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Doves, rainbows and an uneasy peace: student images of reconciliation in a post-conflict society [1]

ANA FERREIRA AND HILARY JANKS
ana.ferreira1@wits.ac.za; hilary.janks@wits.ac.za

In this article we draw on data from a two cycle action research project, in which ways of teaching reconciliation in post apartheid secondary school classrooms are explored. We undertake a de tailed analysis of a selection of artefacts produced by South African students representing their understandings of reconciliation. Initially students' work conceived of reconciliation either in terpersonally or intrapersonally. Subsequently work related to South Africa's Truth and Recon ciliation Commission (TRC) resulted in a more socio historical engagement with the idea of reconciliation. An analysis of the visual and verbal messages on postcards designed by students suggests that they experience our ostensibly post conflict society as one of unstable peace. We argue that for a society with a violent past, reconciliation work needs to find ways of confronting the powerful discourses of the past that continue to circulate and to shape our identities and those of our students.

Keywords: discourse; identity; peace education; reconciliation pedagogies; teaching in a post conflict society

Introduction

The data presented in this article was collected in South Africa as part of an international research project on Reconciliation Pedagogy. The South African research was undertaken by three teachers from three different racially mixed schools and four educational researchers from the University of the Witwatersrand. It was conceptualised as part of an international project in which scholars in education, for whom reconciliation is a priority, could collaborate. This broader project includes researchers from Australia, Israel/Palestine, Cyprus, New Zealand, the United States, and Northern Ireland and investigates the possibilities that exist for a pedagogy of reconciliation.

By the time our research project began in 2005, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) had long completed its work. The process set up by the TRC allowed per petrators of apartheid violence, both physical and symbolic, to admit to their deeds, to apologise for them and to seek forgiveness. Victims, on the other hand, could provide testimony by telling their stories of loss, degradation, suffering and death. Reparation was promised but fell short of expec tations. The process was underpinned by a Christian worldview in which the confession of one's sins and true remorse can lead to forgiveness and redemption. This process provided a space for South Africans to listen to one another across the racial and class divides that had been constructed historically by both colonial and apartheid rule.

Our interest in reconciliation, and pedagogies of reconciliation in particular, is ongoing because the project of national reconciliation in South Africa is far from complete. Although the work of the TRC focused on acts of gross human rights violations, it did not necessarily change the ingrained ways of thinking of ordinary South Africans. In addition, because the TRC failed to address struc tural inequalities, differential access to power and privilege continues. Although access to the middle class has been broadened to include people of all races, the majority of the population remains poor. In this context, our project endeavours to engage students with the recent past in order to create possibilities for young South Africans to imagine a more inclusive future and to begin the process of making and circulating new discourses of belonging.

The classroom based South African reconciliation pedagogy project reported on here com pleted two cycles of action research in 2005. In Cycle 1 the emphasis was on what it means to be

sorry and how this can be expressed. The artefacts produced by the students demonstrated that this 'sorry' work had largely been conceptualised in terms of interpersonal relationships. The second cycle focused on narratives, collected by students from adults in their own communities, of their experiences of and attitudes to the work of the TRC. A comprehensive account of this work has been recorded in Ferreira *et al*. (in press). In this article we focus on images of reconciliation produced by students across both cycles of work in the three classes in which this research was undertaken.

Reconciliation pedagogy in a post-conflict society

The liberation struggle against the Apartheid state officially came to an end with the first democratic elections in 1994. A politically driven negotiated settlement brought about the formal cessation of hostilities which transferred power from the white minority to the black majority. Because political solutions in themselves do little to reconcile ordinary people on different sides of a conflict, the TRC was established to contribute to reconciliation at a national level and to begin the healing process. Amongst the many criticisms of the TRC process is that, in working with the categories of victims and perpetrators and focusing on gross human rights violations, ordinary South Africans who benefited from or were harmed by the structural inequalities of apartheid were excluded from the process (Mamdani, 1999; Posel & Simpson, 2002). As a result, at the level of the individual, there has been little imperative to change attitudes and beliefs about self and other, leaving tensions unresolved and peace unstable.

Enslin (2002, 241) argues that in South Africa peace education provides a way forward because it works towards the willing acceptance of the narrative provided by the other; it attempts to achieve empathy against the odds and "to remove the very attitudes to the other that led to the human rights abuses in the first place". Although our own work is located in a critical literacy paradigm which looks at the interrelationship between discourse, power, identity and social change, we have found that peace education provides an additional theoretical framework for imagining reconciliation pedagogies for South Africa. What peace education brings to our work is a new way of understanding the implications for education of inter group relations in a post conflict society.

The work of Gabi Salomon (2002; 2004; 2006) in particular provides an orientation to peace education that has proved useful for thinking about inter group relations in multiracial South African classrooms. We have extracted for discussion three key aspects of his work that resonate with our concerns.

1. *The relationship between micro and macro orientations to conflict*: Salomon (2002, 5) distinguishes between peace education that desires changes on the interpersonal micro level and that which desires changes on a more global, macro level, pertaining to inter group attitudes, behaviours and prejudices. He sees this difference as "ways of handling other individuals versus handling other collectives". In our work, we have found that working on the micro level can result in apolitical engagement with a personal conflict and what we wanted was personal engagement grounded in a socio historical understanding of past conflict in South Africa. We believe that the socio historical dimension constructs the necessarily dialectical relationship between the micro and the macro, enabling new ways of thinking about self and other.
2. *Problematising the question of empathy for the other*: Our research project enabled students to uncover community narratives of the TRC process. We found evidence of the potential of these narratives to create empathy with the experience of the other (Ferreira & Janks, 2007). Although one of the ultimate goals of peace education is to create an understanding of the other person's point of view, we agree with Salomon (2002, 11) that empathy for the victims of gross human rights violations cannot be equated with empathy for those who abused the rights of others. The asymmetrical historical relations of power in South Africa continue to make the question of empathy a complex one.
3. *How different socio political contexts require different approaches to dealing with conflict*: Salomon's work is based in Israel which he describes as a region of "intractable conflict", as

distinct from regions of "interethnic tension" and regions of "experienced tranquillity" (2002, 6). We argue that South Africa, as a society in transition, falls between these categories. Although we ostensibly live in a post conflict society, "collective memories of a long history of hostilities, humiliation, conquest [and] dispossession" continue to shape the national psyche. Work in the area of reconciliation and transformation has to create the conditions for the emergence of transformative discourses that interrupt what Hoffmann calls the "intergenera tional transfer of trauma" (2004), and what Jansen calls "knowledge in the blood" (2009).

The focus on reconciliation pedagogy in our research project is an attempt to understand how to begin to work towards these conditions of possibility.

The research project: methods and data analysis

This qualitative classroom based action research was undertaken as a collaborative endeavour by teachers and educational researchers from the disciplines of English, History, and Art, all of whom were interested in exploring what kind of reconciliation work might be possible in desegregated South African classrooms. For the purposes of this work, and in the current context of schooling in South Africa, we define reconciliation work as the process whereby students engage with the social and historical relations of power in which they are embedded and confront their diverse histories and experiences with a view to developing a better and more compassionate understanding of their own and others' current realities. We contend that by developing pedagogic approaches that foreground students' agency and creativity, students' engagement with content is heightened and the opportunities for developing understanding of complex and often uncomfortable social issues are thereby increased. With a history of conflict in South Africa based on race and ethnicity, it was important for a project on reconciliation to work across the historical constructions of these dif ferences in South Africa. The three teachers in whose classrooms the pedagogy was enacted two working in ex Model C schools and one in an independent school all taught racially hetero geneous classes.

The early phase of the project was shaped by teachers' reluctance to address the question of political reconciliation in South Africa directly. In a post conflict society, it is not surprising that teachers and students do not feel comfortable dealing with the recent past. The teachers in the project feared student resistance and the possibility of conflict in the classroom. They saw their students as not wanting to be trapped in their parents' past, as being part of the 'born free' generation and as wanting to move on. In addition, in South Africa it is difficult to talk about the past without issues of race, identity and difference surfacing. Recent classroom research supports the teachers' perceptions of student resistance to history and has shown that young people's posi tions become entrenched when their identity investments are threatened (McKinney, 2004a, 2004b; McKinney & Van Pletzen, 2004; Walker, 2005a, 2005b).

The research group therefore approached the notion of reconciliation in an open ended way, basing the first cycle of classroom intervention on the word 'sorry', with each teacher free to use a range of different approaches and stimulus material to explore the meaning of 'sorry'. The presence of a Visual Arts teacher in the research group generated what one language teacher referred to as 'art envy'. This produced a shift into multiliteracies pedagogy (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), prioritising meaningful engagement with texts that integrate multiple modes of representation. Both literary texts, such as poems and plays, and popular texts, such as contemporary songs, were included. In response, students designed artefacts that were visual, verbal or visual verbal. In our discussion of Cycle 1, we focus on four visual images from the Art class which exemplify in visual form the range of intra and inter personal positions that students across all three classes took up.

In Cycle 2 students were tasked with interviewing members of their communities or social networks to research attitudes to the TRC and its work. In this way, they were positioned as agentive researchers of their communities (Egan Robertson & Bloome, 1998) and the 'funds of knowledge'

that they accessed were placed at the centre of the curriculum (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Gonzalez 2005; Moll *et al.*, 1992). After sharing their interview experiences and findings with their peers, students designed a multimodal text (New London Group, 1996; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996, 2001; Jewitt, 2006) in the genre of the postcard in response to their work on the TRC. In our discussion of this cycle we focus on a selection of postcards in order to understand how the students represent conflict and peace.

Analysis of images of reconciliation produced in Cycle 1

Nine drawings were produced by the students in the Visual Arts class. Students were introduced to the word 'sorry' which the class collectively brainstormed. Our preliminary analysis of these drawings suggested that they were all located in the personal rather than the socio political. While we would still argue that the dominant preoccupation in these drawings is with the self, a more nuanced analysis of the set of drawings reveals a continuum from the absent self to a self that is defined in relation to the social. We have chosen four drawings that exemplify this continuum.

In Figure 1 the student produced an abstract Escher like drawing of the interior of buildings where the absence of people is striking. This suggests an understanding of 'sorry' which is about neither the interpersonal nor the social. In her written commentary, she says

> [*p*]*eople appear to be rational, cold, hard like the external structures of a construction but the interior of the building is composed of upside down staircases and colossal extending pillars, much like the symbol to portray complex thoughts and emotions. We seem to be strong but our darkest secrets are often disguised behind captivating illusions* (student's rationale for her drawing, 2005).

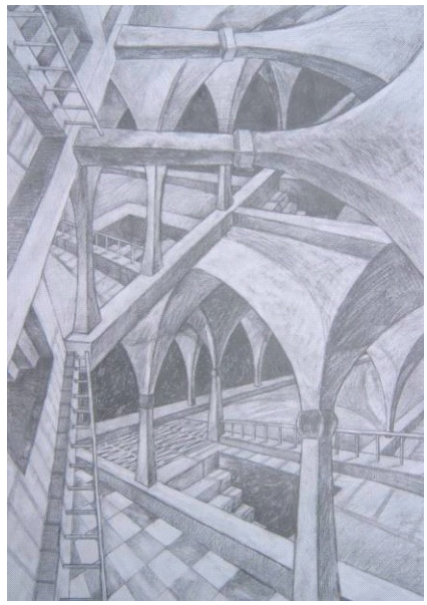


Figure 1

Taken together, the visual and the verbal suggest an extreme preoccupation with interior and exterior representations of self which almost completely exclude 'sorry' as a theme. If 'sorry' is intended to be one of the 'complex thoughts and emotions' that need to be 'disguised behind capti vating illusions', then this can be read as an intrapersonal representation of 'sorry'. This sorry state generates internal turmoil that shuts out the other.

Figure 2, in contrast, draws the eye to a young woman with her back to the viewer, framed by

a jagged opening in a brick wall. The viewer cannot see what the young woman is looking at beyond the wall but visible above the wall are leafy tree tops, drifting balloons and a bird flying. These images of life and pleasure are in stark contrast to the sterility of the wall that occupies the greater part of the picture. The wall, which physically prevents the viewer from seeing the life on the other side, symbolically represents the mental barrier that prevents the young woman from participating in what she can see happening on the other side. Her sense of 'sorry' is about her own exclusion and social isolation, and focuses on the self.

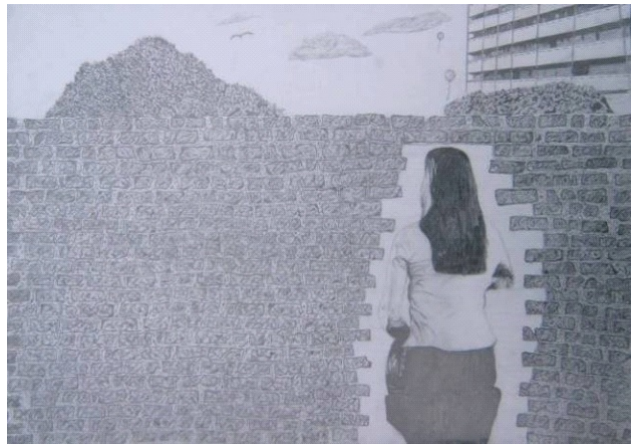


Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 3 introduces the interpersonal dimension of 'sorry'. Here two figures, a young boy and an old man, face the viewer with their backs to the other people in the drawing who are looking elsewhere. We learn from the student's written commentary that this is the funeral of the boy's father and that the old man at his shoulder is the father who appears as a ghost at his own funeral. His death leaves the boy to deal with their unresolved conflict. Representing the two figures facing the viewer rather than each other suggests the impossibility of reconciliation. However, by isolating the son and

his father and placing them side by side in the foreground, the student calls attention to the relation ship thus conveying an understanding of 'sorry' as relational.

In Figure 4 three identical cut out dolls looking suspiciously like Paris Hilton are posi tioned along a conveyor belt which seems to emerge from a machine. They are tall, with long blonde hair and they are wearing mini dresses. Their stance and visual gaze are invitational. In the lower left hand corner, there is a single young woman, with long dark hair, wearing a full length skirt and sporting a pair of butterfly wings. Her folded arms, her disdainful expression and her gaze, encode her refusal to engage with either the viewer or the cut out dolls. From the student's commentary, we learn that she is the young woman in the corner who is rejecting the gendered stereotypes and patterned conformity represented by the cut out dolls. The artist's representation of herself has various markers of individuality, and bears out the comment that she 'refuses to apologise for being different'. Here we see the notion of 'sorry' linking the self to the social. However, even while resisting being constructed by gendered social norms, the student's defiance is individualised. She stands alone and in visual terms is overpowered by the gendered clones with whom she disidentifies.

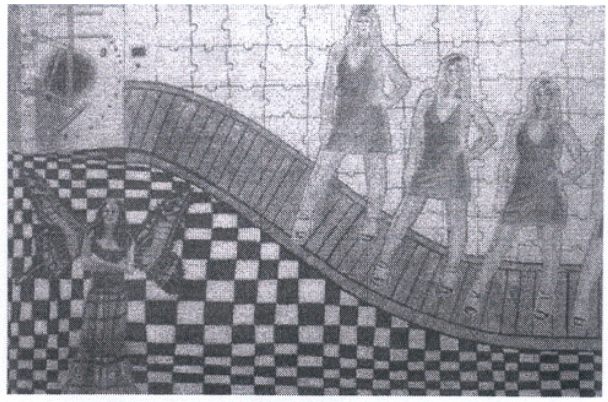


Figure 4

These four drawings are typical of the range of positions students take up in relation to the notion of sorry in all three classrooms. Even when producing artefacts in response to activities in which they were not asked to speak in their own voice, students located their 'sorry' interactions along the personal and interpersonal continuum. We were concerned by students' interpretation of 'sorry' as an individual emotion divorced from the broader socio political context. It is clear that this individual focus in Cycle 1 bears no relation to either peace education or social reconciliation. What was missing in most of the work was an understanding of social relations of power. In Salomon's (2002) terms the 'sorry' work operated at a micro level rather than at a macro level, thereby precluding the consideration of group relations. In the context of a project on reconciliation pedagogies, Cycle 1 shows clearly the limitations of a decontextualised approach to reconciliation. It became clear to the research group that if reconciliation pedagogy was to work at the level of attitudes, beliefs and practices it needed to engage with South Africa's history of inter racial conflict. It is this that led us to select the TRC as the core subject matter of the next cycle of work.

Analysis of images of reconciliation produced in Cycle 2

The challenge in designing a classroom approach for the second cycle was how to engage students with South Africa's conflicted history. Having noted that the multimodal pedagogy used in Cycle 1 produced engaged and lively work, the research group collectively designed a short multimodal unit of work to be taught across all three sites. The aim was to work with students' affective and

social imaginations in relation to the work of the TRC. Although located in the pedagogically difficult terrain of the past, the TRC process, conceptualised as "the foundation on which we can build our future" (TRC Report 9, 149), was not exclusively backward looking. Moreover it required a direct engagement with the idea of 'reconciliation'.

The unit produced student texts in a range of modalities, including the visual verbal postcards from which the images of reconciliation in Cycle 2 are drawn. The visual verbal nature of the post card harnessed multimodalities for engaging students cognitively, affectively and imaginatively. The genre of the postcard required students to write a relevant message and address it to someone. They were given the option to write it in their own voice, from their positions as students researching the TRC, or to adopt the voice of any one of the people they had encountered or learned about, placing themselves in that person's shoes to write the message. No restrictions were placed on their design of the picture side of the postcard. In this article, we have limited the discussion to postcards that include images of conflict and/or peace, as illustrated by Figures 5 to 12.



Figure 5

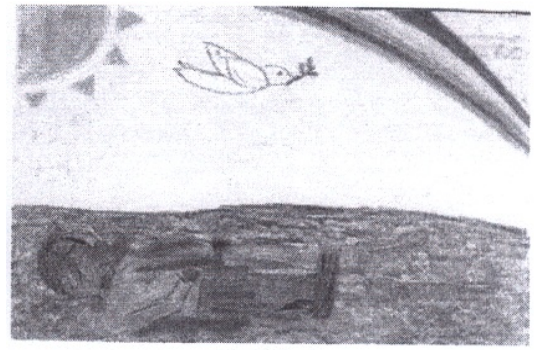


Figure 6

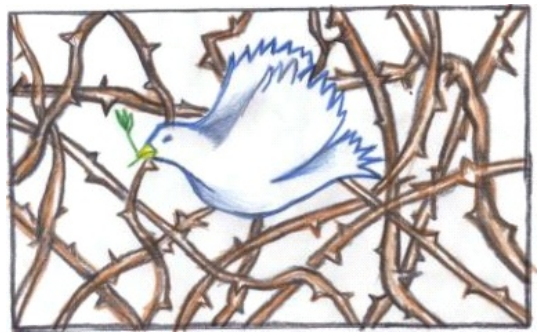


Figure 7

Figures 5, 6 and 7 all make use of the image of the white dove of peace. Figure 5 is unam biguously positive. The dove, holding an olive branch in its beak is juxtaposed with South Africa's post apartheid flag and a collage in the shape of the map of South Africa. The map is made up of photographs of happy smiling faces of young people of different races. The student addresses her postcard to the 'youth of South Africa' and urges them to commit themselves to her vision of the future. Figure 6 combines an image of a dead man lying in his own blood in the ground with images of the dove of peace and a rainbow in the sky. Traditionally the dove of peace and the rainbow are biblical images of peace and hope for the future. Archbishop Desmond Tutu used the rainbow as an image of racial harmony in 1994 at the birth of South Africa's new democracy. This postcard reminds us of the human cost of Tutu's 'rainbow nation'. The written message constructs a contrast

between the closure of 'the rainbow after the thunderstorm' and the 'opening of a door that led to a never ending electrical storm'. Overall the written message sees the TRC as a positive process that was a 'moment of truth that accounted for so many years of lies' and it appears to ignore the spectre of death. The written message makes explicit contrasting interpretations of the TRC but the contrasts are different from the contrasts in the images. Figure 7 sets the white dove, again with an olive branch in its beak, against a backdrop of intertwined, bare, thorn branches. The contrast between the images is reinforced by the verbal message addressed to Desmond Tutu, the chair of the TRC: "The TRC was trying to achieve a certain peace in the nation … this was not entirely possible as the road was blocked with many obstacles". In all of these images there is a recognition that peace does not just happen when the conflict ends. In Figures 5 and 7, there is the recognition that it is something that we have to work for.

The first set of postcards use traditional symbols of peace, harmony and national identity in conjunction with other images that alter their meaning. This process of redesign takes images that could otherwise have been seen as visual clichés and gives them new meanings. This is equally true of the image in Figure 8.

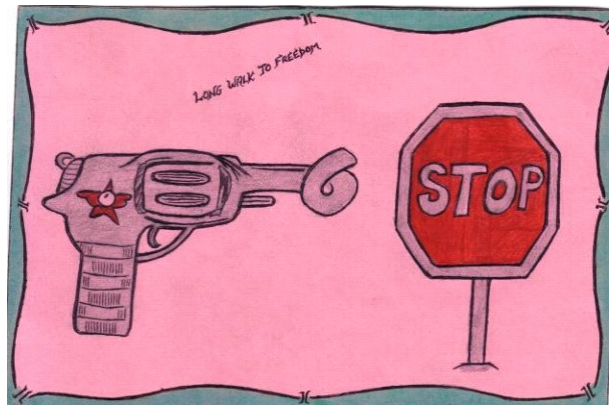


Figure 8

Here a gun, a traditional image of violence, has been knotted and combined with a stop sign to signal the throttling of the gun's force. The words on the drawing "long walk to freedom" suggest that the gun, an image of violence, is no longer needed. This is reinforced by the message which is written in the voice of a contrite perpetrator who confessed his guilt to the TRC and who expresses his remorse in the postcard. The image, in combination with the written message, conveys his renunciation of violence.

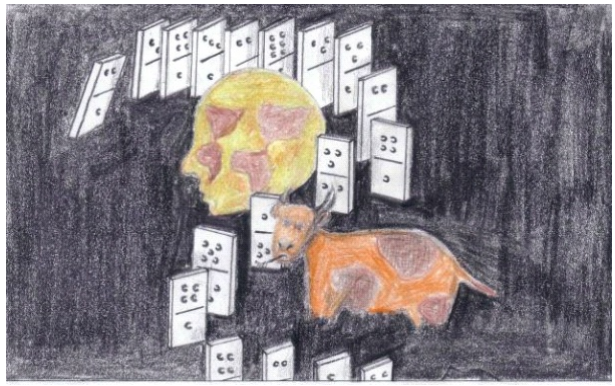


Figure 9

What makes Figure 9 unusual in the data set is that it conceptualises the need for reconciliation as both local and global. The postcard presents a snaking line of standing dominoes that weaves between a cow and disembodied human head within which a map of the world is depicted. The images of the dominoes, the human head and world map, although less clichéd, are like those of the previous postcards which draw on widely recognised symbols. The image of the cow, however, is located in a non dominant, culturally specific discourse not available to all readers. The written message is needed to explain all the images and the interplay between them. The writer warns that "apartheid is a mental worldwide attitude", as represented by the world map in the space of the head; this mindset threatens to destroy the world, suggested by the imminent collapse of the dominoes. What is needed is a willingness to forgive, which is symbolised by the cow, a traditional Basotho symbol of penance for murder. Here a local symbol resonates with global significance.

All of these postcards point to a nuanced understanding that the peace that follows an in tractable conflict is both uneasy and unstable. This is made even more explicit in the final group of postcards. Like Figure 8, the first postcard of this set uses a street sign. Where Figure 8 effects a re design by the context in which the sign is used, here the sign itself is re designed.

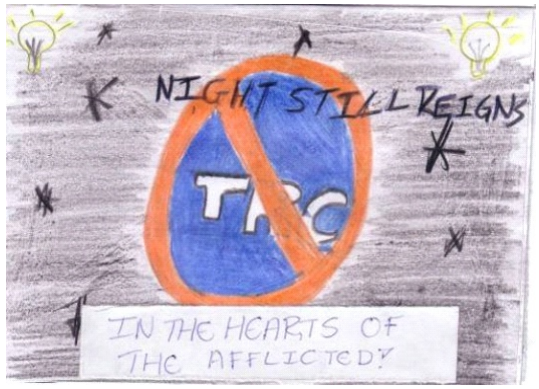


Figure 10

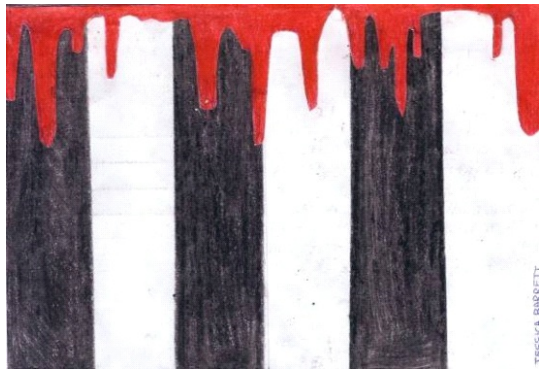


Figure 11

The sign in Figure 10 has a red circumference and a diagonal line which fits the pattern of street signs that prohibit actions, as for example a no parking sign. 'TRC', set against a blue back ground, is written under the diagonal line that cancels it out. The sign is set against a dark, night sky boldly shaded in light black pencil strokes. The stars in the sky appear as thick, dark black child like representations which contrast with the two bright yellow light bulbs placed in each of the upper corners. Although prominently placed these isolated sources of light are overpowered by the surrounding darkness. The visual includes written text that anchors its meaning: "Night still reigns

in the hearts of the afflicted". Overall the image negates the positive effects of the TRC and the written message reinforces the idea that the reconciliation process "just creates more anger and unresolved issues in the heart". The use of the present tense suggests that the suffering is ongoing. This is reinforced by Figure 11, in which the TRC is constructed as "opening up old wounds". The writer concludes the postcard's message with the statement: "I hardly believe that years of anger and emotional torture can be cleared up in one confession". She represents this visually with an image that can be read as black prison bars set against empty white space, with blood dripping down from the top edge of the postcard. In more abstract terms, alternate black and white columns stand side by side but not integrated and they are being covered by the blood of dripping wounds. It is an image of failed reconciliation.

Figure 12, the last postcard that we discuss, is ominous in the way it articulates the nature of the unresolved issues. Here the image and the writing work together to hold on to the symbols and discourses of apartheid and to reject democratic change. With the image of the old South African flag depicted on the front of the postcard, Figure 12a is both a symbol of apartheid rule and a denial of political transformation. The written message is more sinister in its vision of the future than the defiant choice of the old flag for the image. In the written message the student takes on the discourse of the oppressor. Figure 12b displays the full message.

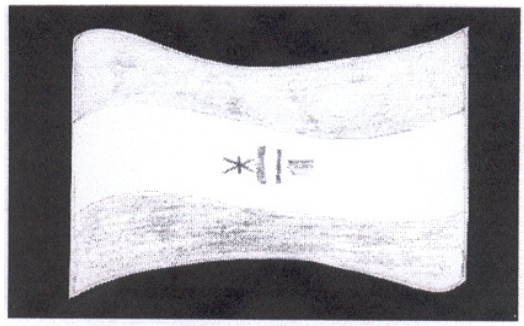


Figure 12a. The postcard image

22 January 1997

Dearest Frikkie,

Above all the ways you are told to live, I beg upon you to stay the way I teach you. I beg you to not turn away from your inherited status.

You are a white man, my boy, of white superior power. No-one can have the superiority that you do.

My father, his father and his father, did what was right with these kaffirs. They are not people. They are not made to live. They are merely animals made to work for us. Slaves.

Son, don't lose yourself like so many others. They don't know what they are doing. They don't know what is right.

Be like me, a proud Afrikaner. I have never done wrong — only right.

You are eight now, keep spirit of a true white man ...

Your loving father

Herklaas van de Beer

Figure 12b. The postcard message

Here the student reproduces apartheid discourses of racial and gender superiority and shows their transfer from father to son, across five generations, vividly illustrating the intergenerational transfer of values and beliefs and the power of discourses to endure. It speaks of the implacable

attitudes and intractable discourses that continue to produce animosities.

The TRC report recognises that

> [i]n the South African context it is important to understand how multiple discourses combined, intersected and intertwined to create climates of violence. In this respect the ideologies of racism, patriarchy, religions, capitalism, apartheid and militarism all intertwined to "manu facture" people capable of violence (TRC, 7, 131, 296) [and that language] constructs reality. It moves people against other people (TRC, 7, 124, 294).

However, it may not have recognised how resilient these discourses are. The postcard forces us to confront the failure of both the liberation struggle and the TRC to interrupt them, at least in the case of this student and the discourses to which she has access. The overt display of racial supremacist beliefs and dehumanising racism eleven years after the first democratic elections is profoundly disturbing.

This reading of the postcard is unsettling once one realises that the student who produced the postcard is a black girl. Is she simply reproducing a racist stereotype of white Afrikaners, or does her ability to use the language of the oppressor show her capacity for empathy? The writer clearly does not support the position of the white male Afrikaner whom she mimics with such intensity. While empathy is commonly construed as the ability to stand in the shoes of the other, not only can the writer's ability to 'stand in the shoes of the other' not be read as genuine empathy here, but we question whether such empathy would even be desirable. Like Salomon, we believe that in situations of extreme historical domination, the oppressed cannot be expected to empathise with narratives that diminish them (2002, 11), and that the acceptance of the narratives of the other should not be a pre condition for reconciliation in all situations. The writer of this postcard is not accepting the narrative of white Afrikaner supremacy instead her mimicry serves to de legitimate the oppres sor's narrative. What is chilling about this postcard is this young black woman's sense that these discourses continue to simmer below the surface in South Africa.

Conclusion

Our sense in 2005 that, although the TRC process was over, the real work of reconciliation had not really begun is echoed by the images of an uneasy peace in the collection of students' postcards. Portrayals of a happy 'rainbow nation' reflect, at least in part, the success of this metaphor as "a tool to market the 'new South Africa' to itself, and to international tourism" (Distiller & Steyn, 2004, 1). Phumla Gqola (2001, 99), in analysing the discourse of rainbowism, points out that as a meta phor the rainbow is also "a spectacular visual illusion" which silences the real issues of difference and power in positing a non racial, harmonious nation. She argues that

> [t]he illusion of unity and equanimity enable the unself reflexive embrace of rainbowism and 'reconciliation' as key to the expression of a new South African ideal (2001, 102 103).

This metaphor belies the racial tensions that lurk just below the surface. When they erupt they unleash a destructive force fuelled by ugly emotions.

At the beginning of 2008, at the time of writing this article for presentation, several race based conflicts dominated the media, suggesting the ongoing relevance of the warning implicit in the 'Dear Frikkie' postcard. Particularly shocking was a racist video produced by students at the University of the Free State to express their opposition to the proposed racial integration of university resi dences. In this video, young white male students are shown humiliating black cleaners. These workers are depicted kneeling on the ground and eating food that a student had urinated into. According to the editorial of *The Citizen* (2008) newspaper

> [w]hen Nelson Mandela was released in 1990, these youngsters were under three years old. They have spent almost their entire lives in a society whose leaders are committed to non racialism.

Questions arise as to how they came to harbour prejudices that would allow them to treat fellow human beings so appallingly.

According to Max Du Preez (2008), an Afrikaans journalist writing for *The Star* newspaper,

> [t]hese youngsters learnt to disrespect, detest and fear black people from their parents. And clearly the teachers, dominees, political leaders and the media of the Afrikaner community did not do enough to counter the poison the kids got in their mother's milk.

This resonates with Jansen's (2009) understanding of knowledge that we carry in our blood. Like these metaphors, Zapiro's cartoon (Figure 13), published in the *Mail and Guardian* (29 February 2007), suggests how narratives of self and other are transferred across the generations.



Figure 13

In this cartoon we see how children are constructed by the discourses of the home and the continuity of these discourses over time is foregrounded. Where Hoffman (2004, 65) explains the "intergenerational transmission of trauma" from holocaust survivors to their children, here we see the intergenerational transfer of discourses of the other. It is not surprising therefore to find the father of one of the video makers declaring "My son is not a racist" (*Times*, 29 February 2008).

The focus in this cartoon is on the need for whites to apologise for the apartheid past and their continuing refusal to do so makes an explicit link between this incident and the TRC. This is reinforced by the newspaper headline in Frame 3, '1997 TRC'. In his analysis of this incident, Jody Kollapen, the Chairman of the South African Human Rights Commission, states that "we focused too much on reconciliation in the first years of our democracy" (*Sowetan*, 28 February 2008) and that this happened before racial tensions had been resolved. As early as 1996, Mda wrote an article for *Tribute* magazine entitled 'The truth about reCONciliation: it's a con', arguing that 'the "culture" of reconciliation "cons" black South Africans of any real public platform to address history' (Gqola, 2001, 104).

Whether or not Mda, Gqola and Kollapen are right, it is clear that it would be simplistic to view South Africa as a post conflict society. Despite the formal cessation of hostilities, discourses pro duced by our history continue to frame our constructions of one another and thus our actions and interactions in the present. As educators, the challenge confronting us is to find ways of in terrupting the powerful discourses of the past that continue to circulate and to shape our identities. There is clearly still a lot of work to be done in and beyond the classroom to create opportunities for the production of inclusive discourses for a truly democratic South Africa.

Note

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Ana Ferreira is a Lecturer at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand where she teaches English. She teaches courses in critical literacy, film, media and popular culture, socio linguistics and language in education. Her research interests include South African youth identities, using diversity as a pedagogic resource, critical pedagogy and social justice education. She is cur rently conducting doctoral research on the relationship between contemporary youth identities and pedagogy in South African classrooms.

Hilary Janks is a Professor in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa and an adjunct Professor at the University of South Australia. Her teaching and research are in the areas of language education in multilingual classrooms, language policy, and critical literacy. Her work is committed to a search for equity and social justice in contexts of poverty.