A Narrative Inquiry into the Professional Identities of Individuals with Disabilities in the Workplace

by
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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

For Rosslyn Erna van der Vyver

(23/04/1973 – 18/09/2011)

University of Stellenbosch Alumni (1996)

My Best Friend
Passed away tragically on 18 September 2011

*"At the age of 37
She realized
She'd never ride
Through Paris in a sports car
With the warm wind in her hair"*

Marianne Faithful

ABSTRACT

Employment in capitalist society forms the foundation of social, economic and political order where most individuals between the ages of 18 and 65 are assumed to be in a position to procure gainful employment in their areas of personal interest. Despite the move to democracy, based on the principles implicit in the Human Rights Movement, individuals with disabilities continue to exist as among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society where they are subject to the sustained effects of discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes in the workplace. This is compounded by the pervasive impact of lack of skills development; poor access to education and training; lack of awareness from employers; disabling environments and poor policy development. The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore the alternative stories of six individuals with disabilities who are currently employed in the mainstream labour sector as a means to gain insights into individual experiences of obstacles and facilitators to inclusion in the world of work.

A narrative inquiry approach, embedded in a critical, emancipatory research paradigm formed the methodology for this study. This thesis was considered through the lens of an integrated theoretical approach, drawing on poststructuralist and social constructionist thought, interspersed with 'episodes' of Lacanian psychoanalysis to attend to aspects of internalized oppression. Six individuals with disabilities, employed in the mainstream labour sector, were selected from three sites, using a purposive sampling method. Data were collected by way of two in-depth unstructured narrative interviews, constructed by way of personal experience stories (Squire, 2008; Riessman, 1993) and life stories (Atkinson, 1998) as a means to explore participants' unique life experiences and how they have constructed and asserted their professional identities in the world of work. A dual analysis process (first descriptive, then interpretive) was employed to bring structure and interpretation to the collected texts. Descriptive analysis involved the re-telling of participants' personal experience and life stories, using Clandinin and Connelly's three dimensional narrative inquiry space, whilst interpretive analysis sought to attend to the universal stories of disability using thematic analysis and synthesis.

The key messages from the narratives revealed that in spite of the fact that many individuals with disabilities demonstrate immense loyalty, low rates of absenteeism, commitment and a range of skills, talents and abilities, disability continues to be conceptualized as an inferior status which inevitably creates widespread marginalization due to the pervasive effects of stigma, fear and ignorance. Many are not privy to vital education and training options as a precursor to entry into the labour market, and unequal salary structures, environmental barriers and physical accessibility are additional constraints which preclude full and equal participation in the mainstream

labour sector.   This study identified the efficacy of narrative inquiry etched within an integrated theoretical approach as the promise that disability studies has been waiting for. A crucial step in re-writing the historically disabling scripts related to the "disabled identity", as a means to lobby for more inclusive strategies in the workplace, involves truly listening to the polyphony of individual voices from an emancipatory perspective.

Key words: Disability and employment; narrative inquiry; poststructuralism; social constructionism; psychoanalysis; professional identity

OPSOMMING

Gelyke werksgeleenthede en indiensneming vorm die grondslag van die sosiale, ekonomiese en politieke bedeling in 'n kapitalistiese samelewing. Die aanname is dat die meerderheid individue tussen die ouderdomme van 18 en 65 besoldigde betrekkings kan beklee waarin hulle belangstel. Ten spyte van die verskuiwing na 'n demokrasie wat gebaseer is op die beginsels van die Menseregtebeweging, is individue met gestremdhede steeds deel van 'n ekonomies benadeelde groepering as gevolg van diskriminasie en vooroordele in die werksplek. Hierdie situasie word vererger deur die deurlopende impak van 'n tekort aan vaardighede, beperkte toegang tot onderwys en opleiding, werkgewers se beperkte bewustheid van individue met gestremdheid se behoeftes en potensiaal, ontoeganklike werksomgewings en leemtes in beleidsontwikkeling. Die doel van hierdie narratiewe ondersoek was daarom 'n verkenning van alternatiewe verhale van ses individue met fisiese gestremdheid wat werksaam is in die ope arbeidsmark ten einde insig te kry in hul individuele ervarings van hindernisse en ondersteuning in die werksplek.

Die metodologie van hierdie studie kan tipeer word as 'n narratiewe ondersoekbenadering wat gevestig is in 'n krities-emansipatoriese navorsingsparadigma. Die lens van die studie was dus 'n geïntegreerde teoretiese benadering van post-strukturalistiese en sosio-konstruksionistiese denke en 'episodes' van Lakan se psigoanalise om aspekte van geïnternaliseerde onderdrukking te verstaan. Ses individue met fisiese gestremdheid wat werksaam is in die ope arbeidsmark is doelbewus gekies uit drie werksplekke. Data is gegenereer deur twee ongestruktureerde narratiewe onderhoude in die vorm van vertellings oor persoonlike ervarings (Squire, 2008; Riessman, 1993) en lewensverhale (Atkinson, 1998). Die deelnemers se unieke lewenservarings en hul konstruksie en handhawing van hul professionele identiteit in die werksplek was die fokus van die datagenerering. 'n Tweeledige proses van analise (eers beskrywend, daarna interpreterend) is gevolg om die teks te struktureer en te interpreteer. Beskrywende analise, gebaseer op Clandinin en Connelly se driedimensionele narratiewe ruimte, behels die oorvertel van deelnemers se persoonlike ervaring en lewensverhale. Die interpreterende analise daarenteen gebruik tematiese analise en sintese van die universele stories.

Die sentrale tema van die narratiewe is dat gestremdheid steeds gekonseptualiseer word as minderwaardig, ten spyte van hierdie individue se ongekende lojaliteit, min afwesigheid, toegewydheid en omvang van vaardighede, talente en vermoëns. Die stigma, vrese en onkundigheid wat daarmee gepaard gaan lei tot marginalisering. Baie persone met gestremdhede het steeds nie toegang tot onderwys en opleidingsgeleenthede nie en voldoen dus nie aan die vereistes wat gestel word vir toegang tot die arbeidsmark nie. Oneweredige salarisstrukture, hindernisse

in die omgewing en fisiese toeganklikheid belemmer volledige en gelyke deelname in die ope arbeidsmark. Hierdie studie bevestig die bruikbaarheid van narratiewe navorsing en 'n geïntegreerde teoretiese benadering in gestremdheidstudies. 'n Belangrike stap is die herskryf van die historiese beskouings van onbekwaamheid en "gestremde identiteit" as 'n poging om te onderhandel vir meer inklusiewe strategieë in die werkplek. Dit behels opregte luister na die individuele stemme vanuit 'n emansipatoriese perspektief.

Sleutelwoorde: Gestremdheid en indiensneming; narratiewe navorsing; poststrukturalisme; sosiale konstruksionisme; psigoanalise; professionele identiteit, inklusiwiteit.

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ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AgriBEE	Black Economic Empowerment Framework for Agriculture
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COLTS	Culture of Teaching, Learning and Services
DPI	Disabled People International
DPSA	Disabled People South Africa
DWDE	Disability Workshop Development Enterprise
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps
INDS	Integrated National Disability Statement
LRA	Labour Relations Act
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCSNET	Nation Commission on Special Education Needs and Training
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OSDP	Office on the Status of Disabled People
SAFOD	Southern African Federation of the Disabled
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UPIAS	The Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

1.1   THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Her form will always be beautiful to me. Shapely. Slender. Undulating. Perfect. Her scratches and blemishes integrated through journeys to far away places, each telling its own unique story of a life well lived. Her wizened expression and deep set wrinkles, imperceptible to any constructions of the ultimate, perfect body. She will always be beautiful to me, her resin smell and soft wood-grained texture that fitted perfectly under my childish chin. We had a fractious relationship at times although she will never admit it. She knows I cherish her, that I will never "own" her, and that she will transcend the bounds of time, generations, epochs. She acknowledges that she has been one of my greatest teachers and that, in generations to come, she will guide, steer and 'change' others, as she did me. She has seen, heard, touched many before me who have similarly held her, caressed her, acknowledged her teachings. She understands that she has been integral to my journey, not just as a musician but as a woman committed to this (sometimes) arduous journey of personal growth and transformation.

As I commit my thoughts to this page, she sleeps contentedly whilst my practiced fingers find new means of creative expression, tapping rhythmically on the modern keyboard which juxtaposes her 17th century origins. She does not blame me for abandoning her and fathoms that she can no longer demand from me the constructions of perfection that she once did. The night of our abrupt and unforeseen estrangement befell a biting, drizzly, winter's eve in August 1994. The bare trees stood like morticians as the blue car erupted brazenly, seemingly from nowhere. The driver, under-age, reeking of alcohol and oblivious to the instant life-changing consequences of his puerile recklessness was ironically unharmed. She was my first thought as I regained consciousness amid the insane piercing shrieks of the equally tormenting blue sirens which supplanted the soothing strains of the second movement of Bach's double concerto which was playing on the antiquated sound system at the time. As the sensorium replaced my oblivion, I was met with the appalling notion that I had lost all sensation in my left arm which was sandwiched tightly between the two seats of the dilapidated red Golf. Although the condition was temporary, so too was my career as a professional violinist. For months I despised her, felt unable to look at her and descended into a murky, narcissistic demise of (gratuitous) self indulgence. My twenty-something self ignored invitations from friends and family to re-join the human race, as I sat transfixed in my own swamp of pity, refusing to touch her, to hold her and to acknowledge the gift of immense growth, synchronicity and alternative journeys that the blue car had quintessentially steered.

My subsequent launch into the world of work, after (sullenly) repeating my third year music examinations and scraping a pass a year later, was interspersed with the wanton self absorbed notion that I would never again feel joyful since I had felt 'disabled' by way of my subsequent exclusion from my chosen profession. As such, I felt that I had no option but to procure perfunctory employment status as a receptionist – which filled me with guilt and shame after a four year course at University. Whilst in retrospect, I would never, ever have 'made it' as a performer, and my self-indulgent images of solo performances were quintessentially utter narcissistic fiction, her loss was painful, and I felt excluded both from the music fraternity's predilection for accomplished, well-schooled technical performers and my own intrapsychic fantasies, born as early as 1978, when my devoted mother furnished me with my first Japanese half sized violin. .

Whilst I do not profess to be 'disabled' by this occurrence and my position vis a vis disability will indeed become perceptible throughout this text, what transpired from this transformative event was an ilk of awareness as to the effects of both the socially constructed discourse related to exclusion from the 'workplace' as well as some conceptualisation of the effects of internalised oppression following the cessation of my career as an orchestral musician. My accident has similarly afforded me some insight regarding the nature of the impairment and the impact that it may have on the 'ability' to perform specialised employment roles that require particular physical outputs and has sensitised me to the notion of stereotypes, pity, and projected anxiety. Above all, it has made me rethink impairment in terms of adjusting to one's life world and the availability of

new possibilities – which is only imaginable with support from all systemic levels.   Whilst this is by no means the beginning or the end of my story, and my brief exclusion from my chosen career (however painful) has by no means impacted my life and existence in the same way as others, this personal narrative serves as the overture to my interest in the topic of the professional identity formation of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. As such, it seeks to underscore my contention, that we are all 'disabled' in some form or another and as such should all be privy to equal employment status based on our unique skills, talents and abilities.

I believe that we all live storied lives, and that our existence and actualisation is carved by our personal narratives and the stories that have been told to us by significant souls that touch our being. The six individuals who have told their stories in this study have indeed touched mine, and I am trusting that through their tremendous perspicacity, experiences, understanding and unique perspectives about disability in the world of work, readers will acquire insights into their own conceptualisations of the negative impact of segregation, internalised oppression, discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion, and as such reconsider the historically inculcated stereotypes and archetypes of disability with a view to transform and transcend the socially constructed discourse of disability as an 'inferior' status. This study does not seek to provide a generalised account of disability in the workplace but rather attempts to appeal to each and every person who has in some way been touched by disability as well as to provide employers, institutions and society at large with food for thought about the professional identity formation of individuals with disabilities in the world of work.

1.2   INTRODUCTION

From birth, human beings are conditioned to adhere to societal norms – to fit in and mould their existence to pursue the dominant trends deemed 'average' by societies' stipulations. The mass media inculcates these trends and fashions human being's predilection for intelligence; average body weight, shape and size; middle class earning potential and typical living and lifestyle standards where almost everything is calculated against a set of well defined norms (Davis, 2006:3) and deviations from these constructions of normalcy carry implications for the social constructions of the 'disabled identity'. As such, the 'problem of disability' lies within the construct of 'normalcy' (Davis, 2006:3) where any person deemed as deviating from society's standards has been historically ostracised and rejected.

These assumptions continue to pervade the social order in spite of policies and processes that 'demand' democracy, parity and redress.   Sociological studies of culture as a dominant ideology suggest that the perpetuated marginalisation and subordination of individuals with disabilities is implicit in the conflict of disabled identities (Barnes & Mercer, 2005a) which is created from cultural stereotyping embedded in the mass media, literary texts, art and film which have traditionally constructed metaphoric images of individuals with disabilities. This imagery symbolises distortions of disabling conditions, where the protagonist is represented in terms of positive or negative stereotypes (McDougall, 2006), and the 'disabled identity' is symbolised as either evil, malevolent and capable of monstrous behaviour (Dahl, 1993) or inherently 'good' and deserving of society's pity (McDougall, 2006; Dahl, 1993; Davis, 2001).

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These representations of impairment imagery have sparked polemic and political debate as a means to challenge clichéd, stereotypical and archetypal representations, yet in reality, little has actually changed. By highlighting the political correctness in relation to the social model of disability and arguing for 'positive' over 'negative' images of impairment, society has quintessentially shifted the divide between 'us' and 'them' equating disability as normalised impairment. To carry a 'disabled identity' in society is staunchly perpetuated by a collective exemplification of the 'normalcy' construct that societies have implemented in an attempt to "reinforce an identity of being the opposite of these unwanted characteristics" (Watermeyer, 2006:34). With this in mind, it is clear that identities are often constructed and maintained by way of the distinctions that we draw between ourselves and those who are different from us (Watermeyer, 2006) without acknowledgment for the individual scripts and stories that shape experiences. As such, prejudice in areas such as education and work within a neoliberal society continues in spite of the smokescreen of democratising principles. For this reason, new stories need to be created and new voices heard. Adopting a narrative approach to explore individual's subjective reality can serve as a means to re-author the storied worlds of the individuals against whom this type of oppression is most prevalent. Creating new stories by individuals with disabilities themselves can serve as an invaluable source to challenge the socially constructed shared images of disability. This underscores an essential component of this thesis.

A variety of theoretical models, political and social movements and paradigmatic orientations have attempted to explicate and redress stereotypical assumptions vis a vis disability in an attempt to 'forge' new identities for disabled minorities. The reconstruction of disability in the light of human rights and social justice is however often oversimplified and little has changed in practicality over the past sixty years. As such, individuals with disabilities in developing nations remain amongst the poorest of the poor and the interests of disabled people[1] are rarely afforded high profile attention in political agendas (UNESCO, 2000; AfriNEAD, 2009). Individuals with disabilities are frequently "assumed to have little potential to earn a living and make an economic contribution" (ibid) and many, (especially from poorer communities) remain divorced from their constitutional right to education and as such, endure under or un-employment. Those who are employed frequently lack supportive role models and continue to occupy perfunctory positions based on societal assumptions as to what jobs are deemed suitable for individuals with disabilities (International Labour Organization, 2008). This is especially prevalent in neo-liberal contexts, wherein most employers are unwilling to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities in the workplace (Shilvers, 2006), and many employers and institutions continue to 'totalise' a

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[1] The terms 'disabled people' and 'individuals with disabilities' will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis. The social model refers to the term 'disabled person' as a means to espouse the individual's 'disabling' experiences of social oppression. People 'first' language (e.g. individuals' with disabilities) advocates that the disability is a *characteristic* of the individual, rather than *the* defining variable (Linton, 2006). This will form part of an in-depth discussion in Chapter 2.

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homogenous 'disabled identity' with the implication that impairment limits overall performance and productivity. As such, these perpetuating stereotypes pose additional obstacles to be 'overcome' by individuals with disabilities (ibid).

Work is important for most individuals, not just in terms of financial gains but also because employment provides status, enhanced self esteem, self confidence and the opportunity to develop and augment skills and talents which contribute to quality of life (Jacobsen, 2003). As such, employment contributes profoundly to the overall identity of the individual (Brown, Hammer, Foley & Woodring, 2009; Cavanaugh, 1997). Whilst in recent years international communities have recognised that inclusion is a human rights issue (Dyson, 2001) where individuals with disabilities should be privy to the same human and civil rights as those without disabilities, the majority of disabled people are unable to secure non-perfunctory employment status where "not working is perhaps the truest definition of what it means to be disabled" (Lipman, 2003, in Shivers, 2006:267). The focus of this thesis serves to address these stereotypical images and the stigma that impacts the lives and living of individuals with disabilities. From this perspective, it aims to provide a platform for the storied voices of those who are currently employed in the mainstream labour sector to be heard, with a view to understanding, challenging and ultimately transforming collective action within society that has, over the years, maintained the status quo. It is hoped that ultimately, by hearing these unique storied voices, policy makers, organisations, education and training facilitators and employers will further acknowledge and make better provision for individuals with disabilities to develop the skills they need to realise their unique talents, capabilities and potential in the workplace.

Apart from my own personal interest in this topic, motivation for this thesis followed the recommendations of the 2009 African Network on Evidence-to-Action on Disability (AfriNEAD) Symposium, which indicates that research in the area of employment for individuals with disabilities, has been neglected and requires foci for further investigation particularly in terms of how professional identities are constructed (Brown et al., 2009). The emerging field of how adults continue to construct their identities relies on life narratives, or "the internalised and evolving story that integrates a person's reconstructed past, perceived present and anticipated future" (McAdams, 1994, in Cavannaugh, 1997:295). AfriNEAD (2009:13) identifies the value of the dissemination of 'success stories' of individuals with disabilities as a means to provide a voice for marginalised groups using narratives, rather than stereotypical, non-disabled perspectives or dominant professional ideologies of disability (Gwernan-Jones, 2008) to investigate what Thomas (1999) refers to as the psychosocial consequences of impairment. This study therefore seeks to offer insight into the storied lives of individuals with disabilities employed in the mainstream labour sector.   The personal narratives elicited from these individuals seeks to provide an

understanding about the role of the family, environment, education, resources, community, labour sector and broader macrosystemic processes that are involved in shaping experiences.

The relevance of this study for the discipline of educational psychology endeavours to further psychological research in the field of disability which forms an integral part of the praxis of educational and psychological practitioners in a variety of institutional milieus. Through the exploration of the barriers and facilitators to non-perfunctory employment status, which draws on both psycho-educational and psycho-emotional experiences of individuals with disabilities, this study is relevant to further psychological research within the scope of practice for Educational Psychologists. This includes assessment, diagnosis and *intervention* as a means to "optimize human functioning in the learning and development; assessing cognitive, personality, emotional and neuropsychological functions of people in relation to the *learning* and *development* in which they have been trained" (Department of Health, 2011:8, *my emphasis*). As the political, economic and social contexts shift and change (Swart & Pettipher, 2005), it is clear that more responsive strategies are needed to prepare learners with disabilities to become economically active. To achieve these ends, this study attends to the storied voices of individuals with disabilities who are currently employed as a means to provide insights into how professional identities are constructed. Through the narrative study of lives, this study seeks to challenge existing unequal structures by way of the exploration of barriers and facilitators to inclusion in order to lay the foundation to redress the disparities of the past (ibid) and as such facilitate greater equality in the lives and experiences of individuals with disabilities. In order for educational psychologists to plan interventions "to optimize human functioning" as a means to reform the historic exclusion of individuals with disabilities in both educational and labour contexts, more responsive research strategies are required to develop alternative stories to guide transformation. This research, positioned within a critical, emancipatory research paradigm (Oliver, 1997), suggests that the voices of individuals with disabilities who are employed in the mainstream labour context need to be heard, to "see beyond the dominant ideologies in order for the truth to be revealed" (Harvey, 1990, in Carmichael, 2004:200) in order to attend to both barriers and facilitators to workplace inclusion. This study seeks to do just that.

1.3   OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research was to explore the professional identity formation of individuals with disabilities employed in the mainstream labour sector, using a narrative inquiry approach embedded in a critical, emancipatory research paradigm, which contends that through the research process, individuals will be empowered (Barnes, 2001; Barton, 2001, 2005). The study was guided by the following research question: *How*

have individuals with disabilities who are employed in the mainstream labour sector constructed their professional identities?

To guide the central research question the following sub-questions were asked:

1. How do individuals with disabilities describe their lives and their experiences in the workplace?

2. What are the major obstacles and facilitators to professional identity formation for individuals with disabilities?

3. How do these stories help us to understand full inclusion in the workplace?

Reality was co-created by way of a hybrid of personal experience stories (Squire, 2008; Riessman, 1993) and life stories (Atkinson, 1998), embedded in an integrated theoretical approach (Marks, 1999), drawing on post-structuralist (including elements of Lacanian Psychoanalysis) and social constructionist thought, using the participants own storied voices as a means to challenge the dominant stereotypes of disability. Six individuals, selected using a non-probability, purposive sampling strategy were interviewed twice, using informal, conversational, open-ended interviews to explore their unique life experiences (Lindegger, 1999) and how they have constructed and asserted their professional identities in the world of work. Narrative analysis (first descriptive, then interpretive) was employed to bring structure and interpretation to the collected texts. Descriptive analysis, presented in Chapter 4 involved re-telling the participants personal experience stories and life stories using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensional narrative inquiry space, to reflect the personal, social, contextual and temporal aspects of experience. In Chapter 5, I present the interpretive analysis, wherein the field texts were summarised according to their semantic content to elicit themes within the data for more universal applications. An in-depth presentation of the research design, methodology and ethical considerations pertaining to this study are presented in Chapter 3.

1.4   STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION

This thesis is structured and presented as follows:

Chapter 1 provides the background to the study and briefly introduces the research question, purpose of the research, significance of the study and the organisation of chapters.
Chapter 2 includes an overview of the theoretical framework and the dominant literature in the field of disability and the workplace.

Chapter 3 discusses and describes the research paradigm, research design and methodology and delineates the selection of participants, data generation methods and modes of data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the descriptive analysis of the individual stories. As such, a hybrid of the experience-centred personal stories (Squire, 2008; Riessman, 1993) and life stories (Atkinson, 1998) are re-written from the perspectives of the narrators, structured according to Clandinin and Connelly's three dimensional narrative inquiry space to include temporality (past, present and future); the inward (personal) and the outward (social) within the context of place.

Chapter 5 includes the presentation of research texts from an interpretive analytic lens, following thematic analysis as a means to reveal categorical themes across the narratives related to universal stories of disability.

Chapter 6 provides conclusions, implications for individuals, employers, institutions, the field of educational psychology, theory and research. It summates with recommendations for further research, the study's strengths, limitations and a summary of the researcher's reflections.

1.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter delineated the context and rationale for the study and espoused the key issues which will be addressed throughout this thesis. The research problem was clearly formulated. The research design, methodology, research methods and data analysis techniques were briefly introduced and the chapter concluded with the structure and presentation of the thesis as a whole. In the next chapter, I will provide a thorough review of the literature, before an in-depth presentation of the research methodology is espoused in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Individuals with disabilities have been written about, named, shamed, politicised, normalised, pitied, avoided, excluded, segregated and ostracised by way of what Davis (1995:3) refers as the 'discursivity' of disability. This discursivity underscores the challenges involved in the formulation of a universally accepted definition of disability and indicates the necessity to deliberate alternative perspectives proximating the nature of disability and interpretations of concepts within a variety of paradigmatic orientations. These conceptualisations of "the marked body" (Watermeyer, 2009) have led to political and polemic debate as to whether disability is an individual or a social construct. Viewed entirely as an individual 'problem', etched within the inner bodies of those it seeks to describe, disability from a modernist perspective is defined in terms of the medical, deficit model which links impairment to individualised 'pathology'. From this lens, individuals are subjugated, marginalised and excluded from society as a result of their 'other-ness'. In response to the inequities of adherence to a strictly medical approach, proponents of the social model (UPIAS, 1976; Barnes & Mercer, 2005a; Schneider, 2006) sought to denounce such discourse in favour of the view that disability is a social construct, defined and constructed in terms of societal obstacles that preclude full and equal participation as a result of social and political ideologies which perpetuate the disadvantage under which disabled people are oppressed – from this lens, impairment is a strictly social phenomenon. It is society's impairment which creates a 'disabled identity'.

These approaches, conceptualised as diametrically opposed, operate across extreme ends of the disability continuum. From a social perspective, individuals with disabilities are viewed as entirely devoid of individual, uniquely defining characteristics, which inevitably creates with it, a new type of oppression. Thomas (1999) proposed a means to bridge the divide between the notion of disability as an entirely individual 'problem' and the social model which purports that impairment is the root of social oppression. Thomas' so-called social relational model (Reindal, 2008) comprises "a common platform as an understanding of the phenomenon of disability that connects individual and social aspects, both for explanatory purposes and for designing provisions, facilitating interaction between the inclusivity of the system *as well a*s responding to specific individual needs" (Norwich, 2002, in Reindal, 2008:141, *my emphasis*). Whilst this approach appears more moderate, it continues to exclude the role of the intrapsychic. To challenge this debate, in his proposal of a psychoanalytically informed model of

disability, Watermeyer (2009:14) contends that: "(a)chieving a satisfactory theoretical understanding of oppression of any sort must make adequate conceptual provision for the intra-psychic". These definitional constructs will form part of the focus of this chapter.

It is my proposition that an integrative approach to the disability discourse informed by an assimilation of some of the concepts of psychoanalysis within the epistemological positions of post-structuralist and social constructionist thought may hold the promise that the field of disability studies has been waiting for. Whilst I adhere to the Khunian notion of the 'incommensurability of paradigms' (Dickerson, 2010), and I am in no way suggesting that this study traverse two inherently opposing lenses simultaneously, it is my argument in this chapter that by attending to the repressed content of the unconscious expressed through individual and societal anxiety in relation to 'the disabled identity', psychoanalytic theory can be usefully *added* to the personal and socially constructed stories of a post-structuralist and social constructionist epistemology. As such, I do not propose that *all* difficulties are the result of deep seated structures (Tarragona, 2008), but rather that disabling experiences may derive scripts and narratives encapsulating the personal histories of social and political oppression which may "leave a legacy of distress and difficulty… which makes psycho-social fulfillment precarious and problematic" (Shakespeare, 2006:113).

This chapter identifies a variety of theoretical approaches which have proved efficacious in the disability discourse, including the social model of disability; psychoanalysis; social constructionism and post-structuralism. An integrated approach is subsequently offered. A discussion of the archetypes and stereotypes of disability, etched in the metaphoric images implicit in the mass media, literary texts and film are presented after which disability as stigma is considered from the lens of Goffman's (1963) conceptualisation of a 'spoiled identity'. The shift to a rights model within the South African context is espoused amid the policies and legislation that have proved meaningful in the disability debate and current educational policies and processes are delineated to align in part with the notion that educational experiences form the foundation of the procurement of non perfunctory employment statuses (Naicker, 1999) which underscores the centrality of the relevance of this study for the field of Educational Psychology. Employment concerns related to individuals with disabilities are reviewed. Finally, the integrated theoretical framework which guides this study is delineated, with special reference to the central tenets of post-structuralist (including Lacanian psychoanalysis) and social constructionist thought.

2.2   DEFINITIONS AND DISCOURSES

The quest for a universally constructed, operationalised definition of disability remains illusive and requires the careful consideration of multiple social, historical and political influences that have shaped collective experience. For eons, scholars, philosophers, politicians, sociologists, psychologists, activists, epidemiologists, health care providers and individuals who identify as 'disabled' have engaged vociferous deliberation to theorise disability and impairment in pursuit of 'the ultimate' unified theoretical perspective. This historic quest for the 'superlative' definition of disability and as such, what it means to be 'disabled', is etched in the ontologies of individuals and groups most often from vehemently emotional, yet well intentioned perspectives with the ultimate goal of attempting to make sense of a 'collective' experience of disability. In order to adequately conceptualise the dramatic shifts in thinking about disability, it is necessary to espouse the historic definitions and concepts that have influenced the discourse from domination to liberation in the sections that follow.

The varieties of definitions of disability which have pervaded the movements of disabled people can be viewed either from a methodological perspective, which underpin "(t)ools for helping us understand what there is in the world" (Williams, 2001:127); an ontological mechanism which seeks to understand how individuals with disabilities exist in terms of psychological and social processes (Reeve, 2002) a political activity (Barton, 2001) and a phenomenon to be understood in terms of epistemological varieties, (Goodley, 2001, in Goodley & Lawthom, 2006), which includes the necessary preconditions for making sense of reality. Disability in this thesis will be considered from an integrated approach which deliberates the construction of *disabling experiences* and *contexts* together with the way in which individuals *think and feel* about varieties of 'difference' (Marks, 1999:10). As such, the central tenets of this thesis align with Mark's (1999) view that "(d)isability should not be conceived as a special area or topic to be left to the experts", but rather a resource for "social theorising" which includes the lens of post-structuralist and social constructionist thought. The position in this thesis therefore concurs with Marks' (1999:13) view that it is necessary to "bridge the gap between the personal and the political, the internal and the external experiences of disability" (Marks, 1999:13) and in so doing strive to integrate the interpersonal, experiential, psychoanalytic and post-structural discourses (ibid). In order to adequately delineate the quintessentially opposing forces operating within the field of disability studies, I will briefly espouse some of the central tenets of the discourses and definitions which have pervaded the field in the past 30 years.

Recent trends in disability studies discourse indicate the shift from disablement to emancipation, implicit in the movement from the medical deficit model to the social model of disability which will be discussed in greater depth

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below. These transitions indicate a shift in perspective from impairment as an individual construct toward the notion of disability as etched in the social and political disabling permutations which denude human dignity and contribute insults to human rights. As such the construct of the term 'disability' carries various meanings and implications when considered from the variety of theoretical frameworks which pervade the discourse. In the early years, definitions were primarily based on the World Health Organization's (WHO, 1980) influential formulation of the International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap (ICIDH). According to this conceptual framework, the following definitions and distinctions of disability, impairment and handicap were offered:

- **"Impairment**" connotes "(a)ny loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function"

- "**Disability"** includes "(a)ny restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being" and

- "**Handicap**" refers to "(a) disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal for the individual"
(World Health Organization, 1980)

These early definitions imply that it is individual 'limitations' that prevent active engagement in the world which inevitably results in a 'handicap' (Priestly, 2006). As such, viewed entirely from this perspective, disability is cited solely within bodily difference, where disability is defined conceptually as 'impairment' (Swartz & Watermeyer, 2006). In the same year as the WHO's promulgation of the International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap (WHO, 1980), 250 individuals from international contexts gathered at the Rehabilitation International Congress in Canada and shared their common experiences of oppression and dehumanisation which resulted in the birth of the constitution and manifesto of Disabled People's International (DPI) which focused on the "full and equal participation of disabled people in society" (Hurst, 2005:67). This manifesto saw the transition from the medical to the social model of disability which is discussed below. Additionally, the DPI sought to challenge the WHO's (1980) classifications of impairment as that which denudes the individual's "identity as fellow human beings" (Hurst, 2005:69) as a means to simply perpetuate the tenets of the medical model wherein the source of all 'dysfunction' was cited as implicit in the individual who 'presents for treatment'. At a meeting in Stockholm in 1987 between the WHO and the DPI in 1987, the latter argued that individuals with disabilities required control over their own lives and experiences as active participants in society which indicated that the current WHO classification required redress. This initiated the process of the formulation of the 'new' International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001) which eventually made its way as an 'integrative' model based

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on the biopsychosocial approach which sought to achieve coherence between the biological, individual and social perspectives (ibid). From this perspective, disability is viewed as a process of interaction at three levels of functioning: the personal, environmental and societal level (WHO, 2001). The personal level considers impairments within different domains of functioning such as the cognitive, physiological and biological levels. The environmental level impacts the physical level as well as the functioning of "the whole person" (Schneider, 2006) and must be considered in terms of obstacles and facilitators to health and well being. The societal level considers the interactions between both the personal and environmental levels which may impact the individual's active participation in all aspects of life, e.g. school, tertiary education access; work etc.

Throughout the 1980's, following the increased politicisation of the disability rights campaign, increased pressure was placed on politicians and policy makers to redress the rights of individuals with disabilities (Barnes & Mercer, 2001). As a result of intensifying pressure in the political arena in the United States, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990), promulgated in 1990 became important legislation related to employment provisions for individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Under this Act, individuals with disabilities were protected from discrimination in all employment decisions especially in terms of inquiry about aspects of an applicant's medical history in the process of placement. Although not successful in its entirety, Charlton (1998, in Barnes & Mercer, 2001:15) suggests that the Act was "(t)he most comprehensive anti-discrimination law anywhere in the world" (Barnes & Mercer, 2001:15). The ADA was amended in 2008 (ADA, 2008).

By 1993, the Standard Rules on Equality of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was initiated by the United Nations in an attempt to standardise the international human rights laws for individuals with disabilities to access equal opportunities (United Nations, 1993). This initiative comprised 23 rules established with the goal of ensuring that every individual has equal opportunities to fully and equally participate at all levels of society including "awareness raising, medical and support services, education, employment, leisure and cultural activities" (Barnes & Mercer, 2005b:8). Of particular relevance to this thesis is Rule 7 (United Nations, 1993), which indicates that individuals with disabilities should be empowered to exercise their rights to equal education opportunities and non-discrimination in the workplace.

The 2006 Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) (UNESCO, 2006) became "the first legally binding standard instrument" (Guernsey, Nicoli & Ninio, 2007) adopted in New York and later ratified in South Africa in 2007 (Swart & Pettipher, 2011) to "promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity" (UNESCO,

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2006). The Preamble of the CRPD is of fundamental significance to this thesis in that it stipulates the recognition that "disability is an evolving concept" (UNESCO, 2006, 1(e) which insinuates a "non-definition of disability" Schultze, 2009:14) to underscore the notion that impairment results from "the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UNESCO, 2006, 1 (e). The key principles as outlined in Article 3 include the specification of respect; non-discrimination; the provision of mechanisms to support effective participation and inclusion in society; respect for difference and diversity; equal provision of opportunities; accessibility; equality between men and women and respect for children with disabilities to preserve their identities. Article 27 of this text (included as Appendix A) is cardinal legislation which recognises the rights of all individuals with disabilities to procure non-perfunctory employment status through the drive to prohibit discrimination in all matters concerning employment and the career development and advancement of individuals with disabilities. This complements Article 24 of the CRPD (UNESCO, 2006) which corroborates existing legislation and policy which calls for the inclusion of all learners, regardless of their 'ability' in the general education system (included as Appendix B). This ground-breaking text is discussed further in Section 2.3.1.

Whilst disability definitions and discourse have transitioned over the past thirty years, I argue that the very act of debating which terms are most 'acceptable' perpetuates social distinction. A central hypothesis in this thesis is that the quintessence of the experience of disability remains largely individualistic and must be considered from the point of view of individuals with disabilities (Williams, 1996a, 1998, in Williams, 2001; UNESCO, 2006). To further this debate, the dominant models of disability will be espoused in the section that follows.

2.2.1   Shifting Paradigms: The Moral, Medical and Social Models of Disability

It is clear that the historic pursuits for an all-encompassing definition of disability has been complex amid stereotypical and absolutist constructs, with the result that disability can be placed within a variety of interlocking methodological and ontological frameworks (Williams, 2001; Terzi, 2005). As such, the conceptualisation of disability over the past thirty years is characterised by (at least) three distinct models of disability: the moral approach which considers disability as a moral lapse in faith; the medical model which defines disability as "a physical, psychological or intellectual condition that results in functional limitation" (Rioux, 2001:36) and the social model which encapsulates a variety of 'versions' of disability, wherein the dominant trend is to view disability as a creation of the social environment which requires social change (Mitra, 2006). Armstrong (2005:54) cites that an understanding of the historical developments within the disability discourse is essential as a means to illuminate

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"current practices and struggles" and it is for this reason that I provide a recapitulation of these models in the section that follows, even though I argue that none of these have been particularly meaningful to understandings of the 'experiences' of individuals with disabilities. Appendix C provides a summary of these three models of disability in tabular form.

2.2.1.1   The Moral Model of Disability

The oldest and most ubiquitous model of disability is rooted in the moral approach where disability was explained in terms of a 'defect of character' which formed part of divine punishment, lapse of moral judgment, *karma* or dilemmas related to issues of faith (Shakespeare, 2006; Olkin, 2002). As such, individuals with disabilities were either shamed and ostracised from society, or viewed as having a 'special' relationship with God and pronounced as being among 'the chosen ones'. In the Middle Ages, individuals with disabilities were persecuted based on superstitious ideas that impairment was as a result of evil or witchcraft (Marks, 1999). The Victorian epoch sought to prevent procreation of 'defectives' lest it brings about the demise of the human species (ibid) and the Judea-Christian era sought to pronounce individuals with disabilities as an expression of God's wrath or displeasure (Koopman, 2003). As such, viewed specifically from this perspective, disability brought either shame both to the individual and their family members (Olkin, 2002) or blessings from a divine source.

The early political conceptualisations of individuals with disabilities as undesirable, bothersome, indigent and mentally and morally defective (Rioux, 2001) is evidenced early on in the literature and will be discussed in more detail below. Individuals with disabilities were described as: "scum of the colonies" (Rioux, 2001:34); "useless and bothersome to the community" (Green, 1986, in Rioux, 2001:35); "degenerates" (Conrad, 1968, in Davis, 2006:13); tragically flawed (Lane, 2006:80); "the expression of God's displeasure" (Koopman, 2003:1) or alternatively, heroic and noble (Serlin, 2006); "helpless, pure and innocent" (Marks, 1999:163) or victims of bereavement and loss (Levinson & Parritt, 2006:114). Whilst these (atrocious) archaic constructions of disability are outmoded in contemporary discourse, moral implications of disability continue to pervade social consciousness and remain etched in the archetypal images of disability of the collective unconscious. The moral model of disability is well documented as comprising some of the most atrocious human rights abuses against individuals deemed as 'undesirable' as a result of their disability. Immigration, selective abortion, institutionalisation and eugenics are some of the historic mechanisms which have been the hallmark of disability rights abuses over the centuries. The Disability Rights Movement has shifted these constructs of disability "off the

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body and into the interface between people with impairments and socially disabling conditions" (Hevey, 1993:426, in Lane, 2006:80). This will be discussed in more detail below.

2.2.1.2   *The Medical Model of Disability*

The post-enlightenment era viewed the etiology of disability or impairment as emergent entirely within the individual, where disability was seen as a 'defect' or pathological bodily system due to a medical abnormality; genetic defect; poor health or aberrant behavioural dysfunction which was either physical or internal (Swart & Pettipher, 2005; Olkin, 2002; Shakespeare, 2006; Barnes & Mercer, 2005a; Armstrong, 2005; Schneider, 2006). As such, this foundational discourse saw the naissance of the medical model**,** which considered social exclusion in terms of the individual's medical condition (Islam, 2008) where disability as pathology was considered entirely in terms of diagnosis and treatment (Swart & Pettipher, 2005; 2011). The rise of the modernist age, with its emphasis on positivism and increased status for science and the medical professions sparked what Hughes (2002, in Armstrong, 2005) referred as 'invalidation' which emphasised barriers to full and equal participation in society and concomitant exclusion from the labour force. Clearly such constructs carried unfortunate social consequences for individuals with disabilities where "(t)he ontological essence of disability was impairment" (Hughes, 2002, in Armstrong, 2005) and the medical problem or "personal tragedy" (Oliver, 1990) aroused pity, sympathy and charity reminiscent of the inculcations of the moral model. Yet, proponents of the medical model sought to defend their position and indicated its worth as a means to 'eradicate disease' – or find a 'cure' through the provision of treatment for organic conditions. As such, the medical model has been strongly criticised especially due to its "focus on normative strength" (Amundson, 2000, in Mitra, 2006:237).

Since the 1980's there has been a drastic shift away from the medical approach of diagnosis and intervention where a focus on context became the precursor to the so-called socio-ecological model of disability which viewed the type of barrier as the defining feature as to how and when individuals would be integrated into a variety of settings. This resulted in the term 'normalisation' which indicated that individuals with diverse needs were integrated into the mainstream system, where disabled people were described as having the rights to normal everyday experiences (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:6). Criticism of these normalisation principles implicit in the concepts of 'mainstreaming' and 'integration' have cited these units as equally segregating as past policies of exclusion (Farrell, 2004) with the result that many individuals with disabilities continued to suffer segregation – in different ways. Although the traditional, individualistic, medical model is still relevant in the disability discourse (Barnes & Mercer, 2001:11), there has been a radical shift in perspective from functional limitations caused by

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impairment within the individual toward the view that it is the limitations within social structures, social relationships and social processes (Priestly, 2005) which disables. The section that follows attends to this model.

2.2.1.3   *The Social Model of Disability*

The social model of disability emerged in the 1970's in United Kingdom from the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976), a then small group of individuals with disabilities inspired by Marxism who advocated for individuals with impairments to participate fully, equally and independently in society (Shakespeare, 2006). The UPIAS (1976) published its own constructions of disability definitions which distinguished between 'disability' and 'impairment' in an attempt to arrive at an early conceptualisation of the social model of disability. From this perspective, 'impairment' was viewed as a physical or intellectual limitation and 'disability' was considered as a construct formulated in response to the social oppression of individuals with impairments. As such, the UPIAS (1976) defined impairment as "(l)acking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body" and disability was defined as: "(t)he disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no, or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities" (UPIAS, 1976:20). The term 'impairment' therefore transitioned from the medical model construction, which excludes differences and variations within and between individuals (Shakespeare, 1999, in Freund, 2001), to the notion that impairment is quintessentially a social construction, where the "non-disabled majority view impairment as different, inferior and something most certainly to be eliminated" (Flood, 2005:180). Since then, the social model of disability has been established in the academic discourse by Mike Oliver (1983, in Priestly, 2006) and adopted by scholars, academics and activists ever since. The term has become something of a political "buzzword" (Gronvik, 2007; Swart & Pettipher, 2005) wherein its proponents began to vociferously challenge disability as a physical or mental condition, in favour of the view that social and physical environments were chiefly responsible for the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from active participation in mainstream society (UPIAS, 1976; Barnes & Mercer, 2005a; Rioux, 2001; Shakespeare, 2002; Abberley, 1987; Schneider, 2006). As such, disability was seen as encompassing social or attitudinal constraints emanating from discrimination and social exclusion rather than as a result of impairment 'within' the individual. This indicates that disability became something imposed on top of the individual's impairments through social exclusion and oppression (UPIAS, 1976).

In an attempt to align with the move away from the medical model, supporters of the social model sought to 'integrate' individuals with diverse needs into a variety of settings by eradicating barriers in society implicit in

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stereotyping, inequality, environmental and social obstacles and the failure of society to address the needs of disabled people (UPIAS, 1976; Barnes, 1998:78, in Goodley & Van Hove, 2005:16). The social model also recognises the social causes of disability implicit in the social, economic and political structures that contribute to disablement (Oliver, 1990, in Rioux, 2001) and as such seeks to dismantle these disabling structures by way of social action and social change in order to actively consider the rights of individuals with disabilities (Flood, 2005) and implement transformation in society as a whole (Shakespeare, 2002). This included legislation promulgated as a means to eradicate oppression and prejudice, often visible in terms of accessibility standards and reasonable accommodations (Oliver, 1996:33, in Priestly, 2005:18).

The primary criticism of the social model is implicit in the wholehearted rejection of impairment as a relevant construct. It is argued that whilst the medical model is criticised for its singular focus on disability as an individualised medical impairment, the social model should receive similar criticism for reducing disability to the outcomes of social obstacles and for rejecting that impairments do exist. As such, adherents of the social model of disability may fail to explicate the individual differences between and among individuals with disabilities, assuming a disembodied, one-size-fits-all approach which disavows the uniqueness of the individual's interests, needs and wishes (Freund, 2001). An additional consideration is that many people with disabilities do not view themselves as part of a collective identity (UNESCO, 2006) or a political group of activists and the varieties of disabilities that pervade society, together with the multitudes of social, cultural and contextual factors that derive disparate experiences of disability, indicate that disability is an "individualised experience for most" (Scotch, 1990:239). It is therefore necessary to consider alternative models of disability which address the individual experiences amid these socially oppressive structures.

2.2.1.4   *Alternatives to the Medical and Social Models*

It is clear from the discourse above that each of these historically well-intentioned "models" of disability carries certain limitations for those they seek to 'describe'. As such, a variety of authors have argued for more integrative models to bridge the divide between viewing impairment and disability as two separate entities (Shakespeare, 2002; Mitra, 2006). Shakespeare and Erickson (2000, in Shakespeare, 2002:19) suggest that "an adequate social theory of disability would include all the dimensions of disabled people's experiences: bodily, psychological, cultural, social, political, rather than claiming that disability is either medical or social". It is this very type of alternative model that I argue will make the greatest contribution to the future of disability studies discourse and the movement toward the more successful inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of society.

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The **social-relational model of disability**, first cited by Thomas (1999) is one such alternative which suggests that it is the interaction between the individual's impairment, together with the social and environmental context that perpetuates disability (Brown et al., 2009). This underscores Bury's (1996, in Reindal, 2008:142) notion that "(i)f there is no initially underpinned individual problem, then social reactions such as oppression, exclusion, discrimination etc. will have nothing to respond to". As such, the social relational perspective underscores the impossibility of considering disability, or conducting disability research from a de-contextualised perspective.

Until recently, the conceptualisation of disability has been exclusively created by non-disabled professionals (Finkelstein, 1990) and whilst the relationship between disability and psychology has historically been a troubled one, a variety of authors argue that there is indeed a need for a **psychology of disability** (Goodley & Lawthom, 2006b; Reeve, 2006; Watermeyer, 2006; Finkelstein, 1990). Although society's understanding of the concept of disability has shifted to some extent, proponents of the psychoanalytic schools argue that what is currently needed is an approach which understands the psychic mechanisms and contexts within which disabling oppression is situated (Marks, 1999). A central premise in this thesis is that in order to experience transformation, change must occur both at the level of the individual and within the level of group consciousness. It is for this reason that I support Marks (1999); Goodley (2010); Goodley and Lawthom (2006a, 2006b); Watermeyer (2006, 2009) and Michalko's (2002) contentions that the integration of psychoanalytically oriented theories within existing theoretical conceptualisations of disability is a useful *addition* to social theory in order to examine "the mechanisms and contexts in which internalised oppression operates" (Marks, 1999:19). This will be addressed further in Section 2.7.

2.3   THE DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The discourse above summates the universal drive for an all inclusive, "universal language of disability" (Üstün et al., 2001, in Barnes & Mercer, 2005a:1), yet it is clear that the contextual discrepancies pervading developed and developing countries connote variance among the experiences of disability (Barnes & Mercer, 2005b). In recent years, the international community has acknowledged that historically segregated individuals should be privy to the same human and civil rights as those without disabilities, yet, it should be conceded that whilst the inclusion of individuals with disabilities remains similar globally, a one size fits all approach can subvert the unique cultural heritage, historical composition and intrinsic challenges within specific regions and it is for this reason that I will discuss the disability rights movement from a South African perspective in this section.

Many of the imbalances facing society today are as a result of a long history of segregation which has been the defining characteristic of South African society for many years. The atrocities of the apartheid regime underscore some of the additional burdens experienced by black individuals with disabilities in South Africa. Not only did these individuals have to contend with marginalisation of a deeply divided, unequal society, but also an added struggle of living with a disability in a bigoted society. During the apartheid regime *all* individuals with disabilities experienced the effects of discrimination and marginalisation and as such had limited access to employment, education, healthcare and social services. Yet for black individuals with disabilities, these were compounded by the added difficulties of poverty, deprivation and violence of the apartheid system (Howell, Chalklen & Alberts, 2006). In 1984, a group of disabled activists in South Africa formed a national organisation called the Disabled People of South Africa (DPSA) which played a central role in the liberation rights and formulation of policies and legislation to protect the rights of disabled people (Dube, 2005). Koopman (2003) describes the DPSA as primarily "a coalition of self-help groups as well as a way of linking up individual people with disabilities with the disability rights movement, which asserts the rights of disabled people to represent themselves in decision making processes" (Koopman, 2003:34).

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, the South African government has endeavoured to redress the unfair discrimination of historically disadvantaged groups who have been excluded from active participation in society and employment (HSRC, 2007). In response to a small scale research project on the assessment of disability related policy in South Africa, Dube (2005) indicates that while the inception of these policies, (although in their infancy), have been a remarkable step forward in the disability rights movement in South Africa, implementation thereof remains a challenge, largely due to lack of fiscal capacity. As such, one of the greatest problems facing a post apartheid South Africa includes socio-economic barriers – many individuals in South Africa are not privy to the most basic human needs and as a result, face challenges such as lack of access to basic services such as education and healthcare; overcrowding; lack of nutrition and crime and violence. Not only has South Africa had to come face-to-face with formidable challenges in the provision of education, training and employment for all people, especially previously marginalised groups affected by the gross inequalities of the apartheid regime, but demographic trends such as population increases, shortages of schools and teachers, multilingualism as well as problems related to HIV and AIDS continues to impact the availability of jobs and employment for all citizens of South Africa, notwithstanding those with disabilities. As such, one of the greatest challenges facing the South African new dispensation following the first democratic post apartheid elections of 1994 was to reform inequalities of the past with the aim of building a democratic society as a key to social transformation (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001:32). Social transformation therefore is grounded in the ideals of social justice and equity, wherein

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all individuals are provided equal opportunities based on the principles of parity, fairness and equality in the distribution of resources (Fisher, 2007).

The section that follows commences with a brief discussion vis a vis the impact of the New Constitution on the rights of individuals with disabilities and delineates some of the significant initiatives, policies and legislation that have been implemented to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities.

2.3.1   South African Policy and Legislation Related to the Disability in the Workplace

The birth of the 'New' Constitution in 1996, ushered a new era of democracy for all with the affirmation of human dignity, freedom, non-racism and non-sexism. It similarly recognised the historical marginalisation and segregation of individuals with disabilities which has subsequently become an important source of legislation in the South African context. The Bill of Rights, contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution makes provision for the social values upon which the new political, social and economic rights of all South Africans are contained. According to Section 9(2), The Bill of Rights indicates that: "equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms" (South Africa, 1996a, 9(2). This includes the stipulation that all individuals previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination must be protected by way of equality through the implementation of legislation and other measures. Additionally, Section 9(3) orders that:

> The State may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, **disability**, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
> (South Africa, 1996a, 9(3), my emphasis)

As such, according to South African law, all individuals, including those with disabilities must be protected against unfair discrimination, and national legislation is required to prevent or prohibit prejudice. Of further significance in the Constitution is the recognition of Sign Language as an official South African language to make provision for the inclusion of the Rights of Deaf South Africans. As a result of the impact of the Constitution on the redress of inequality and significant human rights abuses that have pervaded South African society, policy makers have latterly committed more focused attention toward legislation that strives to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

One of the most notable achievements apart from the Constitution, was the promulgation of **The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy**, (INDS) (South Africa, 1997), implemented as a means to redress previous inequalities and provide disabled individuals with the opportunity to actively participate at all levels of

society which sought to facilitate inclusion related strategies for individuals with disabilities and in so doing, advocate for the removal of discriminatory barriers in the workplace (HSRC, 2007). The INDS was published six months after the establishment of the Office on the Status of Disabled People (OSDP), an executive branch of government with the objective of embracing disability as a central issue at national level (Howell et al., 2006). The INDS is not legislation per se, but rather provides Government Departments with policies and strategic guidelines to "promote non-discriminatory development, planning, programme implementation and service delivery" for individuals with disabilities (Dube, 2005:17).

The INDS was structured to align with the social model of disability and adopt and popularise (Swart & Pettipher, 2011) the central protocol explicated by the **United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD) (UNESCO, 2006) which as espoused above, is *the* breakthrough in international law pertaining to the rights and freedoms of individuals with disabilities. The CRPD was ratified by South Africa in 2007 by way of "a training manual and guidelines for all role players with people with disabilities" (Swart & Pettipher, 2011:20). Article 27 of the CRPD (UNESCO, 2006) stipulates that: all persons with disabilities have the right to procure employment equally in the public and private sectors and enjoy favourable conditions in the workplace through the facilitation of reasonable accommodations; equal remuneration packages; access to career guidance programmes as well as assistance in the procurement and maintenance of employment (See Appendix A).

In 1993, the **Standard Rules of the Equalization for Persons with Disabilities** was developed by the United Nations to promote the rights and freedoms of individuals with disabilities in all sectors of societies. Section 7 of the Standard Rules for the Equalization for Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 1993) indicates that Member States should endeavor to recognise the principle that persons with disabilities must be empowered to exercise their human rights, particularly in the field of employment. In both rural and urban areas, individuals with disabilities must have equal opportunities for productive and gainful employment in the labour market. As such laws and regulations are required to be implemented to increase provision of employment as well as measures such as vocational training, technical and financial assistance and reasonable accommodations and assistive technology. An additional point espoused under section 7 indicates that all individuals with disabilities should be privy to engage employment options in the open labour market unless special circumstances prevent such ends.

The **Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act** (South Africa, 2000), also commonly referred as the Equality Act, ratified in 2000 is considered important legislation for the promotion of the rights of

individuals with disabilities and as such, criminalises discrimination which includes the failure to make provision for supportive and accommodative structures required by individuals with disabilities to function optimally in society. Section 6 of this Act stipulates the elimination of obstacles that "unfairly limit or restrict persons with disabilities from enjoying equal opportunities" and in so-doing, seeks to make adequate provisions for the accommodation of disabled minorities (South Africa, 2000, 6(9)c). According to Dube (2005), this legislation is a vital provision to recapitulate the manner in which disability manifests in society and as such demands redress of discrimination by way of "prevention, prohibition and elimination of unfair discrimination, hate speech and harassment" (Dube, 2005:26).

The **Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995)** proposed legislation to promote economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace (South Africa, 1995a). This inevitably added weight to Section 9 of the Constitution and sought to preclude any forms of discrimination and make provision for the rights of individuals with disabilities as equal citizens in all aspects of life in South Africa. Three years later, the **Employment Equity Act 55,** (South Africa, 1998a) was passed as a mechanism to redress labour disadvantages of previously marginalised groups. As such, the Act aimed to eliminate unfair discrimination and the remnants of the apartheid legacy, by the promotion of affirmative action in the labour sector. The Act included individuals with disabilities, who were defined as "people who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment" (HSRC, 2007). Individuals with disabilities therefore formed part of a designated group to be recognised in terms of affirmative action policies. The Employment Equity Act makes discrimination against individuals with disabilities unlawful and stipulates that employers are required to make reasonable accommodations to facilitate the equal and active participation of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. This includes physical accommodations such as ramps, parking bays and toilet facilities (where within the 'reasonable' bounds of the employer's means to facilitate such accommodations); time off for medical appointments, suitable assistive technologies such as voice activated software or adaptive computers; necessary staff training etc. The Act further stipulates that discrimination in the form of victimisation or harassment, unfavourable treatment and unfair selection procedures is unlawful.

The Skills Development Act 97 (South Africa, 1998b) promulgated in 1998 made provision for a framework of skills development and training for individuals in South Africa, including support strategies, learnerships and the provision of employment services for individuals with disabilities. Under section 2(1, e) the Act (South Africa, 1998b) indicates that the aim is "to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education".

The inclusion and opportunity for individuals with disabilities to procure non-perfunctory employment status in the mainstream labour sector is intrinsically linked to the provision of adequate education and training facilities. It is for this reason that policy and legislation pertaining to education and training will be discussed in the section that follows.

2.3.2   South African Policy and Legislation Related to Education and Training

The mobilisation of the disability movement in terms of education and training, is rooted in the Constitution (South Africa, 1996a) and the CRPD (UNESCO, 2006) which affirms the right to education and for all children to receive basic education in the official language of his/her choice at public schools. The Constitution requires that school education be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality and the advancement of rights and freedoms.

In 1995, the **White Paper on Education and Training** (South Africa, 1995b) was passed as the first document to focus on an integrated education and training system. By means of a new national qualifications framework, it called for a transformed system which would accommodate people who are in conventional schooling, colleges and training programmes as well as those South Africans who had not enjoyed formal education and training due to the inequalities of the apartheid era. **The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996** (South Africa, 1996c) was promulgated to amend the National Policy for General Educational Affairs Act 1984 and aimed to "enable the education system to contribute to the full personal development of each learner" (Coetzee, Marais & Bray, 1999:43). The Act served to provide equitable education opportunities based on redress to "ensure that no person is denied the opportunity to receive an education to the maximum of his or her ability as a result of physical disability" (Ibid, 40). The Constitution and **National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996** formed the foundation for the **South African Schools Act No. 84** which became legislation in November 1996 (South Africa, 1996b). The primary purpose of this act was to provide "a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools" (Coetzee et al., 1999:42).

In 1997, the **National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training** (NCSNET) and the **National Committee on Education Support Services** (NCESS) (Department of Education, 1997) was commissioned by the then Minister of National Education to investigate the state of special education and support in South Africa. This resulted in findings of inadequacies in the provision of specialised education for learners with disabilities and other marginalised groups with the apprehension that "the education system must be structured and must function in such a way that a diversity of learner and system needs can be accommodated" (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:17).

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These recommendations were outlined in the **Consultative Paper No 1 on Special Education** in August 1999 (South Africa, 1999) and were articulated in the **Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education** (Department of Education, 2001). This document provides an overview for the implementation of a national strategy in support of inclusive education and the implementation thereof. In 2005 a new outcomes based curriculum (OBE) aimed to effect a paradigm shift from a content based transmission code to a competency based one (Lemmer, 2004:12). The initial purpose of the implementation of OBE was to redress inequalities of the apartheid regime. Whilst grounded in the principles of constructivism, many have debated the efficacy of OBE and multifarious initial objectives of the curriculum have subsequently been transformed. Article 24 of the CRPD (UNESCO, 2006) which is attached as Appendix B, encourages all State Parties to recognize the rights of all persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in an inclusive education setting and to access support, reasonable accommodations and assistive devices as a means to maximize academic and social development and as such facilitate a culture of life long learning without discrimination in either the general education and training band (GET) or further education and training band (FET). Whilst this legislation has had an impact on the facilitation and economic empowerment of individuals with disabilities, much still needs to be done to eradicate entrenched patterns of stigma and stereotyping which has become part of the collective unconscious. This will be espoused in the sections that follow.

2.4   DISABILITY AND THE CONSTRUCT OF NORMALCY

The constructs of normalcy have pervaded psychological discourse as convenient terminology to distinguish between individuals with and without disabilities (Linton, 2006). As such, the concept of disability has historically been perceived in terms of black and white binaries, where any person deemed as differing from societies well constructed notion of what it means to be 'normal' was labelled with varieties of deprecating terminology (Gold & Auslander, 1999, in Stadler, 2006:373).   Human beings have been conditioned to strive toward these constructions of 'normalcy' (Davis, 2006). All aspects of being from birth to death are somehow constructed along a continuum, where individuals attempt to position themselves within the average or above average range. A child born with a disability inevitably 'deviates' from these constructs of normalcy, and from birth may unconsciously assimilate his parent's grief and sense of loss that their bundle of joy did not conform to the 'happy' notions of a 'normal' child. The developing child is weighed, measured and tested to ensure that growth, weight, height and intelligence meet a range of developmental domains which is translated into a score and compared with normative samples or specific criteria and objectives. School based assessments indicate whether or not the developing

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child is on par with that of his or her peers and the child's self worth is often entangled in a percentage score which 'illuminates' ability and achievement.

In his prolific writing about disability and the concept of 'normalcy', Davis (2006:4) indicates that the concept of the 'norm' was initially identified in the English language in the mid nineteenth century which correlated with the birth of the modern period and the need for sound data based on empiricism. The conceptualisation of 'the ideal' on the other hand, evidenced as early as the seventeenth century in the painting and sculpture of the classical period as a means to idealise the human body (ibid), was cited as synonymous with godliness, and was later replaced with the notion of 'the average', a concept that became etched in powerful ideologies such as Marxism (ibid) which, according to Davis (2006:5) "(i)s very much in step with the movement of normalising the body and the individual". Marxism occupies a central political, philosophical and ideological role in post-structuralist thought, in spite of the common notion that it "reduces everything to economics" (May, 2006). From this lens, individuals with disabilities are deemed less productive and 'able' to contribute to the burgeoning capitalist economy which considers everything in terms of profit and profitability.

Constructs of normalcy, presented both as archetypal and stereotypical imagery have become fossilised in myth, art, literature, theatre, film and the mass media for eons, often steered as hegemony by those in a position of power (Ebenstein, 2006). It is valuable to consider the derivation of these archetypes and stereotypes in order to comprehend the impact of these reinforced attitudes that have perpetuated society over the centuries. This will be discussed in the section that follows.

2.4.1   Fairy Tale, Myth and Legend: Archetypes and Stereotypes of Disability

Archetypes represent "(a)n unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear" (Jung, 1953 / 2004:4). They are therefore distinguished from stereotypes in that the former presents an original conceptualisation of the human experience based on mythological constructs, and the latter is socially constructed as a means to provide a caricature sketch etched in prejudicial over-simplifications. It is clear that both of archetypes and stereotypes have become inculcated in the worlds of individuals with disabilities for eons and have inevitably had an impact on the creation of socially constructed narratives of disability. Whilst this study is not conceptualised from a Jungian analytic lens, I contend that archetypal material, which manifests in linguistic constructions of 'the Self' expressed through myth, fairytale, literature and film "are among the highest values of the human psyche that have peopled the heavens of all races from time immemorial" (Jung, 1953 / 2004:18) which aligns with my belief

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that "there is an unconscious structure that determines people's social position that regulates their relationships without being aware of it" (Homer, 2005:35). It is for this reason, that I argue that it is necessary to attend, at least in part, to the notion of an archetypal psychology of disability (Eberstein, 2006), which is reminiscent of Lacan's conceptualisation of "the symbolic function" (Homer, 2005:35).

Western idealisation of the 'perfect body' derives Ancient Greek and Roman ideals of 'the body beautiful' (Marks, 1999), expounded in the Renaissance where Classical Greek and Roman ideals were depicted in thousands of paintings which presented idealised human forms. In ancient Greek mythology, the goddess Aphrodite is frequently presented as the superlative archetype of beauty, love and fertility. Better known in Western Art by her Roman name Venus (Tressider, 2003), Aphrodite is frequently presented as a quixotic human form in Greek sculpture and Renaissance art. Homer (2005) presents the image of Aphrodite as the embodiment of physical perfection as juxtaposed with Hephaestus, to whom Aphrodite was allegedly 'married'. Hephaestus was the only Greek God of Mount Olympus who had a 'regular job' in spite of the fact that he was born 'lame'. It is well documented that his parents, Zeus and Hera could not accept his imperfection at birth and as a result threw him out of Olympus (Howatson & Chilvers, 1993). Later, Hephaestus was betrayed by Aphrodite who engaged an adulterous relationship with Ares, possibly because of Hephaestus' 'ugly deformity' which contradicted all the inculcated ideals of Olympian physical beauty and symmetry of the body (Eberstein, 2006). As such, Hephaestus was rejected not only by his mother, but by his wife as well (ibid). This imagery has become inculcated through the centuries in varieties of modern fairy tale and classical literature. Whilst the allegory between the Hephaestus myth; Beauty and the Beast and the more contemporary versions of 'Shrek' is clear, albeit that the latter have happier endings, the classic rendition of D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover perpetuates this archetype through the embodiment of Clifford Chatterley, a frustrated and 'twisted' emasculated character who trapped his beautiful, healthy young wife in an impotent marriage (ibid). These images carry the Freudian interpretations of castration anxiety and oedipal complexes.

Within a culture in the pursuit for perfection vis a vis the ultimate portrayal of beauty in the ancient Greek epoch, mothers are frequently documented as committing infanticide by way of the Apothetae, a chasm used for the disposal of infants who did not meet the requirements of the Greek notion of perfection as espoused in Plato's conceptualisation of 'ideal forms' as templates for aesthetic beauty (Marks, 1999:154). It was Plato's Republic which was the first to introduce the concept of Eugenics, built on the notion that 'inferior species' were not meant to survive in nature or in a 'competitive' human society (Slorach, 2011). In Rome, 'defective' children were

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drowned in the River Tiber and individuals with disabilities were prohibited from marrying. The Hephaestus' Roman counterpart is Vulcan, the early Roman god of fire who was similarly thrown from the top of Mount Olympus by his mother Juno, in response to her dismay that he was an 'ugly' infant. Like Hephaestus, Vulcan became 'lame' yet proceeded to develop as a magical seer in Roman mythology by way of his facility with fire which is the alchemical image of transformation. This in turn may be conceived as a common stereotype in the disability discourse, wherein individuals presenting with a so-called 'defect' are frequently deemed to be compensated with superior attributes in another area (e.g. a blind individual is often portrayed as having excellent audition and vice versa). An additional allegory which presents as the trickster archetype is the portrayal of individuals with disabilities as evil, malevolent or inherently flawed: Both Hephaestus and Vulcan are characterised as calculated and corrupt where the former is fixated on anger, bitterness and revenge, enacted by trapping Aphrodite in an invisible net and the latter is sketched as an evil, sinister figure who controls all in the underworld through his preoccupation with fire, volcanoes and alchemical transformation. On the flip side, these archetypes may represent the notion of the Super Cripple, where both Hephaestus and Vulcan managed to supercede their impairment and engender the image of the transcendence of bodily limitations to achieve success and power. I have chosen specifically to present these two mythological representations, since both Hephaestus and Vulcan were associated with the ultimate 'success' in the workplace in spite of the judgments attached to the Mother archetypes.

In addition to mythology, images of disability hermeneutics have been portrayed as disabled characters in literary and filmic constructions for eons (Davidson, 2006; Mitchell & Snyder, 2006). The (in)famous characterisation of Shakespeare's 'murderous' construction of Richard III encapsulates the Machiavellian rise to power by Richard, a 'hunchback' who is depicted as contrary to the Elizabethan ideals of normalcy and as such "a potent force that challenges cultural ideals of the 'normal' or the whole body" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2006:207). From a Freudian perspective, disability was seen as a "defect of personality" (Eberstein, 2006) where the "ego is too weak to handle conflict between the id and the superego effectively" (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1989:64) which may in part describe the rise of Richard as ruthless, amoral, threatening and evil as a means to overcompensate for his physical limitations. Through his determination to "prove a villain" (Shakespeare, n.d. I, i, 30), Richard's physical 'deformity' becomes conceived as a 'deformity of the psyche' which juxtaposes the Elizabethan societal 'norms'. Even Richard's own mother cannot accept his disability, as encapsulated in Act II Scene ii where she expresses her grief when she sees her 'shame in him'.

Fairytale provides one of the best sources within which to embody classic archetypal images as representations of the processes that pervade the collective unconscious (von Franz, 1996). These images furnish the universal audience with a means to identify with metaphorical images as universal conceptualisations of the human condition. Archetype in fairy tale is not something new. Ancient cultures such as the American Indians actively engaged story telling as a means to inculcate morals and values in the clan as a whole in a manner consistent with what von Franz (1996:17) refers as "the nature constant of the human psyche".

In the modern age, the construction of disability as horror has sought to provide children with 'entertainment' which has latterly been exemplified in the multi-billion dollar Disney Corporation, with the 1937 version of Snow White as one of the earliest representations of 'disability' in Disney films. Images of "monstrosity"; 'evil'; 'horror'; 'terror' and 'revulsion' are similarly evidenced in the portrayal of the wicked witch in Hansel and Gretel who walks with a stick and is similarly characterised as 'deformed', blind and ugly. Pirates with one eye are frequently presented as evil iconography, evidenced in a number of classic stories, such as R.L. Stevenson's Long John Silver whereas Captain Hook's monstrous hook hand in Barrie's version of Peter Pan has served to instil terror and revulsion in children for generations, exemplified further in Johnny Depp's blockbuster screen production 'Hook'.

Literature and films with 'disability content' are not only about the evocation of horror images. In many instances, stereotypes portray the protagonist as a hapless victim of circumstance; imagery related to 'the charity cripple' (Kriegel, 1969, in Marks, 1999:163); a burden on the family; the idea that parents will be punished for their wrongs through the birth of a disabled or infirmed child; a 'condition' to be 'overcome', or the notion that individuals with disabilities are 'victims'. Charles Dickens' conceptualisation of Tiny Tim, a young boy born into penury, notorious for his dishevelled crutch - sought to stir pity in the audience juxtaposed with the 'evil' character of Scrooge who finally came to his moral senses engendering a sense of universal compassion in the audience for 'crippled children'. Although the primary theme in the story was never related to the rights of individuals with disabilities, it served to augment the charity argument to stir society to raise money for 'a good cause'. In Disney's 'Finding Nemo', the protagonist, a fish born with a 'short fin' eventually 'overcomes' his disability and learns to swim well enough to save Dory from the fishing grounds. James Cameron's blockbuster 2010 film Avatar – a movie celebrated for its cinematic and technological genius portrays Sully's disability both as an 'inferior status', juxtaposed with the moral and physical strength of his late twin brother and the corporeal fortitude and resilience of the Na'vi prosthesis. This film further elucidates disability a 'state to be overcome' in order for him to triumph via the consummation of his mission on Pandora.

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Although on the surface these literary and filmic constructions may be well meaning in opposition to their 'horror' counterparts, they simply perpetuate the archetype of the 'good cripple' or Riley's (2005, in Kirkpatrick, 2009) conceptualisation of the 'supercrip' where disabled individuals are portrayed as 'overcoming' their disability. Marks (1999:155) cites that these archetypes are implicit in the message that "(i)f these courageous people could triumph over their impairments, then those who fail to achieve great things have less courage and are perhaps responsible for their pitiful lives".

Norden's (1994) iconic book 'Cinema's of Isolation' makes reference to 600 films wherein disability is a central concern (Marks, 1999). The central structure of this publication seeks to expose the exploitation of individuals with disability in the film media. The earliest depiction of disability from this perspective is the 1932 production of 'Freaks' (Kirkpatrick, 2009) which illustrate circus performers who ultimately murder the 'normals' who gawk at 'them' as a result of their anger at being disabled. Even the title of this film conjures horrifically negative stereotypes about individuals with disabilities. Bogdan (1988, in Marks, 1999:157) indicates that the 'freak' does not only refer to the individual 'put on display' but is rather a social construction created by society to exemplify 'otherness'. The 'freak archetype' exemplified in the celebrated children's tale, Dumbo, depicts the story of an elephant with enlarged ears who eventually learns to fly. Dumbo draws on societal conceptualisations of disability as 'the other', wherein local children come to view the little elephant at the circus place and subsequently respond by laughing, pointing and drawing attention to his outsized ears. Whilst this conceptualisation of disability was an alternative to the horrendous, evil archetypes and Dumbo's essential message is that disability is 'nothing to be ashamed of' – it is through this classic 'nothing to be ashamed of message', that the film actually draws attention to the notion that people with disabilities *are* shame-filled and that it is only through the kindness of others, or by way of tapping in to some extraordinary ability, they can be successful. This caricature of 'enfreakment' was dominant at the time of the film's inception. Individuals with disabilities frequently found employment in circuses, wherein they were able to earn a living from their satirised deformity whilst others were kept away from society through their placement in asylums where they were insidiously conceived as dangerous, to be kept away from children and housed outside of mainstream society

Generally, disability stereotypes in early classic children's literature portray two dimensional literary characters, where the protagonist usually dies young, or experiences some miracle cure. This is clearly evidenced in Johanna Spyri's *Heidi* (1872) where Clara is portrayed as the epitome of a weak, yet humble girl to be pitied due to her physical lack. The 'happy ending' where Clara eventually learns to walk again due to her 'power of will' (Dowker, 2004), epitomises social prejudice and the medicalised view of disability as restriction and impairment. Susan

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Coolidge's *What Katy Did* (1872) depicts a young girl who is seen to 'suffer' from a disability as a means to 'punish the girl' and as such teach her patience at 'the school of pain' whereas Elanor Porter's (1911) Pollyanna reflects a young girl's temporary disability which serves rather as a means to punish those around her, since the girl is already cited as 'good' (ibid).

The notion of non-disabled writers depicting literary and cinematic portrayals of individuals with disabilities has sparked heated debate among theorists and academics. Whilst I identify according to the social constructions of a 'non-disabled' person and the nature of this research seeks to focus on 'successful disabled people', this in itself may present difficulties since, according to Davis (1995:9) "successful disabled people have their disability erased by their success". Drawing on my biographical exposition at the beginning of Chapter 1, I hold the assertion that we are all disabled in some way and that by constructing alternative stories of disability, told by individuals with disabilities themselves, strides can be made to refute the historically stereotypical, socially constructed conceptualisations cited above to mobilise more inclusive practices in the workplace.

2.4.2   Disability as Stigma

Stigma has pervaded society for eons as a global phenomenon and represents "(a) powerful and dehumanising phenomenon" (Petit, 2008:76). It is defined by Crocker and Major (1989:609) as "(s)ocial categories about which others hold negative attitudes, stereotypes and beliefs, or which, on average receive disproportionately poor interpersonal or economic outcomes relative to members of the society at large". As such, all human difference is perceived as 'stigmatisable' (Coleman, 2006), and arises when an individual's social identity conflicts with society's normative expectations (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). It is therefore felt at an *individual level* wherein the stigmatised individual may spend much of his/her life pinning all perceived emotional inadequacies on the blemished body in order to unconsciously protect the psyche from the war within, and an *attitudinal level* (UNESCO, 2006) which inevitably results in discrimination (Goffman, 1963:5)

Most of the theoretical constructs of stigma can be traced back to the seminal work of Goffman (1963) on the management of 'spoiled identities'. Goffman used the term stigma (from the origins of Ancient Greece) to delineate the discrediting social identities that pervade disability discourse which he describes as: "a special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotype" (Goffman, 1963:4; Goffman, 2006:132). Race; ethnicity; religion; gender; sexual orientation; socioeconomic status; body weight, shape and size; illness and disability are some of the sources of stigma that have sought to exclude, label, shame, castigate, punish and even spark hate crimes, torture and war. It is these very notions of stigma that have created further oppression for individuals with

disabilities. It is through the creation of disablist identities, which are etched both in the archetypal and stereotypical images of the societal masses as well as the shame and self derogation (Goffman, 1963) with which individuals with disabilities have learned to respond to themselves, that perpetuates exclusion.   Coleman (2006:145) suggests that stigmatisation is a natural response to attempt to control and order a 'potentially chaotic world' by way of insidiously categorising, typifying and devaluing people who are classed according to categories which perpetuates social distance. The predilection for most human beings to equate and judge others according to their shortcomings and/or differences may well be related to their own projected inadequacies and feelings of inferiority and insecurity experienced at the level of the unconscious.

Disability as stigma has emerged as varieties of wounding discourses through the 1960's: terms such as 'cripple', 'moron', 'bastard', 'retard' and 'idiot' are some of the deprecating titles which have transpired to impute a range of imperfections to accentuate the divide between 'normality' and 'abnormality'. Since the 1970's a drive to promote 'people first' language sought to remedy this disabling discourse. People first language involves the separation of the 'impairment' from the person where, for example, it is deemed politically correct to refer to 'an individual with an intellectual impairment' rather than 'a mentally retarded person'. A variety of euphemisms have pervaded the discourse in response to disability as a human rights issue. Historically, early use of the terms: 'physically challenged', 'differently-abled'; 'able-disabled' or 'special' children sought to "inflate the value of people with disabilities" (Linton, 2006:163) and supersede stereotypical constructions, yet, it is Linton's (2006) view that such constructions simply perpetuate the social control of the lives of individual's with disabilities. These foundational views of disability as stigma have contributed to the debate of disability and mistaken identity (Gill, 2001) wherein the essence of the individual is often lost in favour of these stereotypical constructions. Similarly, as Gill (2001) asserts, many individuals with disabilities spend tireless moments of effort and energy to set the proverbial record straight to "re-establish their real identities" (Gill, 2001:353).   In these instances, true identity may become entangled with identity politics. The impact of some of these conceptualisations will be considered in the section that follows.

2.5   DISABILITY AND IDENTITY

Identity as a concept is not easy to define. Berk (2000) identifies the construction of an identity as interwoven with the conceptualisation of self definition, values and the direction that individuals follow throughout the course of the lifespan which may embrace vocational identity; political identity; religious identity; relation identity; intellectual identity; sexual identity; ethnic or cultural identity; interests; personality and physical identity (Wait, Meyer &

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Loxton, 2005:166). As such, identity formation involves the search for "what is true, real and indispensable to self" (Berk, 2000:456), goes beyond personality theories, and traverses dispositional traits and personal concerns (Cavanaugh, 1997:295). The challenges attached to the search for an all-encompassing definition of 'disability' and as such what it means to be 'disabled' depends on the theoretical lens through which the conceptualisation of 'disability identities' are envisaged (Brown et al., 2009; Davis, 2001). The central argument that I weave throughout this thesis, is that it is impossible to envisage the construction of a universal, fixed identity status for individuals with disabilities. As such 'identity' in this thesis is considered from a post-structuralist and social constructionist lens, whilst acknowledging some of the psychological formulations that examine mechanisms of both the unconscious and internalised oppression. As such, identity formation in this study considers that whilst the human being is essentially social, individual experiences of disability encompass the range of "socio-cultural, institutional, group and interpersonal levels as well as the intrapsychic level" (Marks, 1999:20). Thus, I argue that identity is constantly in flux and construed variously in terms of context, individual experience and socially constructed influences.

Understanding disability as a homogenous group of individuals simply perpetuates a stereotypical view of group membership (McDougall, 2006) where self identity formation is influenced by group membership wherein stereotypes emerge from "the collectively shared nature of social identities" (Cohen & Garcia, 2005:566). With emphasis on the normative, idealised conceptualisations as to what it means to 'belong' and be 'accepted' by the population at large, individuals with disabilities are frequently grouped together as a result of their 'shared' experiences of disability and envisaged as unable to speak for themselves (McDougall, 2006). This perpetuates stigma and exacerbates the struggles that individuals with disabilities face to assert their innate potential and uniquely constructed individual identities. It is for this reason that focus groups were not included in the methodology of this study. Not all individuals with disabilities identify as 'disabled': they may reject the construct and plea to be seen as "normal, although different" (Priestley, Corker & Watson, 1999, in Shakespeare, 2002:21). This study aligns with the view that we are all disabled in some form or another and that 'disability' is "a normal condition of humanity" (Sutherland, 1981, in Shakespeare, 2002:26). The participants in the study were therefore considered in terms of their common humanity, which seeks to challenge both the medical and the social model of disability using a narrative inquiry approach as a means to co-construct personal experience and life stories. It is my contention that by way of co-constructing alternative stories, stereotypes can be challenged, self understanding enhanced and individuals with disabilities can be empowered to both challenge and supersede internalised oppression.

2.6   DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment occupies one of the most central periods of an individual's life and contributes to the development of personal and professional identity formation (Brown et al., 2009) and concomitant quality of life (De la Iglesia, 2006, in Ramon & Gelabert, 2008). Work is not only a means to provide financial security it also contributes to the physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual development of the individual who seeks autonomy and individuation through the development of a professional role. In spite of the move to democracy, based on the principles implicit in the Human Rights movement, individuals with disabilities continue to be among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society (Schriner, 2001; Newton, Ormerod & Thomas, 2007; WHO, 2011) and many disabled people endure exclusion from the mainstream labour sector possibly because disability continues to be erroneously equated with impairment (Brown et al., 2009; WHO, 2011). Lack of skills development; poor education and training options (Newton et. al., 2007); lack of awareness (ILO, 2008); disabling environments (AfriNEAD, 2009) and poor policy development (SALGA, 2009) are some of the factors which have historically precluded individuals from equality in the workplace in spite of the fact that they "often have the appropriate skills, strong loyalty, low rates of absenteeism and growing numbers of companies find it efficient and profitable to hire individuals with disabilities" (WHO, 2011:236). The fact that individuals with disabilities are frequently conceptualised as a homogenous or uniform group implies that there is some type of limitation to their overall performance abilities. In order for disabled people to achieve successful inclusion in the workplace, these limiting, discriminatory, homogenous conceptualisations in terms of impairment require redress in favour of an approach which considers "capacities, possibilities and potentialities" (Ramon & Gelabert, 2008:167).

Since the industrial revolution, ideological changes in the labour sector have sparked burgeoning debates related to the discourse of 'employability' which implies an individuals' "(a)bility to gain and maintain employment and stresses their ability to be self-sufficient actors that draw on an appropriate set of skills, experiences and attitudes" (Holmqvist, 2009:vii). Historically, individuals are deemed 'employable' if they meet a variety of normative categories, including self confidence; independence; initiative; flexibility; adaptability and willingness to engage life long learning (ibid). The social construction of disability as 'an inferior status' which opposes these normative statuses has created widespread marginalisation and discrimination where individuals with disabilities are frequently precluded as potential employees based on negative perceptions in terms of performance, expenditure and low profit margins as well as the stigma they are dependent, incompetent and unproductive (Dube, 2005; Louvet, Rohmer & Dubois, 2009; WHO, 2011). The Human Sciences Research Council (2007) suggests that in order for the successful inclusion of individuals with disabilities in non perfunctory employment roles to become a

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reality in South Africa, a shift in negative stereotypical attitudes from employers, trainers and colleagues is needed together with the provision of support and information for both trainers and employers relative to the needs of the disabled themselves.   Additionally, enabling environments and reasonable accommodations are requisites for access to participate in and enjoy equal employment opportunities (Morosky, 1994; WHO, 2011; UNESCO, 2006).

As evidenced in Section 2.3, a number of Acts, policies and legislation have been promulgated in South Africa to attend to the rights of the historically disadvantaged individuals (including those with disabilities). It is mandatory for government departments to ensure that at least 2% of the workforce includes the employment of individuals with disabilities (South Africa, 1998a; WHO, 2011), yet, as a recent eNews broadcast revealed, present employment equity figures include only 0.9% of individuals with disabilities in mainstream labour contexts (Begbie, 2011).   As such, many individuals with disabilities continue to face under- and unemployment statuses and as such, continue to be excluded from the mainstream economy.

The availability of efficacious education and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including the flexible provision of tertiary training institutes is a prerequisite to ensure their ability to contribute gainfully and productively in the labour market (Naicker, 1999; UNESCO, 2006). Since the 1940's international policies have stipulated the rights of all persons to basic education (Dyson & Forlin, 1999; UNESCO, 1994, 2006) and the move toward 'inclusive education' as a means to redress past inequalities within the education system based on the principles of non-discrimination has instigated widespread reform in contemporary education systems (Swart & Pettipher, 2005; UNESCO, 1994, 2006).   Earlier models of inclusive education included the 'normalisation' principles of integration and mainstreaming, founded in Scandinavia, where learners were assessed and specialist treatments and interventions were prescribed as a means to either include individuals with mild disabilities in the general education setting (mainstreaming) or to "prepare pupils for placement in ordinary mainstreams schools where the pupil must be able to adapt" (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:306).   These principles simply perpetuated negative attitudes and stereotypes and were a far cry from the provision of accessible environments, flexible curricula, multiple systemic intervention strategies, appropriate teaching and learning methodologies and adequate support services.   More recently, at a world conference in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, the Education for All policy took steps to ensure that all persons with disabilities had equal opportunities to education and training regardless of their diversity (UNESCO, 1994) and in 1994, a world conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain underscored every child's right to basic education in mainstream contexts to combat discrimination. Individuals with disabilities have also historically been excluded from tertiary institutes (Kilonzo, 2009; Council on Higher Education, 2005) which has received global attention since tertiary qualifications are a gateway to achieve

employment status; access to greater earning capacity and strategies for the "enhancement of those micro skills that are an important precondition for self-determination and later successful transitions to further educational and employment settings" (Ling, 2010:112).

Whilst a plethora of research exists in the area of inclusive education; special education and rehabilitation, foci on the transition from school to tertiary education and the workplace has received less scrutiny (Greyling, 2008). Students with disabilities have a broad range of needs associated with their transition from school to higher education and the world of work (Eager, Green, Gordon, Owen, Masso & Williams, 2006) and similarly have a more complicated career development process than those without disabilities (Yanchak, Lease & Strauser, 2005) which underscores the CRPD's (UNESCO, 2006) stipulations for the provision of adequate vocational guidance at both secondary and tertiary level in order to provide a clear understanding of aptitudes, abilities, interests and values as preconditions for success and opportunities related specifically to non perfunctory employment statuses. In many instances, individuals with disabilities have significant difficulties with career decision making, possibly as a result of their perceived constraints; lack of vocational information; preparation for transition planning (Robertson, 2006) and educational deficits. As such, lack of access to education and training, forms the foundation of high general unemployment rates in developing countries, exacerbated by the effects of poverty, slow economic growth, globalisation and limited resources available at national level to ensure the dedicated growth and development of individuals with disabilities (Schriner, 2001).

Whilst individuals with disabilities have the undeniable right to access the labour market and work in inclusive, accessible environments (Kilonzo, 2009; UNESCO, 2006), it is widely recognised that individuals with disabilities are among societies poorest (Swartz & Watermeyer, 2006; DWDE, 2009; Barnes & Mercer, 2001; Schriner, 2001; HSRC, 2007; Asch, 1984) since many lack equal opportunities to income generation (DWDE, 2009). Whilst South Africa has made some strides in the development of legislation, economic infrastructure and programmes to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities, there is still much that needs to be done.

In developing countries, rural populations are increasingly oppressed by capitalist market trends with the result that individuals with disabilities are often most vulnerable (Slorach, 2011) which may be causally linked to less developed information technology with greater emphasis on subsistence activities such as farming and fishing. This may complicate the access to these economic roles due to the presenting nature of physical and sensory impairments. Lack of access to education and training opportunities exacerbates the vicious cycle, where those denied education and subsequent access to employment are thrust deeper into impoverished situations.

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Improving physical accessibility together with the redress of societal discrimination is essential if this vicious cycle is to be curtailed.

Statistics elicited from the General Household survey in 2009 (StatsSA, 2010), indicate that of South Africa's population of 45 million, an estimated 5.7% (5 years and older) present with moderate to severe impairments, which means that approximately 2.5 million South Africans are disabled. These figures are elaborated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1   **Disability by Province and Gender – Number in Thousands (Statistics South Africa, 2010:19)**

Indicator	Statistic	Province									
		WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Male	Number	89	143	26	109	310	76	236	61	99	1149
	Percentage	3.8	5.1	5.4	8.8	7.1	4.9	4.9	4.0	4.6	5.4
Female	Number	107	168	32	128	405	75	266	58	120	1359
	Percentage	4.3	5.5	5.8	9.4	8.2	4.9	5.6	3.4	4.9	5.9
Total Disabled	Number	195	311	57	237	715	151	502	119	219	2508
	Percentage	4.0	5.3	5.6	9.1	7.7	4.9	5.3	3.7	4.8	5.7
Total Population	Number	4842	5914	1029	2606	9358	3084	9612	3242	4631	44318

The latest available statistics vis a vis the employment of individuals with disabilities in the South African context relate to the 2001 South African census. It is therefore expected that current statistics will deviate from the information presented in Table 2.2, before updated figures are procured in the October 2011 census. According to StatsSA (2005), based on the census figures of 2001, only 19% of individuals with disabilities who are of working age (15-65 years) are employed compared to 35% of non-disabled individuals. In both groups individuals between the ages of 35-44 years were among the highest percentage of those employed. Women were consistently cited as less likely to access employment than their male counterparts, where 15.2% of disabled females had access to employment in 2001 in comparison to the 22.0% male representation. At provincial level, the Eastern Cape indicated the lowest percentage of employed disabled individuals whilst Gauteng scored the highest for males and females alike. These figures are presented in Table 2.3.

Since the birth of democracy in 1994, the South African Government has committed to reduce the chronic unemployment statistics which emerged from the inequalities of the apartheid regime (HSRC, 2007). In many

instances it was found that individuals with disabilities may be over dependent on disability grants (ibid) due to fear related to the high prevalence of both under and unemployment statues (WHO, 2011). To facilitate greater employment options for individuals with disabilities, reform is required at an individual level, a managerial level, an institutional level and a societal level. These will be addressed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis.

Table 2.2   **Individuals with disabilities who are employed (StatsSA, 2005:21)**

Age group (years)	Disabled persons	Non-disabled persons	Total
15-19	2.5	3.9	3.9
20-24	12.5	22.0	21.7
25-29	21.0	39.6	38.9
30-34	25.2	49.0	47.9
35-39	25.9	52.2	50.8
40-44	25.7	53.5	51.7
45-49	24.8	51.7	49.5
50-54	21.2	46.8	44.3
55-59	16.6	37.9	35.5
60-65	8.7	19.3	18.0
TOTAL	18.6	34.6	33.7

Table 2.3   **Percentage of disabled and non-disabled persons aged 15-65 years who were employed by province and sex (StatsSA, 2005:22)**

Province	Disabled persons		Non-Disabled persons		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Western Cape	28.3	22.7	57.2	42.4	55.8	41.6
Eastern Cape	9.6	8.0	25.3	18.0	24.1	17.4
Northern Cape	21.1	12.2	51.1	31.2	49.1	30.1
Free State	28.7	18.5	42.9	26.9	41.8	26.3
KwaZulu-Natal	17.6	12.9	35.1	23.1	34.1	22.6
North West	22.9	11.6	43.0	22.5	41.7	21.9
Gauteng	30.9	24.1	53.2	37.9	52.3	37.4
Mpumalanga	29.3	16.5	44.5	24.0	43.4	23.5
Limpopo	17.9	12.8	30.2	17.7	29.5	17.5
South Africa	**22.0**	**15.2**	**42.5**	**27.0**	**41.3**	**26.8**

2.7   THEORICAL FRAMEWORK

This research seeks to examine how individuals with disabilities describe their lives and identities in the workplace using a narrative inquiry approach as a means to discern their experiences. Because narrative inquiry is largely embedded in schools of thought and theories oriented toward social constructionism and post-structuralism (Morkel, 2009; Besley, 2002), it seeks to follow that these theories will partly contribute to the theoretical lens through which this thesis is conceptualised. As such, this study is embedded in an integrated approach which seeks to make sense of behaviour at the broadest social level as well as the individual" (Watermeyer, 2006:31), drawing in post-structuralist (including Lacanian psychoanalysis) and social constructionist thought. In principle, this approach aligns with the theoretical framework of Marks (1999) which considers that disability is not just the result of society's perpetual disempowerment and denigration of those with perceived difference. It is also perpetuated at an individual psychological level, wherein individuals with disabilities themselves have internalised these discourses which in turn, affect the manner in which they view themselves.

Post-structuralism, which considers both the "linguistic and narrative structure of knowledge" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007:52) arose in response to French structuralism which was generally thought to reduce individuals to the status of objects which in so-doing asserts that individuals can essentially be studied in the same manner. As such, in relation to the study of identity, structuralists would assert that individuals can be classified or grouped together according to their homogenous identity status which is quintessentially determined by 'experts'. Post-structuralists on the other hand subscribe to the view that there is no direct observable reality and therefore no single, all encompassing universal definition of disability which implies that the disability identity is fluid, constantly in flux and subject to change since all experiences exist as representations embedded in broader social discourses (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007:55). From this perspective, post-structuralists critique the binary opposites (able / disabled; normal / abnormal) which have historically sought to exclude individuals with disabilities (Peters & Burbules, 2004)

Post-structuralism is therefore closely related to social constructionism which posits that there are no absolute truths and human behaviour can only be understood in context and in terms of the interconnectedness of experiences between the individual's personal reality and socially produced phenomena (Patton, 2007; Burr, 1995). A social constructionist epistemology further indicates that the way in which society responds to disability has implications for the way in which individuals with disabilities are treated by those who exert 'power relations' (Burr, 1995:18) over their lives. This is exemplified in the work of Foucault, a post-structuralist, who asserted that

language is a powerful tool driven by the dominant narratives of the individual group or society (Morkel, 2010). Such discourse is represented as 'socially shared language' (Burr, 1995:18) which manifests at social and personal levels. This 'socially shared language' includes imagery such as the archetypes and stereotypes of disability espoused in Section 2.4.1.

Post-structuralist and social constructionist thought therefore drive the core assumptions of this study, which suggest that individuals with disabilities construct their experiences in the workplace subjectively, and as such their participation and inclusion in the world of work is influenced by their personal self-definitions related to their socially constructed experiences in the context of time, place and active engagement with others. A post-structuralist approach further implies that individual experience cannot be separated from the *contexts* and *conversations* that give it meaning and posits that through language, new identities can be shaped, which is a central hypothesis in this thesis.

This study further seeks to draw upon 'episodes' of Lacanian thought wherein I acknowledge that "the psychoanalytic lens provides us with the opportunity to examine how ideas and images of disability are experienced emotionally by all of us" (Marks, 1999:1).   Jacques Lacan (1977) is characterised as a 'psychoanalytic post-structuralist' who asserted that "the unconscious is a hidden structure which resembles that of language" (Sarup, 1993:8). As such, Lacan sought to "facilitate the move from an individual to a social version of subjectivity through the means of 'signification' that permeates both the psyche and the social" (Georgaca, 2005:76-77).   From this perspective, psychoanalytic principles are integrated into a post-structuralist framework, where "knowledge of the world, of others and of self is determined by language" (ibid). From this lens, I consider that there are multiple meanings in the textual constructions of lived experience, and that in many instances the concrete meanings that we may derive textually may signify something entirely different to the individual's lived experience.   Similarly, words and sentences only make sense when uttered in their totality and "reality" is juxtaposed between supporting the social world and the social world undermining that reality (Homer, 2005). Lacan's (1977) notion that we can never fully enter another person's consciousness aligns with the quintessence of the post-structuralist movement which emphasises that "we can only ever grasp versions of the world' (Marks, 1999:17) and the notion of stable identities does not exist. Language is therefore a means to provide a link to the unconscious feelings and motivations of both the protagonists and the audience, based on the premise that the psyche is a form of language (Lacan, 1977), or as Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008:9) indicate, "even a narrative in itself". Disability from this lens asserts that the individual can never be fully defined, nor can they fully

escape definition (Sarup, 1993:13). This implies that the manner in which individuals with disabilities "present" to the world is open to interpretation – most often by those who attempt to "totalise" (ibid) their experiences.

In sum, the epistemological positioning which guides this thesis is an integrative approach which seeks to challenge the present social constructions of disability through the lens of social constructionist and post-structuralist thought as a means to demonstrate that "a transition to a freer and more fulfilling society is objectively or theoretically possible" through the conceptualisation that the existing status of a "disabled identity" is unsatisfactory and should therefore be transformed (Macey, 2000:76). To achieve these ends, I have integrated an understanding of "social structures, interpersonal relationships and unconscious motivation" (Marks, 1999:7) through the lenses of social constructionist and post-structuralist thought together with 'episodes' of Lacanian psychoanalysis to extend the levels of analysis in this thesis in a manner in which I believe contributes to a deeper critical understanding of the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities.

2.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter attended to the historically arduous deliberations involved in the construction of a unified theoretical perspective of 'disability'. Attention was afforded to the shift in focus from functional limitations implicit in medical model to the social constructionist perspective which contends that disability is constructed by society as a social problem. An understanding of disability in developing and developed countries was briefly espoused amid a discussion of the disability rights movement, explicated from a uniquely South African perspective. Current legislation and policy which protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in both workplace and educational contexts was deconstructed. The negative imagery of mythic, filmic and literary constructions of disability as stigma, etched in dehumanising social attitudes as stereotypes and archetypal constructs was approached from a post-structuralist lens. A discussion of disability and identity as implicit in both the social genesis of knowledge, reason and virtue on the one hand and social practices and discourses on the other (Gergen, 1999) suggest that rather than focusing on a 'fixed' disabled identity status, identity must be considered as constantly in flux and may be construed variously in terms of context and both individual and socially constructed influences.

The historic difficulties that individuals with disabilities have encountered relative to employment in the mainstream labour sector were addressed. Individuals with disabilities were cited as less likely to procure equal employment opportunities than non-disabled individuals, amid the backdrop of poor access to education and training facilities, vocational guidance, stereotypes and accessibility constraints. As such individuals with disabilities were cited as

among the most socio-economically disadvantaged groups in society. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the theoretical and conceptual framework within which this study is positioned.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

"An unexamined life is not worth living." Socrates

People are quintessentially storytellers and the human experience is built on the narratives of meaning that individuals attach to their lives. We all narrate stories which outline who we are, where we come from, where we are going and what we think about. As such, stories may shape our identities which form and develop through the narrative (Fox, 2006:47; Lieblich & Josselson, 1994). These stories mould the perspectives we hold of our lives, histories and prospects (Sween, 1998:5) and influence and are influenced by, other socially constructed narratives. All cultures and societies contain their own ideologies about their past, present, and sometimes even about their future (Chaitin, 2003). Thus, the way individuals' stories are constructed is linked to their personal experiences of the world. This forms part of a social constructionist epistemology which posits that "(m)eaning making is a social process based on the individual's construction of a personal reality on the basis of its coherence with related systems of personally and socially held beliefs" (Patton, 2007:121-123). The meanings that individuals invest in their lives as a result of these social constructions form part of the wider linguistic turn "as a response to the formalism and scientific pretensions of structuralism" (Besley, 2001:72), to form part of what may loosely be termed as post-structuralism which was espoused in greater detail in Chapter 2. Within this framework, it is posited that individuals *construct meaning* of their own and other's lives through *language* and these narrative structures formulate meaning from experience. This study considers the meaning that individuals with disabilities construct vis a vis their lives and experiences in the workplace, using rich descriptions in words about their storied worlds as individuals who are currently employed.

Buried under the stereotypes defined in Chapter 2, it can be asserted that the voices of individuals with disabilities frequently go unheard which suggests that a narrative approach is an effective means to explore the identities of individuals with disabilities in the workplace and provide a platform for the revelation of telling, revising and retelling their stories. As such, this research is positioned within both a critical and emancipatory research paradigm, which contends that through the research process, individuals with disabilities will be in the unique situation to not only empower themselves, but also to lay the platform to emancipate others from existing oppressive structures that preclude full and equal participation in the mainstream labour sector.

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This chapter delineates the research design, research paradigm and research methodology implemented in this study as a means to understand the way in which individuals with disabilities describe their lives and their experiences in the mainstream labour sector. As such, Chapter 3 espouses a narrative mode of inquiry, embedded in a critical, emancipatory research paradigm, as a means to drive the data generation methods which include narrative interviews and in some instances, artefacts. Interpretation of data included a dual analysis process using both narrative and thematic analysis by way of drawing on the applications of both deconstruction and critical realist approaches to field text analysis. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations which were employed in this study. As a starting point, I present Figure 3.1 to encapsulate the central methodological considerations in this study.

Figure 3.1   Graphic Representation of Methodological Considerations of the Study

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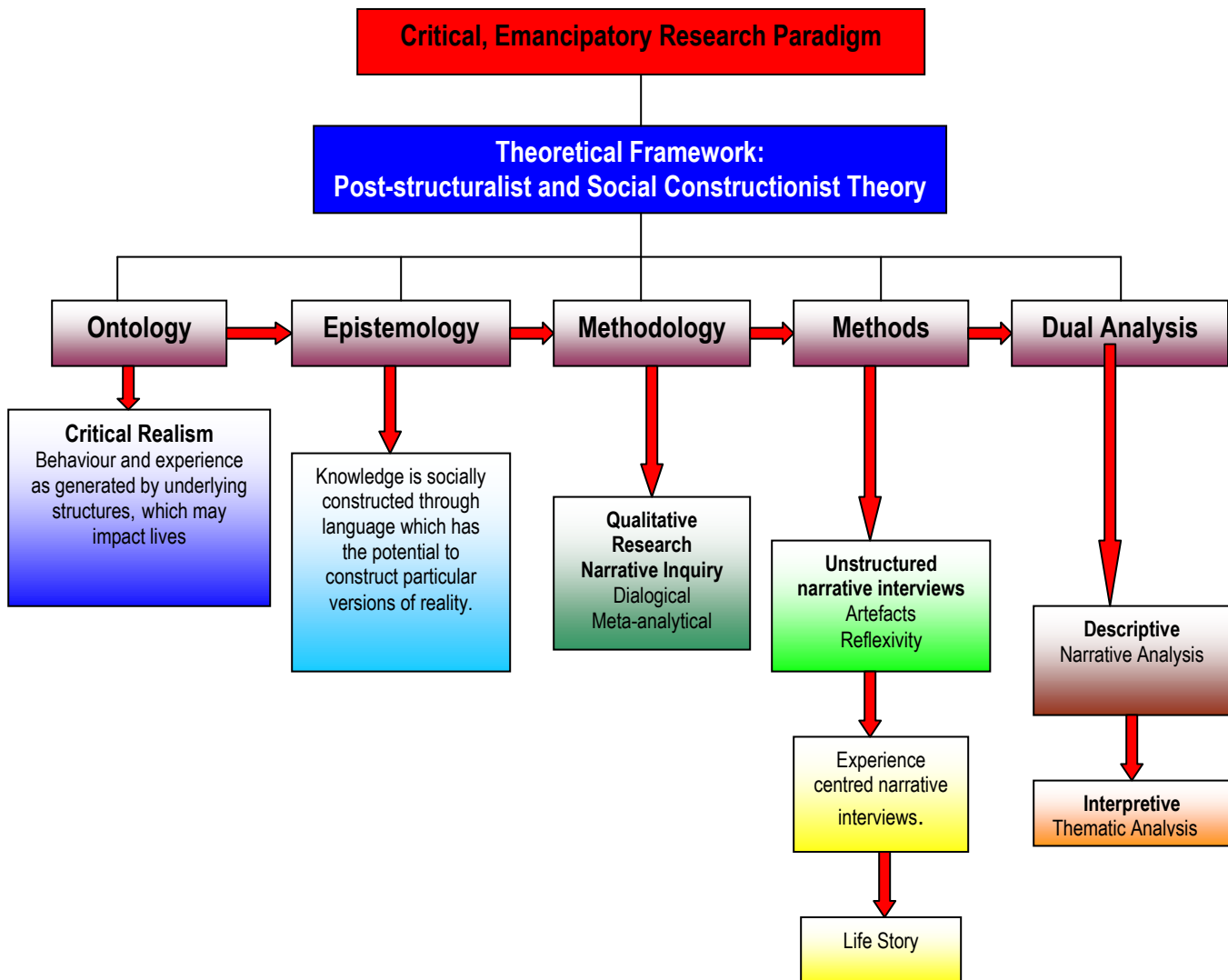
3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky (2001:74) describe a research design as a strategy or blueprint of how one intends conducting the research which aligns with the purpose of the research; the research paradigm; the context in which the research is to be conducted and data generation and data analysis techniques (Durrheim, 1999:37). As such, a research design functions to configure the strategies of inquiry that drive the process as the researcher moves "from paradigm to the empirical world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b:25). A research design must maintain consistency with regard to its purpose, context, paradigm and techniques in order to maximise validity of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). These positions are clearly espoused in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2   The Design of the Study

Adapted from Durrheim, 1999:37
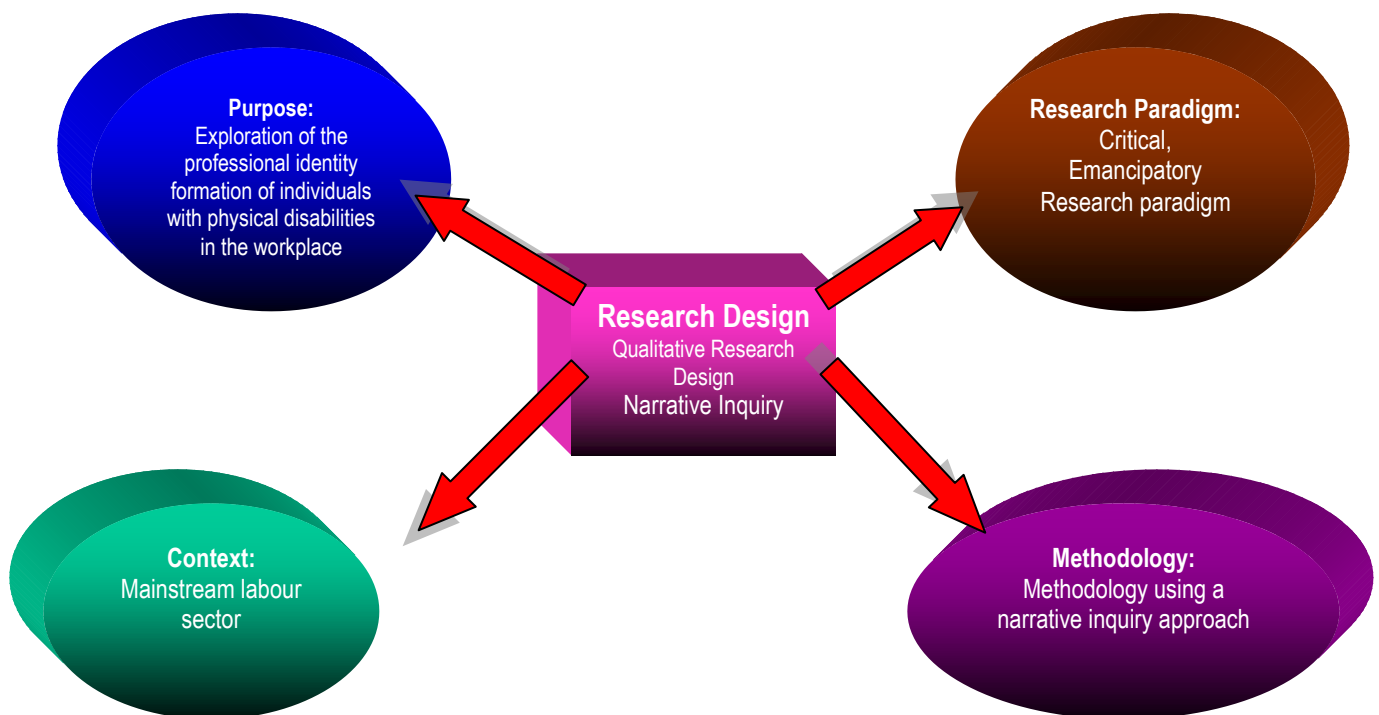
The purpose of this research aligns with the research question, which seeks to explore the professional identity formation of individuals with disabilities in the context of the mainstream labour sector. This study is embedded in a critical, emancipatory research paradigm, viewed through the theoretical constructs of post-structuralist and social constructionist thought as a mechanism to understand the participant's social worlds. From this lens, the stories of individuals with disabilities' lived experiences and interpretations of their experiences in the workplace

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formed the central focus of this thesis. A narrative inquiry approach forms part of the methodology of the study, as a particular *type* of qualitative research.

According to Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky's (2001) research design classification principles, the following principles are implicit in the overall research design in this study:

1. This study is **empirical** since it relates directly to the lived experiences of the individual participants.

2. The study employs **primary** rather than secondary data in that field texts are collected by way of interviews, observations and in some instances, artefacts.

3. The data category in the study is **textual**, in that it refers to text, conversations and interviews.

4. The study employs a **less structured** approach which is implicit in qualitative research methodology.

5. The analysis of data is **inductive**, meaning that the themes identified are linked to the data itself (Patton, 1990).

3.2.1   Research Paradigm

Guba and Lincoln (1994, in Krauss, 2005:759) define a research paradigm as "(t)he basic belief system or world view that guides an investigation" which includes the "systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions" (Durrheim, 1999:40). The centrality of the research paradigm therefore acts as a means to provide coherence between the goodness of fit of what is to be studied and how the research process is to be carried out (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a:183).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005b:6) coined the metaphor 'interpretive and theoretical bricoleur' as a means to explicate the assumption that various paradigms in the social sciences co-exist and in many instances, researchers may draw on more than one simultaneously (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Although qualitative research has, at times, a multi-paradigmatic focus within a single research project (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b:7), I acknowledge that "one cannot easily move between paradigms as overarching philosophical systems denoting particular ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b:6). Krauss (2006:759) suggests that the philosophical assumptions or theoretical underpinnings regarding the nature of reality are crucial to the conceptualisation of the overall perspective from which a research study is designed and implemented. With this in mind, an integrated approach to paradigmatic synthesis is only possible when there is alignment between **epistemology** (the philosophy of 'knowing' or how we come to 'know'); **ontology** (the philosophy of reality) and **methodology** (how the inquirer goes about finding out knowledge). This will be discussed in more detail in the section below.

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As a narrative 'bricoleur' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b), the superordinate meta-perspective which drives this thesis is positioned in a critical paradigm, drawing on post-structuralist storytelling traditions and social constructionist thought. An emancipatory disability research perspective is an additional paradigmatic lens through which this study is envisioned as a means to explicate my contention that the process of storytelling has the unique potential to transform experiences. From this perspective, the research participants had the opportunity to acknowledge the way in which they make sense of their personal experiences and in turn, the broader context of employees, employers, companies, institutions and society at large were considerations in terms of the way in which social context impinges on these interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2006:81). This positioning aligns with a dialogical and meta-analytical stance which considers the 'dual process' of 'empowerment' through attending to oppressive social structures and internalised oppression in the interpretations of the narratives of individual lives. To achieve these ends, a dual analytic process was employed to describe and analyse the narratives which will be discussed in greater depth below.

3.2.1.1   A Critical Metaperspective

Critical theory encompasses a range of approaches and it is for this reason that I refer to it in this thesis as a meta-perspective. The critical paradigm in this study considers the theoretical approaches of post-structuralism and social constructionism and is conceptualised as encompassing a critical realist ontology, a subjectivist (in terms of the values of the inquirer) epistemology and a dialogic, transformative methodology (Guba, 1990:25). From this perspective, I adhere to the ideology that the task of inquiry is to raise people (the oppressed) to a level of 'true consciousness' (Guba, 1990:24), which posits that when individuals with disabilities "realise how oppressed they are, they can act to transform the world" (ibid). Narrative inquirers positioned in the critical tradition frequently attend to "analysing the way large institutions dehumanise, anesthetise and alienate people living and working within them" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007:47). With this in mind, narrative threads as part of lived experience are sought as a means to produce alternative stories, to counter oppressive social conditions.

In opposition to the basic belief system of positivism, which considers that reality exists "out there, guided by immutable natural laws and mechanisms" (Guba, 1990:19), critical theory views ontology, or the nature of reality from a critical realist perspective, which contends that reality exists but can only be incompletely understood (ibid:23). This aligns with the post-structuralist and social constructionist theoretical approaches which drive this study. Critical realism is defined by King and Horrocks, (2010:9) as "(a) perspective that retains a core element of ontological realism where behaviour and experience are seen to be 'generated by' underlying structures such as

biological, economic or social structures" which may impact individual lives. From this lens, this study considers the notion that unequal social structures may influence the wellbeing of individuals with disabilities through varieties of exclusionary practices from the mainstream labour sector. Critical theory attends to such selectivity as well as the socially accepted conventions (Popkewitz, 1990:49) of the meaning of work and employment guided by the power relations implicit in social, cultural and economic structures.

As a qualitative researcher, I believe that the only way to understand a phenomenon is to view it in context and to understand the multiple perspectives through which individuals envision their lives and experiences. As such, I am drawn to the epistemological assumption that knowledge is established through the subjective experiences of individuals and the relationship between the knower and what is known. From a post-structural position, language, if used effectively makes dialogue possible and represents a mode of understanding these unique perspectives of the world (Besley, 2002). A social constructionist perspective, examines how "various versions of relationships, events and memories are created and told in different social contexts and in distinctive relationships" (Rogers, 2007:105). With this in mind, following the premises of both lenses, I have acknowledged the value of both the individual and social contexts within which stories are related, and consider that it is impossible to interpret narratives from a singular vantage point, given the multiplicity of possible meanings.

3.2.1.2 *Emancipatory Research*

It has been premised that the very act of research can be disabling (Singal, 2010). It is for this reason that the individuals in this study have been conceptualised as co-researchers and the research paradigm in this thesis aligns with Oliver (1992); Barnes (1992); Finkelstein (1992); and Barton's (2005) conceptualisation of 'emancipatory research', embedded in an overarching critical metatheoretical approach as a means to contribute to movement of individuals with disabilities (Goodley & Lawthom, 2006b). With the shift from the medical to the social model of disability, came the need for more responsive research strategies and the implementation of methods to challenge social oppression by way of mobilising individuals with disabilities to have some control over disability research (Barnes, 2001:5). As such, the boundaries between the researcher and the researched may be blurred (Olkin & Pledger, 2003, in Goodley & Lawthom, 2006b), yet for the purposes of this study, the primary goal was to facilitate not only the empowerment of individuals with disabilities, but also to provide a text that seeks to "resonate with non-disabled people too" (Barnes, 2001:16).

An emancipatory research paradigm "seeks to advance the interests of 'subordinate' or oppressed groups in society" (Guba, 1990) and as such admonishes the positivist and interpretivist conceptualisations of the world in

favour of an approach which considers empowerment of role players to take action in areas that require individual and collective change. This aligns with the ontological assumption that individuals with disabilities understand from their own experiences, the conditions of disablement and impairment (Lawthom & Goodley, 2006:203). For research to be considered emancipatory, Oliver (1992) asserts that it should be accessible to individuals with disabilities who are required to be integrally involved in the research agenda. For this reason, I was largely flexible in the design of the methods of data generation as a means to 'value freedom' (Barnes, 2001:12) and facilitate choice for the participants' involvement in the research process. Additionally, the use of unstructured narrative interviews ensured flexibility for the participants to share what it was that they chose to share without a pre-determined structure imposed by myself as researcher. It is hypothesised that through the co-construction of multiple stories embedded in post-structuralist and social constructionist storytelling traditions, individuals with disabilities will have *some* control over the research process and as such be in a position to establish a workable dialogue to facilitate emancipation and in so doing, contribute to the production of new knowledge. Whilst Hodge (2008:29) asserts that "the emancipation and empowerment of disabled people is rarely achieved", I contend that through the narrative, wherein individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to share their experiences, not only in terms of barriers and internalised oppression, but also as a means to transcend social oppression, emancipation and empowerment has the opportunity to flourish, not only at an individual level, but at a social level as well.

3.2.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the professional identity formation of individuals with disabilities employed in the mainstream labour sector by way of narratives of experience to consider how these individuals have constructed their lives and identities. As such, this research sought to provide alternative voices and as such construct alternative stories to contest the historic stereotypical and archetypal images of individuals with disabilities and attend to the manner in which this socially constructed discourse has sought to exclude, marginalise and discriminate against disabled individuals from equal participation in the world of work. With this in mind, the study was steered by the following research question: *How have individuals with disabilities who are employed in the mainstream labour sector constructed their professional identities?*

To guide the central research question, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. *How do individuals with disabilities describe their lives and experiences?*
2. *What are the major obstacles and facilitators to professional identity formation for individuals with disabilities?*
3. *How do these stories help us to understand full inclusion in the workplace*?

Research in the area of disability and employment has historically been neglected (AfriNEAD, 2009) and few studies have considered a narrative inquiry approach as a means to provide a voice for historically marginalised groups to address both oppressive and disabling structures in the workplace as well as aspects of internalised oppression, from an integrated theoretical approach. This study sought to fill that gap.

3.2.3   Context of the Study

The Narrative Inquiry landscape underscores the notion that the meaning gained from narrative thinking can only be understood in relation to context (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 1999:275; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:27) wherein "the *context of interpretation* can be as important as the *context of telling*" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010:271, *my emphasis*). As such, from a narrative lens, all human beings can only be understood in terms of "temporal context, spatial context and the context of other people" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:32) which embraces the component of time, (past, present and future), place and human interaction (the personal and the social).

The context of the study included a total of three variegated institutional milieus' which are explicated in Table 3.1. To facilitate contact with institutions and organisations to form part of the context of this study, two non profit organisations were contacted telephonically and via e mail to investigate possible information rich sites as possible contexts for the study. The Liaison Officer and the organisation's Research Assistant from one of the sites, a Public Benefit programme in the Western Cape, which seeks to conceptualise and design projects to emancipate individuals with disabilities from disadvantaged backgrounds to become economically active, contacted the human resource managers at three large neoliberalist organisations with whom they have established strategic partnerships toward the economic development of individuals with disabilities. The human resource manager from one of these contexts responded and her name and e mail address was forward to me. As per our initial contact, the Human Resources manager at Site 1, a large financial institution, expressed interest for the research to proceed and a meeting was scheduled, where a detailed outline of the study was delineated according to the information espoused in Appendix F. This included the requisites for participation as well as the

benefits both to the individuals to the organisation. Written consent (Appendix G) was procured from the Head of the Human Resources Office approximately one month after the initial contact.

The second site, a media organisation was known to me and I approached the Human Resources department in my personal capacity. Following an informal meeting, the Human Resources manager at this site consented to provide an additional context for the study, and informed written consent (Appendix G) was attained from the company manager in Johannesburg. Both organisations granted consent for participant recruitment, the details of which will be espoused below. The third site was added after interviews were conducted at Site 1 and 2. As such, one participant from Site 3 agreed to participate in her personal capacity following contact with a Disability Recruitment Agency, in order to expand the sample of female voices. Site 1 included a large multinational insurance company, site 2, a neoliberalist media house and site 3, a state run day hospital.

The first two organisations were selected for the following reasons:
1. The institutions make provision for *non-perfunctory* employment statuses for individuals with disabilities.
2. The companies are *committed* to the employment of individuals with disabilities. This aligns with one of the prerequisites of the study which stipulates that the research participants were required to be currently employed in the mainstream labour context
3. The organisations employ a *large number of individuals* with disabilities from diverse racial, ethnic and language groups, making them information rich contexts to attend to the research question and sub-questions.
4. The contexts are *diverse*: site 1 is a financial institution whereas site 2 is a media corporation. As such, site 1 makes provision for employees with more numerical, technological, marketing, business, clerical and administrative based preference profiles, whereas site 2 attends to more linguistic, artistic and creative styles.

A comprehensive summary of the contextual data espousing the research contexts is offered as Table 3.1. Three individuals with disabilities chose to participate from site 1, two from site 2 and 1 from site 3. The sampling procedures and participant profiles are explored further in sections 3.2.4.2 and 3.2.4.3.

Table 3.1   **Contextual Data describing the three institutions**

Organisation	Description	Area	Participants
Site 1	Large multinational financial institution	Cape Town, Southern Suburbs	3
Site 2	Neoliberalist media industry	Cape Town Central	2
Site 3	State run day hospital	West Coast	1

3.2.4   Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to "the process where the designing of the research and the choice of particular methods and their justification in relation to the research project are made evident" (King & Horrocks, 2010:6). Methodology therefore connotes more than simply a collection of research methods and also focuses on the steps involved in the research process and the specificity of tools and procedures that will be used which aligns with the purpose of the research, the research paradigm and the research question. Research methods on the other hand include the discrete tools and techniques that are implemented to achieve the goals and processes that are espoused in the methodology.

In attending to the methodological approaches implicit in this study, a distinction between qualitative and quantitative research requires definition from the outset. Merriam (1998:5) describes qualitative research as "(a)n umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible". Thus, the key philosophical assumption upon which qualitative research is based is that "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998:6). With this in mind, it is clear that qualitative and quantitative research occupy extreme ends of the research continuum, where quantitative research refers to the positivistic components of aspects of the social world, expressed in numbers and quantities (King & Horrocks, 2010) and qualitative research "stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b:10). As such, the fundamental features of qualitative research assume that there are multiple realities and multiple perspectives of that reality which must be considered from an emic or insider's perspective (Merriam, 1998). This inevitably influences both the participants and the researcher. The meaning of 'disability' in this research was considered from the participant's experiences using an inductive approach which builds theory from second order constructs and hypotheses through making sense of the data gathered (Babbie et al., 2001). Merriam (1998:7-8) asserts that the inductive derivation of data, is usually generated by way of the production of themes, categories, typologies and concepts. Qualitative research

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which is embedded in social constructionism involves description and interpretation as a means to understand participant's socially constructed realities, rather than to focus on causal relationships (Higgs & Cherry, 2009:5-6). As such, it relies on words and pictures rather than numbers to convey meaning (Merriam, 1998). Lastly, within a qualitative research framework, knowledge is conceptualised as context and time dependant (Higgs & Cherry, 2009:6).

This study is based on the assumption that individuals with disabilities shape their experiences of disability in the workplace through socially constructed realities which are dialogic, or from the perspective that narratives present with "multiplicity of styles, logics and voices" (Boje, 2007:348). This aligns with post-structuralist theory and accommodates the wide ranging alternative styles of the varieties of sensory and physical impairments of the individual participants, which must always form a focal point when considering methodological implications of disability related research studies. To achieve these ends, unstructured, open ended experience centred (Squire, 2008; Riessman, 1993) and life story interviews (Atkinson, 1998) were employed as the means to construct narratives and generate alternate stories which were viewed as dynamic, relational and in terms of the chronology of constant flux in the world of language and communication. After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed and analysed using a synthesis of narrative analysis and thematic analysis. To further this discussion, I will espouse in detail the narrative inquiry approach which guides this study after which I will attend to the specificities of participant selection and data generation methods.

3.2.4.1   *Narrative Inquiry Methodology*

We all live storied lives. Individuals are constantly involved in living, retelling and reliving stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Speedy, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Atkinson, 1998). As such, epistemologically speaking, the way we gather knowledge about our lives is through telling our stories (Richardson, 2000, in Smith & Sparkes, 2008; Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008) which indicates that our life stories serve to "validate our experiences and restore value to our lives" (Atkinson, 2007:224). A narrative inquiry methodological approach was implemented in this study as a means to consider the way in which professional identity formation is co-constructed using language as a device with the potential to change experiences (Hunter, 2010) and influence others' lives. This thesis attends to the notion that empirical research is not the only way in which to attend to "issues of human importance in the community" (Hunter, 2010), but that through the narratives told by individuals with disabilities, employed in the mainstream labour sector, alternative stories can generate more responsive strategies at a social level as well as a broader capacity for emancipation of individual lives.

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The term 'narrative' refers to an evolving movement which has emerged over the past 30 years, etched in the 'narrative turn' (Rorty, 1967, in Besley, 2001) as a means for individuals to make sense of their lives and experiences. This denotes the central assumption of post-structuralist theory, which considers the idea that language impacts individuals' constructions of self and identity (Besley, 2001). Narrative is regarded as "a distinct form of discourse" (Chase, 2005:656) which constructs an understanding of lived experience over time. The central tenet of narrative inquiry suggests that through the generation and analysis of "stories lived and told", (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007:5; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:20) qualitative researchers can reconstruct understanding for various social groups. The aim of this approach is therefore not to procure one generalisable truth, but rather to align with social constructionist philosophy which examines socially constructed "realities" based on participants' experiences over time, in particular contexts and through their engagement with others.

Narrative has become an increasingly prominent mode of inquiry in disability studies (Marks, 1999; Smith & Sparkes, 2008) based on the central premise that it is through the exploration of multiple perspectives which "are written within a highly theorised politicised context and which examine complex identities and experiences" (Marks, 1999:183) that influence 'self and society' (Williams, 1984, in Marks, 1999:183). Because almost all cultures construct the meaning of disability as a 'problem to be solved' (Mitchell & Snyder, 2006:205), and as cited in Chapter 2, representational treatments of impairment in literary discourse have historically involved "a stock feature of characterisation and… an opportunistic metaphorical device" (ibid), it is my contention that stories as linguistic inquiry can do much to begin the arduous process of dismantling such discourse. This aligns with Goodley and Tregaskis' (2006, in Smith & Sparkes, 2008:18) view that narrative can provide insights into impairment as a social phenomenon located as both personal and social narratives. As such, whilst in many instances little can be done about functional limitations (Thomas, 2002, in Smith & Sparkes, 2008:19), stories can provide a platform to open the possibility for societal and individual transformation. Thus, "if we change the stories we live by we quite possibly transform and change our lives and society too" (Smith & Sparkes, 2008:19).

The burgeoning field of narrative inquiry recapitulates varieties of diverse approaches which all quintessentially encapsulate the recitation of narrated stories of individuals lives (Chase, 2005). Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008) espouse contemporary narrative approaches as positioned in parallel movements against positivist empiricism, rooted in French post-structuralism, the postmodernist trends of Foucault and Lyotard, the psychoanalytic work of Jacques Lacan, the more socially constructed practices of Michael White, David Epston and Jonella Bird and the deconstructionist approach of Jacques Derridda. As such, there is "great conceptual diversity" (Riessman, 1993:17) in narrative inquiry and voluminous versions and alternative positions vis a vis the

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meaning of 'narrative' subsist in the contemporary discourse (Speedy, 2008; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). These multifarious meanings of narrative include, among others: "(t)he broad Aristotelian concept of a plot, taking place over time, including a beginning, a middle and an end" (Speedy, 2008:6); the Labovian (Labov, 1994) conceptualisation of personal narrative research which encompasses a very specific linguistic structuralist understanding of stories within conversation which includes an abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation of meaning, resolution and a coda; extensive modes of life histories; free association narrative interviewing (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, in King & Horrocks, 2010); biographic narrative interpretative methods (Chamberlayne et al., 2000, in King & Horrocks, 2010); community and public narratives (Gready, 2008); personal experience stories (Riessman, 1993; Squire, 2007) and life stories (McAdams, 1985, 1993, in King & Horrocks, 2010; Atkinson, 1998; 2007). Regardless of these capricious methods and foci of storytelling, it should be acknowledged that the fundamental mode of inquiry in narrative research is language (Squire, 2008), which contributes to the construction of social identity (Linde, 1993; Mkhoza, 1995, in Atkinson, 1998) which aligns with both the constructionist and post-structuralist thought which drives this study. In order to attain theoretical synthesis within this study, participants were considered co-researchers where personal narratives were gathered using a hybrid model of Squire's (2008) conceptualisation of *experience centred personal narratives* and Atkinson's (1998; 2007) *life story approach* (also known as personal histories) to produce text from the perspectives of the storytellers that could stand alone and undergo interpretation through the theoretical lenses and research questions applied (Atkinson, 2007:224). *Personal narratives* are particularly influential in the consideration of the "impact of social structures on individuals' lives" (Chase, 2005:655). As such, I attended to the participants' subjective experiences and considered not only what had occurred in their lives with special reference to their journey to the procurement of non-perfunctory employment, but also to their "emotions, thoughts and interpretations" which relates to their personal versions of 'self, reality and experience' (Chase, 2005:656-657). Narratives of experience are centred on the human element of representation, reconstitution and expression of experience, articulated sequentially to denote elements of transformation or change (Squire, 2008). Life story as a method is defined by Atkinson (1998:8) as: "(t)he story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it."

In Chapter 4, which considers the Polkinghorne's (1988) conceptualisation of descriptive analysis of the data, I implemented Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) metaphoric construction of a three dimensional narrative inquiry research space, where brief quotes from the interviews, were interspersed with my authorial voice to weave together understandings of the individuals' experiences (Riessman, 1993). Clandinin and Connelly's (2000:5;

2002:162) definition of narrative inquiry extends Dewey's conceptualisations of the personal and social; past, present and future, combined with the notion of context and is based on experience as etched in four directions of posing questions: inward (internal conditions such as feelings, morality, hopes and aesthetic reactions) and outward (environmental indicators) backward and forward (temporality: past, present and future). Utilising the three dimensional narrative inquiry space, allowed me to understand the individuals' inner emotional spaces as well as what was happening as part of their personal and social connectedness wherein the participant's stories were crafted in terms of temporality, or their past, present and potential future experiences together with episodes of experiences which weave through the narratives as a whole. At the same time, I focused attention on the interaction between the personal and the social, in alignment with the notion that disability has a very personal component – the impact of the impairment on the individuals' lives - as well as a social aspect, wherein viewed from the social model, it is society which creates impairment. Lastly, I considered the effects of place – or the impact of the environment on individuals' lives.   This referred specifically to the experiences of employment in the mainstream labour sector.   In Chapter 5, I implemented interpretive or explanatory analysis as a means to "account for the connection between events in a causal sense and to provide the necessary narrative accounts that supply the connections" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:16). From this perspective, narrative threads, tensions and themes were analysed horizontally to provide more global understandings of disability in the workplace. This will be discussed in more detail below.

3.2.4.2   *Selection of Participants*

Qualitative researchers typically work with non probability, non-random samples of *information rich cases* which they can study in depth (Durrheim & Painter, 1999:139; Merriam, 1998:61). To achieve these ends a purposive (Patton, 1990) sampling strategy was implemented as a means to purposefully select information-rich participants in order to illuminate the research question and sub-questions. Merriam (1998:61) cites that "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned". As such, certain predetermined, criteria were espoused in order to procure a representative sample. In order to be considered, selection criteria stipulated that the participants were required to 'identify'[2] as individuals with either congenital or acquired physical or sensory disability. All participants were required to be between the ages of 22 and 55 and currently employed in the mainstream labour sector. Lastly, heterogeneity was a requirement in terms of cultural background, education

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[2] The use of the word "identify" is simply for ease of correspondence, and does not in any way refer to the conceptualisation of a stable, fixed personal or professional identity status. As espoused in detail in Chapter 2, this study concedes the notion that the application of a stable, universal disabled identity status simply perpetuates existing discriminatory discourse.

levels and types of employment procured. Due to the limited time frame of this study, the large sizes of the research sites and the depth nature of the narrative interviewing methods implicit in a narrative inquiry approach, not all individuals at either site could or were interviewed. For the purpose of this study, I had planned to interview 4 – 6 individuals with disabilities employed in the mainstream labour sector.

Once consent was received from both organisations, the HR manager at Site 1 agreed to send a group e-mail to all employees who 'identified' with a physical or sensory disability as a means to disseminate preliminary information pertaining to the study and in so doing provide the foundation for me to engage initial contact with potential participants. I was then referred to all respondents who expressed interest. Five males with disabilities responded to the e mails and I contacted each of these individuals telephonically and via e mail (particularly for those with hearing impairments) and provided them with a detailed description of the study including the aim, purpose, methods of data generation, possible risks and benefits, confidentiality, participation and withdrawal and aspects related to the dissemination of results. The participants were accorded the opportunity to pose questions, and during this time, basic information was gathered based on the selection criteria. Each participant was sent a detailed information letter to peruse at their leisure (Appendix D). Once the participants met the criteria and conferred consent to participate in the study, initial interviews were scheduled. Of the five participants from Site 1 who made initial contact, three agreed to the interview process and were subsequently included in this study.

At Site 2, I approached six individuals with disabilities in my personal capacity on recommendation of the HR department. Two females and two males with physical and sensory disabilities expressed initial interest based on preliminary telephonic and e mail contact. Again the details of the study were espoused, the potential participants were provided with opportunities to ask questions and the information letter was forwarded to them. Of the four participants who expressed initial interest, only two agreed to be interviewed and as such, the initial interview was scheduled at a convenient time and place for the respondents. Participants who refused to participate cited time constraints as the restraining factor rather than lack of interest in the study as a whole.

In the selection of participants, consideration was afforded to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including, social, racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, ability and gender characteristics. Although gender was not a defining construct in this study, based on the unrepresented female sample, an additional female was recruited through a personal associate who had contacts at a disability placement agency. In this regard, the names and e mail addresses of six individuals with disabilities were forwarded to me, and one female was included since data saturation had been attained in the interim.

3.2.4.3   The Research Participants

The process of initial contact with each participant included a telephone call, where I explicated information about the study as espoused in the information sheet, attached as Appendix D. The participants were provided with opportunities to ask questions, and I was able to ascertain whether or not they met the selection criteria delineated in Section 3.2.4.2. All potential participants were sent a follow up e mail, which included a hard copy of the information as well as the letter of consent (Appendix E) sent as an attachment. A meeting time and place was scheduled with those who agreed to participate. Participants from Site 1 were interviewed in one of the company board rooms; those from Site 2 were interviewed at a public restaurant and the home of the individual respectively and the participant from Site 3 was interviewed in her personal, private office space at the day hospital. I found that the interview at the individual's home was the most efficacious setting, since I was privy to the review of some additional personal information and artefacts that she presented during the interview process.   The least efficacious context was the restaurant, which, although quiet, seemed to impact the sustainability of attention of both myself and the participant.

Before the initiation of the first interview, participants were encouraged to read through the consent forms again and identify any questions or concerns related to the research process. As such, I revisited the consent forms with the participants and reiterated their right to withdraw from the study at any given time; their right to refuse to answer any questions and the ethical considerations such as confidentiality. Once these details were explicated, and the participants' questions satisfied, both the individuals and I signed two copies of the consent forms, which were kept by each of us respectively. At the outset, each participant was assigned a pseudonym[3] to protect anonymity. Descriptions of the research participants are documented in tabular form as Table 3.2 below.

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[3] All names in this thesis are pseudonyms to protect the identities of both individuals and institutions.

Table 3.2   The Research Participants

Site	Participant	Age	Gender	Profession	Education Status	Language	Race	Type of Disability	Age of Onset
1	1. Nathan	55	Male	Disability Claims coordinator	Tertiary Diploma	English	Biracial	Polio	18 Months
1	2. Anthony	26	Male	Quality assurer	Matric	Sign Language / English	Biracial	Hearing Impairment	Birth
1	3. Jerome	29	Male	Skills coordinator	First year BA	Eng / Afr	Biracial	Paraplegia	18 Years
2	4. Cathy	45	Female	Compliance manager	BA degree	English	Biracial	Tetraplegia	30 Years
2	5. Evan	33	Male	Editor	Tertiary Diploma	Afrikaans	White	Spina Bifida	Birth
3	6. Dianne	41	Female	Switchboard manager	Matric	English / Afrikaans	Biracial	Visual Impairment	Birth

3.3   DATA GENERATION METHODS

Research methods refer to the modes of gathering data in the research process. These modes may include: interviewing, direct observation, analysis of artefacts, documents and the use of personal experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). Narrative inquiry does not privilege one mode of data gathering above others (Trahar, 2009) which is an important consideration in conducting research with individuals with disabilities. Since particular 'impairments' may preclude pre-selected forms of data generation, it became important to give the participants a choice as to their preferred means of generating data with further aligns with the emancipatory lens through which this study was envisaged. Since many of the participants reported little time to attend to the creation of collage or journal entries, these processes were completely voluntary, and the primary mode of ensuring internal consistency of data referred to the implementation of two distinct interviews; my reflective journal entries and informal observations. As such, the artefacts served simply as descriptive vehicles to enrich, rather than to analyse or interpret the data.

In order to adequately address the research question(s) and the aims and objectives of this study, data were gathered by way of five methods, namely: (1) The literature review (2) two narrative interviews positioned as experience centred personal narratives and life story respectively (3) informal observations (4) personal artefacts and (5) my reflections as researcher.

3.3.1 The Literature Review

Merriam (1998:55) defines the literature review as: "a narrative essay that integrates synthesises and critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic" where the purpose is to contextualise the research (Kaniki, 1999:19). At the outset a thorough literature review was conducted over a period of 13 months, in order to adequately position the study in an integrated theoretical framework and simultaneously investigate existing research pertaining to the experiences of individuals with disabilities in a variety of contexts. I aimed to provide exhaustive coverage of the primary elements of the study as well as topical articles and publications (Mouton, 2001) and the literature review was presumed adequate when saturation was reached according to Mouton's (2001:91) stipulations:

1. There were no further themes related to the research question(s) that could be included
2. Secondary reviews confirmed what I had already included.

Literature for this study was derived from multiple sources, including books, academic articles, policies and legislation and the internet. Additional sources considered newscasts and personal communication with academics, disability activists, friends and colleagues who 'identify' as individuals with disabilities. During this stage of the research process, the various models of disability were examined, national and international policy, legislation and discourse were scrutinised and the fundamental issues related to the employment of individuals with disabilities were studied in depth. Following the literature review and the positioning of the study in an integrated theoretical framework, two unstructured narrative interviews were conducted with each participant. These are espoused below.

3.3.2 Narrative Interviews

Interviewing as a data generation method falls on a continuum from highly structured techniques reminiscent of the post positivist epistemological perspectives on the one hand, to highly unstructured interviews reminiscent of constructivist and critical theory on the other. This inquiry included dual analysis of both descriptive and interpretive analytic procedures where the former sought to deconstruct the participant's life stories within Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) conceptualisation of a three dimensional narrative space, and the latter integrated critical realist modes of thematic analysis. As such, a specific style of interviewing had to be implemented to appeal to both approaches which included the conceptualization of a hybrid approach of both personal experience-centred narratives and life story. As such, two interviews were conducted with each participant. The

aim of the initial interview (Appendix I) was to collect field text related to the workplace and educational experiences of individuals with disabilities and the second interview (Appendix J) served as a means to extend the narratives to include aspects of the participants 'life-as-a-whole' (Atkinson, 1998:3). The interviews engaged the dominant aspect of narrative interviews to co-construct meaning related to the first two research sub-questions and embraced a social constructionist epistemology to attend to the third sub-question which considers the manner in which these stories help to understand full inclusion in the workplace. The overarching research question related to how individuals with disabilities have constructed their professional identities in the mainstream labour sector was addressed in both interviews.

In order to appeal to both of these narrative approaches as well as the dual analytic techniques, which will be described in more detail below, I constructed an open-ended, unstructured, conversational interview technique as a means to align with the social constructionist and post-structuralist lenses through which the research was conceptualised and as such make "the connections between personal biography and public action" (Bell, 1988, in Riessman, 1993:34). By approaching the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities as conversations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1988), I sought to enrich an understanding of how individuals with disabilities describe their lives and as such, attend to the nature of what constitutes the various aspects of their professional identity formation. In unstructured interviews there are usually no predetermined sets of questions and the process is usually exploratory (Merriam, 1998:75). As such, I favoured conversations that emerged from unstructured conversations rather than following a formal interview guide. I formulated a broad open question as a means to encourage the participants to tell their stories (Chase, 1995, in Chase, 2005:662) and included a series of prompts to facilitate the storytelling.   Rather than conceptualising the interviews as a process in which I asked questions that the participants answered, it became important to conceptualise the interview process as a 'journey' of storytelling – a conversation wherein I encouraged the participants to "tell their own stories in their own way" (Anderson & Jack, 1991, in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:111). I aligned with Kvale's (1988, 1996, in Speedy, 2008:60) notion that the research should adopt a tentative unknowing position in order to generate analysis of story lines which may emerge (Speedy, 2008:60).

The focus of the initial interview was loosely organised as a means to enter into the individuals' lives of school, tertiary education and workplace experiences and as such the purpose was to invite the participants to share their experiences as individuals with disabilities in the mainstream labour sector within the framework of experience centred narratives. As a precursor to the actual interview, I spent at least 10 minutes revisiting the information letter (Appendix D) wherein I encouraged each individual to ask questions about aspects of the research, and

briefly described the process of the interviews. I confirmed each participant's willingness to have the interviews recorded and spent some time revisiting the ethical considerations and participant rights before they were asked to formally sign the consent forms. The first interview duration was between 60 and 90 minutes.

To facilitate a story telling environment, I applied Hollingsworth and Dybdahl's (2007) eight key principles to learn from the narratives. These include: (1) development of trust and non judgmental listening (2) scaffolding or structuring the conversations and setting norms (3) encouraging talk about topics that are controversial and difficult (4) allowing emergent purposes for the conversation to develop (5) value of different discourse styles (6) means to specifically articulate the learning that occurs in conversation (7) examination of assumptions (8) attention to issues of power-in-relationships. At the outset, rapport was built as a primary means to facilitate the optimal climate for storytelling to occur. I used a Rogerian non-directive listening approach and a conversational style as a means to educe individual narratives.

I began each interview with a brief introduction as espoused in Interview Guide 1 (Appendix I) to facilitate the storytelling.   Most of the participants required very little prompting and were keen to share detailed aspects of their workplace and educational experiences. As such, many of the prompts that I had constructed in Interview Guide 1 were unnecessary, and instead, I followed intuitive prompting based on the conversations that the individuals presented. At the end of the first interview I thanked each participant for their participation and we discussed their preferred methods of data generation. Most of the participants stated that they lacked time to attend to the creation of artefacts, which became important qualitative data in the study as a whole. I scheduled our second interview at a time and place that was convenient to each individual which was typically within one week of the first interview. After each interview, full transcriptions were written within 4-6 hours of the narrations and detailed reflective accounts were documented so as not to lose any of my own personal experiences of each process. I then proceeded with preliminary descriptive analysis of the first interview, the process of which will be described in more detail below.

The second interview involved the process of co-constructing the life stories of the participants in terms of Clandinin and Connelly's conceptualisation of past, present and future constructs within Atkinson's (1998) life story model of narrative inquiry. To facilitate the storytelling, I invited the participants to tell me a story about their lives, including their conceptualisation of the past, their experiences and feelings as manifest in the present and their projections about the future. This included aspects of their personal and social worlds in context. During the

second interview, I also sought clarification about specific experiences and statements made in the first interview as a means to attend to internal consistency within the field texts.

3.3.3   Artefacts

Although the participants were asked to co-construct methods of data generation for the study, including a choice of time lines, collage, photographs, or reflective journal writing, most participants did not engage the activities due to personal time constraints. Since the artefacts were used primarily as a means to thicken the existing stories and were as such, not used for analytic or interpretive purposes, they were not essential data generation methods and the rich storytelling that took place in the two interviews suggest that artefacts were unnecessary for the purpose of this study.

3.3.4   Informal Observations

Informal observations (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 1998) were conducted at all three sites for a maximum of two days. The purpose of the observations was to provide myself as researcher the opportunity to capture aspects related to the context of the study. Due to confidentiality policies enforced by two of the three sites, the participants were not observed in the engagement of their workplace activities, however field notes related to the contexts and "every day life" in all three settings were recorded. The goal of the observation was not to generate data, but rather to add to my reflexive journal relative to the narrative accounts.

3.4   DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Data management refers to the manner in which the qualitative data from the interviews is "rendered into textual form by transcription" (Lee & Fielding, 2004:533). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) cite that the move from field texts to research texts is often a complex transition and must be founded in relation to the meaning, significance and purpose of the study. With this in mind, the researcher is required to consider for whom the research will be written, what the research is attempting to convey and the personal, practical and theoretical contexts that make meaning from the inquiry.

From a post-structuralist lens, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007:65) indicate that narrative inquirers frequently seek to transcend the "description of the formal qualities of social discourses" to guide "transformative intervention" which envisages what Lather (1991:15, in Clandidn & Rosiek, 2007:65) refers as a mode "capable of helping us to tell a better story". It is for this reason, that the data analysis in this thesis was considered from two lenses, first

descriptive, then interpretive, where the former sought to deconstruct the personal descriptions of the individual lives and the latter served to extend the narratives of experience toward more global, universal constructs of disability and employment using thematic analysis in alignment with a critical realist ontology. This process is summarised in Figure 3.3 and the discussion will be expanded in Section 3.4.1.1 and 3.4.1.2. The choice to synthesise the analytic process in the same field texts is supported by other narrative inquirers, including Atkinson (1998) and Chase (2005) who suggest that limiting a narrative study to a unilateral mode of inquiry may inhibit the richness of data and preclude more universal theorising. From this perspective, I refer to a polyphony of approaches as a means to "bridge the gap between the personal and the political, the internal and the external experiences of disability" (Marks, 1999:13).

The process of interpretation or analysis in Narrative Inquiry involves "many hours (of) reading and re-reading field texts in order to construct a chronicled or summarised account of what is contained within different sets of field texts" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:131). During the initial stage of the analytic process, the interviews were transcribed verbatim from the audio-tape device within 4-6 hours of each interview. An excerpt of these verbatim transcripts is included as Appendix L. Because taping and transcription are "essential to narrative analysis" (Riessman, 1993:56), the transcription process was a vital part of the data management process. Each tape and transcription was thoroughly scrutinised in order to encapsulate as far as possible, the original, intended meaning of each participant. Since I fully acknowledge that meaning in narrative inquiry becomes distorted and cannot ever be fully captivated, once I had scrutinised the raw narratives in their roughly transcribed state, I moved toward the analysis of individual experience as a means to deconstruct the life stories of the protagonists and attend to the multiplicity of meanings encapsulated in the interactions between researcher, storyteller and listener (Squire, 2008). After transcription, I synthesised the author's first and second interviews into a story form draft using a blend of both my voice as researcher and the unabridged narratives of the participants. From this perspective, I endeavoured to rework each narrative "temporally, spatially and in terms of the personal and the social" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:89) whilst attempting as far as possible to understand and retain the participants' intended meanings from experience in context. To achieve these ends, each transcription and tape was reviewed at least four times in order to familiarise myself with the content as well as matters such as "character, place, scene, plot, tension, end point, narrator, context and tone" (ibid:131). At the same time, the field texts were coded (see Appendix M), in order to gain an initial entry point into the thematic content of the data. This process was not completed as a number of "steps" but rather as a process to establish "patterns, narrative threads, tensions and themes" and as such, create interim texts of descriptive data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:132-13) which included the descriptive accounts of the participants, as presented in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I extended the process, and

refined the codes into themes which became the basis of the interpretive analysis wherein I contextualised the research socially and theoretically.

Figure 3.3   Data Analysis Process

Phase 1: Descriptive Analysis   Phase 2: Interpretive Analysis
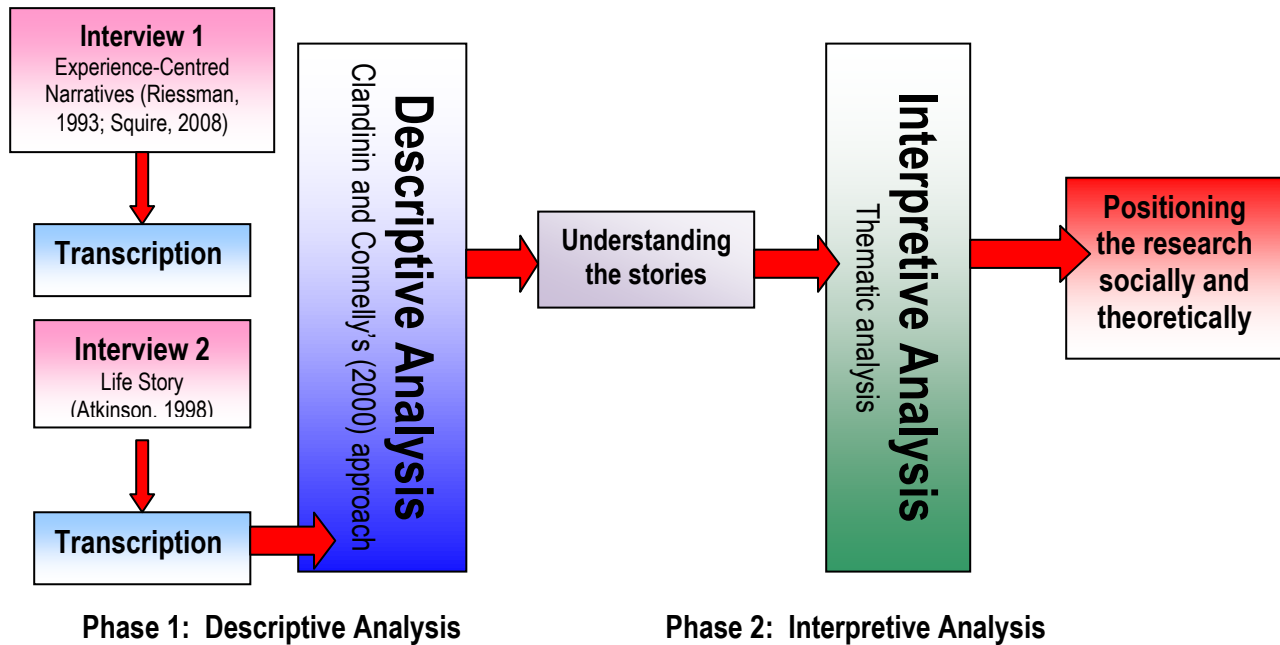
Phase 1:   Descriptive Analysis (the narrator's unique voice as versions of self, reality and experience)

Phase 2:   Interpretive Analysis (the story as enabled and constrained by a range of social resources and circumstances)

3.4.1   Narrative Analysis

Merriam (1998:178) describes data analysis as the process of "making sense out of the data" which inevitably involves methods of interpretation which align with the theoretical approaches implicit in the study as a whole. With this in mind, I referred to Chase's (2005:656-657) description of five analytic lenses through which contemporary narrative inquiry as a qualitative research methodology is conceptualised. The first lens considers narrative from the narrator's point of view, including thoughts, emotions and interpretations. The second considers the narrator's voice as particular and as such relates to the individual's views of self, reality and experience that are produced through the telling. The third seeks to understand how stories are constrained by social structures and as such extends the similarities and differences that are evidenced across narratives. Fourth, the narrative is

treated as socially situated, interactive performances, shaped by interaction with the audience. Lastly, narrative researchers can view themselves as narrators which refer to the auto-ethnographic approach. The first mode of analysis which I present in Chapter 4 as "descriptive analysis", was envisioned from Chase's first and second lenses, as a means to consider the stories from the narrators' perspectives including their thoughts, emotions and interpretations, whilst the interpretive phase presented in Chapter 5 which employed thematic analysis as a mode of analysis, considered Chase's third lens as a means to understand how these narratives were constrained and influenced by other socially constructed discourse.

Narrative analysis may be conceived slightly differently to other qualitative analysis, in that it is considered from the individual's point of view and attempts to encapsulate the uniqueness of individual stories rather than attempt to define commonalities (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1995, in Chase, 2005:657). As Riessman (1993:1) states narrative analysis "takes as its object of investigation, the story itself". For the purpose of this thesis, as represented in Figure 3.3., narrative analysis will be considered from Murray's (2003, in King & Horrocks, 2010:227) conceptualisation of two broad analytic phases of narrative accounts, where the first is descriptive and the second interpretive. The descriptive analytic phase is presented as Chapter 4, wherein I attempted to re-tell the individual stories according to context and internal structure with emphasis on the original meanings that individuals attach to their lives and experiences. The interpretative phase, presented as Chapter 5, includes the move from the participants' unique stories to the universal stories of disability (Atkinson, 1998:63). As such, I employed of a combination of the theoretical and subjective (Atkinson, 1998), presented as commentary in order to provide objective insights pertaining to overall human experience.

Part of the human condition is that our perceptions about life, events, situations, contexts and issues differ. This aligns with a constructionist perspective which assumes that we can only ever know versions of the world, and that our experiences are uniquely encountered. To drive this process, and to align with the contention that experiences are imitable, the narratives were considered from a post-structuralist lens which contends that communication constantly transforms "with or without intervention from us and we can choose to intervene with a view to altering the meanings" (Besley, 2002:6). With this in mind, it was essential to approach the process of deconstruction and analysis with care, in order to encapsulate as fully as possible, the integrity and subjective voice of the narrator.

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3.4.1.1   Descriptive Analysis: The Narrative Study of Lives and Experience

The aim of the descriptive analysis was to build narratives of the experiences and lives of individuals with disabilities who are employed in the mainstream labour sector. In so doing, the narratives sought to describe how individuals with disabilities have constructed their personal and professional identities as shared in their storied experiences. As such, the descriptive analytic process, whilst not neatly separated from the interpretive analysis which will be discussed below, involved listening to, telling and retelling participants' stories and as a means to reconstruct their lived experiences from their own unique perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Initially, the field texts were scrutinised a number of times and coded using thematic analysis which will be described in more depth in the section that follows. The field texts were then interpreted according to Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) metaphorical three dimensional narrative inquiry space and presented in Chapter 4 as descriptions using the participant's own storied voices together with my voice as narrator. The narratives were situated temporally in terms of patterns of events occurring within the continuum of time: past, present and future and were then communicated according to the participants' points of view, using their own storied voices to reflect emotions, thoughts and communications to align with Chase's (2005:656-657) first and second analytic lenses. The experience centred personal narratives were *embedded* in the life stories of the participants and reflected the inward (personal) and the outward (the social) together with the contextual (spatial) aspects of experiences. As such, in Chapter 4 I present a life history for each participant (Atkinson, 1998) which was constructed by restructuring and reordering the texts in terms of chronology and according to core concepts that were presented as sub-narratives. My reflections were interspersed at signified points in order to enhance the storytelling. Since the stories were intended to be texts that could stand alone in Chapter 4 (Atkinson, 1998:60) I kept as closely to the original intended meanings of the participants as possible but sought to summarise their original meaning and to order the story together more comprehensively.

3.4.1.2   Interpretive Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Following the descriptive analysis where the texts of the individual narrators were recapitulated in storied form, interpretive analysis sought to derive thematic content from the narratives and as such structure the data for more universal appeal. This aligns with a critical realist ontological position, since these universal stories are also encapsulated in the stories that the individual participants chose to tell. Braun and Clarke (2006:84) suggest that the analytic process should ideally evolve from description where the data is summarised according to patterns of 'semantic content' to interpretation where "there is an attempt to theorise the significance of the patterns and their

broader meanings and implications" (Patton, 1990, in Braun & Clarke, 2006:84). 'Themes' in this inquiry pertain to patterned, recurring responses of meaning which were extracted horizontally to adequately reflect the textual data which pertains to the research questions. I followed an inductive approach whereby the identified themes were linked to the data itself (Patton, 1990) rather than driven specifically by theory.

At the outset there was immersion in the text and the process of thematic analysis began early on in the data generation stage which involved a recursive process of moving backwards and forwards between the field texts. During the interpretive analytic process (which does not reference the 'interpretive' paradigmatic lens or seek to draw from structuralist traditions), I sought consistencies between stories in order to understand 'social processes' (Atkinson, 1998:69) rather than perpetuate "the personal tragedy of disability" (Barnes, 2001:13). Additionally, I sought to represent the thematic interpretations of the narratives by way of seeking underlying sociocultural meanings in the texts (Hunter, 2010) to expand the individual voices heard in Chapter 4. Although some narrative studies focus solely on descriptive analysis, I concur with Merriam (1998), that in order to do justice to the data it is necessary to "move beyond basic description to the next level of analysis" (Merriam, 1998:179) which involves the generation of themes as a means to make inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Roller, Mathes & Eckert, 1995, in Merriam, 1998). Since it is vital that the theoretical framework, methodology and methods align with the overall purpose of the research and attend to the epistemological and ontological positions of the researcher, I chose thematic analysis grounded in a social constructionist epistemology to attend to the manner in which "events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was considered within the framework of narrative analysis drawing on Riessman's (1993) techniques.

The field texts were coded manually, using highlighters and commentary in order to keep the context of the data extracts in tact (Appendix M). The themes were not predetermined, but were rather constructed as the content was reviewed from the field texts. The coded data were then organised into broad themes which occurred across data sets, and new themes were constantly constructed as new data were analysed. As such, the thematic content was considered from a post-structuralist lens in order to "hear the operation of broader social discourses shaping that person's story of their experience" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007:55). An initial list of themes, collated from the relevant coded extracts was generated and represented in tabular form as a means to begin the process of seeking relationships between themes as well as the construction different thematic levels (overarching themes and sub themes) (See Appendix N). The original thematic set was then refined and cross referenced according to prevalence and internal consistency across the narratives. Themes that were evidenced across data sets were

refined and named in relation to the research question and sub-questions. A final list of themes and subthemes which are presented graphically as Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5 were identified as a result of this process of refinement and these served as the foundation for the interpretive analysis which is espoused in detail in Chapter 5.

3.5   DATA VERIFICATION

Clandinin and Connelly (1990) indicate that the concepts of reliability, validity and generalisability in narrative research are underdeveloped and researchers are therefore required to use their own means to "defend" their work. A central tenet in this thesis is that the *experience* of disability is unique and as such *cannot* be generalised to the wider society of individuals with disabilities who are currently employed. This implies that the in-depth construction of individualised stories can naturally be considered truths within themselves as long as there is internal consistency. The themes presented in Chapter 5, serve mainly as a means to guide social action to attend to more efficacious strategies involving the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the mainstream labour sector.

3.5.1   Narrative Validation

Each narrative contains "multiple truths" which are etched in the constructions made by the interpreter (Josselson, 2007:551). It is for this reason that reliability and validity are not necessarily appropriate verification standards in narrative inquiry (Atkinson, 1998) given that each individual's story is highly subjective and through the various modes of analysis and interpretation, the initial intended meaning becomes transformed to some extent in the re-telling. This aligns with Lacanian thought which posits that "there is no subject except in representation" and this "representation" in no way encapsulates the fullness of the individual's experience, which is inevitably open to interpretation (Sarup, 1993:13). For this reason, it was not intended that the study produce generalisable results, since it is my contention that inter-subjectivity rarely exists. What is necessary in narrative inquiry however, is internal consistency (Atkinson, 1998:61), wherein the researcher seeks to determine the connections that weave through the individual stories. To achieve this, each participant was asked to scrutinise their transcriptions, and assert that they reflected their original intended meaning, both in terms of what was said, as well as in terms of its narration (ibid). As such, each participant in this study had the opportunity to review, edit or recall any information that was incongruent with their original meaning (see Appendix K). The use of reflexivity served to extend the internal consistency within and between the narratives.

3.5.2   The Reflection Process

Narrative Inquiry demands reflexivity as a means to tackle issues related to subjectivity through a process of critical self reflection. Reflexivity refers not only the researcher's critical self reflections and impressions of the story (Holloway & Biley, 2011:971), but also requires the 'teller' to think back on the story that he/she has told, and the personal meaning that it ignites (Atkinson, 1998). In this study, I recorded my personal feelings and responses toward the on-going conversations throughout the duration of the study by way of detailed journal entries. With this in mind, I sought to provide a clear audit trail and my self-insights documenting my beliefs, values, thoughts and feelings which could influence the interpretations of the field text. My reflexive entries recorded in Chapter 4 include critical links to theory including psychoanalysis and social constructionism, which I document in response to the narratives themselves. Lastly, each participant was given the opportunity to review, recall and edit aspects of their personal narratives, and include additional content which they deemed as an omission from the research text.

3.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research carries with it, a great responsibility and researchers have an ethical and moral duty towards others and society. This naturally entails the protection of the individuals who agreed to share their stories. It is clear that whilst researchers are compelled to comply with specific ethical codes (e.g. Board for Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa) it is also up to the researcher to exercise pernicious judgment at all times to protect the rights, values and humanity of the participants. The University of Stellenbosch (2009) makes provision of a Framework Policy for the assurance and promotion of ethically accountable research. As such, this policy framework was closely regarded throughout the research process, and the fundamental principles of integrity, respect, beneficence and non-maleficence, responsibility, scientific validity, justice and academic freedom were closely followed. These will be espoused in greater detail in the sections that follow.

3.6.1   Principle of Integrity and Responsibility

Integrity encapsulates the core principles of fidelity and veracity where the former pertains to the strict conformity to reproduce consistent, factual data and the latter implies truthfulness as the basis of trust upon which research endeavours are built. The University of Stellenbosch Ethics Committee (Human Research) (2009:2) suggest that "the ethics of responsibility means that researchers, in their search for the truth, must be prepared to take responsibility and be held accountable for all aspects and consequences of their research activities". As such, I

made sure that I was informed of all current legislation, norms, rules and policies before embarking the research journey. With this in mind, I strove at all times to conduct truthful research as my part of my responsibility to the research and academic community, the broad profession of Psychology, the institutions and participants and the university institution of which I am a part.   The University of Stellenbosch (2009) cites dishonesty in research as taking many forms such as plagiarism, fabrication and falsification of results, misuse of research funds, mis-use of human and animal subjects, lack of transparency and conflict of interests. There was no transgression in terms of any of these unethical practices.

3.6.2   Principle of Respect

Respect refers to Kant's (1785/1964, in Allan, 2008) belief that human beings are intrinsically valuable which automatically implies the protection of their rights and freedoms irrespective of context, race, creed, colour, religion, ability etc. (Allan, 2008; South Africa, 1996a). At all times, respect and dignity for the research participants and their institutional contexts was upheld with the utmost consideration. From this perspective, I sought to integrate the principles of integrity, beneficence and non-maleficence, responsibility and justice as part of the overarching principle of respect into my research endeavours.

3.6.3   Principles of Beneficence and Non-maleficence

Researchers are expected to strive toward taking reasonable steps to prevent harm (non-maleficence) where it is foreseeable and avoidable. From this perspective participants were informed of their right to seek the counselling services of a psychologist or professional counsellor in the (unlikely) event of the emergence of difficult feelings related to the research process. The participants indicated that they all experienced the research as "positive" and as such, there was no real need for this provisor. Beneficence refers to "the obligation to do good" (University of Stellenbosch, 2009:2). To comply with the principle of beneficence, the research sought to provide participants with the opportunity to enhance their personal development, self growth and understanding through embracing the principles of an emancipatory paradigm.   Similarly, as co-researchers, participants were provided with the opportunity to share their experiences and success stories, as a means to provide a voice for marginalised groups, using narratives, rather than stereotypical, non-disabled perspectives or dominant professional ideologies of disabilities. Benefits to the broader sociocultural community encapsulate the provision of deeper understandings of some of the challenges that individuals with disabilities face in work related contexts, in order to advocate for more responsive strategies and reasonable accommodations to be identified for the benefits of both employers and individuals with disabilities themselves.

3.6.4   Principles of Accuracy and Scientific Validity

Research is required to include accurate reporting of data, wherein the researcher shall not fabricate or falsify any of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). In narrative inquiry, the distinction between fact and fiction often becomes an issue in research texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:179). To overcome this, two interviews were conducted with each participant to consider matters of internal consistency, and all autobiographical material included in the research text was substantiated by each individual participant and considered from a perspective of trust. Although participants had the right to recall, edit and omit data that could compromise their anonymity and confidentiality, each individual remained committed to the accuracy of narrative reporting, and in some cases only minor changes were made to content detail. To attend to the principle of scientific validity, the methodology of this thesis was explored at a peer review session at the University of Stellenbosch in June 2010 together with constant input from my supervisor.

3.6.5   Principle of Justice

The Justice Principle ties into the Constitution Right to Human Dignity (also espoused in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948) which forms the nucleus upon which individuals have the right to self-determination and autonomy as well as privacy. Consistent with the ethical principle of autonomy, research participants have the right to be fully informed about the nature of the research and have the right to participate voluntarily, which precludes all elements of coercion (University of Stellenbosch, 2009). Both the individuals' and institutional rights to autonomy were thoroughly considered, and informed written consent was procured from each institution as well as the individual participants. Participants and HR managers were given the opportunity to ask questions, and both the risks and benefits of the research were clearly delineated. The participants were also assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence and they were provided with copies of all documents related to the study for personal reference.

The Right to Privacy is a constitutional right (protected by the Constitution of South Africa) and refers to participants' rights to the protection of their identities. Confidentiality also refers to the obligation of professionals to respect the privacy of participants and institutions and the information that they provide (Cottone & Tarvydas, 2003:26). As such in relation to the privacy principle, there were no references made at any times to personal identifiers, including names, places and institutions and the personal identities of all participants and institutions were thoroughly protected throughout the research process using pseudonyms and disguised locations. Issues of anonymity are constant concerns in narrative inquiry since the depth story telling approach may inadvertently

connect the pseudonym with the actual individual telling the story. To prevent this, narrators were encouraged to edit and omit any detail that they felt could be associated directly with them. Similarly, in this thesis, one of the participants requested that his real name be included in his story as co-author. This was avoided in order to protect the rights of the other participants and the institution of which he is a part, and the individual thoroughly agreed with this ethical reasoning when it was explained to him. All data were stored in a sealed safe at my personal residence, and all computers and hard drives were password protected. As such, only myself and my supervisor had access to the data and recordings at any given time. The participants were also given the right to recall and edit any information that they did not wish to be included in the final draft of the thesis which is an essential consideration in narrative inquiry where more detailed descriptions are offered. I did not print anything in this thesis without the express permission from each participant.

3.6.6   Principles of Academic Freedom and Dissemination of Research Results

The University of Stellenbosch promotes academic and intellectual freedom which implies the obligation to report research results accurately and transparently without public influence (University of Stellenbosch, 2009). Dissemination of results also refers to making the accurate findings and conclusions available to the research participants, which was communicated personally to each at the end of the process. At the outset, participants were also made aware of the fact that the research findings would be available in the public domain.

3.6.7   The Process of Ethical Research in this Study

An initial conceptualisation of the proposed research was presented at a peer review session in the Department of Educational Psychology in June 2010 after which a research proposal was presented to the University of Stellenbosch Research Ethics Committee according to the prescribed format. Since it is ethical procedure to obtain ethical clearance for research prior to negotiation with institutions and individuals, provisional ethical clearance was granted by the University of Stellenbosch on 30 September 2010, provided that copies of signed institutional consent forms for every organisation was submitted. Official institutional consent forms were submitted in April 2011 and as such, final and official consent to proceed with the study was procured on 6 May 2011 (See Appendix H) on condition that procedures and protocols remained within the boundaries of the proposal; that scientific rigor was followed within the boundaries of applicable national legislation and that the Commission was informed of any substantive changes to the proposal. Once ethical approval was granted, I approached the individual participants using the purposive sampling methods described above. All participants were fully briefed about the aim, purpose, privacy, rights and agenda of the study at the outset. They were also

assured of their right to confidentiality and were briefed on their role as co-researchers. Similarly, the participants were advised that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary, that they were free to refuse to answer any questions at any time and also to withdraw from the study without penalty at any stage of the research. Participants were assured that they had the right to review all transcripts, and as such, hold the key as to what was included in the final version of their personal narratives. Lastly, participants were briefed as to the dissemination of the final copy of the thesis. After these aspects were fully explicated, participants were asked to sign an informed written consent form (Appendix E). This included consent to audio tape the interviews. After each interview was conducted, the tapes were fully transcribed and a copy was given to each participant to review and approve.   All participants were given feedback as to the findings of the research at the end of the research process and meetings were held with the relevant Human Resource managers at two of the three institutions.

3.7   CONCLUSION

A narrative inquiry approach, etched in social constructionist and post-structural thought was employed as the mode of inquiry in this thesis as a means to challenge both individual and 'grand' (collective) narratives that have perpetuated discriminatory discourse through language and other texts (Higgs, Horsfall & Grace, 2009). In alignment with a narrative inquiry approach, I believe that individuals' personal stories are shaped through their own unique, personal histories wherein meaning is built on experiences. As such, the individuals in this thesis were considered co-storytellers and were invited to shape new, positive discourse related to their experiences in the workplace. This chapter addressed the research paradigm, design and methodology which were used to answer the central research question and sub-questions in this thesis. The research methods for the collection, analysis and interpretation of the field texts were espoused and ethical considerations explicated.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 contains the findings of the descriptive analytic process and as such, seeks to provide insight into the storied worlds of six individuals with disabilities employed in the mainstream labour sector. The chronicles in this chapter are told using the participants' own storied voices, interspersed with my authorial voice, as a means to structure the narratives, whilst wherever possible maintaining their original intended meanings. The process of compiling this chapter, involved listening to the multiplicity of participants' storied entries and the telling, retelling and reliving of the individual's' stories served as a means to reflect upon their lives in general and their workplace experiences in particular. Since the approaches to the narratives in this thesis are embedded in Squire (2008) and Riessman's (1993) conceptualisations of experience centred narratives, whilst integrating Atkinson's (1998) life story approach as a hybrid model, I have structured the descriptive analytic phase as verbal action, wherein I applied Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensional narrative inquiry space to 're-story' the field texts as research narratives. To achieve these ends, I approached the narratives to include the constraining aspects of the personal (inward) and the social (outward); the temporal (past, present and future) and the spatial (place) which are represented in Figure 4.1. The stories therefore enabled me to move through the participants' life and workplace experiences to include their past, present and dreams and aspirations about the future.

In this chapter, each story begins with a brief description and introduction to the lives and worlds of the research participants as a means to establish a context for the narratives. When this chapter was conceived, I conceptualised it as narrative 'counterpoint', to align with the allegory of a Baroque Fugue in order to underscore the notion that stories contain a multiplicity of voices, each heard with variegated attached emotion with unique tonal qualities and resolutions which differ according to each participants' telling, my re-telling and the unique meanings extrapolated by the audience. The 'untold' parts of the story, omitted either consciously or unconsciously represent a technical subtext which may be inaudible to the human ear. These reflect the "episodes" of psychoanalysis, included in my reflections as fugal allegory which is implicit in melodic and harmonic passages where the subject is not heard in any voice. This in turn aligns with Roger's (2008) notion of the 'unsayable' which underscores Lacan's assumption that given the ambiguity of signifiers there is an abyss between 'saying' and 'meaning' (Sarup, 1993:13). As such the polyphony in this text seeks to introduce central themes which we may never fully and completely comprehend. With this in mind, I endeavour to provide (in part)

an alternative voice, explicated in versions of my reflections as a means to include myself as researcher in co-constructing the narratives and in so doing propose alternative understandings of the signifiers in the participants' texts. To align with both Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensional narrative inquiry space as well as my (implicit) fugal allegory, each story is told chronologically with a beginning (the Exposition), middle (Stretto) and an ending (the Coda) and summates with a final concluding cadence to encapsulate a core message that each participant wishes to send.

Figure 4.1   **The Three Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space**
Adapted from Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

Temporality (past, present, future)   **Personal** (inward) and **social** (outward)

Spatial (place)
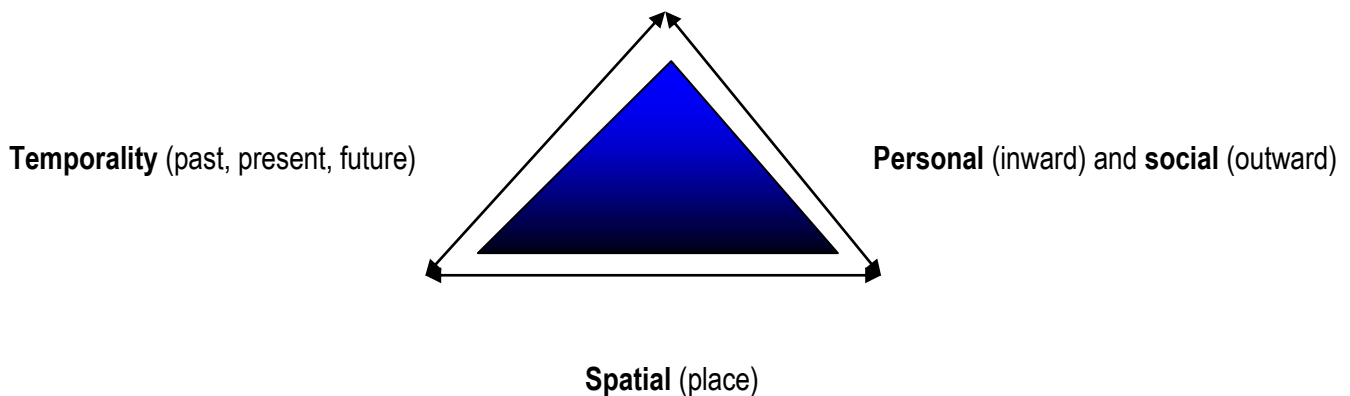
4.2   EVAN'S STORY

4.2.1   The Exposition

Evan was thirty years of age at the time of our interviews. He is the youngest of three boys, and told me that both he and his middle brother continue to reside with his parents in the Northern suburbs, where, given the proximity of interaction, he and his family are "reasonably close". He indicates a particularly ardent connection with his mother who he depicts as instrumental in shaping his personal identity formation whilst he describes his father as an individual who is "more in the background" and who has been more of a silent partner throughout his transition from childhood to adulthood. His eldest brother, with whom he reportedly has a good relationship, was diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome and has historically been subject to teasing and discrimination from others. Evan was born with Spina Bifida Mylomenigocele, and has limited mobility in his lower extremities and flaccid paralysis in his lower limbs. Shortly after birth, the doctors informed Evan's parents that he would only live for three days, yet he his mother refused to accept this prognosis, and as such sought to transcend all negative assumptions and perceptions, believing fully that her son "*would survive*". Evan describes his mother's inordinate "strength" and

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concomitant "positivity" as a primary influential factor which has become a thread throughout his own attitudinal and value formation. He narrated several early memories of hospitalisations but suggested that his disability has "*never bothered (him) much*" and states that he "*never really got depressed about it*", yet as he grew and developed, individuals started *"making stupid remarks"*.

4.2.2   My Reflections

My reflections, echoed allegorically as 'the answer' to align with the structure and form of fugal counterpoint, denotes the way in which I experienced all six participants, and serves as a mode to provide the audience with a more 'chiselled' melodic character to the texts to expand the independent voices of the inquiry. The following citation is an extract from my reflexive entries following my interviews with Evan:

> Evan's willingness to talk to me, and tell me "*a good story*" was evidenced from the initial contact that we made telephonically. I became aware on a very deep level of his pernicious insights and acute ability to view the human condition with truthful compassion and forgiveness and truly 'see' through the disablist projections that individuals in his personal and contextual space have imposed to disavow their own hostile discomfort. Evan's resilience to "*prove other people wrong*" was evidenced throughout his story with almost facetious pity for those who seek to box, discriminate and express their own projected fears through denigration and other intra-psychic and socially constructed preconceptions. His refusal to be viewed as either divided or alienated from human consciousness was evidenced in his constant ability to transcend and surpass limiting situations wherein his loyalty and commitment to "*get involved*" and refute stereotypes and 'limited', illusory images that has historically been projected onto individuals with disabilities was clear. His "*happiness at work*" and the value that he places on the social aspects of his job, together with his refusal to submit to the denigration of projections, defences and fragmentation have been instrumental in his ability to carve an alternative identity, in strong opposition to those voices in his life which sought to constrain his unique, spontaneous and easy going sense of self.

4.2.3   The value of "proving people wrong"

"From birth the doctors gave me three days to live, and now, thirty years later, here I am"

Evan's historic drive to "prove people wrong" emerges as a constant theme throughout his narratives, where, even from birth he states: *"(t)he doctors gave me three days to live, and now thirty years later, here I am!"* Throughout his story, Evan described many incidents where he has sought to refute the discriminatory labels and the resultant limiting discourse vis a vis his abilities and 'challenges' and he adduces recurrent incidents where it has been gratifying to "*prove people wrong*" in light of appraisals related to the stereotypical constructs evidenced throughout his story. Having experienced first-hand that *"perceptions can be very dangerous"* which links to the stereotypes and limiting discourse to which he has historically been subject, Evan told me that he is committed to embracing a non-judgmental attitude where:

> *I just have this view, that if another person's lifestyle doesn't have a negative impact on your lifestyle, why get upset about it, why hate that person simply because of what he does?*

With this in mind, Evan continues to make an effort to *"interact with people from all walks of life"*, in order to formulate his own perceptions, rather than follow generalisations which relates to his personal experiences of discrimination. Evan told me that he feels that one of the primary problems with the world today is that *"people are too lazy to think"* and as such, may rigidly cling to the socially constructed labels and generalisations which have caused him to feel restricted and limited. Evan appeals to people to:

> *Make an effort to find out if what you think is actually true. In 99.99% of cases, you will find out that you were wrong.*

This resonates personally for Evan, since in 99.99% of cases in his own life; he was able to refute 'advice' based on labels and negative perceptions – especially from the 'professionals'.

4.2.4   Education and Training Experiences

> *"Why should a person with a disability go to a 'special school' anyway?"*

Evan attended a school for learners with special educational needs in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town from preschool until his Grade 9 year, when he was elected a prefect. From Grade 10, Evan enrolled at a local 'mainstream' school, in spite of protestations by staff members at his alma mater that he *"would not cope in the mainstream environment"*. Evan was thus *"the only individual with a disability out of 1200 learners"*. The negative perceptions apropos his capability to "make it" in a mainstream classroom is further juxtaposed with Evan's commitment to *"prove them wrong"*:

> *The school psychologist, the physio and everyone told me not to do it – that I definitely would not make it – but I told them that from here on, I would go to a normal school.*

Evan told me that the school psychologist grudgingly indicated that he could go to the mainstream school *"for a six month probation period"*, to *"go and try it and make (his) own mistakes"* – but that they indicated that he *"would never make it"*. Evan refused to submit to their disapproval – a theme which was evidenced throughout his story to refute the historic stereotypes and discrimination. His thoughtful question: *"Why should a person with a disability go to a 'special school' anyway?"* expands the central premise of inclusive education, where Evan thrived in the mainstream context, even though the transition from the special school to a mainstream institution was at times, *"quite scary"*. Evan suggests that he was *"quite stubborn"* and refused to submit to these professional 'recommendations' which underscores his commitment to independence and his desire to make his own decisions, despite negative protestations to the contrary. Evan narrates his experience at the mainstream school as 'positive' and asserts: *"they treated me the same"* where he insists that the only *"difficulties"* vis a vis

mainstream educational placement included accessibility constraints. Whilst he resides in a suburb with multiple educational facilities, Evan told me that there was only one school in the milieu that was amenable to the reasonable accommodations that ensured accessibility through the construction of ramps and structural changes to the building as a whole. Evan thoroughly enjoyed his matric year where he performed well academically and attained a special award at Prize Giving. He told me that this *"was the best year of (his) life"* where he was *"glad that (he) was the only disabled guy in the whole school"* as *"it was rather nice to stand out"* and prove that he is *"just like everyone else".* To underscore these happy times, Evan brought a photograph of his matric year, together with a graduation photograph from the college that he attended post matric to our second interview. These artefacts formed the foundation for rich descriptions vis a vis transition phases throughout his life, where Evan told me that *"there were not really any difficulties"* related to his passage from school to college and he suggested that his father's support at these times was meaningful to him. He further narrates that he had incubated his desire to become a web developer from Std. 9 and feels happy that he "*made it*" since it was something that he *"put (his) mind to do"* and as such attained success. In spite of pressure from others to *"work from home"* after the procurement of his diploma Evan suggests that he *"needs the social aspect"* in his career context where it became important for him to eschew social isolation and participate in all social events, including sporting activities.

4.2.5   Their "good deed for the day"

Evan told me that he has had a number of friends that have *"dropped (him)"* after significant periods of interaction and relationship building. He richly described some of the hurt that he has experienced on an emotional level, when relationships have failed to endure which he describes as implicit in the notion that he was just *"their good deed for the day"* which may in some way correspond to Evan's feelings that he has been judged, labelled and stereotyped across the lifespan. Evan further described situations wherein he socialises with his non disabled friends, and strangers avoid direct communication with him:

> Some people are extremely funny. I will go to a shopping centre with an able-bodied guy friend and they won't speak to me – they will ignore me and talk to my friend when they see the wheelchair.

4.2.6   Evan's Workplace Experiences

Evan told me that he had no difficulties in the early procurement of employment relative to the attainment of his web and graphic design diploma from a local IT College. After earning his diploma, Evan acquired a managerial role where he was the webmaster at an internet banking firm for an 18 month period. Following mandatory

retrenchment, Evan was unemployed for 9 months where he attempted to start his own business as a means to generate an income from home.

> At this time, I had to stay at home, where I looked for positions on the internet. It was difficult for me because of transportation problems. I posted advertisements on Gumtree at this time as an IT specialist. However, I only got three jobs in a six month period.

Evan indicated that he received no remuneration for the minimal work that he did procure during this period and divulged that his difficulties procuring employment in the mainstream labour sector were primarily related to transport obstacles as well as stereotypical conceptualisations from potential employers where he was either completely overlooked or offered perfunctory jobs which was particularly frustrating given his tertiary qualification:

> During that time I was told to put my CV up on the internet, and I don't know if this had to do with the stereotypes around disability, but then I would put my CV on the internet with my diploma and people would still call me for factory jobs, packing boxes or cashier jobs so at the time, I thought this is because I am in a wheelchair - do you not think I am capable of doing anything else? I mean, they have my CV so they know what I can do. I mean, obviously I thought at the time that they wouldn't do this to an able bodied person, and that they see the wheelchair and think I am going to go nowhere in the job.

Evan told me that his employment opportunity in the media initially *"came by chance"* and that it was prompted by way of a contact that he had forged at his previous place of employment. He disclosed that he is *"very happy"* in his current job where he was initially trained as an intern, and later employed as an editor. Evan suggests that he does not think about his 'disability' on a daily basis and relishes the social aspects of his job, where he has a great deal of responsibility and is also involved in training students and interns:

> The job that I have now, changed my life completely. It put me in the position to do stuff that 95% of the disabled people that I know can't do, because they either sit at home doing nothing or they have some low-level job, working for absolute minimum wage. So ya, I count myself lucky to be in the position that I am.

He further suggests that "*if you put people with disabilities in the workplace, they will give them call centre jobs*" and states that to counter this discrimination, employers and institutions should:

> Give them high level jobs rather – these guys do have a brain. They need to be respected and if they are in managerial positions perhaps there would be more respect regarding disabilities.

4.2.7   Reasonable Accommodations and Accessibility

Evan told me that he felt that there were signs of improvement in the arena of accessibility in the workplace but added that he feels that *"there is still a long way to go"*. He indicated that he would like to see the transport system and accessibility within organisations as the primary improvements to enhance the number of individuals employed which has been a historic challenge. He summated the discussion with the following statement:

> Just building accessibility is obviously a really big thing, because I don't think that companies are making enough provision for disabled people.

When asked whether this was a theme in his current company, Evan stated:

> *Well, I think that my company is generally jacked up, but when I started there it was quite frustrating, because they had this hoist outside, which used to break down all the time – and it would be down for a week or two or whatever and then security had to carry me up and down and also the lift was out of order more than it was working – it was out of order for like months, and if you work on the third floor it is quite scary to be carried up three flights of stairs each day. And at the time, the toilets on the floor where I was working were not accessible. There was only an accessible toilet on the second floor and each time I wanted to go to the toilet, I had to call security to carry me down the stairs again. That's another thing. They make the building accessible, but often the toilets are not accessible. There is only one toilet on the second floor, so whenever the lift would break down, I couldn't get to the toilet, so then I would actually physically limit my intake of fluids, because I know the lift is going to be out the whole day, and I don't want to call security twice a day to carry me down the stairs. For the first time now, I don't have a problem, and I have been working there for eight years!*

Evan further described some of the personal challenges that he has encountered vis a vis the transport system which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, since this was a significant theme across all the narratives. He recently bought his own hand-adapted vehicle for the moderate cost of R7000 in response to his historic difficulties acquiring transport to and from the workplace.

4.2.8   The Coda: The Future for Evan

Evan discussed his future plans from two perspectives: personal and professional. On a personal level, he indicates that his next goal is to relocate from his family's home due to the fact that his parents are aging and have health related difficulties. This is *"the next big change"* in Evan's life and whilst he acknowledges that he *"will probably have to become completely independent",* he is unsure how he will attain this due to financial constraints related to the necessity of employing a carer to assist him with various daily tasks that may be a challenge to execute independently. Although Evan indicates that the alternative for him would be to *"go to a quadriplegic home"*, this is not an option that he would be partial to, since he *"is not one hundred percent dependent"*. In terms of his career development, Evan suggests that he would relish the opportunity to advance to the fields of documentary and film production at his current place of employment, which would encapsulate his ten year goal. He also suggests that he has no immediate plans to leave his current company. In the workplace, Evan's passion to *"be the best that he can be"* is clearly evidenced in the following statement:

> *Basically I would just aspire to be the best that I can be. Be that kind of person where someone wants to know something in this kind of job. I would be the "go-to" guy. That is what I aspire to do.*

Evan's concluding cadence includes the following thought provoking statement as a message to future employers and institutions:

> *Forget about your perceptions! If you are in a wheelchair – if your wheels are out of order so to speak, it does not mean that your brain is out of order!*

4.3   NATHAN'S STORY

4.3.1   The Exposition

Nathan was 55 years of age at the time of our interviews and he disclosed that he acquired polio at the age of 18 months. As a result of cell damage, Nathan experienced symmetrical flaccid paralysis and atrophy of the muscles, which effected frequent surgeries in early childhood, where medical practitioners endeavoured to elongate his left leg. He told me that his physical disability is *"all that he has ever known"* which he suggests is *"a good thing"* because, in Nathan's view, *"those who become disabled later in life may struggle to cope and to adapt to that change in their lifestyle".*

Nathan described his early childhood as a *"happy time"* for both himself and his elder brother marred only by his parents' divorce when he was 9. He described this event as his *"biggest traumatic experience in childhood",* possibly exacerbated by the tribulations of existing in an Apartheid South Africa, where he suggests that his father was classified as 'coloured' [4] and his mother was reclassified as a 'white' citizen at the height of the atrocities of the white supremacist regime. From this lens, Nathan narrated that individual time with each parent felt like he was existing in two dichotomous worlds which was *"a sad time"* since his father was precluded from a number of contexts reserved for 'whites only' which evoked the apprehension that he was *"living two separate lives".* In spite of these challenges, Nathan states: *"all of that made me a very strong person"* and suggests that aside from *"the difficulties he faced"*, he was *"a very happy child".* Nathan has been in a wheelchair for the past 4 – 5 years, and used crutches prior to this, which engendered fatigue in the engagement of physical activities. He has been married for 27 years and has two children who continue to reside with the family. He describes his wife as: *"a jewel"* where: *"she has always been there to support me"* and *"has brought stability to my life".*

4.3.2   My Reflections

> At the outset, Nathan told me that he had been excited to share his experiences and that he *"had a lot to say"* which made me cogitate the many voices of disability that have historically been 'silenced' as a result of the hegemonic identities ascribed and inculcated at a social level according to stereotypes and images of an 'inferior status'. In his rich descriptions about internalised oppression and the denigration and exclusion that he has historically experienced which has impacted social and vocational opportunities, Nathan's stories enabled me to apprehend, from my own limited perspective, how impairment and disability are experienced on an emotional level (Marks, 1999:25). Nathan's historic challenges related to the procurement of non-perfunctory employment status were told to me with an element of sadness as well as a tinge of resignation that in order to survive, he would have to assume a 'grateful' position, a

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[4] This refers to the old system of classification under the Apartheid system, and is in no way meant to reflect any discriminatory discourse on the part of the author.

'loyal' disposition and as such *"take whatever (he) could get"*. His experiences of being unheard, and from his perspective *"unseen"* reflects his notion that individuals with disabilities were historically placated with perfunctory statuses and placed in back offices so that nobody would have to 'witness' their physical 'imperfections' which, may 'upset, abhor and repulse' societies constructs of 'normalcy'. This relates in part to the psychodynamic concept of reaction formation, where his palpable experiences of not belonging, are reflected in others' projections to make him 'unseen' lest it upset their own anxieties related to 'difference'. As such, it appears that Nathan has constantly attempted to stay in the shadows - in the wings of his own life to placate the mass stereotypes and archetypal images that have so deeply scarred him. His resultant periods of depression, and 'trauma' reflected by such aspects of internalised oppression were implacably dark times for Nathan, yet, his resilience and positivity, coupled with support and care from family and friends, instigated his quest to write an alternative story where he has externalised the historic discrimination, gross inequalities and marginalisation that shaped his early journeys. Through *"pure will power"*, and inner strength, Nathan has been able to *"see himself going up and up"*, which, coupled with his own immense positivity and resilience have provided the platform for him to process and transform the internalised oppression that was inculcated early on.

4.3.3   Educational Experiences

Nathan described his scholastic experiences as *"positive"*, and indicated that he was a good scholar who achieved well at his Durban-based school. Although he spent the foundation phase at a special school he indicates that his parents moved him to a mainstream Catholic context in Std. 1 where he performed well up until Std. 4, when he underwent numerous surgeries. As a result, Nathan suggested that he did not return to school for 2 – 3 years and as such, was taught by a private tutor. Although Nathan *"skipped a few grades"*, he was made a prefect and attained a good matric pass in 1974. He encapsulates his overall scholastic experiences in a mainstream school citing that: *"my peers didn't look down on me because of my disability at all"* and "*they treated me like a normal child*" and *"made me feel welcome"*.

4.3.4   Transition from School to the World of Work

Although school was a positive experience for Nathan, he indicates a dearth of employment opportunities exacerbated by stereotypes and misperceptions that precluded full and equal employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities particularly in an apartheid South Africa. Nathan's initial experiences of securing a job were fraught with challenges linked to discrimination and marginalisation which he describes as his first obstacle in the procurement of employment in the mid seventies:

> *What happened after I finished school, was that there were no jobs available in Durban for me, because basically all the rejections I got was: you've just got out of school and you have no work experience – AND you are also disabled, so we can't employ you.*

Following the dearth of employment opportunities, Nathan's family sent him overseas to reside with his aunt in an attempt to secure a job which proved futile since the home office refused him a work permit. He completed a

diploma course in computer programming whilst abroad yet upon returning to Durban, his continued exclusion from the mainstream labour sector was *"actually very, very heartbreaking"* and reflective of an enduring pattern of exclusion that Nathan experienced across his lifespan. He suggested that apartheid was an added difficulty for him which initially *"touched him"* upon his homecoming to Durban, where he experienced some of the negative effects of nepotism in the work place. As such, his father sent him to Cape Town in 1976, where an aunt assisted him with the procurement of a position in the Civil Service based on her contacts and connections:

> *It was actually through my Aunt's knowing of somebody who works in the civil service that I was able to secure a job, and I think that was my first obstacle as far as my careers were concerned. At the time, there was nobody really actively involved in employing disabled people, but through the efforts of my aunt, I managed to secure a job.*

4.3.5   Nathan's Workplace Experiences

Following his employment in the civil service, Nathan engaged a government position where he worked for twenty years. In the final four years of government service, he was *"shunted out"* to a district hospital, where he joined the Department of Health as a senior buyer. This was an inordinately challenging period for Nathan which ushered the onset of situational depression related to lack of support from his employers together with immense challenges getting to and from work on crutches without adequate transport provision. The *"trauma"* that he experienced at this time, prompted his resignation where Nathan took a package which funded the purchase of his first vehicle and a family home which he cites as a positive move to *"stabilise (his) family life at the time".* Following his resignation, Nathan reportedly struggled to find alternative employment as espoused in his statement that *"I was certain that I would just walk into another job and it didn't happen".* At this time, Nathan reportedly felt frustration and desperation as a result of the lack of opportunities: *"I got desperate, because when I wanted to go back to work, I couldn't because there were no opportunities for me".* Eventually, he procured employment as a representative at a merchandise firm, which he cites as particularly tedious due to long hours in the car, and very little commission. This adversity prompted his resignation following the acquisition of an estate agent position which was availed through one of his clients. Although Nathan had no experience in the industry, he experienced the job as "fulfilling but frustrating". Again, there was little financial reward for long hours and limited family time.

After his three year term as an Estate Agent, Nathan applied for a job at a large financial institution in the Western Cape again, based on the recommendations of a family contact. He worked at this institution for a period of ten years as a claims administrator and after 18 months, applied for a disability assessor's position which was quintessentially reserved for auxiliary medical practitioners such as Occupational Therapists and Nurses. Whilst

Nathan lacked the 'paper' qualifications, he was successful based on his own personal experiences as an individual with a physical disability.

> *I loved it. It was a new challenge. A new industry – and you know, the first time in the xxx industry and I was so grateful for my job. You know, after having gone through the trauma between the time I left the civil service and 2001, when I started at xxx, because I was kind of job hopping, because I didn't have a stable job as such. The income wasn't that great for all those three years, so for me, it was, you know… my life has taken an uphill from then, and you know I did it!*

Nathan suggests that this type of position is particularly well suited to him personally, since he has heightened perspicacity related to the lives and feelings of individuals with acquired disabilities:

> *I think, especially seeing as a disabled person, that I have a better perspective as to what the disability means. My colleagues are all able bodied assessors, but I think I may have more insight into how the disabled person feels and if that person can really get back to work given their medical condition.*

Nathan resigned eight years later again due to transportation obstacles and applied for his current position where he was offered a permanent contract as a disability claims assessor, based on his prior experience. Nathan is exceedingly happy and his move to become an assessor has been the high point in his career thus far, especially since he is very much a *"people's person".*

> *I got a lot of opportunity to travel, to see clients and also do my own presentations. So basically, I would come to you and say 'I am your new assessor for your company' and as such, go through the processes and say 'if you ever have any problems, I will come to you and try and solve them'. So that is what xxx gave me - the opportunity to improve on my people skills, my presentation skills and just to have the confidence to do things on my own. I became so confident that I could do it on my own, which has helped me so much in my life you know.*

4.3.6   Loyalty

Nathan explicates his long term employment statuses in terms of his *"loyalty"* and *"gratitude"* for the opportunities provided, which underscores his *"fear of losing his jobs".* As such, he *"pushed himself to the limit"* in order to maintain his employment status through loyalty, tenacity, meticulousness and 'gratitude' towards his employers:

> *I think that as a disabled person, you tend to be loyal to your employer because you know they have given you this opportunity – they have given you this job, so you give as much as you can back to them, and that is why I basically worked for the government for 20 years.*

Nathan suggests that employers should apprehend that as employees, individuals with disabilities are inordinately loyal and that most disabled individuals would value a *"proper job",* rather than seek perfunctory employment, or sheltered workshop placements, which he cites as the rule rather than the exception. He summates his argument that individuals are loyal, dependable employees in the following statement:

> *You know, that is the value that the employer will get. That loyalty and the person who is willing to do everything to the best of their ability. You won't find that in every other individual in the labour market, because they know that they can jump from job to job, so that's basically what has driven me. In my previous job, I was only on sick leave 3 – 4 days in ten years. I would always be there - sick and everything and they would say to*

me: "just go home". I mean that comes down to being loyal. That's Nathan for you! And then, perhaps on the flip side, feeling that if you are not there, they might just replace you. That's why I hate going on leave. You sit at home and nobody does your work so I was always worried when I get back what would be waiting for me. I mean, it's just me wanting to be at work every day. It's definitely also being grateful to your employer. You are going to give him that loyalty, that service, that value for money".

4.3.7   Stereotypes

Nathan disclosed several stories related to encounters with the denigrating effects of disability stereotypes. His experiences of 'pity' are espoused in the following story:

On a daily basis, people see me in a wheelchair, and they say, you go first – and it's almost as if they feel sorry for you that there is this person in a wheelchair: "let him go first". It's quite surprising; I have been in a lift with people who are quite surprised when I have said: "ok, you go first".

For Nathan, the ultimate is to be *"treated the same as everybody else in the workplace"* which relates to the acknowledgement that he is independent enough to work without *"special provisions".* Nathan shared multiple stories that revealed some of the gross discrimination and stereotypes that continue to pervade society and induce immense humiliation to the individual with a disability, one of which is chronicled below:

I was sitting one day, waiting for my wife outside a shop and I had bought some cooldrink. I had my Fanta tin in my hand, while I was waiting and then somebody came along and said: 'this is for you'. They thought, because I am sitting in a wheelchair, that I am begging. This didn't only happen once, it has happened quite a few times. They wanted to give me five rand, but I said: "no, don't worry about it.

I asked Nathan what happened inside, when individuals treated him this way. He stated that he felt it was degrading since, from his perspective, individuals *"in wheelchairs"* are basically all *"tarred with the same brush"* where people see the wheelchair, and therefore assume that *"you want something".*

4.3.8   Apartheid and Additional Discriminatory Discourse

Nathan told me that he feels that "there are very few employers interested in employing disabled people". Even with the redress of some of the inequalities of the apartheid system, Nathan states that at times, he continues to feel marginalised:

I think at the time, at that stage, when apartheid had gone and we were the new South Africa, the main focus was on the Black people – that was employment equity and people with disabilities were not regarded as the number one priority when it came to employment.

When I asked Nathan whether he felt dejected after witnessing the lifting of apartheid, whilst acknowledging that discrimination remained for individual with disabilities, he sadly answered:

That was for me very down heartening, you know, because they spoke about it in the Constitution – people with disabilities you know and the new Constitution that came out and it was almost like reverse discrimination, put it that way, because some individuals were getting all the top jobs, the top opportunities and it took me back to my day when I was in Durban struggling to get a job, you know where some groups prevailed and their friends and

in-laws would get a job over and above the person who actually could do the job – who could be employed on merit instead of employment equity.

4.3.9   Reasonable Accommodations

Nathan told me that 'accessibility' is one of the primary obstacles that individuals with disabilities face on a daily basis. This includes transport, which from his perspective is *"one of the greatest barriers to employment".* For Nathan personally, the transport situation has caused 'trauma' and even periods of depression at various intervals across his lifespan. This will be addressed further in Chapter 5. In his discussions Nathan stated that very often non disabled individuals do not acknowledge or fully conceptualise what is required for individuals with disabilities to gain access to buildings and other places. He suggested that even though some buildings may have the requisite ramps, companies seldom take cognisance of other factors such as turnstiles or electronic gates. For him, *"it's not just a matter of having a ramp in front",* it is also about the smaller things that can impede access and accessibility. I asked Nathan if there were other things that frustrated him, and his response was that he *"has learned to adapt".*

4.3.10   The Coda: The Future for Nathan

Nathan told me that he will not stop working anytime soon even though he is soon to be at 'retirement' age. As such, he is clear about his desires to expand and grow toward higher echelon positions and states: *"I hope to see myself going up and up".* With this, Nathan expressed the desire for more leadership roles where he hungers for enhanced training opportunities to realise his potential as a team leader. Nathan also suggested that the future for individuals with disabilities in the workplace should include: more efficient transportation systems; an ethos of inclusion and non-discrimination (being treated as *"a normal worker"*); independence; non-discrimination; disability recruitment 'specialists'; ergonomic consultants and improved remuneration packages. These will be addressed further in Chapter 5.

Nathan's story summated with the following concluding cadence:

> *Disabled people should be given a chance to prove themselves in the open labour sector, and also then not to be put in a back office so that they are not seen. They should be given the opportunity to move up because I was given the opportunity and I think that is something the disabled person appreciates very much.*

4.4 JEROME'S STORY

4.4.1   The Exposition

Jerome is a 29 year old male who was involved in a diving accident which occurred a week post his matric exams and two weeks after the sudden death of his father from Cirrhosis of the liver. He matured in a small community in the Western Cape, and is the youngest of four sisters and a brother with whom he has good relations. Jerome was immensely close to his mother who recently passed away and he suggests that *"to get someone else to fill the gap is quite a daunting task"*. His accident occurred when he attended a social event with his peers which included swimming in a public swimming bath. After connecting head-on with an individual already in the pool, Jerome was *"immediately paralysed from the chest down".* In spite of the obvious shock and trauma, Jerome implored the paramedics and parents who were present at the function, not to call his mother who was mourning the death of his father. His protection and care for others throughout his narrative is tangible:

> *This was two weeks after my father's death and I said to them, "no, don't call my mom… I will be ok in maybe two days' time… I will just sleep it out".*

Upon hearing the news that *"the chances of (him) ever walking again (were) zero",* Jerome *"did not register what had been said to (him)".* He spent three months in hospital and rehabilitation which was frustrating, yet Jerome states:

> *I think I had the life. I did everything that I wanted to and I never had to look back and think, "Oh, I wonder how it would be to do this or how it would be to ride a bicycle?" I had all those experiences.*

4.2.2   My Reflections

I was profoundly touched by Jerome's "half full" approach to life and his commitment to the empowerment of others. His clear positioning within the social model which draws upon social constructionism which in part drives my thoughts in this thesis reflect his position that through relatively minor changes in the workplace, such as the implementation of a sensitisation programme, wherein individuals are free to tell their stories, many of the socially constructed stereotypes can be suspended. Jerome's own story-telling process enacted at a sensitisation programme employed in his work context, reflects my assumption that storytelling is necessary not only for emancipation and empowerment of the teller, but also as a means to bring the audience face-to-face with their own prejudices, fears and defences and as such confront their projections which in part contribute to internalised oppression.

Through Jerome's telling, I noted that in many instances, the individual may not consider themselves 'disabled' at all. As such, the 'disabled' identity is indeed a social construct. Jerome only feels 'disabled' when there are restrictions in the social environment. Jerome is Jerome – he is not Jerome "the guy in the wheelchair!" From both a psychoanalytic and a social constructionist lens, disablism is not simply eradicated through awareness (Marks, 1999), instead, as Marks (1999:19) so aptly states: "(t)he social and psychological relationships represent more than the sum of the individuals that constitute them". For Jerome, actively engaging others through both the commonality and dichotomy of experience is a means to

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shift both social and internalised oppression. These shifts are indispensable to transform entrenched experiences – which Jerome feels is possible if every person commits to it.

4.4.3   Positivity and the Commitment to Excel

The tangibility of Jerome's positivity and his commitment to excel was espoused at numerous intervals throughout his narratives and was evidenced from his early school experiences where he described himself as *"quite an achiever at school – sports also"*. Jerome *"always wanted to be an achiever"* in order to *"improve what's around (him)"*. To achieve, Jerome indicates the importance of *"giving back"* and empowering others through motivation and the provision of a supportive environment which he suggests became an ingrained attitude profoundly predisposed by his mother's influences.

4.4.4   The Value of Sport and Recreation as more than just Social Interaction

Jerome's passion for sport throughout his life has been his *"ultimate form of rehabilitation"* where he was involved in soccer, cricket, rugby and baseball at school. He currently participates in wheelchair rugby and has been part of a national training squad on a few occasions. Jerome's love of sport has extended his rehabilitation and as such provided him with *"the platform to open up again"*, communicate and express himself where, from his perspective, *"it is more than just sport it's social interaction"* which implies the value Jerome places on connecting with others .

4.4.5   The Value of 'Giving Back'

"People are supposed to give you a fishing rod, not just your fish"

What became perniciously apparent throughout Jerome's rich narratives was the tenderness, insight and compassion with which he relates to others and his commitment to assist individuals *"to realise their full potential"*. This is exemplified in all aspects of his life and on some level has transitioned his initial dream to become an engineer, to his passionate commitment of *"wanting to be around people; wanting to change people and wanting to be involved"*. As such, Jerome indicates that he is currently engaging a course in psychology at tertiary level, and suggests that he wants to acquire *"knowledge of people and how to work with them better"*. This, he states has given him the unique opportunity to *"relate to people differently"* and listen to their unique life experiences. In addition to a sensitisation programme with which he was actively involved in his current work context, Jerome is the chairperson of an association for individuals with disabilities where he lobby's for funding and the provision of

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resources for individuals with disabilities to *"try to get them to where they should be"* by his commitment to *"raise awareness and sensitisation around disability"*. Jerome told me that from his perspective, *"giving back"* is not only about provision of resources without empowering others to take care of their own needs. Instead, relative to the quotation above, Jerome states emphatically that *"people are supposed to give you a fishing rod, not just fish"* which underscores the value that he places on emancipation and independence. In his association work, Jerome describes the importance of empowering others through a commonality of experience where *"everyone's the same – everyone's in a wheelchair"*. The value of a commonality of experience is underscored in the following statement:

> *I am a person now who understands what they are going through – and to them it is just the ultimate experience, to be with people who understand and people who know what they are going through and I think that is what excites me.*

It is through this commonality of experience that Jerome apprehends as indispensable in the early stages of *"coming to terms with an acquired disability"*, wherein individuals have the opportunity to grow in confidence and experience which *"rubs off on the next person so that they also want to achieve"*. With this, Jerome acknowledges that in many instances, individuals with acquired disabilities may become ostracised from their friendship groups based his on personal experience where he "lost" significant friendships after his accident. Yet, in spite of this, Jerome's sparkling moment occurred in 2009 after a road trip with 15 non disabled friends which he described in lyrical detail as the *"wow"* moment in his life, when his friends *"actually saw (him) as one of them, not just this guy in the wheelchair"*. Jerome suggests that it is these experiences that *"make you forget that you are in a wheelchair... because you are experiencing life… without feeling limited"*.

4.4.6   Jerome's Workplace Experiences: The Construction of a Professional Identity

"I just love it and it keeps me on my toes"

Jerome's transition from school to the workplace was complicated by his accident which occurred shortly after the completion of his matric examinations where it was *"a new thing just getting into the whole job market"*. As such, Jerome states that he procured the gateway to his current job through a family contact. He describes his entry into the workplace as *"convenient"; "awesome"* and *"almost perfect"* where *"the staff were accommodating"*, the facilities were *"fine"* and he completed a learnership for a year before becoming an administrator. He indicates that it was his participation in the sensitisation programme that really opened doors for him where he states:

> *They could see another side of Jerome, where they wouldn't just see the wheelchair and that was an eye opener to a lot of people around me, and colleagues and that actually came to me and said that when they first*

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saw me, they thought 'ag shame' this, and 'ag shame' that, but now they can actually see me as Jerome – a normal worker.

The process of the implementation of the sensitisation programme involved the telling and sharing of his story and experiences as an individual with an acquired disability to enhance sensitisation, awareness and etiquette:

I told my whole story from A to Z and I think it was with three sessions with different departments and I just presented and told them about what I would like, about approaches you know, the normal stuff like being sensitive – don't just push my chair, ask me if you see I am struggling or something – don't just take it away from me – ask me "can I help you Jerome?" Don't just look at me, don't just stare or something, if you want to ask, you ask, because I also have my normal conversations – I talk about sport, I talk about girls, I talk about everything, so don't just think there is nothing to talk about because I am in a wheelchair, because I live a normal life – so don't look at me as the guy in the wheelchair – look at me as Jerome!

From this lens, Jerome narrates that he is treated the same as everybody else at work which is vitally important to him personally:

All those stereotypes and stuff were taken away back then already, so I have growth with them and they just see Jerome and they can count on me, and I get the same pressures from management and deadlines and everything, so there's no 'ag shame, he's in a wheelchair', so he can have an extra week.

From his administrative position, Jerome *"worked (his) way up to the ranks quite quickly"* in his current place of employment and is presently involved in training and coaching work. This as the company saw his potential and acknowledged his positive *"can-do"* attitude.

4.4.7   Society's Ignorance around Disability

"My disability is not an inability"

Jerome was able to succinctly describe the experience of disability both from the lens of the individual with the so-called impairment, and the perspective of an non disabled individual. He suggests that this relates to the fact that he acknowledges that his disability was acquired rather than congenital. From the perspective of an non disabled individual, Jerome acknowledges *"the ignorance around disability"* and recognises that people in general are *"not sensitised"* to the needs of individuals with disabilities. From the perspective of an individual with a disability Jerome indicates that "*it also depends on how we are going to lobby it, and how we are going to advocate it"* where he states that it is also up to individuals with disabilities themselves to refute the stereotypes and labels that society has inculcated and conceptualises the notion that many continue to view individuals with disabilities as victims engaging in *"one big pity party"*. Through communication, Jerome indicates that individuals with disabilities are ambassadors:

I think that the problem is all about communication. If I feel a bit down today, then I must tell them that I am not in a proper space today, I must communicate it, because if you don't communicate, its almost like a label will

be put on you – like 'wheelchair people are always down'. Tomorrow, another colleague may come whose confident and enthusiastic, but 'wheelchair people are always down' so that stereotype goes along and I always tell people: "you must be an ambassador when you are in that wheelchair", because tomorrow, I will be labelled like that, and I wouldn't like to come into a room and there's that perception that 'wheelchair people' are depressed, or 'wheelchair people' can't smile because he's had that one experience maybe of someone in a wheelchair, so always try to smile, even if you have to fake it, just for the sake of the next person, so it's an on-going thing and the more we are out there, the more people are aware of us and you always need to present yourself – it's sometimes tough and sometimes it's just natural.

Jerome told me that individuals with disabilities who desire employment in the mainstream labour sector themselves need to stop coming up with *"disabled excuses"* on the one hand, and managers must be able to treat individuals with disabilities the same as their non disabled counterparts on the other. Through awareness, Jerome promotes the notion of equality which accordingly *"doesn't mean that you have to conform to the pattern of a disabled society".* For Jerome, a disabled society is one where individuals with disabilities are thought to *"have pity parties"* and one where *"people come and tell you, you can't do this, and you can't do that – you are just someone in a wheelchair".* As such, he refuses to conform to this disabled society because: *"I am still Jerome, and I still have unique potential which I want to fulfil."*

4.4.8   Jerome's Stance on Reasonable Accommodations

Jerome states that individuals with disabilities need to be aware of their rights when it comes to reasonable accommodations in the workplace which involves tapping into self-education. For Jerome this entails effective communication where companies are required to spend time getting to know their staff in addition to the implementation of strategies to improve the quality of accessibility as an on-going process. Jerome describes his own disability from a social constructionist perspective.

To me disability is that I can't go there, because there is a step in the way. That's my disability. I can't go to the second floor because there is no lift, there are stairs, then I am disabled. If I can't go to the toilet to relieve myself, then I know. Then I feel disabled, because then it comes back to who I am, then I feel limited. But as soon as I know, I have access to this, I have access to that, I can go where I want to go, then I can live freely, because there are no limitations. Then I can express myself and I can do whatever I want to do, but as soon as there is something that reminds me of my disability, a lift or parking space – then it comes back to me to say: "Jerome, you are disabled".

Jerome suggested that his present company has done much to ensure quality accommodations for employees which include the provision of ramps, toilets, parking and the sensitisation programme described above. Additionally, Jerome states that his company is always willing to listen and make necessary adaptations where required.   He suggests that his peers have compared his workplace to that of a first world country where *"everything is perfect".* Jerome narrates that it is only through the consultation with individuals with disabilities as to *"how to build a ramp",* that there can be full inclusion and active participation from the standpoint of *"nothing*

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about us without us". Like the other narrators, Jerome cites transport as one of the greatest barriers to the independence of individuals with disabilities which in turn impacts the procurement of employment.

4.4.9   What Companies, Employers and Individuals Themselves Need to Know

Jerome suggests that heightened awareness through sensitisation is vital and that companies and employers need to establish the needs of their employees as well as their *"needs within (their) abilities".* Jerome told me that managers and employers should *"not always just assume that you can do it, or assume that you can't do it, but rather get to know the person"* which relates to effective communication skills. He told me that lack of awareness has two perspectives: first, companies and institutions may not be sensitised to the *"disabled market"* and second, the reason for this lack of sensitisation may be as a result of the fact that individuals with disabilities may not be *"putting themselves out there"* due to apathy or passivity related to over-dependence on disability grants.

4.4.10   Support

Many characters in Jerome's story are illuminated as optimal support systems. These include his mother, sisters, brother, neighbours, friends, colleagues, managers and even relatively minor characters in his story, such as parking attendants who assist him in the mornings at his current place of work. For Jerome, support was not simply extant following his acquired disability, but rather an enduring presence across his lifespan, which cemented his acknowledgement that *"if you don't have support around you, you are doomed to fail".* Additionally, *"the achievements"* of his friends with disabilities *"were the true inspiration"* in Jerome's life from whence he drew intrinsic motivation and encouragement and reflected on the rhetorical self-imposed question *"if they can do it, why can't I?"* As such, Jerome inculcates the value of drawing from other peoples' experiences and achievements.

4.4.11   The Coda: The Future for Jerome

Jerome desires a move to a career role which includes *"social development in social milieus",* where he can become more actively involved in *"making a difference"* – a theme which threads throughout all of his stories. This includes his desire to assist a greater scope of individual by "train(ing) them up and see(ing) them realise their potential". As such, Jerome's desire is to move away from a corporate setting, although he acknowledges that this could prove challenging from a financial perspective.

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Jerome's concluding cadence is encapsulated in the following provocative statement:

> *When I am at work, I don't feel disabled, I feel free because I can do what I want to do. People shout immediately to me, I need this done, I want this done, so there is no time to feel disabled. One day we were sitting in a meeting discussing stuff, and when everyone was getting up, so comfortable I was with myself that I tried to stand up. Everyone saw and said Jerome, you wanted to get up just now. I just said: 'I forgot that I was disabled.*

4.5   ANTHONY'S STORY

4.5.1   The Exposition

"It's a big challenge for a Deaf person to make themselves heard, to be equal"

Anthony was twenty six at the time of our interviews. He described his family members as supportive and told me that whilst his father and baby sister are so-called 'hearing' individuals who are able to sign efficiently, the rest of his family members, including his mother, brother and middle sister are hearing 'impaired'. Anthony's parents separated when he was very young, and whilst he reports a nurturing, mutually reciprocal relationship with his mother, he suggests that his relationship with his father is strained at times. Childhood was *"not difficult"* for Anthony, and during these years of exploration and playfulness, he *"felt the same"* as his peers, yet added:

> *Later though you realise that you are not the same, because everything you do, something tells you everybody is looking at you. You give them your attention and they see that something wrong with you.*

These socially constructed stereotypes weaved thematically throughout Anthony's extensive narratives, which at times have caused him to feel *"rejected"* and *"unhappy"* especially in the workplace.

4.5.2   My Reflections

Anthony's expressive narratives unfolded with extensive rich dialogues and commitment to deliver a story that he hoped would not only assist his employers to truly 'hear' aspects of his unhappiness in his current place of employment, but also to serve as a means to emancipate other Deaf individuals in their quest for full and equal employment status. Our interviews really were fundamentally different to all of the others and Anthony shared, uninterrupted for a full three hours in total. This underscores the notion of flexibility in research practices with individuals with disabilities as a means to accommodate the varying modes of storytelling. I present an excerpt from my reflections (the 'fugal answers') compiled after the narrative interviews with Anthony in the following section:

> Anthony's profuse references to feeling *"unheard"* translates to feeling discarded – a theme which has become intricately interwoven between the symbolic order of what Lacan terms "the gap between signifier and signified". These feelings continue to *"fall on Deaf ears"* and the *"silence"* that Anthony experiences in

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his current workplace is indeed *"Deafening"* which reflects the social constructionist notion where the reality of Anthony's 'Deafness' is inter-subjectively constructed rather than implicit in the 'impairment' itself. The patronising *"smiles"* and *"compliments*" that he does receive from his managers in part underscore a reaction formation defence as a means to repress their own unconscious feelings and impulses toward Anthony as a Deaf individual. These smiles and compliments are *"dishonest"* from Anthony's perspective which juxtaposes his own understandings that *"the Deaf cannot be dishonest*". Anthony implores others to *"step into his shoes"* and communicate with him with sincerity to counter this discrimination, where at times, he feels that in order to be accepted, he must *"prostitute himself through language*". Because from a Lacanian perspective, we can only know the unconscious through speech and language, Anthony's feelings that he is *"a language whore"* amid both societal and personal conceptualisations that Deafness implies an inability to communicate, is juxtaposed with his perceptions that few people in his world at this time, are willing to actively communicate with him, as a result of their misconceptions of his Other-ness. Because, as Lacan teaches us, when we are born we need to learn to articulate our desires, what becomes evident in psychoanalysis is that "our desires are always inextricably bound up with the desires of others" (Homer, 2005:70). From this perspective, because all of our discourse and unconscious desires flow together through language, Anthony feels at times as if he is condemned to speak only through the desires of others which makes him feel like a prostitute: to be acknowledged and respected, Anthony needs to sell his proverbial soul. His feeling of dependence upon the Other, where the Other is not dependent on him, goes beyond Anthony's feelings of alienation through language and communication.

Anthony's social experiences of denigration and exclusion appear to stir feelings of a deeply divided sense of self. On the one hand he acknowledges that he is a valuable employee, yet the mirror images he receives from those in context reflect to him on some level that he is *"not useful*" which underscores society's conceptualisations of disability as an inferior status. His feelings of *"powerlessness"* reflect his growing emotional responses which are reaching a crescendo where his feelings are so painfully etched in the socially constructed notion that *"if you are Deaf you cannot speak for yourself".* For Anthony, his current company has been paying R8000 to *"not make (him) understand what is going on*". This reflects the Lacanian subject of the unconscious as essentially 'no-thing" where Anthony as the subject "has lost his being" (Homer, 2005:71). Through alienation and separation from language, Anthony feels constantly divided, split and separate. His message to his employers is simply to hear what the Deaf have to say, to be aware and to not only hear, but also to listen!

4.5.3 Education and Training

"When I was at school, I grew in confidence because everyone was Deaf"

Anthony told me that he attended a school for children with hearing impairments in the Cape Town area from Grade one where he grew in confidence, based on the commonality of experience through his interactions with children from the Deaf community. He passed matric at the age of 19 and indicates that by the time he was in his final year at school, there were only four fellow learners 'left' in his class, which from his perspective relates to the immense challenges that Deaf children face in the education system. Anthony told me that his confidence levels expanded throughout his school and schooling and he was made head boy in matric, after which he attended a FET college in Cape Town where he studied business administration.

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4.5.4   Workplace Experiences

"I just want to be happy. But they don't give me a chance"

Anthony's richly constructed narrative of experience began with his vociferous acknowledgement that whilst he values his current place of work as an institution - he continues to feel immense frustration, unhappiness, dejection and *"hopelessness"'* related to his lack of training opportunities. In spite of the fact that he has been working at his current place of employment for five years, after passing a learnership, Anthony told me that he has been constantly overlooked for promotional and permanent placement opportunities due to what he feels is marginalisation and discrimination since he *"gives it his all"*. This is painful for Anthony, as his dream is to occupy a managerial role, which appears to be well suited to his very social and engaging personality type. His frustration and concomitant dejection has become even more acute over the years, when Anthony has evidenced new staff members without his wealth of experience, procure permanent contracts and promotions after only a few months of employment even though he comes to work early, leaves late and does more than that which is expected of him. Although Anthony has addressed this several times with both his management team and the HR department, he indicates that little has changed, and that he is repeatedly told by management that: *"they are working on it, and (he) must just be patient"*. Although Anthony suggests that he has *"tried to make them understand"*, he told me that the frequent turnover of new managerial staff, exacerbated by stereotypes and negative perceptions about him as a Deaf individual have precluded him from *"moving forward"* which he wants not only for personal and professional growth, but also as a means to act as *"an example for the other Deaf generation that must come."* These views are exemplified in the following extract:

> *I started working here, because I thought, it's a big company and they give a lot of opportunities for any type of workers, so three years past I was concerned and I said: "when am I going to get training"' I hear people say: " I am going to train tomorrow for three months", and I think ok, you deserve it, but then, later, a new employee comes and says the same thing and improves, so I go to the operational manager and HR and my manager and the floor manager and all they say to me is that they are "working on it. I must just be patient". But I told them, that is what the previous operational manager and HR said. I improve my work results and I have tried to make them understand. I am Deaf yes, but not dumb. I have my matric and I did study at xxx and for me, it's challenging. I tried to improve here, and tried to convince people, but they shut the door in my face.*

Anthony told me that although he is unhappy, his place of employment as an institution is *"like his home"*. His opportunity to engage participation in the workplace soccer club is immensely nurturing for Anthony on many levels – including the opportunity to engage socially with his fellow sportsmen and women who Anthony values as friendly individuals with whom he is able to communicate easily and efficiently. As such, Anthony does not wish to leave his current company, simply because from his perspective, management (rather than the company as a whole) does not appear to value him.

4.5.5 Communication Difficulties

"You can understand what I am saying, but it falls on Deaf ears"

Anthony's communication "difficulties" are only challenging from the perspective of the socially constructed stereotypes and lack of willingness on behalf of others to fully engage with him upon realising that he is Deaf. As such, he persistently feels excluded from conversations where individuals assume that *"if I am quiet, I am dumb"*. Anthony states that people seldom *"listen to him";* take him seriously or spend *"a few seconds of extra time"* to converse with Deaf individuals. This is especially prevalent in the workplace and Anthony suggests that these few extra seconds of waiting and slowing down is all that is required to converse efficiently and as such make a difference in the lives of individuals with hearing impairments. He similarly indicates that in order to enhance his communicative interactions, he is required to implement creative strategies to attempt to 'educate' colleagues and other staff members to converse using the basics of sign language which he describes as an energy exchange for the business skills that he wishes to learn: *"I want to learn the business and I give my language free"*.

Anthony told me that *"it's very frustrating"* that he has not been reasonably accommodated in the workplace during meetings and courses and cites that in many instances people talk with their backs to him. As such he frequently feels excluded from conversations and indicates that the poor etiquette and lack of provision of assistive devices or short term one-on-one training sessions, in many instances excludes him from understanding what is said in meetings. In addition, Anthony feels *"embarrassed"* at times to pose questions in group training settings, since from his perspective, *"the rest of the class become irritated"*, which he feels is partly the reason for his exclusion from training opportunities. With this in mind, it is clear that Anthony and the other Deaf employees at the company would benefit greatly from a sign language interpreter, yet Anthony indicates that when he has broached the subject, management has indicated that the costs involved would be too high.

For Anthony, part of the discrimination that has touched him greatly is that he feels like he *has "prostituted himself in a communication way".* From his perspective, he values the lives and interactions with *"hearing people"* that he depends upon when there is no sign language. His painful question: *"how can I make myself valuable for you who is hearing?"* summates his argument that whilst hearing individuals can *"reject"* him at any time, he will still approach *"them"* for help which from his perspective translates to communicative 'prostitution'. For Anthony, communicative challenges, specifically related to *"not being heard"* and subsequently *"not being understood",* is the greatest barrier that he has experienced across the life span. In many instances, Anthony suggests that individuals with disabilities have to *"act"* in order to show others that 'they' are positive.

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4.5.6   Stereotypes and Discrimination

"We've got feelings too"

Apart from Anthony's experiences of exclusion from training opportunities and a permanent contractual position he told me that he felt *"rejected"* on many levels. This is particularly related to the fact that in many instances he feels that he has to *"depend on others"* whilst others do not depend on him and instead treat him with *"pity"* where he feels *"unseen"* and *"unheard"*. From this perspective Anthony suggests that individuals in his immediate context perceive that it is 'difficult' to interact proficiently with Deaf individuals – for him, it is not simply about being disabled, but rather understanding *"the different types of disabled groups"* since individuals with a hearing impairment are often perceived, however prejudicially as *"a retard, a comedy"* and as such experience compounded exclusions:

> If you are blind you can still speak for yourself. If you have one arm, you can still speak for yourself. I am hearing you, the disabled person. But if you are Deaf, you can't speak for yourself. Just think of that. I can't understand what you say. You are quiet. You are Deaf.

From this perspective, Anthony wants to talk. He wants to be heard and truly listened to. He desires the acknowledgement that Deaf individuals are the same as what he calls *"normals"* – that he also feels hurt, loss and painful experiences. Anthony wants to speak up to tell others how he feels about his present situation, yet he indicates that the more he attempts to talk, the more others:

> Look at me, like I am a retard. I make signs – it's like a comedy for them to see a Deaf person going on, who can't really speak properly.

For Anthony, the irreverent use of the term *"Deaf and dumb"* is excruciating discourse which further contributes to discrimination where society is quick to pass the aspersion that individuals with hearing impairments *"cannot speak for themselves"*. His chronic feelings of exclusion and discrimination in the world of work have frequently caused Anthony to dejectedly consider whether indeed he will ever be afforded the opportunities to grow and develop. With this in mind, Anthony posed the following question: *"have you ever heard of a Deaf manager?"* From this perspective, it is clear that Anthony feels that it will be excruciatingly challenging to attain a leadership position in the workplace amid the discrimination and oppression that has formed part of his experience for the past four years.   Anthony also told me that he feels that his difficulties are exacerbated by the fact that his disability is 'congenital'. From this perspective, Anthony states that it is more challenging for individuals who have experienced what it is like to 'hear'.

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Anthony wants people to know that Deaf individuals are also *"human beings"* to be valued:

> *We've got feelings too. So what's the difference? I can't hear you. You can hear. Everything's the same, it's just that part that God took away from me, and it's my hearing.*

Lastly, Anthony told me that in many instances, people take advantage of individuals with hearing impairments, possibly due to their honesty and transparency. From Anthony's perspective, Deaf individuals seldom lie, and are frequently straight to the point, which may translate to the persistently held stereotypical assumption that Deaf people are *"short tempered"*.

> *You can't lie, because you can't hear what's going on. You can't change the subject! We are always straight to the point. We are Deaf. So we are honest. That's our nature in the Deaf world.*

For Anthony, what so-called hearing individuals do not concede is the fact that individuals with hearing impairments frequently have heightened and very well developed perceptual insights into human nature, where 'they' are able to respond fully with the utmost level of insight and perception to the common humanity of others. On the other hand, Anthony indicates that in some instances, his colleagues may laugh with one another and exclude him. From this perspective, because of his heightened sensitivity, Anthony may perceive that they are laughing at him, which makes him feel offended.

4.5.7   Reasonable Accommodations

Anthony told me that *"money"* is the biggest obstacle to the provision of reasonable accommodations for him as a Deaf individual in the workplace. Whilst he indicated at the outset that a sign language interpreter is not necessarily a pre-requisite, it became evident throughout his narratives, that a sign language interpreter would definitely make his life easier particularly at meetings and during times of training and staff development. Anthony states that lack of funds are the primary *"excuses"* for failing to make the services of a sign language interpreter to the Deaf employees. He also suggests that for training, the basic requisite is one-on-one intervention, to gain clear understanding as to what is required of him in a logical, meaningful manner.

4.5.8   The Coda: The Future for Anthony

Anthony indicates that the goal for his immediate future is to acquire the requisite training as a mechanism to progress further in the workplace. He suggests that in the long term, he would like to become a manager since he has *"been responsible from a young age"*. From his perspective he feels that he *"is getting older"* and as such, told me that he would like to cement his career not only in terms of prospects but also to be in a position to increase his remuneration so that he will have the financial means to take care of his mother, and also fund the

family's needs in terms of the purchase of new hearing aids. The ultimate for Anthony, would be for individuals to step fully into one another's worlds, to understand and appreciate different perspectives and experiences.

The culmination of Anthony's narratives summates with the following concluding cadence:

> *It's amazing to see a Deaf person grow, but they don't want to see it. They think it is a lot of work. But I am not Deaf. They are Deaf. I am not disabled. They are disabled. It is not me, I am not the problem. I am just here to feed my family, but they forget that maybe one day their family members or even themselves may be disabled!*

4.6   DIANNE'S STORY

4.6.1   The Exposition

Dianne is a 45 year old mother of two with congenital visual impairment. She was a toddler when diagnosed with Glaucoma which has caused her sight to steadily decline across her lifespan and Dianne told me that she is currently *"totally blind".* She is the youngest of three siblings and derives a close knit family of origin, where her father was somewhat overprotective, whilst her mother *"treated (her) the same as (her) siblings.* Dianne reports that this taught her *"to be self-sustainable and independent"* which is *"what gave (her) the advantage to be where she is now".* Dianne was initially placed in a mainstream educational context, but told me that she had a number of obstacles *"like seeing on the board"* which prompted her mother to seek placement for her at a boarding school for learners with visual impairment. Dianne's educational experience was reasonably happy and she told me that she *"found it nice to be with people who were in the same situation".*

4.6.2   My Reflections

The interviews with Dianne were unlike any of the others, in that I had the rare opportunity to fully experience her engaging her daily workplace activities. I became aware of her velvet-toned voice as she answered the telephone and communicated over the loudspeaker which mirrored her statement: "I love talking".   It therefore didn't surprise me when she told me that she had indeed been "employed" at the local community radio station and that the media was "her first love". Yet, the R1500 that they paid her per month, on the basis that the job was more a "voluntary" position, highlighted Dianne's reality of "limited choices". The notion of "limited choices" was evidenced throughout her narratives where her clear talent and love of "using her voice" as a chosen career path was etched against her lack of opportunities and environmental constraints. Dianne's desire for somebody to "see (her) capabilities" became an on-going experience of having to re-present herself, to refute stereotypical assumptions that have in turn contributed to aspects of internalised oppression which were evidenced in parts of Dianne's narratives. Like Anthony's feelings of not being heard, Dianne's experience of having others "turn a blind eye" on her wealth of skills and talent, simply because she does not meet the socially constructed notions of "normalcy" was evidenced throughout her stories. Her resignation to accept that on some level, others are 'more deserving' of a media position than she is – reflects the dominant stereotype of the individual with a disability as less "entitled".

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Dianne clearly possesses all the credentials to truly find fulfilment and her own niche in the media without intrapsychically internalising alternate forms of self-deprivation.

4.6.3   Transition from School to the World of Work

Dianne told me that she was excluded from tertiary educational prospects because as an individual with visual impairment, she simply didn't have the opportunities:

> *In those years, people didn't have the opportunities – and I am talking about people with disabilities – they*
> *didn't have the opportunities to go to the universities and things like that after they had completed their school*
> *careers.*

Dianne's *"lack of opportunities"* refer not to the fact that she lacks the *"capabilities"*, but rather that from her perspective individuals with disabilities often *"can't speak up for themselves"* in order to acquire the much needed reasonable accommodations to facilitate success in educational and employment contexts. Whilst Dianne told me that she failed a few of her matric subjects in 1987, it appears that the opportunity to study at university for individuals with disabilities remained illusive at that time which contributed in part to her apathy to engage further educational opportunities. Dianne told me that she finally completed her matric in June 2011, and is considering further study in communications in the future even though her current earning potential is scant, and it would be inordinately challenging to procure the funds to realise this dream, especially since she is a single mother of three.

After the completion of her matric in 1987, Dianne only managed to acquire her first 'legitimate' job thirteen years later in 2000, where she worked on a short term (two month) contractual basis at a local community radio station. Prior to this, the years 1988-2000 consisted of a number of perfunctory positions, wherein Dianne worked at the Cape Town Society for the Blind in the weaving department and later, as a child-minder at a crèche. She told me:

> *It was a bit difficult for people who were not educated to get work, so I needed to go and work in these places*
> *to earn something for myself, but it wasn't something I wanted to do.*

Dianne also reported that she generally acquired these positions through contacts which from her perspective inculcates the view that individuals with disabilities need to *"know someone in order to get somewhere"*. Dianne told me that she was the first blind person to work in the media and suggested that she found the position immensely nurturing and reflected that the media was an industry within which she would definitely have liked to procure long term, paid employment status. The short term contractual position was advertised especially for individuals with disabilities as a forum to present disability awareness programming. Upon expiry of this contract, Dianne was forced to continue in a voluntary capacity since the organisation was not prepared to pay her for her services in spite of her obvious talent and facility with verbal interactive communication. As such Dianne was later obliged to seek alternative opportunities in order to care for herself and her three children. The volunteer work

enabled Dianne to *"meet quite a lot of people",* including the superintendent and matron of the local day hospital where she was eventually offered full time employment as a switchboard operator since, as Dianne indicated: these people *"knew her capabilities"* and as such *"knew actually what they were going to employ".*

In the workplace, Dianne told me that in some ways she is *"a spokesperson"* for individuals with disabilities and as such at to *"double prove"* herself, since:

> When so-called able bodies make a mistake, then people will always forgive them, but when people with disabilities do something wrong, they will say, ag, I am not going to give another blind persona chance, because that blind person did this and that blind person did that. But they will not say that about someone who doesn't have a disability and it can be very frustrating at times.

Dianne's need to "*double prove (her)self*" is also relates to her understanding that *"not all individuals with disabilities can speak up for themselves"* and as such, she states that she *"constantly considers others with disabilities who may wish to acquire similar opportunities in the world of work"* and in so doing commits to act as a role model for future generations of visually impaired individuals.

4.6.4   Dianne's Current Position

Dianne has been working at her local community day hospital for five years now as a switchboard operator. In spite of the fact that she has always valued a career in the media, Dianne told me that she likes her job which is preferable to the alternatives, which in her mind comprise the prospect of *"having to go and plait baskets somewhere".* Yet, Dianne is not earning a good salary, which may prevent her from completing her studies and further impact her dream to become a talk show host. Dianne similarly told me that *"people with disabilities like to stick where they are, because they are not always changing their jobs like other people"* which translates in part to loyalty on the one hand, and the fact that individuals with disabilities have limited choices on the other. She contends that:

> You are actually having a valuable asset if you invest in someone with a disability, because they don't have a choice to decide 'I am not going there today', or 'I don't want to do this anymore', or 'I can change for someone else'.

For Dianne this does not necessarily indicate that individuals with disabilities *"appreciate it more"* but rather that they will *"think twice before they change for something else".* This thinking twice, relates to the Dianne's indication that in spite of the government's drive to employ at least 2% of individuals with disabilities in the workplace, this seldom happens with the result that in many instances, individuals with disabilities continue to experience exclusion and marginalisation from the world of work. As such, Dianne suggests that *"you can't just walk into some place and just do whatever you want to get extra money".*

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For Dianne, the dearth of reasonable accommodations and provision of assistive devices at her current place of work continues to present as a challenge. In spite of the fact that she works within a governmental department, she told me that there is no computer software available for her to *"do her job"* which suggests that:

> *If people are looking for the clinic's telephone numbers, I need to remember them all. My memory is not always that good, but I am forcing it to be good. I have my own braille machine so as you can see, I sometimes write things down, but if you are a fully sighted person, and you want to see what you did for the day, you can just take your eye and let it go through the page, but when you are blind, you must feel through every individual thing.*

For Dianne, accommodations refer not only to the availability of assistive technology, but also to a caring attitude from employers and managers, where, from her perspective, *"there is a difference between sympathy and caring"*. Dianne said that sadly, her employers simply view her as a 'disabled person' that they can add to their books to fulfil their requisite equity quotas, rather than as *"an individual"* with a lot to give. From this perspective, Dianne indicates that she would like employers to learn to *"communicate"* better, so that *"they know what the needs of the person are, as it opens quite a lot of doors"*. For Dianne *"communication is actually the ultimate key to success from all parties"*.

4.6.5   The Role of Mother

Dianne told me that the recent divorce from her husband has been a particularly painful experience and states that she has been struggling financially, given the fact that she has to share the profits of the sale of her RDP house with her ex-husband and support three children with very little financial assistance. Dianne described her role as mother and narrated the experiences with her daughter, now thirteen who presents with intellectual impairment as one that is *"bringing so much joy into my life".* She recounts her daughter's story:

> *She was 2 and a half months old when she went into cardiac arrest and the doctors told me that she will never be 'normal', she will be 'mentally retarded' and that. But she is talking and everything now. It is teaching me such a lot of things because when she was two and a half months old, when the doctors asked me if they must take off the machinery that was holding her to life, I actually said "no" and I don't know why I said "no" but um ya, it's just because some people often think that ag It's true what the doctor says. But life is not in their hands.*

Dianne's son, *"fell into crime and drugs"* at the same time when she completely *"lost her sight"* which she describes as *"the most difficult time"*. Her son is currently serving a prison sentence which has made Dianne *"see crime in a different light"*. Dianne has committed to forming a parent support group in addition to her disability association work, where she is the chairperson.

4.6.6   The Coda: The Future for Dianne

Dianne told me that she definitely does not wish to see herself behind the switchboard forever. She suggests that all her friends *"had switchboard jobs"* which is what inspired her to seek a similar career although *"that is not actually what (she) wants".* Her ideal career would be in a media related industry and Dianne told me that she would like to study further in the future to attain these ends. Throughout her career, Dianne *"never stopped fighting"* and her motivation *"to fight for what you want in life"* was evidenced in her decision to return to write her matric whilst working in 2011. For Dianne, the media is her *"first love"* and she stated:

> If someone would give me the opportunity, then maybe I would pursue it. I am not scared of challenges. It's not that I am saying this job is not nice, it's just that when I was interviewing the people on the radio, I was always learning something, but here it's just day to day stuff, people looking for the matron or the medical superintendent. If I would like to have something, then it would be presenting Fokus, like Lynette Francis does. I am sure that she learns from others on a day to day basis – and that is what I would like. Learning from other people's experiences
> .

Dianne ended her narrative with the following concluding cadence:

> You know what you are now, but you don't know what you are going to be in the next five minutes. A person doesn't need to be rude to put across whatever you want to say, whatever you want to do, but you must say to yourself, whatever I want to achieve is possible to achieve, and then you can't go wrong.

4.7   CATHY'S STORY

4.7.1   The Exposition

Cathy is a 45 year old, mother of two who was involved in a serious car accident in 1996 where her seventh cervical vertebrae was severed whilst seven months pregnant with her second child, Luke. Cathy derives a close knit family or origin, where she matured in an orthodox Christian home, and was *"sent to"* a private school in the Western Cape for most of her scholastic career. She indicates that she *"did not like school one bit"* and as such convinced her father to procure placement for her in a government school from grade 9. The move to a government school was a happy time for Cathy, and she indicates that she *"embraced it".* Cathy told me that she and her husband have basically *"known each other their whole lives"* and became friends at a youth camp when they were teenagers. Her daughter, Samantha[5], who is 19 years of age, recently disclosed to the family that she is gay. Whilst Cathy has accepted this willingly, her husband Steven is reportedly resistant to the idea that Samantha has chosen an alternative path. Cathy currently works for a large media corporation, where she has been employed since 2002. She loves her job, and intersperses her time at work with writing and is currently

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[5] All names included in Chapter 4 are pseudonyms.

engaged in crafting her own autobiography which has provided Cathy with the ultimate cathartic mechanism where she is able to work with her repressed memories and feelings about the accident.

4.7.2   My Reflections

The narrative interviews included in this section, were conducted at Cathy' home, which was a particularly intimate experience, wherein Cathy shared many details of her life and living, expounded through storytelling replete with photographs, shared poetry, publications and deep discussions as we wandered throughout the various family rooms, where I was privy to such personal artefacts which enhanced the lived stories with exquisite detail and sentimentality. Cathy' rich descriptions about her deeply personal journey from a non disabled individual to the immensely confusing time post-accident where she felt as if she was *"going into a forest trying to find her way"*, interspersed with her vividly stirring stories about her family and dreams for the future, were captivating and inspiring as I sat, transfixed, immersed in her private world. I describe a selection of my reflexive notes in the section that follows:

> The symbology of 'loss' and the concomitant feelings of an inability to *"control the course of her own life and future"* reflected through bodily transformation (the vehicle), was evidenced in Cathy' developing narrative which she described eloquently as *"feeling lost in a forest".* Cathy' experiences of 'loss' and feeling 'lost' following her accident may reflect in part her sense of self-alienation implicit in the Lacanian principle of mis-recognition of Self (Sarup, 1993) which was painfully reflected in the image where her own daughter *"cried"* after seeing her in a wheelchair. Cathy' immense mourning work through the catharsis of writing (language) has been a means to extricate the bonds of the *"forest"* experience and as such, absorb her sense of object loss and in so doing re-integrate her sense of Self through her citations that *"not all disabilities are deficiencies"*. Whilst contemporary disability literature does not constitute disability as a 'loss', and refutes the notion of 'grief work' using a stage model (Watermeyer, 2009), the early part of Cathy' story addresses her thoughts and feelings related to multiple experiences of grief and loss reflected in the stories about her own physical impairment; her husband's head injury; her son's premature birth and concomitant intellectual impairment; financial loss and her own excruciating early feelings of dependence, frustration and anger. For Cathy, independence and mobility were her two most important needs post-accident and she describes instances where she felt alienated and distanced from humanity. It appears that Cathy' feelings of separation and alienation from others following her accident, refer in part to the Lacanian view that there is no such thing as a discrete, coherent identity and that those who fool themselves with the delusion of a 'whole' sense of self, are in part buying into social consciousness, where society is almost addicted to finding a universal semblance of 'normalcy', against which all are measured. This is first evidenced in the mirror stage, where the infant confuses his reflection with the image of the Other, only later to understand that the reflection is his own and different to the other, which reflects the dichotomy between alienation and subjectivity (Sarup, 1993:8).

> Cathy' story includes aspects of both her own 'coming out' story, following her dejection and fear related to her physical impairment, and her daughter's 'coming out' story which relates to the disclosure of her homosexuality. Whilst Samantha was the only family member who did not sustain permanent 'impairment' in the motor vehicle accident, this could in some way reflect her father's difficulty in accepting her 'gay-ness' as a defence to maintain Samantha's perfect 'unblemished' Self. Cathy also expressed her own 'guilt' linked to her feelings that that she may, in some way have influenced Samantha's choice to engage

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a lesbian relationship and through 'exposing' Samantha to some of her gay friends, Cathy suggests that she feels that she may have inadvertently left her daughter unprotected which seems to be a theme throughout her narrative, where, following the accident, Samantha was left like a *"bundle of clothes"* underneath the seat of the car, where Cathy too felt unable to protect her. On many levels, Cathy is able to connect with Samantha's experiences of discrimination, albeit in our current society which protects the rights of our gay and lesbian community, since, she too has experienced discrimination and the devastating effects of stereotypes by the uninformed, in spite of her own protection from our wonderfully inclusive Constitution.

4.7.3   In the Beginning

Cathy's story began with the moving prologue to her life as an individual with a physical disability:

Fortunately I can say that I wasn't born with a disability. In 1996, on a Sunday afternoon we went out, just for a joyride. My husband's friend got a brand new car and we got to take it for a test drive. He got the car on Friday and apparently he was going to go back on the Monday to do the insurance and all that, but he wanted the car on the Friday to show off of course, and the Sunday, we went over for lunch, myself, my husband and my child Samantha. I was pregnant, 6 months with Luke, my second child and it was really a stinker – a hot day – and we said, ok, we will go to the beach and get some ice cream and then we will come back, because I was not in the mood to go anywhere. But it so happened that we never got to see the beach or the ice cream at all. We had a freak accident. I had whip lash and I severed my seventh vertebrae and was immediately paralysed. So, I mean, coming from being completely abled to being a disabled person – I didn't know what was waiting for me. I mean, it was like going into a forest trying to find your way.

Cathy recalled with intricate detail how the paramedics at the scene of the accident had to cut the family out of the car in order to save their lives. As she moved in and out of consciousness, Cathy recalled hearing the paramedics state that her husband was *"not going to make it"* which was both terrifying and abhorrent. After extricating the family from the wreckage, Cathy and her husband were transported to different medical facilities, where she was convinced that *"he didn't make it"* and Steven had the same thought that Cathy had passed away. Samantha sustained only minor injuries, and Cathy recalls that she was found curled up underneath her dad's seat, where there was so much blood that the paramedics had thought that *"she was a cloth with blood on it"*. The accident occurred three days before Cathy's thirtieth birthday, which she spent in the ICU with a high fever. Her deteriorating health conditions prompted a move to Tygerberg hospital, where she gave birth to her son, Luke, two months premature. The doctor's predicted that Cathy would not survive and her family were summonsed to come *"to say goodbye"*. Cathy' journey through the forest did not end there: her husband Steven sustained serious head injuries and her son Luke was born with a severe intellectual disability. In spite of this, Cathy made medical history when Luke was born by normal vertex delivery.

4.7.4   A Burden on the Family

Cathy told me that her greatest fear was that she would become *"a burden on the family"*. She told me of some of the responses that she encountered post-accident:

My daughter looked at me, and it was like she was scared of me. Other people would also look at me, and they would look so sympathetic and empathetic, 'shame poor Cathy'. She is going to become a huge burden on her family.

Because *"becoming a burden"* was an abhorrent notion for Cathy, she even considered finding placement in a home and as such thought about applying for a grant to support herself as an initial port of call. Yet, the immense support and care that she received from family members together with her own resilience later became an integral part of her healing process. Initially though, it was a challenge for Cathy to contemplate feelings that she had *"lost her independence",* and at times in her story, she told me that she was not ready to *"face the world".*

4.7.5   And Then I Started Writing…

Writing has been Cathy's greatest therapy. After her move back to her parent's house following her extensive six month hospital stay, Cathy told me that she found it challenging to find pleasure in anything and as such found solace sitting outside in the sun, doing very little. Whilst her father encouraged her to read or engage with others with disabilities, Cathy was largely disinterested and dispirited, until one day when her father stated: *"you know, sitting in the sun makes you stupid".* For Cathy, this was the ultimate *"wake up call"* and she acknowledged the enormous effort and energy she had submitted to the procurement of her Bachelor of Arts degree and felt compelled to change her thoughts. As such, her father bought her a journal, where Cathy began writing. This assisted Cathy to process some of her inner conflicts, and as such garner motivation to connect with other individuals with disabilities, where through contacts, Cathy procured her first job post-accident.

4.7.6   Cathy's First Job Post-Accident

Cathy described how her employer at the time of her accident offered her immense support and even proposed to transform the built environment for her enhanced accessibility as she was a valued employee. In spite of this support from both colleagues and management, *"she was not ready to go back to work"* and transport obstacles were an additional barrier, which prompted Cathy's decision to leave her job at that time. Whilst Cathy was still living with her parents, she became involved in the Disabled People of South Africa (DPSA) organisation where she had the opportunity to interact with other individuals with disabilities and in so doing build up contacts which prompted her employment in the government sector as her first job post-accident. Because the family had largely *"lost everything"* as a result of the accident, Cathy was eager to start earning again (2 years after the accident) as a means to re-establish her sense of independence:

When I started working there, I gained a lot of integrity, which had been taken away from me – people deciding what you must wear, what you must eat. And I thought to myself, this is what I want to wear, this is what I want

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> *to eat, and this is the time I want to get up. This is my routine and not yours, and this is how I want to take control of my life.*

In spite of the fact that she was working for *"minimum wage"* where *"the salary was pathetic"*, Cathy thought that it would be a valuable means of *"getting (her) foot in the market – of getting out there, doing something and just being employed".* Cathy loved the position, which involved travel and opportunities to serve on a number of national boards where she developed both personally and professionally. At the time, her biggest frustration was dependence upon others for transport and Cathy indicated that transport is *"extremely difficult"* for individuals with disabilities. As such, Cathy suggests that *"people with disabilities must learn to drive"* which was one of her own *"biggest fears"* related to the fact that she thought she would never be able to drive again. Upon eliciting the assistance of a close friend as a means to *"get behind the wheel again"* Cathy told me that *"she nearly wet (her)self"* when the memories of her accident flooded her consciousness at her first *"driving lesson",* yet as her confidence grew, she gradually mustered the courage to purchase her own hand-adapted vehicle. Seven months later, Cathy told me that she was involved in another accident and her 'new' car *"was written off".* Upon *"losing"* her first vehicle post-accident, the thoughts of once again being dependent on others again came to the fore:

> *That was my biggest fear, because I don't like being dependant on people, going here, take me here, take me there. It's very difficult to not be mobile when you are used to being mobile.*

For Cathy independence and having one's own car is essential for individuals who are employed.

4.7.7   Cathy's Current Job

After two years of employment in the government sector, Cathy acquired her current position in the media through a contact. The salary was double what Cathy was currently earning and she was the successful applicant following a board interview process. Cathy will have been at the company ten years in 2012, and the position commands much responsibility where there is a lot of supportive energy from both colleagues and management.

Cathy told me that although she loves her job, and that the company has done much to improve accommodations and structural changes to the built environment in order to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities, she adds that there is still much to be done to ensure better provision of bathroom facilities for the employees with disabilities and also pointed out that individuals with disabilities at her current workplace may experience challenges, should a fire erupt given the multi-storied layout of the building:

> *Nobody is going to worry about Cathy, should the lifts and stuff not be able to be used. Everyone is going to run down to save his own ass and then what is going to happen to me.*

This ties in to Cathy' acknowledgement that she has a fear of *"people handling her"* and that when the lifts at work are out of order (which she cites happens with monotonous regularity); Cathy has to rely on individuals to carry her up and down the stairs, which she finds which she finds invasive.

Cathy told me that her boss has made provision for her to gain accessibility to a private lift which ascends and descends outside the actual building. Whilst this appears to be working on some level, Cathy indicated that she feels that her boss is trying *"to put jam on her lips"* since she is vocal about some of the difficulties related to the provision of reasonable accommodations in the workplace. From Cathy' perspective, this is unfair to the other individuals with disabilities since:

> *Peter[6] (Cathy' boss) only gave it to me, because I make a noise. I always ask him: What about the toilets? What if the lift breaks? What if there is a fire? I am not going to move (to the fourth floor) unless you make this place accessible. Then he comes up to me and says: "Come, come – this is your private lift" and he was really chuffed about it. And he told me, if you go down to the second floor there is this toilet there, and another one there. He was really chuffed about it. But I said to him that Thandi and Brandon can't use it. I said to him if they want to use the lift, they must first carry them up to the fourth floor, take them right past my office and then use the lift. It's wrong. It's not fair".*

4.7.8   The Mother's Role

Cathy told me that it has been a simultaneous challenge and an *"immensely joyful experience"* taking care of her son, Luke:

> *Luke turned fifteen in February. He has severe brain damage and can't talk. He is still wearing diapers and is in a special school. There are many things that we need to do for that child. There is just no way that we can. We paid R10 000 a month for his special schooling, which was the best place that I could possibly put my child, but we can't afford it. Luke breaks stuff. He is in a little world of his own. He is autistic and epileptic. He is now at x and started there just last week, so it's something completely new. Now it's so quiet and we miss him so much. The accident has broken us up financially into completely small pieces.*

Cathy describes Luke as *"amazing"* and *"fun to be around"* but also indicates her pain at times through her message that *"it's sad to live with a son like that".* Cathy told me that the way her daughter Samantha has historically responded to both her and Luke's disability has been inordinately meaningful:

> *She has never been ashamed of me or her brother: she always wants me to come with her and tells me she couldn't be bothered about what other people think about her mom that's in a wheelchair, her brother that is brain damaged – you know, they call them retarded.*
> .

Cathy' close connection with Samantha, and their immensely open, honest and devoted relationship is extremely precious to her. She described her daughter's immense talent for the arts and showed me photographs of some

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[6] Pseudonym

of her achievements at school, as she tenderly expressed the unconditional love that *"makes her life worth living"*. She values each and every moment spent with both her children and indicates that she has never judged her daughter's homosexuality and told me that she gets on well with Samantha's girlfriend who she treats as *"part of the family"*. Cathy told me: *"I would do anything for them, before I do something for myself"*.

4.7.9   The Coda: The Future for Cathy

Cathy suggests that she is *"happy"* in her current job, and her dream to complete her autobiography which is about *"the different obstacles and how my life was falling apart, and how it is now falling into place"* is fast becoming a reality. Cathy' writing is clearly therapeutic for her (in spite of her inordinate talent in this area) and she is able to express her *"hardships and happy times"*. Because her family is of the utmost importance to Cathy, she expressed that she would like to ensure that Luke has more constant educational prospects and to encourage her daughter Samantha to embark upon a more stable career path. The love and support that she receives from her family continues to awe her and she describes the immense strength that she has garnered from her husband based on their mutual experiences of loss.

Cathy's final concluding cadence encapsulated her perspective that every individual can become disabled at any given time. With this in mind, Cathy implores others to recognise that:

Not all differences are deficiencies.

4.8   CONCLUSION

Six stories were told and retold in this chapter, using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensional narrative inquiry space, structured allegorically as fugal counterpoint to metaphorically depict the multiplicity of voices which at times enter independently to construct a unique identity, and at others, align more fully with universal stories of disability which will be addressed in the next chapter. As such, individuals' experience centred personal narratives were amalgamated with their life stories, and structured with a beginning, a middle and an end, interspersed with personal and social encounters of individuals with their world in context. Each story highlighted both the challenges and successes of the participants and identified important characters, plots, tones, tensions, themes, conflicts and resolutions. My voice, not only as narrator, but also in part as interpreter, explicated by way of brief excerpts from my own reflexive accounts, drawing on both psychoanalytic and social constructionist thought, sought to enrich the polyphonic flavour of the narratives, and as such produce a thicker contrapuntal layered

structure in order to unify the narratives as a comprehensive exploration of each participant's journey as individuals with disabilities in the world of work.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how individuals with disabilities, employed in the mainstream labour sector, have constructed their professional identities. In Chapter 4, the stories of six individuals with disabilities were told using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) conceptualisation of a metaphoric three dimensional narrative inquiry space, where the participants' storied voices remained the central focus along the dimensions of temporality, the personal and the social, integrated with context. Chapter 5 seeks to transition from each participant's 'unique story' to a 'universal story' (Atkinson, 1998:63) of disability to align with post-structuralist and social constructionist thought which contends that "individual lives are constant constructs embedded in societal and cultural forces that seek to constrain some and enable others" (Tierney, 2003:299). This chapter does not seek to test existing theory or conceptualise disability in terms of a mono-conceptual, stable image and the themes which were constructed horizontally across the narratives using thematic analysis (See Appendix M as an example), provide a 'partial recognition' of the more universal stories of disability. This aligns with the Hegelian notion that "consciousness cannot grasp itself without recognition by others" (Sarup, 1993:13). This process was envisaged from a critical realist ontological lens which "acknowledges the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:81). As such, individual selections of text were analysed and grouped together according to common core concepts as recurring patterns related to the research question and sub-questions (See Appendix N). This produced three broad categories which include:

- entering the job market and accessing the workplace

- psychic states and social connectedness of employees

- the role of employers, employees and institutions

Recurring themes and sub themes were positioned under these broad categories which are presented graphically as Figure 5.1. This chapter seeks to present the narratives as alternate ways of viewing disability in the workplace in order to guide future employers, institutions, policy makers and individuals themselves who are involved in seeking non-perfunctory employment status.

Figure 5.1   Clustering of Themes

Clustering of Themes		
Entering the job market and accessing the workplace	**Psychic states and social connectedness of employees**	**The role of employers, employees and institutions**

• The value of contacts
• Experiences of unemployment across the lifespan
• Experiences of underemployment
• Reasonable accommodations and accessibility
  ○ Transport
  ○ The built environment
  ○ Adaptation of working hours
  ○ The Provision of assistive devices
	• Loyalty
	• Internalised oppression
	• Motivation, positivity and achievement
	• Social interactions with others
	• Independence and Interdependence
		• The value of sensitization, awareness and communication
		• The importance of etiquette
		• Equality
		• The influence of education and training

5.2   PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC CONTENT OF THE NARRATIVES

5.2.1   Entering the Job Market and Accessing the Workplace

Stigma and discrimination continue to affect the lives and working experiences of individuals with disabilities (HSRC, 2007; WHO, 2011) – especially in neoliberalist contexts, where the emphasis is on profit and productivity. Many employers and institutions continue to cling to the misguided assumption that individuals with disabilities are less efficacious employees than their non disabled counterparts (HSRC, 2007). Entering the job market and accessing the workplace as a category refers simultaneously to participants' experiences of inclusion and exclusion and seeks to attend to the manner in which periods of under- and unemployment have impacted professional identity formation. All participants in this study, who were employed by large institutions at the time of this inquiry, described a variety of obstacles and facilitators to entering the job market and accessing the workplace.   Additionally, thematic content related to connections through 'contacts' and the provision of reasonable accommodations from a social constructionist perspective were evidenced in all the narratives and will be presented below. It is clear that to counter the oppression that individuals with disabilities have experienced across the lifespan, change is required at an attitudinal level, an environmental level and a social level.

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5.2.1.1   The Value of Contacts

All six narrators described their entry into the mainstream labour context as dependent upon personal contacts and connections in their employment contexts. Nathan, Evan and Dianne indicated that it was *"unlikely"* that they would have procured employment without *"knowing someone"*, and their historic experiences of obstacles to employment support their notion that individuals with disabilities generally have fewer employment opportunities than their non disabled counterparts, especially in the private sector.   Nathan suggested that the facility of specialist agencies to assist with placements in neoliberalist contexts *"would help a great deal"* whilst both Evan and Nathan indicated that responding to job-finder advertisements was futile in most instances since many employers are simply *"not interested"* in employing individuals with disabilities. This aligns with the overwhelming evidence that pervades the literature vis a vis the institutional discrimination that weighs heavily on the lives and living of individuals with disabilities in search of employment (Barnes, 1992; Jacobson, 2003; Schriner, 2001; WHO, 2011; HSRC, 2007).

5.2.1.2   Experiences of Unemployment across the Lifespan

The Employment Equity Act (South Africa, 1998a) stipulates that two percent of a company's workforce must be represented by individuals with disabilities, yet in spite of these requisites, many individuals with disabilities continue to experience episodes of unemployment which was mentioned by all six narrators in various ways. Nathan's exclusion from the world of work as a result of his disability was evidenced throughout his story whilst the only way in which Dianne was able to procure *"some type of employment"* was through engaging voluntary work which underscores her experience that *"it is difficult for disabled people to get employed"*. Cathy's decision to accept a paltry salary after her accident was in response to her *"fear"* of *"not being able to find employment"* after *"coming from being completely abled, to being a disabled person"*. Dianne's experiences of *"sitting at home for long periods"* mirrors Evan's ordeal following retrenchment which was in direct opposition to the value that he places on the social aspects of going out to a place of work. Both Jerome and Anthony have not directly experienced episodes of unemployment, given that they have occupied their current positions for the duration of their employment histories, however Anthony's on-going difficulties in his current position, linked to promotional and training preclusions is a deep source of unhappiness – yet he is afraid that should he resign, he may not find alternative employment due to stigma. Dianne, Cathy, Nathan and Jerome suggest that many disabled individuals are apathetic toward seeking employment based on the effects of perpetual discrimination and stigma which results in overdependence on their respective disability grants and may negatively impact autonomy and self

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concept. This type of discrimination, experienced by five of the six participants, which present in some cases as enduring patterns across the lifespan, is "not just a question of individual prejudice, it is institutionalised in the very fabric of our society" (Barnes, 1992:2) and clearly perpetuates the life and living of individuals with disabilities in spite of policies and legislation (South Africa, 1995a; 1996a; 1997; 1998a, b; 2000; 2001; 2009; UNESCO, 2006) which prohibits such acts of discrimination.

5.2.1.3   *Experiences of Under-employment*

Barnes (1992:5) cites that "when disabled people do find work, the majority find themselves in poorly paid, low skilled, low status jobs which are most unrewarding and undemanding". The technical term for such status is 'under-employment'. Under-employment largely derives negative attitudes of employers and managers implicit in perpetuated ignorance, stereotypes and stigma (WHO, 2011; HSRC, 2007; Marks, 1999; Levinson & Parritt, 2006; South Africa, 1998a). These attitudes are inculcated at societal level, which appear to hinder progress related to the redress of employer attitudes at an institutional level. Whilst the social model discourages such discourse, and lobbies for the removal of obstacles to promote equality which has been ratified in current disability legislation (South Africa, 1995a; 1996a; 1997; 1998a, b; 2000; 2001; 2009; UNESCO, 2006), the stark reality is that most individuals with disabilities continue to occupy low level employment statuses (WHO, 2011); experience less job security (ILO, 2008); receive lower earnings and shorter contracts (Schriner, 2001) and may endure a greater possibility of unfair dismissal or forced resignation (South Africa, 1998a).

The narratives revealed that all participants are perniciously aware of the obstacles that they face in search of employment and five of the six narrators acknowledged that the types of jobs that they are most likely to procure include perfunctory, low level, token positions. For Dianne, part of her employment history comprised *"weaving baskets"* or looking after other people's children to support her daily needs. Nathan's experiences of *"lack of prospects"* in the workplace and poor remuneration packages were a constant in his life, up until his employment at a financial institution - at the age of 44. Even after their respective diplomas in information technology, both Nathan and Evan battled to procure employment that was not *"some kind of low level job"* because *"there were no opportunities".* Evan's indications that both friends and family members attempted to convince him to work from home, in spite of his protestations that he wanted to interact with others on a social level in the workplace, is cited by four of the six participants as a common challenge which confronts individuals with disabilities.

Participants' experiences of reduced earning capacity were reflected in five of the six narratives. For Anthony, these salary deficits are related to the fact that "people take advantage of the Deaf, because they are considered

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to be dumb". From Anthony's perspective, Deaf workers will never reach the status of the higher echelon positions in the workplace, whilst Evan suggests that the only way to transcend the stereotypes is to include individuals with disabilities in top level managerial roles, which he suggests remains illusive amid the stereotypes of disability cited above.

5.2.1.4   *Reasonable Accommodations and Accessibility*

Reasonable accommodations refer to "any modification or adjustment to a job, employment practice or work environment that enables a qualified individual with a disability to participate in and enjoy equal employment opportunity" (Morosky, 1994:3). Since it is a basic human right for all persons with disabilities to gain access to public spaces (UNESCO, 2006), and as such, enjoy equal rights and freedoms (SALGA, 2009), most social model theorists argue that through the provision of temporal, attitudinal and spatial accommodations, individuals with disabilities will be included. What the social model does not consider, is the multiplicity of the 'types' of impairment which may require alternative approaches to facilitate workplace access (Freund, 2001). This was evidenced throughout this study, where it became apparent that individuals with sensory impairments had different needs to those with mobility impairments. Article 3(d) of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNESCO, 2006) acknowledges the "diversity of persons with disabilities" which enshrines a paradigm shift to inculcate the central premise encapsulated in this study that there is no stable, fixed, homogenous identity among individuals with disabilities.

Each participant in this study made some reference to the impact of reasonable accommodations on their workplace experiences. Whilst all four of the individuals with mobility 'impairments' suggested that their employers have made the necessary adjustments to the built environment to ensure accessibility which has had a positive effect on their workplace experiences, they indicate that transport continues to present as an enduring obstacle for individuals with disabilities. It appears that employers were less likely to make reasonable accommodations for the individuals with sensory impairments which both Dianne and Anthony cite as indicative of the prejudicial notion that individuals who are either visually or hearing impaired "*can't speak for themselves*" and are therefore, from both Anthony and Dianne's perspectives, "*undeserving*" of the accommodations that they need to perform their workplace duties. From Dianne's perspective, this type of exclusion relates specifically to the fact that her employers are simply content to fulfil their equity quotas, without the necessary care and attention as to *"how they cope with their day to day tasks"*. The theme of reasonable accommodations attends to the following sub themes: transport; the built environment; adaptation of working hours and provision of assistive devices.

Transport

Transport is a significant facilitator to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace (HSRC, 2007), yet in South Africa, the public transport service is generally inefficient for consumption by disabled persons and as such, presents a major obstacle to workplace inclusion. All participants with the exception of Anthony, whose hearing impairment did not necessarily influence his 'ability' to utilise public transport services, indicted that *"transport is the biggest problem"* which at times further impacted periods of unemployment for 4 of the 6 participants. The *"battle"* and concomitant *"trauma"* and *"depression"* which Nathan experienced throughout his employment history was predominantly related to transport deficits which ultimately instigated his resignation from his position in the civil service. For Jerome, lack of accessibility to transport services in the early years of the onset of his disability was a serious obstacle to his independence since he was forced to depend on family members to ferry him to and from work. For Cathy, it was *"very difficult not to be mobile when you are used to being mobile"* and her *"biggest fear"* was how she was going to get to work. Evan's inordinate challenges related to the procurement of alternative employment following his retrenchment was critically compounded by his lack of accessibility to transport services whilst Dianne noted that transport facilities have improved slightly, but for her, *"getting into a bus to travel is an obstacle".*

For many years Evan depended on the government funded Dial-a-Ride service which was 'difficult' since there were only 18 vehicles available to service the whole of the Western Cape region, yet, he suggests that he was 'fortunate' to have procured placement. This aligns with Cathy's contention that when she required the service she was told that she was not able to acquire the requisite registration criteria for a six month period. Both Cathy and Evan described the service as inefficient and Evan suggests: *"I would wait for hours for them to come and pick us up and even though my shift ended at 3:30pm, sometimes I would only get home after 6pm".* Whilst the nature of Dianne's impairment suggests that she would not be able to drive a self propelled vehicle and Anthony is clearly able to access the current public transport system, the remaining four participants acquired their own hand-adapted vehicles which they cite as essential to accessing employment. For Jerome, the purchase his first vehicle was *"independence finally"* whilst Cathy described her emotional struggles attached to her fear of getting into an automobile again following her accident. A reliable and accessible transport system would indeed benefit the procurement of employment for a larger group of individuals with disabilities (HRSC, 2007:39; UNESCO, 2006). The World Health Organization (2011:178) indicates that worldwide initiatives to develop accessible transport systems are required to improve accessibility.

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The Built Environment

The built environment refers to the premises and accessibility points that contribute to facilitative interactions between individuals and the social world. It represents "a key area in the analysis of the oppression of disabled people" (Marks, 1999:82) and impacts the effects of exclusion from physical environments that individuals with disabilities experience, given that in many instances architecture is 'designed' to appeal to aesthetic appraisals which in turn seeks to "exclude the powerless" (ibid:83).

In alignment with the social model of disability four of the six participants suggested that they generally only feel 'disabled' when they are excluded as a result of obstacles in the built environment. Most of the participants described their satisfaction with the modifications made to their respective contexts, although Evan, Jerome, Cathy and Nathan did state that in many instances, employers failed to attend to *"the little things" that* would enhance their workplace experiences. These include factors such as accessibility to appliances and modifications to turnstiles, which Nathan suggests is often a challenge to negotiate. Cathy states that employers also need to develop awareness related to emergency exit points in the event of fire and both she and Evan acknowledged that it is challenging for individuals with physical disabilities to occupy office space on higher floor levels, when the lifts are out of order which inevitably results in dependence on others to "carry them" up and down the stairs which is invasive.

Adaptation of Working Hours and the Provision of Assistive Devices

Apart from reasonable accommodations regarding the built environment and the transportation system, it is clear that other factors such as the adaptation or purchase of computer hardware and software devices; adjustment of working time and leave; modification of work stations and the provision of readers and sign language interpreters for individuals with sensory impairment require scrutiny as well.

Adaptation of Working Hours

Two of the participants are employed in an institution that generally depends on employees' willingness to work irregular working hours, including late night shifts and weekends. Both participants stated that they have been accommodated in their current settings to work regular hours, especially at times where transport has been an obstacle. A principle barrier for Cathy has been the onset of scoliosis eight years after her appointment at her current place of employment. From this perspective she indicates that she approached her employer to request

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an amendment to her nine hour shift due to pain, but was met with resistance and as such had to submit to a salary reduction to attain these ends. Jerome suggests that his company has been exceedingly supportive in the provision of time off for disability related concerns and he indicates that he feels supported by management when such needs arise.

Assistive devices and interpreters

Assistive devices include personal apparatus such as crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, hand-adapted vehicle controls, spectacles and computer adaptive software to be used specifically by the individual. Assistive devices are necessary to increase disabled people's level of independence in daily living (Schulze, 2009; UNESCO, 2006). Both Anthony and Dianne revealed that they did not have access to requisite assistive devices in their places of work which negatively affected their proficiency. The dearth of voice activated software prompted Dianne to memorise important telephone numbers as a means to accommodate *herself* in the workplace which is challenging at times. Anthony's narratives suggest that although he is employed in a large multinational corporation, which makes a budget available each year for the accommodation of disabled employees, the company has refused to make provision of a sign language interpreter for Deaf employees due to the related costs. Although the Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects of Disability in the Workplace (South Africa, 2001:5) stipulates that "the employer need not accommodate a qualified applicant or an employee with a disability if this would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the business or the employer", it is clear that the scope of both Anthony and Dianne's workplace institutions, would not necessarily fall into this category. Anthony suggests that it is the 'little things' that would make all the difference. This includes the etiquette of having staff and trainers face him during meetings to ensure that he is able to lip-read or to extend the provision of one-on-one interactions in a logical sequential manner, to enable him to understand what is said.

5.2.2   Psychic States and Social Connectedness of Employees

The themes presented above align with matters related to the social model of disability, where social arrangements including environmental modifications are emphasised by the narrators. This section delineates thematic content which corresponds with the psychology of disability and considers the processes related to the "psychological experiences of exclusion" (Lawthom & Goodley, 2006:191). Whilst disabled identities are as complex as non-disabled identities (ibid), Murray (2006:38) argues for the acknowledgement of the internal emotional and psychological experiences related to the inclusion and exclusion of individuals with disabilities. The disabled people's movements have utilised these conceptualisations as referential to psycho-emotional difficulties

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which emerge as a result of living in an unequal, divided society (Lawthom & Goodley, 2006:190). This thesis sought to attend to the notion that social constructions of disability which inculcate social oppression and restrictions, may affect psycho-emotional wellbeing.

The experience of psycho-emotional disablement was described to a greater or lesser degree by all six participants. Since this thesis considers the construction of professional identity formation from a post-structural and social constructionist perspective, these constructs were not necessarily considered in terms of traditional models of "loss and adjustment" (Reeve, 2006:96), but rather in terms of "the psychological anxiety and distress caused by the social relations of disability" (ibid). This links closely to the stereotypes and archetypal images that were espoused in greater depth in Chapter 2. Whilst these themes cannot be neatly separated from those extrapolated in Section 5.2.1., there was clear thematic content that ran throughout each individual narrative relative to what Kitchin (1998:351, in Reeve, 2006:97) refers as "landscapes of exclusion". The themes evidenced in this category refer to: loyalty, internalised oppression; motivation, positivity and achievement; social interactions with others and independence.

5.2.2.1   Loyalty

The World Health Organization (2011:236) reports that individuals with disabilities often have "appropriate skills, strong loyalty and low rates of absenteeism" which inculcates that as employees, 'they' may contribute much to productivity, profitability and efficiency in companies and institutions. Throughout the narratives, all six participants explicated that as employees, they are willing, capable, loyal and committed and may take minimal 'leave' in general. This is directly contrary to historic negative perceptions of employers and managers that include the notion that the employment of individuals with disabilities may lead to certain 'problems'.

Along the thematic dimension of 'loyalty', all six participants describe long-term employment statuses (ranging from 5 – 10 years), which explicates a sense of loyalty and commitment which each described in various ways. Anthony's five year employment status, where he has been dedicated to making his manager "*proud"* is evidenced by his "*high production sets*"; passion to *"learn the business"* and commitment to extended working hours. Jerome's passion to *"excel"* and achieve his career aspirations echo Evan's indication that he has no plans to leave his company, and is committed to being the *"go-to guy"*. Cathy's five year term of employment at her previous institution, where her salary was less than half of what she currently earns, is a further example of 'endurance' through 'loyalty'. Both Dianne and Nathan described their loyalty to their employers in terms of 'gratitude'. These underlying messages echo the "grateful disabled person" role (Reeve, 2006:98) which is

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evidenced throughout Nathan's narratives, as a means to respond to the disabling stereotypes that inculcate oppression in the attainment and preservation of his jobs. For Nathan, being loyal to his employers is related to his internal fear of dismissal, etched in the social constructions of disability as an 'inferior status'. Dianne explains that individuals with disability are not likely to change their jobs as frequently as their non disabled counterparts since from her perspective *"people with disabilities like to stick where they are"* because *"they don't have a choice"* which links to the theme of internal oppression discussed below. Her message to employers is that by *"investing in someone with a disability"*, they are *"actually having a valuable asset"*.

The 'gratitude' that the participants describe for their employment statuses, albeit born from stigma and manifest as internal oppression which in itself is a major concern, indicates that individuals with disabilities are likely to emerge as excellent employees, given their commitment to: retain their positions for extended time periods; put in extra effort without being asked and to work longer hours and take less leave. As Nathan suggests, *"when you are fortunate enough to get a job, you are going to give your 150% because you are so grateful for the opportunity"*. His message to employers is that *"you won't find that (loyalty) with every other individual in the labour market, because they know that they can jump from job to job"*. In most instances, this 'gratitude' stems from internalised oppression, where individuals with disabilities are fearful of retrenchment and the impact of under- and unemployment.

5.2.2.2   Internalised Oppression

Internalised oppression is described by Reeve (2006:101) as a form of oppression which operates at the level of the unconscious, where "individuals within the marginalised group internalise the prejudices held by the dominant group". Internalised oppression as a theme in this study, assists in understanding the manner in which individuals with disabilities have sought to counter denigration and exclusion inculcated by disabling relationships (Marks, 1999:25). Mason's (1992, in Marks, 1999:25) contention that it is necessary not only to consider the relationships that individuals with disabilities have with others, but also their relationships with themselves subsumes the theme of internalised oppression which was evidenced in some way, across all the narratives. In most instances, the participants in this study were able to transcend this internalised oppression through actively engaging non-perfunctory employment statuses, which left them feeling valued and empowered (Reeve, 2006:102).

Evan's desire to surpass the negative labels ascribed to him by professionals is expressed throughout his narratives and reflected in his drive to *"prove other people wrong"*. This aligns with Lawthom and Goodley's

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(2006:196) statement that "for many disabled people, challenging professional intervention and knowledge is a crucial part of developing a positive identity". Through the procurement of his current position, which has been a *"lovely"* experience, Evan acknowledges that in spite of these stereotypes and oppressive attitudes, he *"made it"* because it was *"something that he put his mind to do"* even though at times he may still feel like people's *"good deed for the day"*. Cathy encountered similar attitudes from professionals following her accident in 1996 where her internalised fear of *"becoming a burden"* prompted subsequent contemplations to apply for a disability grant and placement in a *"home for the disabled"*

Aspects of internalised oppression are also evidenced in response to 'pity' which became a dominant theme, evidenced in some way throughout all the stories. In response to numerous periods of denigration and exclusion etched throughout Nathan's life story, aspects of internalised oppression frequently manifest as 'depression' for this individual. Nathan's responses to the discrimination and marginalisation that he experienced across the lifespan is expressed variously throughout his narratives and include the following debilitating locutions: *"heartbreaking"; "difficult"; "rejection"; "battling"; "unhappy"; "trauma"; "frustrating"; "desperate"; "struggling"* and *"degrading"* which in many instances become internalised as truth that as a 'disabled' individual he would have to simply submit to tokenistic opportunities.

For Anthony, oppression is not just implicit in disability as a construct – but it extends to the type of disability wherein *"you have to be Deaf to understand"*. From his perspective individuals with hearing impairments experience more discrimination than those with other 'types' of disabilities. In the workplace, he feels *"helpless"* because from his perspective, he is depending on people, but people are not really depending on him. As such, Anthony would like "to be seen as a human" rather than an object of pity or as he puts it *"psycho or something"*. For Anthony*, "the shadow is always around"* which may refer to the emergence of his own shadow side as a reflection of this internalised oppression.   Jerome's 'sparkling moment' included a time when his friends *"actually saw (him) as one of them"* which stood in stark contrast to his experiences of losing "95% of his friends after his spinal cord injury. Internalising that he is *"Jerome",* and *"not this guy in a wheelchair"* was the transition point in Jerome's narrative, where he was able to *"forget that (he) was in a wheelchair"*.

Dianne's lifelong dream to acquire a paid position in the media together with her excellent track record at a local community radio station remains illusive. In spite of her acknowledgement that she has talent her historic *"lack of opportunity"* has forced her to convince herself that her current job is *"actually very nice"* because she is *"still communicating with people, but it's just different on the phone"*. Her constant need to prove herself over and over

again may suggest that on some level, Dianne appears to have internalised the fact that she will never have the opportunity to fulfil her dreams.

5.2.2.3 Motivation, Positivity and Achievement

From a social constructionist perspective, the concept of personality and self is no longer an individual conceptualisation but rather rests on socio-cultural formation (Goodley & Lawthom, 2006a:7). The practice of Narrative Therapy as a discipline conceptualises the constructions of alternative storylines of people's lives as a means to re-author problem saturated stories to "lay the foundation for new initiatives in addressing the problems, predicaments and dilemmas of their lives" (White, 2007:62). The theme of motivation, positivity and achievement which ran thickly through each participants' narrative, serves as a motivating energy to encourage other individuals with disabilities to re-author their own problem saturated scripts in order to encounter 'sparking moments' as tools to refute the disabling structures and concomitant internalised oppression that may contribute to their exclusion from the world of work.

A common theme throughout all the narratives indicated that the demonstration of competence through the attainment of a non perfunctory employment status impacted positively on the participants' self concept and in many instances silenced some of the stereotypes and the embedded modes of internalised oppression cited above. Aspects of resilience, motivation and positivity were evidenced throughout all participants' narratives and as such present as a recurring theme in this study. In some instances, participants explicated these qualities as enduring across the life span, wherein four of the six participants occupied leadership roles at school and four of the individuals are actively involved in high level positions in disability association work. All participants in the study were able to construct alternative stories (White, 2007; Morgan, 2000) throughout their narratives of resilience, positivity and hope. This suggests that alternative stories of disability can reduce the influence of stigma and "create new possibilities for living" (Morgan, 2000:14) contrary to the modes of internalised oppression cited above. Participants' richly described narratives related to personal skills, abilities, motives, beliefs and values, produced alternative conceptualisations of disablist imagery which has historically kept prejudicial attitudes toward impairment alive and in so doing, perpetuated exclusion and discrimination. Alternative stories were evidenced variously by all six participants which included aspirations to *"be the best that (they) could be"* (Evan, Anthony, Nathan, Jerome) through their commitment to *'"personal growth"* (Anthony, Jerome); self motivation (Anthony, Nathan, Dianne, Evan, Jerome, Cathy); embracing professional challenges (Dianne, Nathan, Jerome); autonomy (Dianne, Cathy); taking the presented opportunities (Nathan, Dianne, Evan, Jerome); positivity (Nathan,

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Dianne, Anthony, Evan, Jerome, Cathy), will power (Nathan, Cathy); commitment to success (Anthony, Jerome, Evan, Nathan), resilience (Anthony, Cathy, Evan) and personal achievement (Jerome, Nathan, Anthony, Evan, Dianne). These are delineated in tabular form in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1   Themes of Motivation, Positivity and Achievement in the Narratives

Motivation, Positivity and Achievement	Evan	Nathan	Anthony	Jerome	Dianne	Cathy
Be the best that they could be	x	x	x	x		
Commitment to personal growth			x	x		
Self motivation	x	x	x	x	x	x
Embracing professional challenges		x		x	x	
Autonomy	x	x			x	x
Taking the presented opportunities	x	x		x	x	
Positivity	x	x	x	x	x	x
Will power		x				x
Commitment to success	x	x	x	x		
Resilience	x		x			x
Personal achievement	x	x		x	x	

For Dianne, individuals with disabilities *"need to be motivated all the time"* in order to refute some of the stereotypes and discrimination that perpetuate exclusion from mainstream labour contexts. Her refusal *"to let opportunities pass her by"* and commitment to *"get involved"*, in spite of personal difficulties, ensured that her previous and current employers were able to *"see her capabilities".* Nathan reflects his *"pure will power"* as indicative of his own personal strength of character, where challenges and disappointments as constant themes throughout his search for a non perfunctory employment status have "*made him a very strong person"*. Anthony's commitment to prove to his company what he can do, in spite of lack of training opportunities and frustrations emphasise his commitment to *"be a successful person one day".* Cathy' resilience shortly after her accident is reflective in her statement that:

> *I just told myself, you can sit in the corner, you can mope, you can groan , you can be very angry at the world for 'doing this to you' – or you can pick up the pieces and go on and I thought that the second one was the option that looked better to me. And when I started working, I gained a lot of dignity and integrity.*

Evan's commitment to *"show them"* that he *"will be a success"* is what *"drives him"* whilst Jerome's resilience, motivation and achievements were evidenced throughout his narratives where he draws inspiration not only from his own commitment to success and accomplishment, but from inspiring others as well. What all these individuals have in common is that due to their own resilience, motivation and positivity, they were *"given a chance"* in the

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workplace to *"prove their capabilities"*, which in itself creates the conception of discrimination. Jerome, Dianne and Anthony suggest that this type of positivity and motivation is not only for personal gain, but also to pave the way for other individuals with disabilities to acquire successful inclusion in the workplace.

5.2.2.4 Social Interactions with Others

Support was cited as a dominant theme in all participants' narratives where each suggested that involvement and encouragement by friends and family members have been quintessential components to enhance their resilience and positivity, especially during times of unemployment and financial stress. Support as a theme also included supportive attitudes from colleagues and managers which was described by four of the six participants as an essential part of their positive workplace experiences. All participants described positive co-worker experiences, and the development of different degrees of friendships in the workplace.

Four of the six participants reported feeling supported by management in terms of: benefits directly related to business objectives; promotion and empowerment; the provision of training; personal value; acknowledgement of skills and competencies and lastly, provision of equal promotional opportunities. Cathy described her positive relationship with management as implicit in fact that she is not afraid to speak up when she has difficulties related to accessibility, yet cites that colleagues with disabilities who are unlikely to do the same, have not reaped the same benefits. The *"sense of belonging"* from *"a company that really cares"* has provided Jerome with feelings of recognition for the positive changes that he brings to the team reflected by way of the input and feedback he receives from management together with the time his colleagues / managers have taken in *"getting to know"* him. Nathan suggests that his company has always been *"willing to give him a chance"* and he indicates that they recognise his competence and skills. Whilst Evan did not make direct references to support felt by management, he indicates job satisfaction and fulfilment and values the fact that he was always *"treated the same"*.

Dianne and Anthony, (the two participants with sensory impairments) explicated their feelings of lack of support by management. In both cases this included the failure from management to provide these individuals with support and opportunities to grow. For Dianne care, rather than sympathy from management would go a long way to make her workplace experiences more expansive whilst Anthony's frustrations of *"not being heard"* are based on more than just his hearing impairment and include the lack of training and promotional opportunities cited above.

Involvement in sport and recreation activities as part of the overall ethos of companies to engage inclusion, integration and social interaction was an additional theme which contributed to the participants' positive

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experiences in their current milieus. Nathan, Jerome and Anthony who all derive context 1, explicated the fact that their company makes provision for sporting activities as part of their overall plan for social development. For Jerome sport is a mode of communication and empowerment for individuals with disabilities which promotes physical activity and means to cement relationships between both non disabled and disabled staff members. For Anthony, involvement in sport within his company has been an extremely positive experience wherein he is able to communicate with colleagues on a deeper level and as such, build positive relationships. Nathan's sense of belonging emerged from his interactions with an external sport club, where he has been an inspiration to his disabled colleagues to seek employment outside of sheltered working milieus.

5.2.2.5 *Independence and Interdependence*

Work inevitably provides all individuals, disabled or non disabled, with a sense of independence and autonomy. Independence is defined by the INDS (South Africa, 1997) as "a state of being whereby available and adequate support services, assistive devices and personal assistance to people with all disabilities at all levels, enables people with disabilities to exercise choice, bear responsibility and participate fully in society". The right to independence and autonomy is underscored in the Preamble of the CRPD (UNESCO, 2006, 1(n) which recognizes the value "of their individual autonomy and independence, including the freedom to make their own choices" which is underscored in Article 3(a) (ibid). Because as Marks (1999) reminds us, no person is ever a completely "independent" organism, independence as a theme reflects the enabling personal and social strategies that individuals with disabilities employ to enhance their sense of self-reliance and autonomy which inevitably impacts self concept.

All participants cited independence as an essential element related to their success in the workplace. Whilst both Dianne and Evan indicate that they were raised very over-protectively, which they both ascribe to the congenital nature of their impairments, both individuals attended to the importance of gaining control over their independence and the manner with which to exercise choice as to how to get their personal needs met (Slorach, 2011:5). In order to be independent, there is inevitably some type of dependence on structures and mechanisms to promote self-sufficiency which suggests that the term 'interdependence' is perhaps more applicable. For Anthony this type of interdependence includes access to training as a means to upskill himself to become more financially autonomous. Jerome, Nathan, Evan and Cathy indicate that interdependence links specifically to mobility and accessibility to their own transport facilities, whilst Evan cites an additional factor related to *"independent living"* which inevitably has financial implications. For Jerome, interdependence links to awareness through sensitisation,

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where he states that it is necessary to inform others what individuals with *disabilities "can and cannot do"* to preclude feeling limited by socially constructed stereotypes. Jerome also suggests that individuals themselves need to take responsibility to mobilise their own drive toward interdependence and ensure that they do not make *"disabled excuses"* or engage in *"pity parties".*

5.2.3   The Roles of Employers, Employees and Institutions

5.2.3.1   *The Value of Sensitisation, Awareness and Communication*

Five of the six participants made direct reference to the importance of awareness, sensitisation and communication in the workplace. The Disability Framework for Local Government (South Africa, 2009) recommends the value of sensitisation programmes to address disability concerns as a means to enhance communication and ensure a congruent "understanding" of disability and the related aspects of etiquette.

Jerome suggested that a major contributing factor to his success in the workplace included the implementation of a sensitisation programme which he facilitated four years ago. This proved an invaluable platform for him to share his story, and in so doing provide understanding vis a vis the experiences of 'disability' and aspects of etiquette as well as a platform to challenge stereotypes and discrimination. Without sensitisation, Jerome feels that the lack of awareness which currently pervades work spaces will perpetuate. The promotion of awareness includes action on both the part of the individual and employers wherein, individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to *"put themselves out there and instil the ethos that they want to achieve"* and employers and managers need to understand that there is a large disabled market out there which require opportunities.

Communication is the pillar on which successful inclusion in the workplace rests. Three of the six participants emphasised that there was poor communication from employers and as such, refusal on the part of managers to actively listen and respond to the needs of employees with disabilities. For both Anthony and Dianne, aspects of discrimination in the workplace rests on colleagues' and managers' assumptions that being Deaf or blind equates to *"not being able to speak for yourself".* This links to poor modes of information transmission which causes Anthony and Dianne to frequently feel misunderstood and as such creates feelings of lack of value.

For Jerome, communication is *"a two way thing"* and a vital part of the promotion of the needs of individuals with disabilities. Jerome, Anthony and Dianne indicate that part of this 'two-way' communication involves advocacy and assuming the role of *"ambassador"* to lobby for the rights of individuals with disabilities, by individuals with

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disabilities themselves. For these participants, being an ambassador links intrinsically to refuting the stereotypes that continue to pervade the mainstream labour sector and aligns with the social model's perspective of 'nothing about us, without us' (Charlton, 1998). For both Jerome and Anthony, part of being an ambassador involves occasionally having to 'fake' their feelings, to ensure that negative perceptions are not attached to individuals with disabilities. For Cathy, the most cathartic means of having her voice heard in the workplace is through 'making a noise' to lobby for more appropriate reasonable workplace accommodations. In spite of the fact that Cathy' employers have attempted to *"put jam on her lips",* she acknowledges that the only way individuals with disabilities can be *"heard"* is if they *"speak up".*

5.2.3.2 The Importance of Etiquette

All six participants alluded to the importance of etiquette in the workplace. For Jerome, imparting knowledge and sensitivity vis a vis etiquette was an excellent entry point to the development of meaningful and collaborative relationships between himself, management and his colleagues. For Nathan, etiquette in the workplace refers to consideration and respect by others in terms of the use of parking bays and toilets reserved for individuals with disabilities. Dianne suggests that etiquette involves *"encouraging"* others who want to assist – but teaching them the *"correct"* manner in which to do so, which Jerome suggests can be usefully inculcated by way of sensitisation. Both Cathy and Evan indicate that etiquette involves *"speaking directly to the individual with a disability"* and not talking past 'them' as if 'they' are *"invisible"* whilst Anthony reflects the importance of talking directly to Deaf individuals to facilitate their ability to lip-read and ensure that they have *"heard"* what is said to them.

5.2.3.3 Equality – being treated the same in the work context

Equality and fairness are quintessential agendas to facilitate inclusion which, according to Finkelstein (1996:11, in Tregaskis, 2006) can only eventuate if disabled and non-disabled individuals work together. Gill (2001) suggests that negative universals about disability are usually etched in feelings of isolation, invisibility and struggles related to interactional processes between employers, colleagues and other individuals in social contexts. Goffman (1963) reminds us that if stigma cannot be managed, individuals with disabilities may be treated as 'non-persons', dismissed by society in terms of their 'lack'. To 'overcome' this, Davis (1961, in Gill, 2001) cites that individuals with disabilities need to be treated equally. The CRPD (UNESCO, 2006, 27(b) stipulates that equality in the workplace refers specifically to the protection of the rights of individuals with disabilities by way of the facility of equal employment opportunities; access to the workplace; recruitment options and commensurate remuneration.

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All participants referred to the importance of being treated the same as so called 'non disabled' employees. This encapsulates the fundamental theme of 'equality' which was evidenced in all six participants' narratives. Equality involves experiencing the same pressures and expectations from management without pity or stereotyping. For Anthony part of equality includes *"not seeing the disability"* whilst for Evan it entails having the same kinds of deadlines, disciplinary procedures and interactions with management and staff. Cathy suggests that in some cases, different standards have been imposed in her place of work and she feels that she has received preferential treatment to her disabled colleagues based on her managerial status. For Nathan, equality in the workplace took on a more politicised stance. The move to a democratic South Africa did not necessarily elevate Nathan's chances of employment since he cites that these opportunities were largely given to black employees, with the result that he did not benefit in the early post-apartheid years from employment equity standards. Equality also refers to equal opportunities, equal remuneration (UNESCO, 2006) and fair appointments in the labour sector. Four of the six participants revealed that they had not been privy to the same opportunities and remuneration packages as their able-bodied peers.

5.2.3.4   *The influence of education and training opportunities to successful inclusion in the workplace*

Transformation in the field of education and training has been extensive over the past 30 years, amid the move toward democracy, equality and inclusion. The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) acknowledges the importance of transforming aspects of the education system as a mechanism to infuse supports to promote accessibility for all learners as a basic human right. With the exception of Jerome and Cathy, who both acquired their physical disabilities later in life, the remaining four participants all had some experiences in special educational facilities, whilst Evan and Nathan completed high school in mainstream schools which both cited as 'positive' experiences. This aligns with Dianne and Anthony's statements that their transition from school to work was less efficacious than those exposed to mainstream settings. Both Nathan and Evan suggested that their inclusive educational experiences, where, in their words they were treated as *"normal",* impacted their positive experiences in the workplace later on.

To date there has been little emphasis on the exploration of vocational interests and career guidance for individuals with disabilities (Estrada-Hernandez, Wadsworth, Nietupski, Warth & Winslow, 2008) in spite of the fact that career development is an essential element of vocational planning (Stead & Watson, 2006). Nathan suggested that more responsive career guidance strategies would go a long way to expose individuals with disabilities to greater career options and most participants indicated that access to tertiary education opportunities

resulted in successful employment procurement. Previous dispensations have sought to exclude individuals with disabilities from access to tertiary education opportunities entirely (SAFOD, 2008), which is reflected in both Dianne (age 45) and Nathan's (age 55) indications that there were lack of opportunities for individuals with disabilities to procure tertiary education status in earlier years. For Dianne, the additional difficulty of simply acquiring her matric was challenging in itself and her lack of tertiary qualifications has in part, excluded her from realising her dream as a journalist. With the exception of Dianne and Anthony, the remaining four participants indicated that they had access to either formal or informal training opportunities in the workplace which have been positive experiences for the enhancement of their general skills development. Anthony's vociferous articulation throughout his narratives that he has been excluded from company training options and facilities underscored his general workplace dissatisfaction at this time.

5.3   CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to provide a link between the individual telling of six stories related to the experiences of disability in the workplace and the universal stories of disability as a means to connect experiences that others may also share (Atkinson, 1998:70).   Drawing on post-structuralist theory which considers "the relationship between human beings, the world and the practice of making and reproducing meanings" (Besley, 2002:5), this chapter sought to move away from the unique to the universal stories of disability in the workplace (Atkinson, 1998:63). In so doing, thematic analysis was applied as a means to identify the motifs evidenced across all the narratives as a means to ascertain the influences of social discourse according to common core concepts related to how individuals with disabilities make meaning of their lives and experiences in the mainstream labour sector.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to gain insights into the storied worlds of six individuals with disabilities who are currently employed in the mainstream labour sector. A narrative inquiry approach, etched in a critical, emancipatory research paradigm, viewed through the theoretical constructs of social constructionist and post-structural thought together with 'episodes' of psychoanalysis were integrated as mechanisms to approach the research question and sub-questions. The narratives revealed that although some strides have indeed been made towards the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the mainstream labour sector (specifically in terms of redress of policy and legislation), individuals themselves continue to experience exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation in varying degrees. Whilst this study sought to hear 'alternative stories' to the historically socially constructed stereotypes and perpetuated aspects of disablist oppression, it is evident that many individuals with disabilities, continue to experience subjugation, marginalisation and discrimination together with the impact of hostile defences from employers, companies, institutions and society at large. The voices that were heard in this thesis underscore the notion that individuals with disabilities are valuable employees: those in this study indicated that they are only limited when structural, physical and attitudinal barriers continue to impact their lives and living. The significance of this study for the field of educational psychology inculcates the notion that greater preparedness structures need to be implemented in educational and training institutes, together with more effective intervention strategies to enhance the psycho-emotional and psycho-educational adjustment of individuals with disabilities as a means to develop augmented career opportunities as well as mechanisms to procure guidance and support in finding and maintaining non-perfunctory employment statuses. An ethos of inclusion is the *sine qua non* for all systemic levels to dismantle the enduring stereotypes and archetypes of disability which are inculcated at the core of the collective unconscious and continue to exclude individuals with disabilities from active participation in the world of work.

In this final chapter, the implications of this study for individuals, employers, institutions, theory and research are presented. Recommendations for future research endeavours are made and the strengths and limitations of this research text are debated. Conclusions and my final reflections are presented.

6.2   IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study attended to the implication that individuals with disabilities are among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society (Schriner, 2001; Newton, Ormerod & Thomas, 2007; WHO, 2011) which was discussed at length in Chapter 2. As such, it sought to examine the socially constructed stereotypes carved throughout the fabric of our nation, inculcated in the ripostes of individuals, employers, institutions, communities and broader socio-cultural contexts. Since the dominant definitions of disability have historically been constructed by experts, this thesis offers the unique perspective of challenging existing discourse through the storied voices of six individuals who have provided the opportunity to "counter the claims of those who position themselves as experts" with the assertion that "things could be different" (Marks, 1999:139). As such, the interpretations that individuals with disabilities negotiate in this thesis provide a foundation to challenge existing understandings of disability in the workplace, and truly hear alternative voices as a means to impugn 'disablement'. The section that follows considers the implications of this study for individuals, employers, institutions, the field of educational psychology, theory and the research community.

6.2.1   Implications for Individuals

The future employment conditions for individuals with disabilities rest on society's commitment to accommodate and value difference (Schriner, 2001). With the transition from the medical model to the social model of disability it is clear that the varieties of inclusion in education (Dyson, 2001), the labour sector (Priestly, 2005) and society at large can no longer be deliberated in terms of individual difference or the totalising labels that have historically sought to stereotype and subjugate individuals with any type of difference (Barnes & Mercer, 2005a; Abberley, 1987; Schneider, 2006; UNESCO, 2006). The narrative inquiry methodology applied in this thesis sought to challenge the ascription of these totalising identities, as a means to encourage individuals themselves to describe and develop their own preferred identities (Morgan, 2000). To extend this debate as a means to facilitate awareness among employers and co-workers, recommendations are made to implement sensitisation programmes at all institutions, to challenge stereotypes and promote more responsive standards of etiquette by individuals with disabilities themselves. Each participant in this study suggested that the opportunity to share their stories related to obstacles and successes in the workplace was indeed empowering and necessary at both an individual level, as well as to form the foundation to expand the emancipation of others. By way of positioning individuals with disabilities as experts over their own lives through the narration of thick rather than thin descriptions of their identities (White, 2007), individuals with disabilities themselves will be in the position to re-

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author some of the historically stereotypical scripts which have inculcated stigmatised, totalised collective identities within social consciousness for eons. These sources of disability as stigma, where disabled individuals have historically been perceived as 'damaged', 'broken' and 'dysfunctional' (Marks, 1999) were debated at length in Chapter 2. As such, disabled people themselves need to speak up and lobby for equality rather than subscribe to the stigmatised identities (Marks, 1999) imposed by oppressive structures.

Part of lobbying for more inclusive strategies encompasses the notion etched throughout these narratives that individuals with disabilities need not accept perfunctory, tokenistic employment statuses and as such, settle for paltry remuneration and in some cases voluntary positions. Whilst it is clear that many individuals with disabilities continue to face both under- and unemployment, the participants highlighted personal strategies including resilience, positivity and intrinsic motivation as qualities which each have employed to procure 'successful' inclusion in the mainstream labour sector which has subsequently impacted positively on their lives and living. Whilst disability studies have focused extensively on applications related to the perpetuation of disability in light of living in a disabling society, the construct of internalised oppression stipulates that psycho-emotional difficulties emerge when individuals with disabilities submit to external oppression from the socio-cultural milieu (Marks, 1999; Lawthom & Goodley, 2006). Each participant in this study indicated the value of drawing on aspects of personal resilience to refute stereotypical constructs even though on some level this must be considered cautiously to avoid repression and other defences (Marks, 1999; Watermeyer, 2009) on the one hand, and circumvent the perpetuation of stigma on the other. Whilst the narratives revealed that individuals with disabilities are indeed 'loyal employees' which will be discussed in the section below, such overcompensations in light of internalised oppression may require the individual with a disability to focus on the relationships that they have constructed with *themselves*, to address the need to make restitutions in order to 'retain' their precarious workplace positions. From another vantage point, employers and managers are required to confront the stereotypes and stigma which perpetuate this internalised oppression in the first place. This will be addressed below. It is for this reason that I align with Lawthom and Goodley's (2006:191) view that "psychological knowledge can be utilised in disability studies to understand and challenge the psychological experiences of exclusion".

The role of networking appeared to be an important strategy utilised by all participants in this study. This was evidenced in each participant's introduction to their primary context by way of existing connections and contacts. On some level, this may be seen as cause for concern, since it may suggest in part that many disabled individuals continue to be excluded without the additional influence exerted by a personal contact network. The availability of

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more responsive employment agencies as networks for individuals with disabilities could counter the need for entry related to personal connections which in many instances may not be available to all 'disabled' individuals.

6.2.2   Implications for Employers

The narratives revealed that more responsive awareness training for employers is necessary to enhance the number of appointments of individuals with disabilities in the mainstream labour sector – and more specifically in the private sector.   Whilst individuals with disabilities acknowledge the fact that they are immensely loyal employees and may work harder to be recognised than their non disabled counterparts, negative perceptions and stereotypes continue to exist, implicating the 'disabled' as a burden on company time, finances and resources. Employers are encouraged to re-visit their perceptions and supplant the internalisation of these historically crafted stereotypical constructions of disabled individuals. This includes attending to the misconceptions that the employment of individuals with disabilities may place undue hardships on the company as a whole, including: absenteeism; additional costs; lack of skills and expertise. The narratives revealed that in most cases, individuals with disabilities are loyal, committed, skilled and valuable staff members, who take minimal 'sick' leave, and who value minor structural and technological accommodations to enhance their efficacy. In most instances, these provisions do not place any undue financial hardship on companies as a whole.

Employers are encouraged to provide equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities to grow, access training and skills development and the prospects to compete equally for managerial positions. The dearth of managerial and higher echelon employment statuses for individuals with disabilities similarly requires the urgent attention of all role players. Support; an accommodating environment; equality; open communication and equal remuneration packages require redress at managerial level.

6.2.3   Implications for Institutions

Companies and institutions are encouraged to revisit their employment equity figures, and examine both collective and individually constructed images of disability as a whole in order to redress the stigma that continues to influence the low number of positions available to individuals with disabilities. This also involves the redress of company policy; skills development opportunities and the provision of reasonable accommodations for disabled employees. Individuals with disabilities may benefit from learnership programmes and the on-going provision of adequate training facilities, replete with accessible training methods, which requires urgent review by companies

as a whole. This includes training for trainers to respond more inclusively especially with regards to individuals with sensory impairments.

In many instances, individuals with disabilities are excluded from the workplace as a result of physical obstacles in the built environment; poor provision of transport services and obstacles to the supply of assistive devices. Most of the participants in this study reported that their companies have made the necessary workplace accommodations to assure accessibility, yet suggest that more attention be afforded to aspects such as accommodations in the event of emergency evacuation drills and alternatives to traditional elevator accessibility such as non-electronic external hoists. Institutions should be encouraged wherever possible to consider the office space provision for individuals with physical disabilities to encompass ground floor stationing to enhance ease of accessibility in the event of elevator malfunctions. It appears that whilst the general tendency is to afford focused attention on the more 'visible' modifications to the built environment, including the construction of ramps; toilets and parking bays for individuals with disabilities, employees report that in many instances less visible and often 'small' changes are needed, such as modifications to the height of appliances and the accessibility of turnstiles. Consultation with individuals with disabilities themselves as experts in this regard is a serious consideration for all companies to align with Charlton's (1998) iconic statement: "nothing about us, without us". Participants with sensory impairments in this study reported that their institutions were generally unwilling to make necessary adaptations and provide access to assistive devices. The provision of voice activated software and sign language interpreters, generally involves minimal costs to the company as a whole, yet enhances employee productivity which inevitably improves company profit margins. Lastly, the transportation system requires urgent redress and the provision of an internal transport system by companies themselves may be a viable consideration.

6.2.4   Implications for the Field of Educational Psychology

It is well documented that individuals with disabilities have historically been subject to sub-standard educational and training opportunities, and in many instances may lack requisite skills when entering the workplace (Council on Higher Education, 2005). With this in mind, this study has implications for the field of Educational Psychology which seeks to enhance foundational skills and development to optimize human functioning in areas of learning and development (Department of Health, 2011), with the goal of promoting efficacy in mainstream economic life. Through hearing the storied voices of individuals with disabilities who are currently employed, this study seeks to address obstacles and facilitators to professional identity formation which begins in the education and training settings. As such, barriers or facilitators to educational experiences have implications for the inclusion of

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individuals with disabilities in the world of work. By attending to the needs of individuals with disabilities who have achieved non-perfunctory employment statuses, more responsive strategies can be implemented in the education and training sector to advocate for access to "tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others" (UNESCO, 2006, 24(5).

Whilst strides in terms of access to education have indeed been made with the implementation of more inclusive policy and legislation (Department of Education, 2001), it is clear that large numbers of students with disabilities remain excluded from access to education and training largely as a result of under-resourcing, socio-economic obstacles and accessibility constraints. Whilst the medium to long term goal related to the implementation of an inclusive education and training system in South Africa includes strategic changes to legislation, policy and accessibility to learning institutes (Department of Education, 2001), in many instances individuals with disabilities remain excluded from educational provision beyond the general education and training phase (Council on Higher Education, 2005). This implies that many individuals with disabilities continue to lack the requisite skills for inclusion in the mainstream labour sector, especially at managerial levels, which relates in part to attitudinal barriers both in the schooling system and higher education institutes as well as lack of provision of vocational guidance and other preparedness strategies to ensure inclusion at tertiary institutions (Council on Higher Education, 2005). Lack of career guidance and counselling strategies perpetuate the misguided sentiment inculcated in many young people with disabilities that they will have to seek employment in sheltered environments. Educational institutes are encouraged to make vocational guidance and counselling strategies mandatory, with a specific focus on career development for learners with disabilities to glean insights into the wide range of employment options available to them. The transition from school to tertiary education and the workplace requires further scrutiny from all role-players since individuals with disabilities have more complicated career development processes than their non disabled counterparts (Yanchak et al., 2005). At tertiary institutes, greater awareness should be made vis a vis the available support services for disabled students in conjunction with their continued commitment to ensure that facilities are inclusive, and that reasonable accommodations are a mandatory part of all institutional agendas.

6.2.5   Implications for Theory

This study contributed to the broad base of knowledge about the social construction of disability in the mainstream labour sector. As participants in this thesis described their lives and experiences as individuals with disabilities who are currently employed, it was evidenced that a universal, homogenous, stable identity status is no longer an

applicable construct in the disability discourse and professional identity should be considered variously, according to the unique, individualised characteristics implicit in each person as a means to challenge existing stereotypes and archetypes embedded in the collective unconscious. As such new opportunities to 'theorise' disability were evidenced in this thesis where disability was conceptualised as uniquely *experienced* by each individual in alignment with temporal and contextual life histories, as well as social and environmental interactions.

This study acknowledges the value of approaching the construct of disability from an integrated theoretical approach and therefore proposes this mode of inquiry for consideration for future investigations. An integrated theoretical approach promotes the notion that because the mind, body and environment cannot be neatly separated, "we need different levels of analysis to explore different dimensions of experience" (Marks, 1999:12). The theoretical and paradigmatic lenses through which this study was envisioned, sought to do just that. Drawing on the integration of the fields of sociology, psychology, political science, education, economics and at times even architecture, this thesis sought to embrace a trans-disciplinary approach which proved a particularly efficacious means to consider the multiplicity of experiences in the world of work. Because so little literature affords foci on psychological and emotional aspects of disability (Goodley & Lawthom, 2006a, 2006b; Goodley, 2010; Marks, 1999; Watermeyer, 2006, 2009), this study revealed that the integration of 'episodes' of psychoanalysis was a useful means to attend to the constructs of internalised oppression and address socially constructed stereotypes and archetypes of the 'disabled identity'. Therefore, the integration of aspects of psychoanalysis served as an efficacious means to add to the existing frameworks of post-structuralist and social constructionist thought. The post-structural theoretical lens through which this study was in part envisioned, was a useful mode through which to consider individual perspectives of disability in the workplace and to attend to themes implicit in the narratives as inculcated truths pertaining to the individual's lived experiences. For this reason, a narrative inquiry approach was implemented as an effective mechanism to truly hear alternate voices through which to challenge the stereotypes and archetypes of disability that have pervaded social consciousness for generations and as such contributed to stigma. This will be discussed further in the next section.

6.2.6   Implications for Future Research

This study has many implications for the future of research within the field of disability and the ramifications for both theory and research suggest that the future inclusion of individuals in the mainstream labour sector rests heavily on the way in which disability is theorised, conceptualised and presented in order to silence the historic stereotypes which have sought to exclude, marginalise and ascribe universal, fixed identity statuses to perpetuate

stigma. At the outset, research which considers the storied voices of individuals with disabilities in the workplace is rare (Gwernan-Jones, 2008; Dube, 2005), and current research practices continue to over-emphasise theorising disability from the medical perspective according to static constructs of the 'disabled' identity. As such, in the past little attention was afforded to the choice of methodology in the design of disability research (Barnes & Mercer, 1997, in Mercer, 2004), and the over-emphasis on positivist research methodologies which pervaded the academic fraternity until fairly recently (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), appeared to perpetuate the 'perceived incapacity' of individuals with disabilities themselves through exclusion from active participation in the research process (Mercer, 2004). This research sought to challenge the medical hegemony; stereotypical non-disabled constructs and static professional perspectives of disability in favour of an approach where the actual stories of individuals with disabilities are heard which favours the view that there are multiple identities which are expressed variously through the complexity of individual experience.

The stories presented in this thesis provided a critical lens through which rich, powerful descriptions related to the workplace experiences of individuals with disabilities were heard. This supports the notion that narrative as a methodology is an effective mode to explore the effects of oppression (Thomas, 1999) by way of providing individuals with "as much control as possible" over the research process (Beazley, Moore & Benzie, 1997). This defends the idea that there are many factors which perpetuate the oppression and discrimination of individuals with disabilities, notwithstanding research practices which should always be afforded careful and extensive consideration in the planning of any research endeavour. It is for this reason that disability research must seek to challenge oppression (Beazley, et. al., 1997) through emancipation (Barnes, 2001; Hodge, 2008; Carmichael, 2004), where it is posited that it is only the disabled person who is able to adequately describe their experiences of both inclusion and exclusion.

The epistemological and ontological lens through which research is conceptualised has the potential to emancipate rather than oppress. In many instances, attention toward the way in which knowledge or reality is conceptualised is averted, which inevitably impacts the tenuous line between 'emancipation' and the somewhat patronising versions of 'triumph over adversity'. It is for this reason, that I advocate for a critical realist ontology which "recognises the complexity of language and reality, but nonetheless acknowledges a relationship between how people narrate their world and their experiences" (King & Horrocks, 2010) to guide future studies.

Narrative inquiry as a methodology, positioned within the qualitative research tradition has been critiqued for its 'confessional stance' which has been cited as a "form of self subjugation, affirming a fixed 'disabled' identity and

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viewed as either representing all disabled people, offering a model along the lines of 'triumphing over adversity' or reinforcing disabled people's positions as pathological objects available for voyeuristic gaze" (Marks, 1999:183). This was not my experience in this research process, and I challenge the notion that narrative as a methodology simply perpetuates the subjugation of individuals with disabilities. Through the narrative study of lives, the participants in this study were provided with *some* control over the research process, whereby they were encouraged to view and review the research texts and were also able to voice their experiences in the workplace from an emancipatory perspective – to empower not only themselves, but also others as a platform to lobby for more inclusion in the workplace. With this in mind, I argue, that since there is no stable, universalised disabled 'identity', through the narrative telling of past, present and future experience, individuals with disabilities have the platform to craft their personal self-identity as experts over their lives and experiences – which contrasts strikingly with prior positivist approaches to disability research. The open-ended mode of interviewing underscores the notion that participants were free to express whatever it was that they wanted to address.

An additional consideration in research with individuals with disabilities is to provide individuals themselves with the breadth and freedom to decide on the most efficacious mode of data generation. Asking an individual with visual impairment to construct a timeline or make a collage; or requesting a telephonic interview with an individual with a hearing impairment are some of the considerations that need to be made when designing a study with individuals with disabilities. It is for this reason, that I included flexibility in the data generation process, and encouraged individuals to take control over their own preferred methods. This contributed to the overall reflection that individuals in this study were co-producers of knowledge, which enhances the emancipatory lens through which this study was conceptualised. It is vital that research creates a platform for the development of authentic, trusting relationships rather than simply a mode for researchers to further their own personal ends. The emancipatory paradigmatic lens through which this study was in part envisioned, sought to do just that.

Lastly, in terms of data analysis which inevitably must align with the research design as a whole, the implementation of a dual analytic process sought to truly 'hold' the narrator's original intended meanings in the descriptive analytic phase, and extend more universal applications in the interpretive analytic phase. As such, the individual identities of the individual themselves were retained in this study, whilst the research as a whole has an extended meaning to which others can relate.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a number of recommendations for future research which have emerged in response to this study. At the outset, more voices need to be heard as a means to comprehensively understand the complexities involved in the formation of an 'individualised' professional identity crafted through the unique life histories and workplace experiences of individuals with disabilities. These voices should form diverse groups to extend understandings of disability in the world of work and in so doing, silence the voices of those who have historically sought to denigrate, marginalise and oppress those with any type of 'different-ness'. This study revealed some consistent differences between the employment experiences of individuals with sensory disabilities and those with impairments related to physical mobility. As such specificity to the type of impairment could provide more focused, in-depth considerations. Additionally, more specified attention could be afforded to the workplace experiences of individuals with acquired vs. congenital disabilities.   The voices of employers who are committed to the employment of individuals with disabilities in their respective contexts could form the foci of future research endeavours to dismantle some of the socially constructed perceptions that continue to influence the appointments of individuals with disabilities in mainstream labour contexts.

Lastly, there appears to be a dearth of literature related to the transition of individuals with disabilities from school or tertiary educational institutes to the world of work. Future research is needed to underscore the career development process of individuals with disabilities and attend to more responsive vocational guidance methods related to the transition from higher education to the workplace.

6.4   STRENGTHS OF THIS STUDY

The primary strength of this study relates to the choice of a narrative inquiry approach as a mechanism to gather *alternative stories* and as such challenge prior research which considers the notion of a fixed 'disabled' identity which inevitably connotes stigma and stereotypical constructs which limits inclusion. Since it is my contention that human beings are multifaceted, influenced by both socio-political structures and inner constructs of the intra- and interpsychic, it therefore seeks to follow that the social constructionist and post-structuralist lens together with episodes of psychoanalysis was a useful mechanism to generate a three dimensional experience of the lives and experiences of individuals with disabilities in the mainstream labour sector. Similarly, from an emancipatory lens, all participants reported the process as extremely productive and conducive to their own personal growth and development and suggested that the research as a whole could be considered a useful tool for the empowerment of others, who have not managed to upskill themselves or actively procure placement in mainstream labour

settings. Using both experience centred narratives and life story, together with the dual analytic lens as a mechanism to address both the individual and the collective meanings and stories of disability in the world of work, served as a useful mechanism to generate rich descriptions related to professional identity formation.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

A primary limitation of this study was the spatial restriction implicit in the conceptualisation of this study as a 'mini thesis' which impacted my capacity to expand the narratives with the full flavour that I had initially intended. The inclusion of fewer participants would therefore have generated richer descriptions. Whilst this research was not intended to be generalised or transferred to the wider population, the dearth of black male and female voices in this study is cited as a limitation. The inclusion of individuals with sensory disabilities is cited as a further limitation since some of the findings in the study relative to reasonable accommodations and stigma were impairment specific. In terms of the methodology, narrative inquiry is oft cited as a subjective approach, wherein participants are frequently moved by socially constructed meanings, which, may have influenced the stories that they chose to tell (Hunter, 2010). To counter this, rapport was built with each individual at the outset and I aligned with Clandinin and Connelly's (2000:181) statement that "every response is valid to some degree and contains the seed of an important event".

Although the sample size of this study was very small due to the methodological considerations and space constraints, the purpose of this study was, from the outset to 'hear' alternative stories related to disability in the workplace by individuals themselves who have achieved inclusion in the mainstream labour sector.   This served to provide a platform for rich descriptions of personal success stories as a mechanism to instil an ethos of hope as well as to shape, shift and change some of the negative attitudes and discourse adopted by employers and institutions. Whilst this was in part accomplished, some of the participants in this study found it easier to articulate the obstacles, rather than the facilitators to employment. Whilst this is useful in terms of theorising debates relative to internalised oppression and continued marginalization together with the fact that there is still much that needs to be done to implement more inclusive strategies in labour contexts, it may also be considered a limitation.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

How then do we really effect change at societal level so that all individuals will be privy to equal rights and freedoms? How do we put an end to these stereotypes and discriminatory discourse which has exacerbated the disabling conditions under which individuals with disabilities have lived for eons? How do we ensure not only that

individuals with disabilities gain access to meaningful employment opportunities, but also to independent living statuses? Perhaps the move toward individualism and the celebration of diversity and difference through active *listening* to alternate stories will provide the much needed end to 'disability' as an inferior status. It is my contention that only when we, as a society are able to surpass the notion of a universalised, stable 'disabled identity', that we will be successful in refuting the inculcated stereotypes and archetypes that have so drastically affected the lives and living of individuals with any type of 'difference'. This study confirmed that whilst South Africa has achieved much in the move from exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation toward a nation of equality, hope and inclusion, a great deal still needs to be done to transform the dominant inculcated stereotypes and archetypes which have sought to oppress individuals with disabilities for generations.

Individuals with disabilities remain among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society and those employed, have been cited as earning less and privy to fewer education and training opportunities than their non disabled counterparts (Schriner, 2001). Although South Africa has one of the most globally comprehensive Constitutions as well as legislation and policies such as the CRPD, (ratified in South Africa in 2007) which seek to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities from societal ignorance; severe educational disadvantages; stereotyping; social and physical obstacles, a dearth of non-perfunctory employment opportunities continue to preclude individuals with disabilities from access to the mainstream labour market (SALGA, 2009).

Disabled scholars and organisations have argued for research that is relevant to the social inclusion of individuals with disabilities by way of emancipatory approaches (Barton, 2005; AfriNEAD, 2009). This study sought to do just that. By way of a deeper understanding of both the obstacles and facilitators to the procurement of equal employment statuses as well as the way (individualised) professional identities are constructed in the workplace, this thesis strives to lobby for more responsive strategies for reasonable accommodations to benefit both disabled individuals and their employers. Based on the narratives espoused in this thesis, it can be concluded that in most cases, individuals with disabilities should not need to adjust their professional identities or their choice of career in order to be successful and that simple modifications and the implementation of responsive reasonable accommodations by institutions and employers can make the difference to securing non perfunctory employment statuses among the disabled minority (Phiri, 2010).

It is imperative that more responsive research strategies are implemented to align with new ways in which individuals with disabilities can represent themselves, their lives and their workplace rights. This research acknowledged the value of accessing and understanding various social constructions of disability related to world

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of work, where alternative stories were heard beyond the actual scripts themselves. Through the revelation of the complexities of each individual's stories, this study has attempted to illustrate that narrative inquiry as a methodology can contribute much to the future of the movement of individuals with disabilities, to truly hear alternative stories of disabilities through the voices of those who have historically been marginalised and subjugated. As such, I would like to conclude this journey simply – with a quote by Chief Joseph who tells us all to:

"Listen, or your tongue will make you Deaf"

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APPENDIX A

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNESCO, 2006)
Article 27: Work and Employment

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation, to, inter alia:

(a) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions;

(b) Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances;

(c) Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others;

(d) Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training;

(e) Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;

(f) Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business;

(g) Employ persons with disabilities in the public sector;

(h) Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures;

(i) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace;

(j) Promote the acquisition by persons with disabilities of work experience in the open labour market;

(k) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities.

2. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery or in servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forced or compulsory labour.

APPENDIX B

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNESCO, 2006)
Article 24: Education

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life long learning directed to:

(a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

(b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;

(c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:

(a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;

(b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;

(c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;

(d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;

(e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:

(a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;

(b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the Deaf community;

(c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, Deaf or Deafblind, is delivered in the

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most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

4. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.

5. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

APPENDIX C

Comparison of the Moral, Medical and Social Models of Disability
(Adapted from Olkin, 2002:133)

Measure	Moral	Medical	Social
Defining features	Disability is a lapse in faith or test of moral positioning	Disability is an abnormal or pathological deficit occurring solely within the individual	Disability is a social construct
Treatment and intervention considerations	Intervention is based on spiritual or divine acceptance.	Treatment is based on amelioration of symptomatology and finding a cure for the presenting problem.	Intervention strategies are aimed at the broader socio-cultural context through increased access and social inclusion.
Advantages of the Model	An acceptance that the impairment connotes a special relationship with a higher power.	Improvement of medical and technological advancement.	Disability is de-pathologised
Disadvantaged of the Model	Increased sense of shame that disability is an inherent flaw within the individual or as a result of "God's wrath"	The individual is not separate from the disability. Paternalistic.	One-size-fits-all approach. The uniqueness of the individual is disavowed.

APPENDIX D

Participant Information Letter

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

A Narrative Inquiry into the Professional Identities of Individuals with Disabilities in the Workplace

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Natalie Smith-Chandler, under the supervision of Prof. Estelle Swart from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University for the partial fulfilment of the degree, Masters in Educational Psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study as I am hoping to learn about your experiences and life as an individual with a disability who is currently employed in the 'mainstream' labour sector.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the research is to generate narratives (stories) exploring the professional identities of individuals with disabilities employed in the mainstream labour sector, and through these stories to provide a platform to counter the universalized generalizations of disablist identities in search of factors that contribute to successful participation and full inclusion in the workplace.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- Participate in at least 2 x 60 minute one-on-one narrative interviews with the researcher, where you will be asked to share your personal and professional life story with special reference to your experiences in the workplace. The interviews will be conducted once a week, for a period of 3 - 4 weeks, at a time and place that is convenient to you.
- Describe your preferences in terms of the methods that you would like us to use to generate the data. These will be explained to you at the first interview with examples of each.
- Make a collage; devise a concept map or construct time line outlining your life story, in the medium of your choice (using magazine clippings; newspapers; photographs etc.). These activities will be based on your own personal preference that will be discussed and decided upon collaboratively with the researcher. With your permission, you will be asked to share your collage / concept map or time line with the researcher.
- Keep a reflective journal about your professional identity and personal biography for a period of 1 week. With your permission, you will be asked to share your personal writings with the researcher. Your journal will be returned to you at the final interview.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Although there are no foreseeable risks involved in the participation of this study, and your participation and level of sharing is completely voluntary, in the unlikely event that you feel distressed at any point, you will be encouraged to share these feelings with the researcher and support and containment will be provided for you at no cost by way of the intervention of a counsellor. You have full entitlement to withdraw from participation in this study at any time.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is hoped that you will benefit from your participation in the study, by way of sharing your invaluable experiences and your journey as a professional person. Although this study is not meant as a therapeutic exercise, by engaging in a co-constructed conversation, you will be encouraged to reflect and recall experiences that we trust will facilitate and enhance your own personal development and self understanding.   As such, you will have the opportunity to re-live and share your experiences with others. Lastly, you have been chosen as a participant in this study, based on your success in the labour market and it is hoped that by sharing your experiences, you will act as a role model to empower others.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no financial remuneration for participation in this study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times for the duration of the study; no personal identifiers will be disclosed at any time during the course of the research; all data will be kept in a locked cabinet and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to it at any given time. All information recorded on a word processor will be password protected, accessible only to the researcher.

As the information gleaned by way of this study is for the fulfilment of a Masters thesis, findings will be disseminated among the academic fraternity. The results of the research may be used by other academics to enhance future research endeavours. At no times will any personal identifiers be published, and all names; places and institutional identifiers will be concealed using pseudonyms.

With your permission, all interviews will be recorded using an audiotape device. It is your right to review or edit all recordings, which will be erased at the end of the research process. All recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet for at least five years. You will also be asked to create a collage / concept map / timeline of your life story, using magazine clippings, words; photographs (if appropriate and if your consent is granted) and other media. If photographs are used, they will be appropriately concealed in the dissemination of the results of this research. You will be asked for permission in writing to use these artefacts in the dissemination of results to which you may refuse. Should any visual media that you supply be used in the thesis (with your permission), any personal identifiers will be concealed with appropriate technology. You will also be asked to document your findings in the form of a reflective journal, which will be returned to you at the end of the study process.

You will be considered a co-researcher and co-producer of knowledge in this study. This means that you will have access to all the data that is generated, and all your narrative stories that are constructed. As such, you will be able to review, edit and recall any information that may not be reflective of your original meaning and intention. You will also be actively involved in your own choice of data generation in this study. Your valued input will constantly guide the course of the research and any ideas, thoughts or suggestions that you may have will be considered as part of the

process. Ultimately, it is hoped that your voice will provide the foundation for empowerment of other individuals with disabilities who may not have achieved similar success in the workplace.

7.   PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8.   IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Researcher:	Natalie Smith-Chandler	082 305 222(all hours)	natsmith@mweb.co.za
Supervisor:	Professor Estelle Swart	021 808 2305/6	estelle@sun.ac.za

9.   RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS:

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Mrs. Marlene Fouche (021 808 4622) at Stellenbosch University's Unit for Research Development.

APPENDIX E

Participant Informed Written Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

I have read the information pertaining to the study: 'A Narrative Inquiry into the Professional Identities of Individuals with Disabilities in the Workplace' to be conducted by Natalie Smith-Chandler from the Stellenbosch University, under the supervision of Professor Estelle Swart. The information above was described to me by Natalie Smith-Chandler in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I have the option of agreement to have my interviews audio recorded to ensure an accurate account of my responses.

I am also aware that I may withdraw from the study at any time with no implications and that my participation in the study is completely voluntary. It was explained to me that excerpts from the interviews and artefacts (collage; timeline; concept map; personal reflective journal) may be included in the thesis and/or for publication that might come from this research with the understanding that verbatim quotations will be used. I further understand that all my personal information and identifiers will be kept completely confidential and that pseudonyms will replace any names, people or organizations that may relate specifically to me.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of participant

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____   _____

Signature of participant or Legal Representative   **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to [*name of the participant]* and/or [his/her] representative [*name of the representative]. [H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English.

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APPENDIX F

Institutional Information Letter

Letter to Institution for Permission to Conduct Research:

Dear ………………..

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH EMPLOYEES AT _____

I am conducting a research study for the partial fulfilment of the degree, Masters in Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University, under the supervision of Professor Estelle Swart. The title of my research project is: *"A Narrative Inquiry into the Professional Identities of Individuals with Disabilities in the Workplace"*.

The purpose of the research is to generate narratives (stories) regarding the professional identity formation of individuals with disabilities employed in the mainstream labour sector, using their own storied voices as a means to challenge dominant stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes. As such, the research aims to find alternatives to the universal generalizations of disablist identities within an emancipatory paradigm, which contends that through the research process, individuals will be empowered.

I have selected [name of institution] as a possible context for the study because of the company's commitment to the employment of individuals with disabilities as well as the ethos of active participation, inclusion and personal growth potential for disabled employees. Participation in this study would involve four employees from various departments, who are identified as presenting with physical / sensory disabilities between the ages of 22 and 55 years. Employees will be asked to:

- Participate in at least 2 x one-on-one interviews with the researcher, where they will be asked to share their personal life stories, with special reference to their transition from school / higher education to the world of work.

- Share their experiences as professionals / employees.

- Make either a collage; concept map; or timeline outlining their life stories in their media of choice and share the content and process with the researcher.

- Keep a reflective journal about their professional identity and personal biography for a period of 1 week.

The interviews will be conducted outside of the employees' regular working hours and will take place at a venue that is mutually agreed upon by both participants and the CEO.

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There are no foreseeable risks involved in the participation of this study and both participation and level of sharing is completely voluntary. Employees will have full entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants will receive full support and containment in the unlikely event that feelings emerge that are uncomfortable. It is hoped that individuals will benefit from participation in the study, in that they will be provided with a voice to share experiences and their life stories. Neither employees nor [name of institution] will receive remuneration for their participation in this study.

Any information that can be identified with [name of institution] or the participants will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the express, written permission of all parties. In no way will any logo's, documents, property or company material be disclosed in any way or form throughout the research process or in the dissemination of results. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times for the duration of the study; no personal identifiers will be disclosed at any time; all data will be kept in a locked cabinet and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to it at any given time. All information recorded on a word processor will be password protected, accessible only to the researcher.

All information gleaned by way of this study is for the partial fulfilment of a Master's thesis and findings will be disseminated among the academic fraternity. The results of the research may be used by other academics to enhance future research endeavours. At no times will any personal identifiers be published, and all names; places and institutional identifiers will be concealed using pseudonyms.

With the permission of the participants, all interviews will be recorded using an audiotape device. It is the participants' right to review or edit all recordings which will be erased at the end of the research process. All recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet until they are erased. If photographs are used they will be appropriately concealed in the dissemination of the results of this research. Individuals will be asked for permission in writing to use any documents and artefacts.

Participants can choose whether to be part of the study or not. If they do volunteer, they may withdraw at any time without consequences. They may refuse to answer any questions that the researcher may pose. Similarly, the researcher may withdraw participants from the study if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (Social Sciences) at Stellenbosch University. The final decision as to whether [name of institution] can form the context for the study and include four employees as participants is up to management and the CEO.

It is hoped that the results of this study will be beneficial to both [name of institution] and to the participants, their families and individuals with disabilities in South Africa, as well as the broader research community. I look forward to your kind consideration in this regard and thank you for your time and consideration.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact:

Researcher: Natalie Smith-Chandler   082 305 2221 (all hours)   natsmith@mweb.co.za
Supervisor: Professor Estelle Swart   021 808 2305/6   estelle@sun.ac.za

APPENDIX G

Institutional Informed Written Consent Form

Institution Consent Form

I have read the information pertaining to the study: "A Narrative Inquiry into the Professional Identities of Individuals with Disabilities in the Workplace" to be conducted by Natalie Smith-Chandler from the Stellenbosch University, under the supervision of Professor Estelle Swart. The information above was described to me by Natalie Smith-Chandler in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my / our satisfaction.

I understand that all information pertaining directly to the employee participants as well as [name of institution] will be kept confidential and that pseudonyms will replace any names, people or identifiers directly related to the company or the employees. I further understand that all personal information disclosed by the employees is strictly confidential and that the company will not be privy to the personal disclosures made by the employees. I am also aware that the employees may withdraw from the study at any time, without implications and that their participation is completely voluntary. It was also explained to me that excerpts from employee interviews will be included in the thesis and/or for publication that might come from this research with the understanding that verbatim quotations may be used.

I hereby consent for the above mentioned study to take place within the context of [name of institution] and for four employees to act as participants.   I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of CEO / HR Manager

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____   _____

Signature of CEO or Legal Representative   **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to [name of institution] and/or the company's representative [*name of the representative*]. *He / she* was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English.

APPENDIX H

Letter of Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

6 May 2011

Tel.: 021 - 808-9183
Enquiries: Sidney Engelbrecht
Email: sidney@sun.ac.za

Reference No. 458/2010

Ms N Smith-Chandler
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7602

Ms N Smith-Chandler

LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE
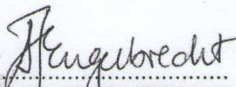
With regards to your application, I would like to inform you that the project, *A Narrative inquiry of the professional identities of individuals with disabilities in the workplace*, has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards

MR SF ENGELBRECHT
Secretary: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanoria)

DIE UNIVERSITEIT VAN STELLENBOSCH
- 6 MAY 2011
THE UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling • Division for Research Development
Privaatsak/Private Bag XI • Matieland 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa

APPENDIX I

Interview Guide 1: Experience Centred Narrative

Opening Statement:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As mentioned previously, I am hoping to learn about your experiences and life as an individual with a disability who is currently employed. I am excited to hear your stories!

I would like to remind you that you are in no way obligated to participate in the study and should you decide to withdraw at any time, you are free to do so. You may also choose not to answer any of the questions that I may ask you and you, or refuse to participate in any of the activities that we will plan together for the purpose of the study without any repercussions.

In our discussions as to the purpose and procedures involved in the study, you granted permission or me to audiotape our interviews. Are you still in agreement with this (remember that you are under no obligation? If yes… would you mind if I turn the audiotape on now?

I would like us to plan together how best we should generate the data for this study. In this interview I thought that you could share stories with me about your life as a professional person with a disability. Then, in preparation for the next interview I thought that we could come up with creative ways for you to document your life story for us to explore next time. Some of the suggestions that I came up with include: a collage; concept map or time line [show examples of each one and explain how they are constructed]. What do you think about this? Essentially, the purpose of these is to outline your personal life story which should ideally contain important information about your life, including your childhood, education and experiences in the workplace. You are welcome to use any media, including photographs, magazine clippings, newspapers, your own artwork etc. Which process do you think aligns most with your personal preference? Are you comfortable in doing this activity for next time? Remember that you are under no obligation.   If you agree, next time, I will ask you to walk me through your collage / concept map / timeline and tell me the story that you have created.

I would also like to ask you to continue to document your experiences at work in the journal that I gave to you in your information pack. These documentations can include any thoughts, feelings, frustrations, joyful moments, insights that you feel others should know about etc.

Interview I:

Lets begin!

I would like you to think about your experiences in the workplace as well as your education and training opportunities that have contributed to or hindered your occupational process. These may include your experiences at school or university as well as your previous and current workplace exposure.

To begin with, can you tell me your story about how you decided to embark upon your career as a(n) __

_____.

- Who was involved?

- What support did you received?

- Who motivated you?

- What challenges were involved?

- What were the facilitators?

- What happened?

- Where was it?

- When was that?

Are there other parts of the story about your experiences as a(n) (e.g. editor) _____ ?

- Prior employment history

- Inclusion / segregation / integration

Could you tell me a story about your education and training experiences?

- What types of accommodations has your employer / manager made to ensure your full and equal participation in your place of work?

- Could you tell me a little more about the stories of some of the challenges that you have encountered along the way?

- Could you tell me a little more about the stories of some of your successes in your career(s)?

- Could you tell me a little more about how you perceive your personal qualities have contributed to your successes in the workplace?

Closing:

I really appreciate your participation in this study, and enjoyed hearing your stories. I believe that the stories that I am collecting will have a positive impact on our community and that with your help, we can provide support and encouragement for other individuals who may be struggling to find employment or settle into a career. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor.

When would it be convenient for you to have our next interview? Where should we meet?

APPENDIX J

Interview Guide 2: Life Story

Opening Statement:

It's great to see you again! Thank you so much for coming. In this interview, I would like us to explore aspects of your personal life story. If you engaged any of the activities, perhaps we could use your collage/concept map or timeline as a platform for the story telling. If not, we can simply have a conversation about your life story from birth to the present. Again, I would like to thank you for choosing to participate in this study. Your insights and participation is so valuable, and I am excited to hear about your collage / concept map /timeline and the processes that you went through to create it.

I would like to remind you that you are under no obligation to participate in this study or to share your [artefact(s)] with me. You may choose to end the interview and your participation in the study as a whole at any time without any consequences.

Would you like to share the stories that you have created via your collage / concept map with me?

OR: If no artefact has been completed: Would you like to share your personal life story with me? We could begin with your early childhood.

- Did anybody in your family tell you anything significant about your birth or very early childhood years?

- What was it like for you growing up?

- Could you tell me a story about your teenage years and some of the transition phases in your life?

- Could you tell me a story about your transition from school to university or the world of work?

- Could you tell me a story about a significant event or events that you remember during childhood, adolescence, adulthood?

The following prompts will be used to further the conversation:

- Who was involved?

- What happened?

- Where was it?

- And then what happened?

- Can you tell me a story about it?

- What was that like for you?

- How did you feel about that?

- What did you think about that?

- What did that mean for you?

- How did you respond to that?
- What do you think that you would have / could have done differently?

Closing Statement:

I would like to thank you once again for all your time, effort and energy that you are investing in participating in this study. I really appreciate all your insights and your stories will contribute greatly to the field of disability studies and hopefully empower other individuals to achieve success in the workplace.

Once I have written and transcribed your stories, I will be in touch with you so that you will be able to review and edit your story to ensure that I have captured everything that you have said in the manner in which you intended it to be heard and also to recall any information that you may not wish to be published in the final study. I would also appreciate it if you would be kind enough to contact me if you have managed to record some of your own reflections in the journal that was given to you at the beginning of this study, which I will review and return to you after a period of one week. I will provide you with a transcript of your story as soon as it is complete and it will be up to you if you would like to meet to discuss it, or whether you would like to make your own changes to the copy provided and send it back to me via e mail.

Thank you again for all your time, effort and energy. I have loved hearing your story.

APPENDIX K

Review of the Narratives with Each Participant

Note: This part of the process was conducted face to face; via e mail or as a conference call depending on the individual needs of each participant with special reference to their time availability. The prompts and style of questioning and commentary was tailored according to each individual story and the needs of the participant as an individual. Appendix K therefore serves merely as a guide for aspects that were addressed with each individual participant.

Let's begin. What I understood about our first conversation…

- Did I capture your story correctly?

- Is there anything that you would like to add?

- Is there anything that I didn't adequately explain?

- Tell me what you think about the story that you told me as a whole?

- Is there anything that you would like to omit – that you feel may be too closely associated with you and that would therefore compromise your anonymity?

- What stood out for you?

There are a few specific things that I wasn't too sure of, and I would like to explore a little further with you…

- Is this what you meant to say? Could you clarify for me?

- What did you want us to know when you said…?

- What can we learn from your experiences?

Prompts:

- And then what happened?

- Can you tell me a story about it?

- What was that like for you?

- How did you feel about that?

- What did you think about that?

- What did that mean for you?

- How did you respond to that?

- What do you think that you would have / could have done differently

I will also leave the transcripts of our interviews with you to go over at your leisure. Should you feel that you would like to make any changes, please feel free to do so. I will collect them from you on _____ / you can e mail them back to me at your leisure.

Do you feel that we should have an additional session to clarify some of the discussions that we have had? (If yes… when would it be convenient for you?)

Closing Statement:

Thank you so much _____ for your participation in this study. I so value all the time, effort and energy that you put into your participation. I have truly enjoyed hearing your stories and have valued your in-depth sharing tremendously. The stories that you have told me can provide future researcher with new ideas and will also assist other individuals with disabilities to learn from your experiences. How did you feel about the process? Was there anything positive or negative about your participation in this study that you would like to address?

I would like to present you with a small gift as a token of my sincerest appreciation. If you have any questions, further insights or questions, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisor at any time. We will be glad to answer any questions or receive any feedback that you may have.

I will call you once the data has been analysed and the thesis complete, and will provide you with feedback of the findings of this study at your convenience.

APPENDIX L

Excerpt of an Interview Transcript

N: *Jerome, I was wondering if you would like you to tell me a story about your experiences in the workplace and perhaps I could ask you to start out by telling me a story about what sparked your interest in coming to work at this company, and what your professional role is?*

J: Well basically it started off with xxxxx working here eight years ago, and she got me in, just on a temporary basis and I saw that it was quite convenient and that everything was fine. Because when I started off, I was injured eleven years ago. I have spent the last three years in a wheelchair and in the beginning it was a new thing just getting into the whole job market. Because when I was injured I was still in school, so it was a whole transition from school to the workplace, and it was a career gap for me, because I also had to get into the whole social scene and everything again. And then, when I came here, it was almost perfect. I mean the staff was accommodating, the facilities was fine and everything was just perfect, and I thought, this is somewhere I would feel comfortable working in. I didn't have any other exposure with regards to work with regards to facilities and that, so this was my dream thing for me, and then what happened was that I got a contract after a few months and then I got a learnerships from [name of institution] and that was for a year, and then everything was fine for about a year, and everything was accommodating and all of that and then I started off where I am now as an [name of specific role within the company] doing my thing, and then what opened doors for me was the sensitisation programme that they have running here, and I was part of the facilitation of it, where I could share my story and people could understand where I come from and my experiences and what I would like and what I don't like and what I expect from other people, so I could present another side of myself – so they could see another side of Jerome, where they wouldn't just see the wheelchair and that was an eye opener to a lot of people around me, and colleagues and that actually came to me and said when I first saw you they thought ag shame this and ag shame that, but now they can actually see me as Jerome, a normal worker, and you can actually do the same and that was one of the biggest things for me, to be on an equal par with the rest of the people because now I can actually start pursuing my career aspirations at [name of institution], and I slowly worked my way up from an [role within the company]. I became a [role]… and like I say if I compare to other people my peers now, where they work, some of them are in government institutions where they work and they don't have the half of what I have go here and it makes a big difference getting up in the mornings, knowing that you are going to [name of institution] and that you are going to be sorted for the day. Parking Toilets everything is just perfect, and like I said from management side, they really did a lot, - I don't know from other divisions but from my division there is a lot of input getting to know me, and wanting to know

more and how they can improve and that. It's always an on-going process where you can give feedback and that, so it was really a journey for me, where you can give back, and I have been here I think six, seven years or so now and it's been an awesome experience.

N: Would you like to tell me a little more about the sensitisation programme.

J: I think that it was my first year with [name of institution], where they approached me to say that they would like me to share my story with the whole department – with the whole division and we are what we call the [specific name of the programme], which is where we impart knowledge onto other people and they decide– where we think it's a good idea to kind of like, I am going to tell my story now and I told my whole story from A to Z and I think it was with three sessions with [specific names] departments and I just presented and told them about what I would like, about approaches, you know, the normal stuff like being sensitive – don't just push my chair, ask me if you see I am struggling or something – don't just take it away for me, ask me can I help you Jerome and don't just look at me, don't just stare or something, if you want to ask, you ask, because I also have my normal conversations – I talk about sport, I talk about girls, I talk about everything – so don't just think there is nothing to talk about because I am in a wheelchair, because I live a normal life – so don't look at me as the guy in the wheelchair – look at me as Jerome! And it was amazing - the responses when we came back and how they treat you and how they make jokes with you and they tell you they thought they couldn't make jokes with you 'ços you gonna get depressed and so its amazing and that went well and after that there was an external group that came in called [name of organization] – I don't know if you have have heard of [name of organization]? They came in and they did the more practical side of it. How to use a wheelchair – how to push him, how to approach him and all other disabilities, like blindness and all of that, and that was also something that I could bring back to the office, and then they knew that they couldn't just come back to me, and say, are you fine Jerome, can I help you? Can I push you? That was the whole thing, even because they think now, I have a cup, so then they ask, can I wash it out for you, so there that etiquette was there between me and y colleagues and its just so nice, because now there is no awkwardness no nothing and they know where to draw the boundaries for the work and what questions to ask, what not to ask 'cos in the mornings we will talk about everything and anything and they will know where to draw that line of asking and its just amazing, because I feel normal when I come to work, because I am Jerome, I am not disabled and I think just about everyone in the area sees me as Jerome.

APPENDIX M

Example of Coding from the Transcripts

Code	
Acquiring employment through Contacts	Well **basically it started off with xxx working here eight years ago, and she got me in, just on a temporary basis** and I saw that it was quite
Access and Accessibility: positive	convenient and that everything was fine. Because when I started off, I was injured eleven years ago. I have spent the last three years in a wheelchair
Barriers	and in the beginning it was a new thing just getting into the whole job market. Because when I was injured I was still in school, so it was a whole transition
Education and training: transition school to work	from school to the workplace, and it was a career gap for me, **because I also had to get into the whole social scene and everything again.** And
Social and Recreation	then, when I came here, it was almost perfect. **I mean the staff was**
Access and Accessibility	**accommodating** the facilities were fine and everything was just perfect, and
Support: staff	I thought, this is somewhere I would feel comfortable working in. I didn't
Access and accessibility	have any other exposure with regards to work with regards to facilities and
Happiness: workplace	that, so this was my dream thing for me, and then what happened was that I got a contract after a few months and then I got a learnerships from [name
Education and training: learnerships	of organization] and that was for a year, and then everything was fine for about a year, and everything was accommodating and all of that and then I started off where I am now as an administrator doing my thing, and then
Sensitisation programme	what opened doors for me was **the sensitisation programme that they have running here, and I was part of the facilitation of it, where I could share my story and people could understand where I come from and my experiences and what I would like and what I don't like and what I expect from other people, so I could present another side of myself – so they could see another side of Jerome,** where they wouldn't just see
Stereotypes and discrimination	the wheelchair and that was an eye opener to a lot of people around me, and colleagues and that actually came to me and said when I first saw you they thought ag shame this and ag shame that **but now they can actually see**
Equality: the value of being treated the same	**me as Jerome, a normal worker,**
Equality	**You can actually do the same and that was one of the biggest things for me, to be on an equal par with the rest of the people** because now I can actually start pursuing my career aspirations at [name of institution], and

Resilience, motivation, positivity **Barriers** **Access and Accommodations** **Support: management** **Support: feedback** **Support: of others – the value of giving back** **Loyalty: long term employment** **Happiness: work** **Sensitisation programme: telling my story** **Etiquette: sensitisation** **Stereotypes and discrimination** **Equality**	I slowly worked my way up from an administrator. I became a [specific name or company role]… and like I say if I compare to other people my peers now, where they work, some of them are in government institutions where they work and they don't have the half of what I have go here and it makes a big difference getting up in the mornings, knowing that you are going to [name of institution] and that you are going to be sorted for the day. Parking Toilets everything is just perfect, **and like I said from management side, they really did a lot, - I don't know from other divisions but from my division there is a lot of input getting to know me, and wanting to know more and how they can improve and that.** It's always an on-going process where **you can give feedback** and that, so it was really a journey for me, **where you can give back,** and I have been here I think **six, seven years or so now** and it's been an awesome experience. *Tell me a little more about the sensitisation programme.* **I think that it was my first year with [name of organisation], where they approached me to say that they would like me to share my story with the whole department** – with the whole division and we what we call the [name of programme], is where we impart knowledge onto other people and they decide– where we think it's a good idea to kind of like, I am going to tell my story now and I told my whole story from A to Z and I think it was with three sessions with different finance and two admin departments and I just presented and told them about what I would like, about approaches, you know, the normal stuff like being sensitive – don't just push my chair, ask me if you see I am struggling or something – don't just take it away for me, ask me can I help you Jerome and don't just look at me, don't just stare or something, if you want to ask, you ask, because I also have my normal conversations – I talk about sport, I talk about girls, I talk about everything – so don't just think there is nothing to talk about because I am in a wheelchair, **because I live a normal life – so don't look at me as the guy in the wheelchair – look at me as Jerome!**

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APPENDIX N

Preliminary Clustering of Themes

	Broad themes	Sub themes	Evan	Nathan	Jerome	Anthony	Dianne	Cathy
Psychosocial Factors	Motivation and positivity		√	√	√	√	√	√
	Putting in extra effort at work			√	√	√		
	Achievement	School / tertiary Work	√ √	√ √	√ √	√	√ √	√ √
	Loyalty	Long term employment tenure Fear of losing current job	√	√ √	√	√	√ √	√
	Social factors and recreation	Involvement in sport Engagement in social activities Other hobbies (e.g. writing, music)	√ √	√	√ √	√		√
	Type of disability	Impact on procuring work Value of a commonality of experience		√	√	√ √	√ √	√
	Independence vs. dependence		√	√	√			√
	Challenges, frustrations, disappointments	Lack of support Not feeling heard Financial difficulties due to disability	√			√ √	√	√
	Support	Family Friends Employers Colleagues Institution	√ √ √	√ √ √ √ √	√ √ √ √ √	√ √		√ √ √ √ √
	Current job satisfaction		√	√	√			√
	Current job dissatisfaction					√	√	
	Previous job dissatisfaction		√	√			√	
	Leadership and empowerment of others	Involvement in organisations Speaking up to employers Need to be an ambassador			√ √ √	√ √	√ √ √	√ √
Employment Related Factors	Reasonable Accommodations	Access and Accessibility (physical environ) Transport difficulties Having own transport facility Facilitative working conditions Some Problems with physical environment Need for time off work	√ √ √ √ √	√ √ √ √ √	√ √ √ √ √	√	√ √ √	√ √ √ √ √
	Awareness and sensitisation	Involvement in sensitisation programmes		√	√	√	√	√
	Feels value from employers		√	√	√			√
	Procurement of job through		√	√	√	√	√	√

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Category	Topic	Subtopic						
	contacts							
	Communication	Poor communication from employers Refusal to listen to needs of individuals with disabilities		√		√	√	√
	Etiquette		√	√	√		√	
	Barriers and Facilitators	Understanding what you can and can't do			√	√		
	Underutilisation of skills			√		√	√	
	Promotional exclusions			√		√	√	
	Equality and normalcy	Being treated the same Barriers to equal opportunities	√ √	√ √	√	√ √	√	√
Education and Training Factors	School and schooling	Inclusion in mainstream environment	√	√	NA		√	NA
		Difficulties with school system	√				√	
	Tertiary Education	Barriers to tertiary education		√	√		√	NA
		Attainment of tertiary qualification	√	√	√	√		√
		Accessibility	√					
	Vocational guidance received							
	Workplace training	Availability of training			√			
		Unavailability of training				√		
Environmental Factors	Lack of jobs	Unemployment experiences across lifespan	√	√			√	√
	Poor remuneration experiences		√	√		√	√	√
	Experience of a perfunctory employment status		√	√		√	√	√
Stereotypes and Discrimination	As barriers to procure employment		√	√		√	√	
	Discrimination in the workplace			√		√		√
	Discrimination or stereotypes from educators, trainers and doctors		√		√		√	√
	Has personally felt discriminated against by others		√	√	√	√	√	√
Governmental level	Failure to implement inclusion statuses			√		√		
	Failure of employment equity policies for disabled			√		√	√	
	Disability grant applications						√	√
Familial Factors	Receives emotional support		√	√	√	√	√	√
	Receives or has historically received financial support		√	√			√	√
	Overprotection from a family member in light of disability		√				√	√
Other	Additional family members with disabilities		√			√		√
	The role of motherhood and a child with a disability						√	√