Six. His family was forced to move out of District Six and then moved to Athlone. After three months, he released his pigeons. None of the fifty homing pigeons returned. Instead they all flew back to the empty plot which was once their home in District Six (Ebrahim N, 1999).

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### **Interviews**

Interview Mr. H. Biscombe, March 2009.

Interview Mr. A. Cupido, February 2009.

Interview CCFM, Benita Bennett, Director, District Six Museum, 8 Feb 2010.



## **ADDENDUM**

It is important to note that there has been huge transformation in the Stellenbosch community with regard to the involvement of the “coloured” community over the last few years. The first “coloured” mayor, Mr. WJ Ortell and Mr. WJ Meyer were appointed. In 2006, Prof Russel Botman was appointed as the Rector to the University of Stellenbosch, fully supported by the Senate, and the relevant committees. In contrast with the sixties where there was no “coloured” representation on the municipal committee, in 2006 more than sixty percent of members on the municipal committee were “coloured”. The “coloured” people have truly come a long way to finally be actively involved in the management of Stellenbosch (Giliomee, 2007:236).

