American Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 31, Nos. 1/2, March 2003 (© 2003)

Narrating Survival and Change in Guatemala and South Africa: The Politics of Representation and a Liberatory Community Psychology

M. Brinton Lykes,[1,3,6] Martin Terre Blanche,[3] and Brandon Hamber[4,5]

Peace accords and international interventions have contributed to the suspension of armed conflict and the censuring of repressive regimes in many parts of the world. Some governments and their opposition parties have agreed to the establishment of commissions or other bodies designed to create historical records of the violations of human rights and foster conditions that facilitate reparatory and reconciliatory processes. This paper explores selected roles that community psychologists have played in this process of remembering the past and constructing new identities towards creating a more just future. With reference to two community groups (in Guatemala and South Africa) we show how efforts to "speak out" about one's own experiences of political and military repression involve complex representational politics that go beyond the simple binary opposition of silencing versus giving voice. The Guatemalan group consisted of Mayan Ixil women who, together with the first author, used participatory action research and the PhotoVoice technique to produce a book about their past and present struggles. The South African group, working within the ambit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in collaboration with the third author and others, explored ways of speaking about their roles in *apartheid* and post-apartheid society. Although both these initiatives can be seen as moments in on-going struggles to overcome externally-imposed repressive practices that censor the voices of marginalized communities, they also serve to dispel overly romanticized notions of "univocal" communities now liberated to express themselves in an unmediated and unequivocal fashion. The paper discusses how each group of women instead entered into subtly nuanced relationships with community psychologists involving a continual interplay between the authenticity of their self-representational accounts and the requirements of the discursive technologies into which they were being inducted and the material conditions within their sites of struggle. In both cases the group's agenda also evolved over time, so that what emerged was not so much a particular account of themselves, or even the development of a particular "voice" for speaking about themselves, but an unfolding process—for the groups and for the community psychologists who accompanied them—of becoming active players in the postmodern, mediated world of self-representational politics and social struggle.

KEY WORDS: narratives of survival and change; participatory research; politics of representations; Guatemala; South Africa.

[1]University of the Witwatersrand.
[2]Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.
[3]University of South Africa, South Africa.
[4]Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
[5]Democratic Dialogue.
[6]To whom correspondence should be addressed at Department of Counseling, Developmental and Educational Psychology, Boston College, Lynch School of Education, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02467; e-mail: lykes@bc.edu.

0091-0562/03/0300-0079/0 © 2003 Plenum Publishing Corporation

Late twentieth century repressive regimes such as those of the apartheid government of South Africa, dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Brazil, as well as brutal conflicts within countries as diverse as Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and Guatemala were responsible for the disappearances and deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. Some of these conflicts were responses to efforts of the majority population to redress economic inequalities and structural poverty. Others reflected ethnic conflicts that emerged within contexts of limited resources, the collapse of previous regimes, or longstanding institutionalized racism. Within the context of a growing, at least tacit, acceptance of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, governments and their opposition parties in many of these countries agreed to the establishment of truth commissions or similar bodies designed to create historical records of the violations of human rights, thereby creating conditions that would facilitate reconciliation.

Psychologists have been increasingly present in these late twentieth century post-wars contexts, offering crisis intervention strategies and psychosocial services to survivors and their families. The need to look at how ordinary people are affected by war has become increasingly important since civilians constitute the vast majority of the victims of contemporary wars. The emergence and validation of post-traumatic stress disorder as a primary psychological effect of contemporary warfare for children and adults (see, e.g., Eth & Pynoos, 1985; Herman, 1992) has informed much of the work developed by psychologists in response to contemporary warfare. Notwithstanding this important contribution to understanding the biological and intrapsychic bases of human responses to extreme violence, critics have identified limitations of this individually based diagnostic tool and of the psychological practices with war's survivors that have emerged from it. Missing is an understanding of the extent to which both oppression and responses to it are not only individual, but also collective, phenomena. Specific critiques of individualizing psychological approaches to trauma include liberation psychologists' theories of psychosocial trauma and the public health-based critique of an individually based tertiary intervention that addresses only a small proportion of those affected while leaving devastated communities and even societies unattended (Comas-Díaz, Lykes, & Alarcón, 1998; Martín-Baró, 1994). Further, cultural psychologists and anthropologists point to a range of culture-based understandings of illness and psychological processes, including war's consequences, that fall outside of the Euro-American classificatory system (see, e.g., Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995; Jenkins, 1991; Kleinman, 1995).

In this paper we explore another critical approach to psychologists' roles in postwar contexts and illustrate it by means of two case examples from the work of social and community psychologists accompanying communities in their searches for a just peace in Guatemala and South Africa. These community-based interventions include a participatory action research project (PAR) drawing on photographs and stories gathered with a local community in rural Guatemala, facilitated by the first author and her colleagues, and the development and accompaniment of a survivors network with those who told their stories to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, facilitated, along with others, by the third author. Through an analysis of these two cases we seek to demonstrate some of the ways in which they rupture the increasingly normative psychological responses to trauma that reduce collective processes to individual suffering and to contribute to a developing liberatory community psychology. We conclude with a discussion of some of the caveats and limitations of these models.

GUATEMALA

The majority of the approximately 12.9 million inhabitants of Guatemala are Maya. They live in rural communities and speak 21 Mayan languages (Cojti, 1988) although Spanish is the only official language. They represent various ethnic groups, all descendants of the Mayan civilizations that sought to assert their individualities and land claims after the collapse of the Mayan empire and prior to the arrival of the Spaniards over 500 years ago. Although the Guatemalan economy is amongst the strongest in Central America, more than one third of the urban population and three fourths of those who live in rural areas live in extreme poverty. Approximately 65% of the arable land is held by 2% of the population (Barry, 1992). It was this and a lack of basic nutrition, health and educational services, as well as the exploitation of largely Mayan workers on coffee, sugar, and cotton plantations, which fuelled 36 years of civil war that many describe as the most recent armed response to 500 years of repression.

Violent repression, including the razing of more than 400 rural villages, the disappearance of over

40,000 people (45% of those disappeared in all of Latin America) and the deaths of between 150,000 and 200,000 civilians, was a central strategy of the Guatemalan government during the conflict (CEH, 1999). Moreover, estimates are that nearly one million people were displaced internally, and another several hundred thousand fled to other countries during the early 1980s. The state silenced many in the population through terror, exploiting fear in a particularly brutal way.

The Peace Accords afforded new spaces in which many survivors began voicing multiple versions of their stories. Commissions for the "clarification of past human rights violations and acts of violence," such as those established by the Catholic Archdiocese of Guatemala City (REMHI) (ODHAG, 1998) and the United Nations (CEH, 1999), were challenged to document not only individual violations but collective violence within a context in which the communal nature of rural life was ruptured, entire communities destroyed, and ethnic groups massacred.

Some psychologists and community educators consulted to the truth-recovery process, designing training programs to ensure effective, efficient, and psychologically beneficial gathering of testimony. Attempts to develop follow-up programs to provide psychological accompaniment of those who gave their testimonies have been initiated by REMHI and other NGOs whereas the CEH's mandate terminated with the issuance of its report in February 1999.

Taking Pictures to Tell Stories

The more than 5,000 testimonies collected by REMHI and a similar number gathered by the CEH reflect only a small percentage of the stories of the estimated 200,000 persons "killed or disappeared as a result of the fratricidal confrontation" in the country (CEH, 1999, p. 17). Included among those who had not "testified" were a large number of women living in a rural area of the Ixil region, a part of Guatemala deeply affected by the war. The first author was invited by local women to work with them in 1992 and has served as a consultant to the Association of Maya Ixil Women-New Dawn (ADMI) since then. ADMI grew out of a committee of six women and currently coordinates five projects in addition to the one described here, including three economic development projects, an educational program for children and a community library (Lykes et al., 1999). The work focuses on three areas including (1) the psychosocial issues that these women encountered as they responded to the multiple effects of violence and repression, (2) the development of the organization, and (3) concrete work to improve conditions within the local community. The participatory workshops facilitated by the first author integrated Freirian pedagogical and analytical techniques (Freire, 1970), creative resources (e.g., storytelling, dramatization, drawing), indigenous practices (e.g., weaving, religious ceremony, and oral histories; see, Lykes, 1994, 1997), and documentation and interpretive strategies developed within the context of participatory action research (PAR) (Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

Despite the work of REMHI and the CEH, prior to 1996, few of ADMI's members had spoken directly of their experiences during the years of war, silenced by ongoing terror, gender relations in rural communities, local political and religious power dynamics, and pressing concerns for the material survival of themselves and their children. However, ongoing work as well as small political openings afforded by the Peace Accords and the work of the formal commissions described above contributed to ADMI's desire to create a public testimony that witnessed to the atrocities committed against the people of Chajul and its surrounding villages. Inspired by the work of Chinese rural women, *Visual voices: 100 photographs of village China by the Women of Yunnan Province* (1995), photography was used to "tell the story of the violence" and of women's responses to the war. By speaking out through pictures and storytelling, ADMI sought to prevent future violence through creating a public record, as well as to build connections with other women in Guatemala and beyond who were engaged in similar processes. Equally importantly, they sought new skills and resources to develop economic and psychosocial resources for their communities thereby responding to the material ravages of war.

Two photographic methods, "photovoice" (Wang, 1999; Wang, Burris, & Xiang, 1996) and "talking pictures" (Bunster & Chaney, 1989) served as important resources that were incorporated into the existing group processes to consolidate a PAR method that fit the needs articulated within the group. An iterative process of data collection and analysis wherein women "analyzed as they photographed" was developed. Twenty photographers recorded their own life stories, sometimes assisted by a facilitator, in dialogue with another participant in the group. They photographed life in Chajul and traveled to neighboring villages, photographing women and their families. Through recording and critically

analyzing multiple stories of daily living, that is, of war, its effects, and ongoing poverty, the women of PhotoVoice developed sensitivities to the various forms of violence experienced in the wider municipality as well as analyses of the complex challenges facing the region as it develops recovery strategies in the wake of war's trauma. The PAR team selected 60 photos from over 2,000 and drew on hundreds of interviews, group-based analyses and stories to develop a shared story of the violence within these local communities, its effects, and multiple responses towards rethreading individual and collective lives (see Women of PhotoVoice/ADMI & Lykes, 2000; Lykes, 2001, for a more detailed description of the research process and outcomes).

PhotoVoice as a Resource for Reconciliation and Community Change

Of the hundreds of specific stories gathered in this project, the PhotoVoice participants selected 11 through which to re-story the massacres, displacement, death, and destruction that characterized life among them during the war. The picture shown here was one of those selected for inclusion in the book. It stands on the site of the army's massacre at the Finca La Estrella Polar (see Fig. 1).

Several women walked from Chajul to this village to talk with those living in the present community. Initial stories gathered from survivors were presented by the photographer/interviewer to a small group of project participants and then re-analyzed by a larger group using content analysis, including categories that situated "the event" in its historical context, described those present in terms of their actions, feelings, and thoughts, and identified the analysts' responses to the events and their aspirations for the future in the face of what happened. The following is an extract from the story that, coupled with the photograph, represents the re-storying of this gross human rights violation and responses to it.

> There were two hundred people massacred in 1982 in the village of the Finca La Estrella. We feel extremely resentful because of this terrible tragedy and we are saddest of all for these victims who were murdered so suddenly. They didn't know that they were going to die because they were *campesinos*, [peasants] workers, who were guilty of nothing. They didn't owe anything to anyone, but what is saddest is that the children and babies were murdered and they were only children, no more. But despite that, their lives on this earth were taken from them. And the assassins—who were they to take the lives of human beings? So, just like the young boys and girls, the adults ought to have lived longer, but they were murdered. And the saddest thing is that they are buried in a single clandestine grave and this is something that will never be/forgotten. The soldiers came to this village for no reason. Why did they murder these innocent people? The people saw each other die and we don't know what kind of suffering they had to endure before dying.
>
> Those of us of the Catholic faith often remember our deceased loved ones and the rest of the people who were killed. There are some whose names have been identified through investigation and each year a Mass is celebrated to pray to God for all of them. It would be wonderful if there could be an exhumation in the *finca* [plantation] for the sake of the family members. Then they could rebury their dead in the cemetery so they could rest in peace. . . . As a result of the massacre, many people were disappeared without anyone knowing where they were murdered or where their bodies were tossed. . . .
>
> But enough now of hurts and wrongs. May there never again be another massacre. The indigenous people, of different ethnicities, have a right to live in peace and be happy with their families. It is difficult to rebuild but *el pueblo* [the people/community] will advance. The times of *la violencia* [the violence] destroyed much of our patrimony that is now impossible to retrieve. But we will persevere with our struggle so that this war never returns, because what happened has no meaning and even less, forgiveness. Nobody deserved it because we are human beings and it is our responsibility to build our peace, since peace comes from inside of us. It is born in our hearts so that we can live in harmony. (Women of PhotoVoice/ADMI & Lykes, 2000, p. 27–28)

Unlike the description of gross violations of human rights found in the REMHI and CEH reports, the story crafted by the women of ADMI goes beyond the "facts." They embed their register of the number of deaths in a set of interrogations that situate their understanding of the event within the context of their rights as human beings and as indigenous peoples. They express sorrow and outrage alongside their solidarity with those who were killed and their families. The innocence of the victims starkly implicates the murderers in an unjust war. Equally importantly, the women analysts tell us about their rituals for mourning their losses and commemorating the lives of their deceased families, rituals that were also disrupted by the war. Thus the "facts" are embedded in past practices and reflect the symbolic systems that are ruptured in war's wake. The women of ADMI stand with those who have been killed while affirming their commitment to struggle for a better and a more just peace. The end of the war was an occasion to recover lost bodies and to rethread ritual practices within a

Fig. 1. The site of the army's massacre at the Finca La Estrella Polar.

contemporary context, thereby reclaiming not only loved ones but also the stories of the past and the challenges they pose for the future.

PhotoVoice participants as well as interviewees often spoke of these interviews or group-based discussions as their first opportunity to talk about events that had heretofore been silenced or spoken only privately to family members, thereby affording them a "public" individual and collective record. Thousands of hours of tape recordings of individual and group-based storytelling and interviews with women in neighboring communities—stories of the war, its losses, and the multiple responses to it—as well as *memorias* [memories] of the dozens of workshops in which we systematized analyses of the photographs—constitute the raw data which were systematically analyzed in small groups (see Lykes, 2001, for details) and from which the stories and photographs within the published book were drawn. The photograph told its own story and became a site for wider participatory storytelling and analysis. It communicates the photographer's perspective but then becomes a stimulus for

the group's reflections, discussions, analyses, and representations. The fixed image serves as a catalyst for an ever-widening discussion of the differing realities that are present within these Mayan communities. The conjoining of picture and story present that complexity to a wider public.

Despite differences in religious beliefs, political affiliations, age, and ethnicity, through the stories and subsequent analyses of the photographs the women of ADMI have developed a shared understanding of some of the multiple causes of "the violence" and its effects. The knowledge they have co-constructed includes stories from contradictory political perspectives wherein some participants have revindicated their husbands' murders by guerrilla forces, others their own participation in support of the armed resistance. PhotoVoice within PAR has created a structure and process wherein over time such conflicting experiences and the effects that they generated can be better tolerated by women who, despite these differences, find common ground in their struggles to survive and re-create community. Thus through these community-based activities the women of ADMI resituate themselves within the group and beyond. They have deepened their individual and the group's commitment to work within and across differences, despite persistent hurts, towards constructing a shared future. PhotoVoice embodies one local community's attempt to concretize some of the multiple discourses of reconciliation.

Transgressing Local Boundaries: Voices and Images as Liberatory Praxis

Maya are represented widely in photo essays, magazines, and postal cards. Tourists and professional photographers struggle to capture "exotic Mayan customs." Male Guatemalan photographers (*los ambulantes*) rove among county fairs to take formal family shots or offer themselves for hire to record weddings and funerals (Parker & Neal, 1982). The women of PhotoVoice and members of the wider community who have allowed their pictures to be taken for this community project are very aware of the distinctive nature of the photographs taken through PhotoVoice and their relationships to them, as compared to the more predominant experiences of "being photographed." The 20 women of ADMI who co-developed this project are the first rural Ixil and K'iche' women to become "professional" photographers.

Women with fifth or sixth grade formal schooling accompanied by "outsiders" (a community psychologist and her colleagues) have honed analytic skills necessary for developing critical consciousness and "multiplied" these skills through small group work with other photographers with considerably less formal education. A core group participated in training that prepared them for assuming all roles within the research process and for strengthening their local women's organization. They have developed computer skills, become data recorders and analyzers, and learned how to balance the financial accounts of their various projects. Several have written grant proposals to support new economic development, educational, and mental health initiatives that have evolved from this ongoing work. Others have spoken publicly in national forums about their work and its contributions to recovering stories and constructing a just peace. Most recently, they have established a team of "technical assistants" to work with women in the villages surrounding Chajul who want to establish their own women's groups and develop community-based projects that will improve their lives and those of their families. Others represent ADMI in national efforts to pressure the government to fulfill promises made to Mayan communities as part of the Peace Accords.

Through PhotoVoice local Mayan Ixil and K'iche' women, internationalists (Unitedstatesians and Spaniards), and Mayan professionals from urban centers represent a porousness of the seemingly rigid class, race, and language barriers that exacerbate power differences. Rural peasants have appropriated the skills and techniques of social scientific research in the service of speaking out about past horrors to construct new options towards a better future. Gender roles as well as other cultural practices have been affected by the introduction of cameras into a local economy where the cost of developing a single role of film is equal to a family's food budget for several weeks. Notwithstanding criticisms of the project, including the introduction of "Western" technology into a rural community and the project's economic non-sustainability, the participants have described repeatedly its positive impact on their local community and their own enhanced self-understanding and self-esteem. PhotoVoice reflects their developing critical understandings of themselves as Mayan women both during the war and in post-war processes of reconstruction. Rural women's voices have entered the scientific and human rights discourse about state-sponsored violence and its effects, transforming the

"talk" as well as the lives of those who speak their truths.

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has 11 official languages, and the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups within the country is even greater. Approximately 76% of the population today is Black, 12.8% is White, 2.6% Indian, and 8.5% of mixed origin or colored. The history of racial and class oppression in South Africa reaches back more than three centuries, culminating in the 46 years of *apartheid* rule from 1948 to 1994. Despite dramatic economic and social changes that have accompanied the first years of the African National Congress's post-1994 government, resulting in sharp increases in the number of people with running water, electricity, access to health care, and education, the legacy of colonialism and *apartheid* have deeply marked economic and political structures. Nearly 45% of South Africa's approximately 40 million people still live below the poverty line; the vast majority of these people are Black.

Under *apartheid* Black South Africans were required to carry special identity documents, prohibited from owning or renting property in White areas (which comprised approximately 80% of the country), subjected to inferior education, and prevented from taking up certain occupations. Individuals and organizations supporting the liberation movement were dealt with harshly, sometimes within the ambit of oppressive laws, but frequently by illegal means, including kidnapping, assassination, and torture. Between 1985 and 1994, about 20,000 people were killed by the State or in interorganizational conflict that was a direct result of the *apartheid* context.

One of the terms of the settlement between the *apartheid* state and the liberation movements was that individuals from both sides who had engaged in gross human rights abuses would be granted amnesty and that this process would be administered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC's task was also to compile a comprehensive report on abuses and afford victims the chance to tell their stories (TRC, 1998).

Unlike the Guatemalan hearings that were conducted outside the media spotlight, of the nearly 38,000 gross violations of human rights documented, 1,818 were showcased at public hearings. Narratives of survivors and perpetrators were broadcast on a daily basis to millions of South Africans via television, radio, and newspapers. The TRC Special Report TV programme had up to 1.2 million viewers a week, more people than the English news at 8 p.m. (Theissen & Hamber, 1998).

Although one of the 17 TRC commissioners was a psychologist, psychologists as a group played a relatively minor role in the TRC. A number of psychologists presented evidence to the commission on inequities in the *apartheid* mental health system, while a few provided support and counseling to survivors giving evidence before the commission (De Ridder, 1997; Hamber, 1998). One of the significant impacts psychologists had on the TRC was through the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) active in human rights work since 1989, with which the third author of this article is affiliated. The CSVR's work around the commission gained particular impetus from its collaboration with Khulumani—a support group for survivors of gross human rights abuses.

The Founding and Growth of Khulumani

Khulumani (Zulu for "speaking out") was set up in early 1995 when a group of survivors asked the CSVR to help build a support structure to assist them in preparing for the TRC hearings. As the numbers of attendees mushroomed it was decided to start local self-help groups that could operate without CSVR facilitation. These were initiated by holding workshops with NGOs in an area, followed by educational workshops with survivors in which they learned about and started exploring ways of making use of the TRC process. The workshops and educational materials distributed there emphasized storytelling and the importance of dialogue and discussion around the TRC. Khulumani developed as a network of groups across the greater Johannesburg area and its neighboring provinces. At times there were as many as 35 Khulumani groups running, mainly in strife-torn areas, but with significant pockets of support from other parts of the country.

Although Khulumani has always had an open door policy, membership consists mainly of women, many in their late 40s and upwards, broadly aligned with the liberation forces. Members are typically indirect survivors, such as relatives of victims of the apartheid security forces, rather than direct victims. Organizationally, Khulumani moved over a period of 5 years from an informal grouping dependent on the CSVR for institutional support, to an independent

entity with a central office run by salaried staff as well as several fieldworkers. Khulumani has thus in many ways progressed from a network of support groups to becoming the organized voice of *apartheid*-era survivors.

The Process of Speaking Out

"Speaking out" in the TRC context was seen, at least initially, as a linear process in which uncovering the truth would lead to psychological and social healing (Asmal, Asmal, & Roberts, 1994) and it is only now that such assumptions are beginning to be questioned in the academic literature (Hamber, Nageng, & O'Malley, 2000). One of the most prominent TRC slogans was "revealing is healing," a sentiment echoed in one form or another by many academic authors writing about the TRC (e.g., Chicuecue, 1997; De la Rey & Owens, 1998) and, more generally, about responses to state-sponsored violence and victim recovery. At first the CSVR's involvement in Khulumani was also founded on the premise that "encouraging people to speak out about the atrocities of the past was psychologically beneficial" (Hamber et al., 2000, p. 3). However, it soon became clear that there is a difference between individual and national healing, and that at times the latter might be achieved at the expense of the former.

In addition, participants' motivations for wanting to speak out were complex and continually changed as the TRC evolved. For example, a survivor might (simultaneously or at different times) tell her story in order to share her pain, to place important facts on record, to instigate an investigation into her case, to ensure that justice is done, or in the hopes of receiving symbolical or material compensation. This meant that the CSVR had to continuously adapt its support to the issues of the day as defined by the victims themselves (and sometimes by the national agenda). This created a complex interplay between the survivors' desire to address their individual needs and what issues were being prioritized by other members or by the society.

For example, participants' initial reasons for speaking out through Khulumani had little to do with any expectation of receiving compensation. However, as the fact that most perpetrators would receive amnesty sank in, restitution in the form of payment, jobs or symbolic contributions such as gravestones, became an important theme in the groups. The group also enabled members to participate in community rituals. Meeting at the time of "death anniversaries" of loved ones to share each other's grief became a common practice. Throughout the process an important motivation in being part of Khulumani concerned the sense of community it imparted. Some women had lost touch with the liberation movement and for them Khulumani was a way of re-establishing contact and showing their allegiance to the struggle. However, other women who joined Khulumani had never been highly politicized and they were therefore at first strongly dependent on the organizational and activist skills of professional staff and fieldworkers from the CSVR.

In the post-TRC period, other forms of and motivations for "speaking out" have started to take root. The groups have, for example, become informal networks of sharing information on socioeconomic survival issues such as job opportunities and income generation projects. Khulumani has also been instrumental in establishing projects such as bread baking and gardening. As Khulumani has grown as an institution, increasing amounts of energy have also gone into debate on internal issues such as the proper ways to structure and administer the organization—a far cry from the original forms of "speaking out" that were encouraged in the group. However, in ways similar to ADMI's use of PhotoVoice in Guatemala, Khulumani as an institution remains a symbol of unity and shared pain while carving out a powerful social space for women participants as they lobby for the government to address their needs.

South African Transgressions: Whose Voice and When?

Instead of simply providing spaces for people to tell their stories, Khulumani has set up a complex and constantly evolving new pattern of what may and may not be said. Thus when questions such as "what do the victims think?" or "how did Khulumani help them to speak out?" are asked, the counter question should be "when?" Although there are wide divergences among survivors, one typical pattern would be as follows. Initially the feeling might be: "if we can find out the truth we'd feel better"; later, "persecute the perpetrators" (or, "we forgive"); later, "speaking out is not enough, we want to see justice done"; and, still later, "maybe if we get some compensation we will feel better" (or, "you're trying to buy us off").

As significantly, it is widely accepted (TRC, 1998) that Khulumani helped to shift the TRC's discourse and many of its practices from being "perpetrator

centered" to being "victim centered." This helped to change the TRC, in the eyes of many, from primarily a legal body granting amnesty to perpetrators, to primarily a forum where survivors could make themselves heard. This was achieved not only because Khulumani became widely respected as reflecting the "authentic views" of survivors, but also because, through the group, survivors learned to "speak out" in a very different register from that initially envisaged when they were asked to "tell their stories." The group used the press at times to "speak out" and they captured public and television space through organizing high-profile public demonstrations and marches; public healing ceremonies were also held and a play about their stories was developed which they took back into communities and overseas. A formal submission was also made to the TRC by Khulumani and the CSVR, outlining the needs of victims with regards to reparations (CSVR & Khulumani Victim Support Group, 1998).

The press release reproduced below put out by Khulumani in October 1999 illustrates some of the ways in which Khulumani "spoke out" (see Table I). Not only is the release written in a formal English, replete with legal and psychological catchphrases such as "re-traumatization" and "in good faith" likely to be taken up by the media, but the attached memorandum (not shown here) to the Minister of Justice, Penuell Maduna, has the form of an official legal declaration with headings such as "Noting that . . .," "We acknowledge that . . .," "We demand that . . .," and "In pursuit of all these . . . ." Khulumani's success in speaking out at this public and professional level (in addition to being a forum where survivors can share their narratives) resulted in the CSVR coming to be viewed with a measure of respect but also with suspicion by some involved with the TRC. Accusations were frequently made that CSVR was "putting Khulumani up to it" or that "CSVR is trying to speak on behalf of victims." When Khulumani picketed the opening of the TRC to protest the inadequate information about the amnesty process, the third author of this article was held personally responsible by one of the TRC's most senior figures.

CSVR staff sometimes edited Khulumani statements on request. But, if anything, CSVR tended to be more cautious in its approach, often advocating that the group should seek clarification from the TRC before taking confrontational steps. It is also true that initially the boundaries between Khulumani and CSVR were blurred, with some of CSVR's funds, for example, being raised on the express understanding that it would be used for Khulumani. However, the principle of completely independent funding for the two organizations was soon established and Khulumani has functioned as such for several years now.

There were also occasions when CSVR bore the brunt of criticism from Khulumani members, sometimes because CSVR was held responsible for the shortcomings of the TRC. Over a period of time community psychologists at the CSVR have come to understand that as intermediaries part of their role is to absorb anger from both sides. They have also come to understand that the issues that concern people keep changing as the post-apartheid historical process unfolds. Visits to other countries and contact with groups such as the "Mothers of the Disappeared" in Argentina and Brazil have also helped to provide a perspective on how such groups evolve over time (Hamber, 1997).

The implied criticism in the questioning as to whose voice speaks through documents such as that in Table I cannot be lightly dismissed, but should equally not lead to political paralysis on the part of community psychologists. Few of Khulumani's individual members would ever be in a position to express themselves in the terms typically used in the media and in legal worlds, but, having developed relationships with

Table I. Extract From Khulumani Press Release, October 1999
One Year Since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report
Where Are the Reparations?

On the 29th of October 1999 it will be one year since the TRC released its final report. In its report the TRC made a range of recommendations on reparations, we have been waiting for the matter to be discussed in parliament so that the policy can be expedited.

We have heard very little and have decided to take action!

The TRC has compromised our right to justice and to making civil claims. In good faith we came forward and suffered the re-traumatisation of exposing our wounds in public in the understanding that this was necessary in order to be considered for reparations. We now feel that we have been used in a cynical process of political expediency. We are angry, frustrated and disappointed by the lack of progress and transparency regarding reparations. Survivors are suffering in poverty and the elderly are dying without receiving the relief of the promised reparations. It appears that our need for reparations is not being considered seriously as we have attempted to set up contact with Ministry of Justice on several occasions without success.

In order to draw the attention of the public and government to our plight, we have decided to hold a meeting and march on 29 October 1999, the one-year anniversary of the release of the TRC report.

others who can, they can, and do, instruct them to produce documents operating in such registers and thus enhance their own effectiveness on a broader national scale.

LIBERATORY PRAXIS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED GROUPS: NARRATIVES OF SURVIVAL AND RECONCILIATION

Despite significant differences the PAR project in Guatemala and the survivors network in South Africa represent two efforts developed through collaborations between community psychologists and local survivors who engage processes of reconciliation and continuing resistance to unjust political, economic, and cultural situations. Both projects emerged in the context of shifting political situations and the cessation of repressive attacks on civilians. The South African work within the overall framework of the TRC hoped to create contexts for public witnessing and performances that exposed the atrocities of apartheid to the wider community. What was initiated as a support network to accompany victims as they "spoke out" developed in ways that also contributed to the economic subsistence of its members. In the case of Guatemala, a context wherein a revolutionary process failed, the project operated outside of the "official storytelling context" of the various truth commissions. A grassroots organization whose objectives included developing an integrated approach to the community's development sought to use storytelling and photography to recreate a process whereby community members could explore their differing experiences of the past and work collaboratively to create dialogue whereby future struggles could be engaged.

However, for our purposes, the most significant similarity between Khulumani and PhotoVoice is the fact that both groups were explicitly concerned with self-representational practices in the aftermath of oppression. Even in naming themselves, the two groups inscribed this representational focus into their core group identities. In the case of Khulumani ("speak out") the name was initially chosen by a small group and reflects the "survivor testimony" focus resulting from their involvement with the TRC. It was enthusiastically embraced by those who later joined and remains unproblematic even now that the group's focus has broadened. In the case of PhotoVoice, the name was borrowed from the methodological term given to similar work previously done in China, but its methodological and descriptive roots were soon "forgotten" and in practice PhotoVoice became a proper noun denoting the group and its activities. As we have described above, however, this focus on representation was not limited to the kinds of individual storytelling typically associated with psychology, but involved collective identity and collective representational practices (writing a book, sending out a press release).

Interestingly, Khulumani and PhotoVoice each also have encoded in their names the principle that the kind of representational practice they are concerned with goes beyond speaking about themselves in a manner and register "natural" to their condition as historically oppressed groups. "Khulumani" alludes specifically to speaking out, that is speaking where there has been silence, while "PhotoVoice" is suggestive of the appropriation of sophisticated new technologies of communication heretofore not associated with rural Mayan women. In thrusting personal stories of suffering into public discourse, the women of Khulumani in South Africa and of PhotoVoice in Guatemala have converted private stories into public speak with differing impacts for the storyteller and the various contexts in which the story is told. In each case formal and informal processes of remembering and representation were used as resources for mobilizing struggles for both personal survival and structural change. In addition to having successfully published the first photo essay that is both by Mayan women and the story of their rural communities during more than three decades of war and thereafter, PhotoVoice and ADMI are the base for a growing number of economic, educational, and psychosocial assistance projects not only in Chajul but in its surrounding villages, the most recent of which draws directly on the PhotoVoice experience (Lykes et al., 1999; Women of ADMI & Lykes, 2000).

These community interventions are therefore fundamentally transgressive practices and can only occur in the dialectic generated through professional-community collaborations such as those described herein. They use the codes, recording and dissemination technologies, and representational practices appropriate to one stratum of society, that is, the academic, urban, western, and global, and put them to work in another, that is, "community," rural, "indigenous," and local. Transgression happens in both directions—for example, academics bring in cameras and ideas about the value of critical reflection and democracy into a "community," thereby perturbing power relations in diverse ways, many not foreseeable

prior to the intervention. Community-based representational practices also then enter into a more "global context" through academic papers or community authored books, perturbing power-relations in that world.

As significantly, the local and gendered focus on the survival of oneself and one's children enters the discourse of human rights in very material and pragmatic ways. PhotoVoice emerged from a group wherein education, health, and economic survival are core concerns. Khulumani developed into an organization wherein women (and men) worked together to initiate self-supporting economic projects. In both contexts the local community is the site in which community consultants have labored alongside women who were telling their stories and rebuilding their lives. PhotoVoice and Khulumani illuminate the importance of process in community work. Hope as some might that truth commissions will "put the past behind us" these local community interventions and grassroots networking efforts exemplify ways in which testimonies are refashioned over time and the contributions of such retellings for reconciliation and ongoing organizing for social change.

The community psychology practices described herein are not without their pitfalls, some of which have been alluded to in the discussions of each project. In both examples community psychologists were outsiders to the local communities who sought to respond to the various impacts of state-sponsored violence. It is not possible to foresee the multiple consequences of such collaborations/interventions and it is often hard for any "outsider" to know where the lines between community participants and community psychologists merge. As mentioned above, the CSVR was, at times, accused of "speaking for" Khulumani. In a similar, but less public vein, once they saw the quality of the photographs and the level of analysis achieved by a group of informally educated rural women, supporters of the Guatemalan collaboration queried as to "who was really doing this work." Such experiences highlight the role of the community psychologist in mediating between the groups with which they work and the ways the wider society tries to deal with (sometimes through blaming) the stories which communities can thrust into the public realm.

Conscious of the ways in which academics, professionals, and the privileged classes in general have in the past taken it upon themselves to speak for and on behalf of the oppressed, it is now a commonplace in most academic disciplines involved with community work to stress the importance of unmediated community voices. Community psychology is no exception to this tendency. However, voices are, of course, always already mediated—speaking through layers of language and by means of technologies that are cultural products and not natural givens. In the twentieth century we have seen the development of highly sophisticated theories of the mediated nature of language such as the post-structuralist work of Foucault and Derrida, together with the rise of a media saturated global society where even the most local and "spontaneous" speech issues from the pervasive postindustrial culture. Similarly, community psychologists have been engaged in the development of sophisticated applied approaches to engagement with those who have been marginalized by the economic and political system. These approaches (which include neo-Marxist work on the role of intellectuals, Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed," and much feminist work) neither romanticize marginalization nor attempt to unilaterally "rescue" communities, but work with the productive tensions that arise when disparate groups unite behind a common cause.

In this paper we have not attempted to review this work at a theoretical level, but to illustrate some of the complexities that arise when academics engage with communities and together develop novel processes of self-representation. Our hope is that our account will serve as a corrective to overly purist and naive ideas sometimes found in the community psychology literature regarding the possibilities of "giving voice" to or empowering the marginalized and the disenfranchised, while at the same time celebrating basic community psychology principles of respectful engagement and participatory action. These transgressive, collaborative processes shift the voices of both professionals and community participants and discourse shifts. As community psychologists committed to a liberatory practice we operate not only within the local community but also in the realm of representational politics.

REFERENCES

Asmal, K., Asmal, L., & Roberts, R. (1994). *Reconciliation through truth: A reckoning of apartheid's criminal governance.* Cape Town: David Philip.

Barry, T. (1992). *Inside Guatemala*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center.

Bracken, P. J., Giller, J. E., & Summerfield, D. (1995). Psychological responses to war and atrocity: The limitations of current concepts. *Social Science and Medicine*, *40*(8), 1073–1082.

Bunster, X., & Chaney, E. M. (1989). Epilogue. In X. Bunster & E. M. Chaney, *Sellers & servants: Working women in Lima, Peru* (pp. 217–233). Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers.

CEH/Commission for Historical Clarification [Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico]. (1999, February). *Report of the CEH* [On-line]. Guatemala: Author. Available: http://hrdata.aaas.org/ceh

Chicuecue, N. M. (1997). Reconciliation: The role of truth commissions and alternative ways of healing. *Development in Practice*, *7*(4), 483–486.

Cojti, N. (1988). *Mapa, proyecto linguistico Francisco Marroquin* [Map, linguistic project of the Francisco Marroquin]. Texts by Lopez Raquec. Guatemala: Editorial Piedra Santa.

Comas-Díaz, L., Lykes, M. B., & Alarcón, R. D. (1998). Ethnic conflict and the psychology of liberation in Guatemala, Peru and Puerto Rico. *American Psychologist*, *53*(7), 778–792.

CSVR & Khulumani Victim Support Group. (1998). *Survivors' perceptions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and suggestions for the final report.* Unpublished submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

De la Rey, C., & Owens, I. (1998). Perceptions of psychosocial healing and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, *4*(3), 257–270.

De Ridder, T. (1997). The trauma of testifying: Deponent's difficult healing process. *Track Two*, *6*(3/4), 30–33.

Eth, S., & Pynoos, R. S. (1985). *Post-traumatic stress disorder in children*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.

Hamber, B. (1997). Living with the legacy of impunity: Lessons for South Africa about truth, justice and crime in Brazil. *Latin American Report*, *13*(2), 4–16.

Hamber, B. (1998). The burdens of truth: An evaluation of the psychological support services and initiatives undertaken by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *American Imago*, *55*(1), 9–28.

Hamber, B., Nageng, D., & O'Malley, G. (2000). "Telling it like it is . . ." Understanding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from the perspective of survivors. *Psychology in Society*, *26,* 18–42.

Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.

Jenkins, J. H. (1991). The state construction of affect: Political ethos and mental health among Salvadoran refugees. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, *15,* 139–165.

Kleinman, A. (1995). Violence, culture and the politics of trauma. In *Writing at the margin: Discourse between anthropology and medicine* (pp. 173–189). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lykes, M. B. (1994). Terror, silencing, and children: International multidisciplinary collaboration with Guatemalan Maya communities. *Social Science and Medicine*, *38*(4), 543–552.

Lykes, M. B. (1997). Activist participatory research among the Maya of Guatemala: Constructing meanings from situated knowledge. *Journal of Social Issues*, *53*(4), 725–746.

Lykes, M. B. (2001). Creative arts and photography in participatory action research in Guatemala. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of action research* (pp. 363–371). London: Sage.

Lykes, M. B., in collaboration with Caba Mateo, A., Chavez Anay, J., Laynez Caba, A., Ruiz, U., & Williams, J. W. (1999). Telling stories—Rethreading lives: Community education, women's development and social change among the Maya Ixil. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *2*(3), 207–227.

Martín-Baró, I. (1994). *Writings for a liberation psychology: Ignacio Martín-Baró*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

ODHAG/Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala [Office of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Guatemala]. (1998). *Nunca más: Informe proyecto interdiocesano de recuperación de la memoria histórica* [*Never again: Report of the interdiocescan project on the recovery of historic memory*] (Vols. 1–5). Guatemala: Author.

Parker, A., & Neal, A. (1982). *Los ambulantes*: *The itinerant photographers of Guatemala*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2001). *Handbook of action research*. London: Sage.

Theissen, G., & Hamber, B. (1998, Autumn). A state of denial: White South Africans' attitudes to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Indicator South Africa*, *15*(1), 8–12.

TRC/Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa. (1998). *Truth and reconciliation of South Africa report* (5 vols.). Cape Town, South Africa: CTP Printers. Also available on ReconciliationNet. See http://www.reconciliation.org.za

Visual voices: *100 photographs of village China by the Women of Yunnan Province*. (1995). Yunnan, China: Yunnan People's Publishing House. Copies may be purchased from Dr. Caroline Wang, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, 48109.

Wang, C., Burris, M., & Xiang. Y. (1996). Chinese village women as visual anthropologists: A participatory approach to reaching policymakers. *Social Science and Medicine, 42*(10), 1391–1400.

Wang, C. (1999). Photovoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. *Journal of Women's Health*, *8*(2), 185–192. See also http://www.photovoice.com/

Women of ADMI Lykes, M. B. (2000). *Voces e imágenes: Las mujeres Maya Ixiles de Chajul/Voices and images: Mayan Ixil women of Chajul*. Guatemala: MagnaTerra. Copies may be purchased from EPICA, 1470 Irving St. N.W., Washington, DC, 20010. E-mail: epicabooks@igc.org

Women of ADMI (2000). *Project proposal. Application for funding to the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights.* Unpublished manuscript.