Chapter 2: Methodological Accountability and Co-authoring voices

2.1 Preface

Gergen (2002:13) notes that constructionist dialogues do far more than provoke critical reflection; that they also invite new forms of methodology, theory, and practice.   Consequently experimentation will necessarily demonstrate that persons are caught within a deterministic world of cause and effect, ; trait measures will yield linear hierarchies of good and bad (for example high self-esteem versus low, high neuroticism versus. low).   This resulting determinism is not because causal relations and hierarchies are simply there in the world, but because the choice of method is inevitably a choice of ontology (Gergen 2002:13).   Further, all methodologies harbour political, moral, and ideological ramifications.   "Most existing methods, for example, create the reality of a subject-object divide – the knowing scientist as opposed to the subject of study.   In this way they foster an atomized picture of society in which each of us exists separately and independently of others" (Gergen 2002:13).

Consequently, due to constraints within existing methodologies, many constructionists have been moved to seek alternatives.   "Such methods create different constructions of human activity and harbour different values.   For example, many researchers have established means of working cooperatively with those they might otherwise study as 'the other.'   Participatory action researchers attempt to work with various marginalized groups to establish the kinds of knowledge necessary to enhance their life conditions.   Others use various narrative methodologies to give voice to otherwise silenced sectors of society.   Polyvocal methodologists attempt to give expression to the multiple voices or selves possessed by both the researcher and the researched.   Still other scholars search for more aesthetic means of representing their subject

matter; performance, poetry, multimedia, music, and art are all added to the compendium of methodologies.

Senior researcher at Actioma and professor extraordinaire, Andries Baart (2003) comments on a special research edition of Practical Theology in South-Africa 18(3). This edition has a specific narrative angle. Baart (2003:147) notes herein that most researchers do not thoroughly account for their data collection, the selection from the raw data, their interpretation, and analysis etcetera. For this reason this chapter is principally devoted to such concerns.

Before I embark on a more elaborate journey I wish to provide the reader with cursory remarks on methodology and its implications. Here I refer principally to Müller and Schoeman (2004) writing about narrative methodology:

Müller and Schoeman (2004:11) describe research as multi-facetted action. Consequently they assert that McClintock et al (2003:715-731) have moved into the right direction by creating several metaphors for research, which account for the rich variation in research styles. It is my hope that the reader might in this chapter see how there is accounted for the realisation of these metaphors in the research since, and I agree with Müller and Schoeman (2004:11), these metaphors reflect the basic values of good research to which this study also subscribe.

Consequently they allude to research as action, research as narrative, research as facilitating, and research as responsibility. While ontological and epistemological concerns inform the research from an academically accountable and philosophical based perspective these subsequent metaphors are the pillars that practically inform method[59] and accountability[60], which this chapter is all

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[59] This distinction was rather helpful to me; Thinking of *methodology* in terms of personal positioning within accepted methodological theoretical understandings while *method* consists of the illumination on a practical level of how research happens. Since this distinction is not water tight, or an important differentiation these concepts will be used interchangeably unless otherwise stated.

about. The following are rephrased from Müller and Schoeman (2004:7-14) with the aim of instilling in the reader a sense of what this chapter is about.

2.1.1 Research as action

Action in the context of this research signifies participation: The way in which the primary researcher is active is through being present in a participatory fashion; never passive and objective. This notion of participatory interaction involves all relevant parties; "both researcher and those being researched are drawn into the action" (Müller & Schoeman 2004:11).

2.1.2 Research as narrative

In this regard Müller and Schoeman 2004:11 cite McClintock et al 2003:721 in saying that research-as-narrative suggests that research works by describing, exploring and changing the metaphors used in a process of finding during research. In this process of finding fragments of narratives are always imminent, either directly related to the theme or related to some aspect of an individual's life, either consciously asked for or presented, or incognisantly performed from the storying nature of our humanness.

2.1.3 Research as facilitating

Given that the topic or research question mostly originates from the interest of the researcher, s/he is the initiator and therefore facilitates the research (Müller & Schoeman 2004:11). It is emphasised that a facilitator is not suppose to be a manipulator. S/he performs the role as the conductor of an orchestra that performs meaning. It is not the conductor that writes the music score. The performance of music/ meaning is a joint venture.

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[60] It is my belief that a good research design is all about accountability; towards participants, the scientific community, personal standards and so forth. Therefore these concepts are wedded in this chapter.

2.1.4 Research as responsibility

It is argued that there are no means or methods by which a researcher can be objective.   S/he is rather actively involved and therefore also has the responsibility to further the research. A responsible researcher is a self-reflective researcher in answer to unattainable objectivity.   Thus responsibility replaces "objectivity."   This happens by creating space for metaphors and for the development of new stories. (Müller & Schoeman 2004:11)

Section A

With these above ideas as a basis of understanding I would just like the reader to take note of the broad structure of this chapter. This chapter falls out in two sections: The larger first part tackles questions about method and the second part serves as a cursory introduction to research participants. In this latter part in will not be attempted to provide the entire stories of participants. In I introduce them in this chapter with the aim of revealing how it came that they were involved and why they were chosen and such research methodological concerns. Their voices will rather be heard at length in following chapters.

2.2   Introductory metaphor

We could all think of people whom we've met of whom we might say: Surely God must have a sense of humour in having created them. Look at their hairstyle… never the same and they dress rather odd at times. Strangely enough those people are often very close to us. At times we think we know them exceedingly well while in some instances they don't make sense to us at all. They are rather peculiar at best. Remarkably similar to some, they are different from the rest. These people, whom reveal God's humoristic approach to creation, live in my mirror.

You might remember that in chapter one it has been mentioned that people are made up of almost innumerable voices. Gergen (1999:123 takes this to such an extent to imply a myriad of voices even in one's thinking activity. Van der Ven

(2002:291-307) writes one of the two very important reflections revolving around the conversation between Theology and Social Constructionism. The other is written by Gergen (2002b:273-289). Van der Ven (2002:291) remarks on Gergen (2002:3-23) which is also the opening article to the reader. What interests Van der Ven (2002:291) about Gergen (2002a:3-23) is the general insight that every kind of human activity – from perceiving, thinking and feeling to interpreting, evaluating and communicating – is socio-historically and socio-culturally determined.   This also applies to activities that we tend to consider extremely individual, private, and intimate such as meditation and prayer. It applies equally to those aspects of human existence that relate to the self, such as the moral and religious self, and to what – also in the moral and religious domains – constitutes the individual's personal identity. Thus thinking is a social constructionist activity as we are in a strange way in conversation with people from our past. It is in the context of these conversations, these relational ways of being that I allude to, and essentially refer to myself in the above metaphor. I am thus the sum total and more of all the influences I consciously and unconsciously have been subjected to.

How exactly this tension between whom I am in relation to the influences in my life works one can only speculate. This occurrence is most fascinating since I am more than the sum total of all the influences I consciously and unconsciously have been subjected to. One will have to inquire how human beings share *similarities* on the one hand, while we are *creatively different* from the rest. In appearance and preferences, of which we are mostly cognisant, to the way in which we walk like our dad's, have our mother's noses, followed through to our truly unique qualities. Such as our fingerprints, unique retina's, voice tone and quality (measured in graphical waveforms) and DNA. The same idea applies to other creations such as animals and especially the zebra. By and large it is acknowledged that most zebra's have stripes, though no zebra's stripes are alike.

Why this introduction? Well in the first instance this notion of uniqueness versus dissimilarities situates this chapter again in our Theological positioning wherein God is the creative creator God. Human beings are created to journey with each other and all research whether social sciences or not has this component of humanity, human fallibility, human interpretation and so forth. Secondly this notion of uniqueness applies to research and research communities as well. The research community of this particular research will be presented here. In this chapter we will consider a method and design through which we might look in the mirror so to speak to consciously and sometimes incognisantly reflect on the voices we hear, the voices we consist of.[61] Adding to this we take a look at the kind of practical methodology and its design that are put to use in amplifying participating voices. These two goals for this research chapter (introducing voices and an illumination of a truthful methodological design) stems from a specific question or research gap, which will subsequently be presented.

I'm of opinion that most of the answers to the direction this research has taken; themes it include/ exclude, which art form's input is heard most strongly and so forth, could be found in this chapter. Alluded to elsewhere I make a case for the idea that something of the general could be found in the specific but not the other way around: The existence of the general opinion (such as statistics) does not necessarily apply, without interrogation, to the *specific* or *local* that this study wishes to do justice to.

Before one can embark on a process of collaborative inquiry with co-participants and do so via a valid research method underpinned by certain methodological considerations which is informed by, epistemology and ontology (as referred to in chapter one), one needs to know something of the seeds of curiosity from where this study is birthed. These seeds of curiosity are situated in a definitive research gap.

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[61] The metaphor of mirror/ mirroring in this context should be understood as in line with the ontology and epistemology of chapter one and not as in a modernistic positivist sense such as a mirror objectively, supposedly mirrors reality.

2.3   A twofold research gap

I acknowledge that the second part of this subsequent twofold research gap is not a primary motive for conducting this research and thus deliberately placed in this order. The second part of the twofold research gap concerns issues around establishing narrative therapy as a professionally accepted practise in the eyes of those whom are statutorily involved in health care. This issue could have been disregarded in this study with no significant loss to the research. However, this battle for professional acceptance is something that relates to most arts therapies. It is argued that the discourse that is upheld and sustained by not allowing professional accreditation boils down to issues regarding objectivity and validity. These types of considerations does not only relate to practise but also to research. Thus, narrative research might not always be accepted if measured against conventional criteria for research.   Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:14-16) also asks questions about valid assessment from the practise of drama therapy. Following their title chapter they ask the question: "How can we tell if drama therapy is or has been effective?" In considering research, as focussed inquiry, they attest to four approaches: Quantitative drama therapy research, Qualitative drama therapy research, Practitioner drama therapy research, and lastly the one they advocate for most arts research inquiries, Art-based research. Following we encounter different sets of criteria in research.

Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2001:206) however still situates arts therapies research within Qualitative methodology and accentuates the different criteria such as trustworthiness instead of reliability and within this general category one will find four checks: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.   The proposal is therefore that the debate concerning professional accountability and acceptability in light of dominant scientific bodies or communities extends further than practises such as therapy.   Such dominant discourses interrogate the presuppositions from where knowledge or meaning is created when juxtapositioning arts related paradigms over conventional research or therapy.

Returning to the primary research gap: There is, what I describe as, an overly reliance on linguistic ability on the part of the *client* (referring to traditional clinical practices in medical and psychological models), and or rather *conversational partner* as used by narrative practitioners, therapists, and so forth. Rephrased: It can be argued that a sufficient amount of psychotherapists, psychologists, narrative therapists, counsellors, facilitators, educationist's and the like all at some stage use various art forms such as drawing, role play, and so forth. Their application of these art forms is all together something different than what I would like to call 'art specific therapy' such as music therapy, play therapy and the like. Regarding art specific therapists; they all had extensive training in these art forms at various levels of involvement. The important question then is: "How can narrative practitioners/therapists make use of various art forms in a responsible and accountable way?" The manner in which they go about should, on the part of the narrative therapist contribute to the development of the story that evolves in a social constructionist process.

Despite this reliance on linguistic ability I've come to know *narrative* practice as employing very creative measures in working along side people. Nothing though very structured, as in based on structured inquiry. Such as the study: A few years ago in a master's student group discussion on the book *Playful Approaches to Serious Problems,* from Freeman, Epston, & Lobovits (1997). We have argued that this narrative positioned book to be too much reliant on linguistic discourse. The reason: The book is especially aimed at ways of being engaged in therapeutic processes with smaller children. At that time being busy with a master's degree dissertation on a social constructionist view of sex and morality I started to wonder about the notion of spoken dialogue and reliance thereon in therapy.

Tentatively speaking, the arts could function as a medium to underscore such a research gap; that of a linguistically reliant approach to therapy. In addition, the

arts could become the therapy as opposed to being used in therapy.   These ideas will be considered in chapters three to five.

In tribute to the *primary* role that the arts could play I offer these cursory examples within the art form of music: Gregory (1997:123-140), expands on the traditional roles of music with a more specific focus on ethnic African cultures. These uses include lullabies, games, work music, dancing, storytelling, ceremonies and festivals, battle, communication, personal symbol, ethnic or group identity, salesmanship, healing, trance, personal enjoyment. When looking at healing: "In traditional Mali society music has a sacred healing role both for the individual and for society. Music is believed to facilitate communication…." and "Native Americans believe that music has a magical power for curing people, but can only be used by ceremonial practitioners who have had years of learning" (Gregory 1997:132). Using the arts profoundly opens up possibilities of alternate realities where the mode of verbal communication might not solely be effective.

Another example: When looking at the notion of communication Gregory (1997:129), affirms that many languages in the world are tonal, where the pitch of a vowel is linguistically important. Some even have a much more subtle stress and intonation pattern: It the Bantu and many central African languages music cannot be dissociated from speech. The ability to represent languages of these cultures in music almost precisely is remarkable. Even the level tone and a glide that is rising or falling are linguistically significant along with each syllable having its own pitch, intensity, and duration. It is said then that the music in many ceremonies and dances is thus speaking directly to the participants whom in turn answer the music. The *talking drum* found in some African societies has this ability to represent language musically according to pitch and rhythm. This is a small, two-headed, hourglass shaped drum, with cords fastened to the membrane. Since it is held under the armpit the pressure on the arm can vary the tension of the skins and thus the pitch of the drum. (Gregory 1997:130)

Music is also used as a personal symbol in the Saami people (Lapps), having the unique tradition where each individual person has their own special song or *joink.* "This becomes a personal acoustic symbol, and is often sung when herding reindeer. Parents can give a *joink* to their children, or lovers can give a joink to each other as a gift" (Gregory 1997:131 citing Blumenfield 1993).

The secondary reason for this study has to do with a proactive step in seizing a possible contemporary opportunity:

Tillman (2000:11), states that there are professions that start honestly addressing their own limitations.[62] As they address these limitations it is said that doctors, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists are turning to musicians for any remedies they might offer for the sicknesses of contemporary society. For instance, "[c]ommunity musicians are being welcomed in health-care establishments."

Consequently there is an acknowledgement of an aesthetic quality in current medical practise, a rediscovery of the deep human need for the aesthetic and a rebirth of interest in many different areas (such as professional musicians, medical practitioners, psychotherapists, New Age practitioners) of the healing potential in music (Tillman 2000:11).

The abovementioned are written within the European context. One can only go about speculatively and patiently within the South-African context. It would do the profession of narrative practise good to open up to the voices of other disciplines (as does this study) since some other therapeutic disciplines are able to affiliate with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (Drawing on conversation with drama therapist Kirsten Meyer 2005/03/15-16). Not so at present with narrative therapists. If it could do the aforementioned, this would allow people to more readily see therapists since they can then claim from a

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[62] Shouldn't we all be aware of the limitations of our professions, especially so in the so-called helping professions?

medical aid.[63]   At present SAAP (the South African Association for Pastoral workers), is busy trying to achieve related goals in this regard.   In my humble opinion narrative therapists, being akin to arts therapies should be able to, as is the case with drama therapists and music therapists, register with the *Health Professions Council of South Africa* (HPCSA).   Ironically on the furthest point of the continuum in the South-African context the traditional healer can register!?   On the other side of the continuum in the affiliated and accepted field of clinical psychology one will find the narrative informed psychologist who undergoes related training as the narrative therapist, and is registered.   In some countries such as Canada and Australia it seems narrative practitioners are highly accredited therapists.

The above inquiry relates to Ansdell (2002:111) referring to a contemporary issue (in the UK at least) pertaining to "…Music Therapy's success in becoming an establishment profession – its identity now state registered."   Music Therapist's are asked how their practice differs from that of "…other musicians who work with people – for example 'Community Musicians.'   Do Music Therapists and Community Musicians have different practices, or just different theories?   Are their distinct professional turfs always in the service of client needs?"   (Ansdell 2002:111).   So on the one hand Music Therapy is a registered state practise.   While on the other hand the profession struggles with its own identity.   As the borders between theoretical and professional practises seems to fragmentise (See related arguments in chapter 4 on the arts as therapy versus the arts in therapy, and also the extended description of the dilemma in Ansdell 2002:111).

This relates to the above research gap in the following manner: More academic literature is needed firstly, to explore and be in evidence of narrative's affinity to accepted arts therapies; secondly, to shed light on broader movements (paradigm shifts and so forth) resulting in fundamental changes even within long standing affiliated practises such as psychotherapy or clinical psychology.   If

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[63] One could also argue that there are very prominent economic/health care discourses that suggest that any practice that cannot claim from health care providers are substandard to psychologist, music-/ drama therapists that can.

such long-standing practises (whom are trusted affiliates to the HPCSA) experience changes in the direction of preferring narrative as in thinking about expressions of life, truth, definitions and treatment of illnesses and so forth does this mean their affiliation will be terminated? Could this rather imply that narrative therapists will get closer to affiliating with the Health Professions Council?

Subsequently we ask what kind of a process, method or design if you will, within narrative social constructionist ideas and research is fitting to such a research gap. From there the focus will shift to the people involved, looking at criteria for participation, sampling, and so forth.

2.4 Research procedure: A Birdseye view

It is first and foremost important to note that within Narrative Research, data becomes equivalent to life stories. This then is the process of data collection: Research generated data by means of interviews will be recounted after[64] informed consent has been signed. However, natural occurring data will also be put to paper as part of the research process. Themes that recur in a process of qualitative emergent design will be transcribed and made available to the interviewees. Interviewees will be able to evaluate the accuracy of the transcribed material, as well as to reflect on the direction and meaning of the study: As I have written to professor Hagemann in a reflection letter on the 2004/02/04, "The possibilities in the development of this joint story are fascinating. True to narrative research I'm not sure how this story will end but I'm certain it will be absolutely marvellous." Some of my PhD focus group scholars were circumspect of the idea that I could say before hand that it is going to be marvellous. I don't agree since this does not in the first instance reflect on the content of the research but the process. The narrative process is a process of intrigue, it surprises, it could disappoint though, but the general gist of narrative research is to me to embark on a journey, a compelling one at that since the kind of conversation is about

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[64] See Thatcher (1999:111) on the term 'processual marriage': marriage as a *process* rather than a clearly defined rite of passage. Applied to research, it would mean as Smythe and Murray (2000:313) states: "Consent is something freely given by the research participant and may be freely withdrawn at any time

something that interests the researcher. The idea that the research might serve to advance the various fields of narrative practise, theology and so forth also makes for anticipated excitement. The researcher is himself part of the social construction and it is not believed in our epistemology that the researcher should as a prerequisite be dispassionate about the endeavour.

Yet another motive for co-participants to be able to reflect has to do with the idea of transparency. From a social constructionist methodological point of view it is argued that one can never be objective. In providing transcribed accounts of our meetings, which already is an interpretation on my part, and discussing it makes all the participants including myself accountable to each other. A scientific community will hereafter reflect upon an overview of the relevant themes negotiated in the interviews with institutions and certain individuals. These comments and interpretations will in turn be made available to the original interviewee's. In a way a loop is made that we call triangulation with the purpose of deeming our, some might say, participatory qualitative research trustworthy. This process will lead us to other significant themes i.e. snowball sampling (Strydom & Delport 2002:336)[65] until all the parties agree that a saturation point, concerning themes and relevant data has been reached, if only at least for the time being. (For a graphical representation and further explanation see heading 2.6.3.)

Embedded in a social constructionist worldview this research hopes to open possibilities, stemming from the stories of qualitative interviews, in which art can be used satisfactory in Narrative Therapy. Abbreviated, the ABDCE approach (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001), will be used as a point of reference in generating research momentum. This will enable the research to develop on two crucial points namely, developing the story (evolving themes from the interviews),

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[65] Neuman (1997:207) also calls this network chain referral. This is the kind of sampling where one relies heavily on the referrals of participants in order to find people that will assist the research to acquire a well-rounded view of a topic. This of course also involves academic literature referrals. The choice for this sampling which some regard as the least desired way of sampling has in narrative practise to do with situated knowledge that is of interest. A further point to consider since snowball sampling is not in the first instance a narrative research 'tool' is that it differs with its conventional use in that a distinct effort is made to introduce the information and reflect on it in the larger discussion groups.

and story telling (see Freedman and Combs 1996). By means of sticking to and caring for the characters (our research participants), and thickening the plot we will hopefully get to a climax related to the use of art in narrative practise. This climax could be described as the realisation of some kind of cathartic experience and relates to the arts therapies predominantly that of drama therapy: With regard to drama therapy the authors Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:229) assert that the abandonment of defensiveness that allows a cathartic release of feeling lies in the drama itself in the same manner as the research climax lies in the narrative research process. Primarily the drama therapist's concern is with that of sticking to or managing the psychological equilibrium of safety and danger (Andersen-Warren & Grainger 2000:229). This act of caring for our research characters primarily relate to what the abovementioned authors dub empathetic involvement that will lead to some kind of cathartic experience which is induced by the imaginative frame of drama (Andersen-Warren and Grainger 2000:229).

At this point in time, we will be able to start making sense of the action of our research; that of answering questions about how language is used; how art, as communication as part of the storying process might be able to assist people in what we in accordance with Michael White (2000:9), might call *meaning making*.

2.5   *Design*

At risk of stating the obvious this study broadly follows the notion of a qualitative emergent design; qualitative since it associates itself with the characteristics of what Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2001:139) describes under this research. These are, process centred, personal, natural or contextual, explorative, descriptive or comparative, interpretive, idiographic, intra-disciplinary, reflexive. Along this understanding of being situated in broadly qualitative, and as far as conventional accepted designs are concerned this study is at once a   phenomenological and a grounded theory endeavour (Subsequently elaborated from Leedy & Ormrod 2001:153-155). Narrative research is also much more than these as will be elaborated on after the latter mentioned.

2.5.1 Phenomenological

As far as this study relates to a phenomenological undertaking it is attempted to understand participant's perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of a particular situation or action field.

Method: There is a primary dependence on lengthy interviews, mostly semi-structured of about an hour with a selected sample of people. The number of participants is usually between 5 and 25. In this study there are roughly 21 participants, dependent on how one counts participation. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:153) assert that in a phenomenological study all participants have had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. In an explorative study such as ours this is not in all instances true: Within accepted criteria, experience will be generated.[66]

In interviews, which often takes the form of informal conversations the primary researcher, is alert for subtle yet meaningful cues in participants' expressions, questions, and occasional sidetracks. However Leedy and Ormrod (2001) states that throughout the data collection process, the researcher suspends any preconceived notions or personal experiences that may unduly influence what the researcher hears the participants say. From a social constructionist perspective these researcher experiences are rather part of the process but there is a high regard for transparency about them and encompassing interpretations thereof. Take note though the focus does not lie here.

Data analysis: It is said that during data analysis the central task of the researcher consists of identifying common themes in people's descriptions of their experiences. From a narrative perspective I would rather redefine what happens by saying that in revisiting conversations often with participants some themes present themselves more readily than others. Most often these themes tend to be significant to the

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[66] Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2001:145) note that in qualitative inquiry both natural occurring data and research-generated data are acceptable ways of obtaining information.

research participants and study. Typically what would happen in a phenomenological study, which is not necessarily narrative, is that the researcher will do the following:

i. Identify statements that relate to the topic: The primary researcher gets to decide what relevant or irrelevant information is and then breaks the relevant information into segments that connote a specific thought.

ii. Group statements into meaning units: The researcher groups segments into categories that reflect the various aspects or meanings of the phenomenon.

iii. Seek divergent perspectives: The researcher looks and considers the various ways in which different people experience the phenomenon.

iv. Construct a composite: The resulting various meanings are used by the researcher to develop an overall description of the phenomenon as people typically experience it.

Following chapter one it is evident that I would be cautious about the role the researcher takes in interpreting so-called data. Rather, this study although sharing the some of the above working methods of 'data analysis' is in favour of a more collaborative effort or at the very least a consciously open design. Therefore in the qualitative emergent yet narrative social constructionist design there is a greater emphasis on levels of reflection.

2.5.2 Grounded theory

This study is not formally that of a grounded theory approach but it relates to it in that there are no constructive theories for the use of the arts in narrative practise. In narrative practise that which is often referred to as a model could rather be judged as tentative guidelines. Chapter four serves to loosely categorise experiences in the study in an attempt to serve as guidelines or notions to consider for contemplation for anyone who immerse themselves in the arts and narrative practise.

Method: Whereas the phenomenological study almost exclusively relies on interviews the grounded theory study is more field based, flexible, and likely to change over the course of the study.   Though interviews play a major role in data collection, observations, documents, historical records, videotapes, and anything else of potential relevance to the research question may also be used. The only criteria or restriction is that the data collected must include the perspectives and voices of the people being studied.   It is exactly here that the embedded reflexive design of narrative social constructionist research fits closer to grounded theory study than to phenomenological methods.   However the apparent similarity between narrative social constructionist method and grounded theory studies stops here. This is again evident in the summary of the four procedures involved in data analysis in grounded theory.

Data-analysis: Data collection is aimed at saturating categories that the researcher has devised. This takes place via four procedures:

i. Open coding: Data are scrutinized for commonalities that reflect categories, or themes. Categories are then further examined for properties or attributes of subcategories. Open coding is a process of reducing the data to a small set of themes that appear to describe the phenomenon under investigation.

ii. Axial coding: Interconnections are made among all categories. The focus here lies on, conditions that give rise to categories, its embedded context, the strategies that people use to manage it or carry it out, and the consequences of these strategies. There is a continual back and forward movement among data collection, defining and redefining categories, and the inherent interrelationships.

iii. Selective coding: Categories and their interrelationships are combined to form a story line that describes what happens in the phenomenon being studied.

iv. Development of a theory: A theory could consist of a verbal statement, visual model, or series of hypotheses in aid of explaining the phenomenon in question. The theory depicts the evolving nature of the phenomenon and is

thus represented causally; conditions lead to actions or interactions, again leading to other conditions and so forth.

Even more than an attempt to ground research in the experience of participants, narrative social constructionist research accentuates the co-constructive interpretive enterprise. Narrative social constructionist research would also view any derived at theory as tentative, belonging to a specific context, time, and place. There are therefore definite limitations to the degree to which such a theory or any theory for that matter could extrapolate to future scenarios.

Not wanting to give away the following metaphor let me just state that we now turn even closer to native, narrative academic soil.

2.6   All Beavers Drink Coke a cola Euphorically

2.6.1 Introduction and method

Admittedly it is a ludicrous generalisation that all beavers drink Coke euphorically. I mean, how ignorant of me? Maybe just some drink coke euphorically others might be forced into drinking coke and are forced putting on a smile about it. However, is it true that beavers drink coke or any other cool drink? Well, who could say? Have you ever seen a beaver drink coke? Nor have I seen a beaver drinking coke. However, since neither of us has seen a beaver *not* drink coke we cannot be sure to say that beavers or even one strange beaver doesn't drink coke.

In the fluid truth of this heading I would also agree with you if you add that bears, bats, beetles, and all baby-animals drink coke euphorically, but not eagles, zebra's and so forth. The truth in this statement lies in the fact that *all beavers drink Coke euphorically* is an acronym for the research methodology and design, namely ABDCE that stands for Action, Background, Climax, and Ending.

This research methodology, which has come to be known informally as the ABDCE approach, is a design that favours the research community's truths, their descriptions of their realities. If this research community seems to be saying that beavers drink coke and they validate this then within the genre such as fairytales (paradigm) it is true that beavers drink coke and does it euphorically. In the end this metaphor along with its connection to methodology assert that stories hold truths and that any research project wanting to succeed should be designed to facilitate this emergent and rich understanding of truth, truth-telling or truth-making.

It is believed that the ABDCE approach; taking story construction as metaphor is one of few such possible story approaches[67] to research that allow for local differentiated or communal realities to come to light through being narrated. Although in story theory there could be attested to several movements in any story. (See Vogler's story model) the ABDCE approach ensures that that which is minimally necessary in respect of research as narrative is pursued. Thus research is about some action or *action field* (A), that it is situated in various *backgrounds* (B), that the *story/s* should *develop* when these backgrounds and action fields are brought into conversation with each other (D), resulting in some kind of *climax* or a-ha moment (C), and which naturally would disperse or come to some kind of *ending* (E).

Following, I will say more on the movements involved in this approach. Firstly, a reminder of our chosen theme before we venture into the movements and how that relates to our theme: Our study is an explorative study on peoples' experiences of the arts and how this translates to a narrative framework. This will be done not necessarily from a pastoral perspective as such, but situated in the framework of relating pastorally to people in a specific context.

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[67] See in this regard also Mischler (1986) *Research interviewing. Context and Narrative.*

2.6.1.1   Action

In this research the primary action field is that of the arts. This entails having started out with a tentative description on that which might be viewed as art (Chapter one)… tentative, for the research wants to be open to participant's alternative descriptions. The action field relates to participants' descriptions on where they have *been* involved in the arts in their lives. However the action field in our study is not only related to what has happened in the past but also to experiences *generated* through the research. For this reason the study is not only confined to those already involved in the arts but also allows for entrance into contact with the arts through the research.

Secondly our action field consists of the interaction between, the views and generated experiences of participants in the arts and that to narrative practise ideas. In this instance the reader will see that there is no need for an extensive search into people that could from a narrative perspective form part of the study. The reason for this could be found in that, as one might say, from the word go, this study is embedded in narrative ideas. Not only is the clothes that we put on the research design, that of the ABDCE approach narrative, the heart of the research is also narrative; embedded in a PhD narrative curriculum and a narrative focus group having to form part of the study as a prerequisite. Furthermore, what I would like to refer to as the rootedness (*being grounded in*) of the research is portrayed by the character of the congregation where I minister that has before my involvement there been exposed to narrative thinking. On the research team there are also skilled narrative counsellors and so forth (see Chapter 2).

Thirdly this research is again rooted in the ministry environment. This is not to say that the study has a ministerial aim. What it does acknowledge however is that in this study, to the people from the congregation also involved in this research I am also a pastor, as explained in chapter one. It could be expected therefore that the ministry environment and the relationship between myself and

most co-participants plays a role in the direction of the research. This direction is not propagated from my side. In alluding to this research as a pastoral study the research theme acknowledges the strong relational influence in the interaction between the arts, narrative practise, and the ministerial environment. Thus being pastoral is inherently part of the study and is neither suppressed nor advocated it is just acknowledged.

The difference between these aforementioned topics (arts, narrative, pastoral), relates to the aim of the research and could be explained by the following:

The researcher tries to *secure* that the arts play a significant role.

Narrative ideas, acknowledging its strong rootedness in the context of the research will *most probably* play the desired significant role.

Pastoral considerations *will likely* surface in the research following the participants' descriptions and experiences.

2.6.1.2   Background

It is important to realise that the above movement concerning the action/ action field is not focussed on the action as such but on the people involved in the action. Stories and experiences belong to faces that come from somewhere.

It is to these faces, these people that narrative research would like to do justice to. We don't see people as story machines that we could oil and then out come the data for the research that we might use. No, there is a concern for the person as a whole being. Her or his background in respect of the general theme is important. There is a concern for the judgement and input of the person as a co-research participant. With this being said participants will be given ample room to reflect on the discourses that they think shape our theme and their personal experiences. Personal stories, photographs anything they judge to be of use is viewed as significant. Even if participants seem to diverge from the theme it is believed that this forms part of the research. In such case one would

rather ask to the significance of the story that the participant tells than to assume that a person has sidetracked to an unrelated topic.

It is primarily the background of the participants, expressions of their experiences that set out the terrain on which the research will tread. For this reason accepted scientific literature with regard to the theme (however excluding positioning and methodology) is of secondary importance to the experiences of participants. According to this view as the primary researcher I also take part as a participant. Contrary to dominant discourse in research methodology the subjectivity of the primary researcher does play a role. For this reason my own personal story around the arts and in the case of this study my interpretations about the role of music in my life comes into play. Again, my views are not necessarily advocated but also not unduly suppressed. To put it plainly one should still remember that in most ordinary social sciences research the topic is not the primary researcher but the participants, thus they should speak more, and do so unrestricted.

2.6.1.3   Development

In the art of writing the maxim states that the phrase *after the queen died the king died*, is a story whereas a*fter the queen died the king died of grief*, and is a plot. Constantly bringing the queens death in conversation with the feelings, memories, and photographs of the king aids the development of the story.

Story development is something that needs to be facilitated mainly through creative interviewing and reflexive practises. This is important as the successful development is the single most important factor that raises the level of narrative research.

In the narrative research method that is advocated in this study, successful story development mostly stems from personal reflective practises such as letters being written, after interview transcriptions being presented back to the

interviewee, presenting one participant with transcribed material of interviews conducted with other participants and so forth.

The story development movement is possibly the movement that consumes most of the time span of the research as this involves new information or stories being brought into conversation with evolving themes and conversations from other participants. This results in a rich description of the action field. It also asks for a great deal of patience on the side of the primary researcher since some kind of plot eventually emerges from proper story development.

In summary this movement consists of reflecting, facilitating, and waiting. This waiting does not however entail pacificity that is, doing nothing until a plot miraculously appears from somewhere. This is done through taking on the attitude of caring for and sticking with the characters (participants) in the story.[68] In a social constructionist approach patience does not equal withdrawal from interpretation in general; only withdrawal from a unilateral interpretation.

2.6.1.4 Climax

In conventional social science research literature (Neuman 1997; Rubin & Rubin 1995) it is suggested that the research comes to an end when a saturation point concerning all the themes has been reached (Rubin & Rubin 1995:72-73). Consequently, the themes and issues at stake keep repeating themselves. When conducting an explorative study like this one the notion of saturation makes perfect sense since if one agrees that research is very particular or contextual. If one does not agree, I fear that the explorative study might carry on *ad infinitum*, especially so when it is conducted on the basis of *network chain referral* (see elaboration elsewhere)*. Therefore, the aim of this study is to discover and richly describe the main themes involved in the action field, in a particular context.

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[68] See again the opening preface on researcher action as pillar to this study.

However there is a certain restlessness concerning the above notion. If indeed a study is truly local then there should be the understanding that there should always be room for alternative descriptions and experiences beyond the completion of the research. This takes place simply stated since no two people's experiences are exactly congruent.

In so far as a specific study concerns specific people or groups a relative saturation point could be reached but only concerning the experiences and descriptions of these specific people involved. It could happen that themes that some scholars view as important with regard to the arts are 'overlooked' but still these themes might not have been important to participants and have as a consequence not been pursued. This however does not entail that the primary researcher is not at liberty to consciously inquire about the participants judgement of a certain theme's worth in the specific study.

The idea of a *climax* in story theory is much more significant in asking about when the research comes to closure. The choice for the word *climax* rather than *saturation point* again puts a subtle emphasis on people involved rather that the academic pursuit of research. It describes where the research process is at in terms of what happens with people instead of what happens in the research as academic endeavour. The fiction writer Anne Lamott on who's work the ABDCE approach has been developed [69] states about the interrelationship between characters and climax: "You move them along until everything comes together in the climax, after which things are different for the main characters, different in some real way" (Lamott 1995:62). One can consequently describe what happens to the participants and primary researcher as undergoing a cathartic movement. After the climax things are different, the primary researcher and participants see things in a different light.

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[69] Refer to Müller, Van Deventer and Human (2001:76)

This notion, which to me resembles the idea of catharsis is most visible after the climax of the story in which the actors or characters in the story exude a different presence than prior to the plot. It seems that often this movement in people who we identify with are catalysts for our own cathartic experiences as a consequence of watching or listening to a story. It was in most of the academic voices I have followed up in relation to participants' remarks I came across the idea of catharsis. The Concise Oxford dictionary (1990) recounts for the word catharsis as being *an emotional release* in drama or art and in psychology the process of *freeing repressed emotion by association with the cause*, and *elimination by abreaction*, in the medical profession it connotes *cleansing* or *purgation*.

Furth, on the therapeutic use of drawings writes about catharsis:

> It is interesting to note that when professional artists produce pictures from the unconscious, they frequently become aware of a flow of inner good feelings accompanying their work. They seem to be expressing a freedom that they have not felt in years, or awakening memories of using media associated with good feelings experienced years ago. Pictures from the unconscious executed by artists, interestingly enough, are awkward and childlike, even primitive, and the drawings are very similar to those by non-artists. Any drawing has a cathartic effect, and that catharsis allows the symbol to move inner psychic energy and begin the healing process.
>
> (Furth 1988:12)

The difference after the climax of the story might not be earth shaking. It may not even be positive, as in that which was expected, but it is the result of the rich story embroidery. The envisioning of and ending prior to the research becomes only a temporary destination. Müller, Van Deventer and Human (2001:87) puts it quite strong when saying that the researcher that forces a plot is rather a propagandist who knows the answers to the questions and in fact does not need

to do research. This equates with saying that when understanding comes too quickly, it is not to understand at all (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:87). Drift sand serves as a relevant metaphor: The more the researcher tries to get out the drift sand, the more he gets sunk in, and the more ailing the research quality becomes. Ironically the role of the researcher in the drift sand is to be patient and just keep on conversing with the people that stand around. Eventually one gets pulled out by the participants themselves.

Nevertheless I fear there are also two problems in this assertion to a type of climactic movement in what is accepted story theory. Still only the first of these cautionary remarks relates to this study. To begin with, the problem that I have with waiting on *the* one plot to emerge as in a linear approach still exudes a modernistic understanding of research. Especially in a study such as this one, being and explorative study, I find several climactic instances. It is not uncommon in more complex stories to find a myriad of sub stories in the broad flow of a more dominant story line. Professor Hagemann from the drama department at the University of Pretoria for one interrogates the modernistic notion of a story as having a beginning, a middle and ending with all the implied movements between these. Consequently sub-plots and counter-plots emerge all over. In the second instance there are times where a story is well known. The plot in this sense does not evade the audience in manner of speaking. The focus can therefore not be on *what* happens: Did the team of robbers in the film Oceans eleven and its follow up Oceans twelve eventually get away with their scheming? Rather the focus is on *how* it happens. This is mostly true of nearly all action–adventure orientated films amongst also the famed James Bond movies. How true isn't it also with the Christ story that might possibly be the entire worlds most well know story? Everybody that might have heard the story knows at least that according to the story a man called Jesus Christ was born (Christmas) died on a cross and is said to have risen x-amount of days afterwards. On a more local or specific level the question again is not what

happened but how did it happen. The question to be asked concerns how Christ is said to have been birthed eventually died and risen in once own life.

2.6.1.5   Ending

In the ending, part of this *how*-question is answered: How did it all happen and what do I make of it. This movement is therefore related to *meaning making*; what does all this information mean to me, the co-researchers, organisations, and so forth. If indeed there had been cathartic experience/s, how do people now look and feel. This also requires a reflection on the research process, transparency about what worked and did not work. To take this movement seriously means to realise that research is not an exclamation mark, not even the point at the end of a sentence but rather a comma(,) somewhere in the beginning of a paragraph. Stories ultimately just flow into one another in the moment they touch; each text a preface to the next (Müller, Van Deventer, Human 2001:90).

This research procedure of Action, Background, Development, Climax, and Ending should be seen as a non-linear approach. Practically this entails that research, depending on the participant, criteria and so forth does not need to start at the action field. The research should in point of fact be understood as cycles. As such the ABDCE approach also involves moving through cycles wherein the inquiry could start with any movement, as long as, in narrative research, it values the voice of the participant in the first instance. However non-linear should not be associated with non-systematic. It has been remarked by colleagues and friends: "How can you still be busy with chapter one?" I then assure them that my chapter one is not over two hundred pages long and that others chapters have already started emerging.

In as far as the research report is concerned (this document, fragments of the action, background, reflections on story development, on climaxes hoped for, and possible endings might be found throughout all chapters. It is like a gigantic *semantic-/,* and *meaning-/,* spider web. When I, as the spider toss and turn on

one page it relates to other pages in other chapters as well. It could only therefore apply vaguely (as in the following graphical methodology representation) to say that chapters one and two relate to background and action, chapters three to five relate to story development and climax and that in the end chapter six is about a possible ending.

2.6.2 Usual criteria for good research design

Earlier, in the preface I have mentioned briefly, by way of introduction what the practical, yet overarching pillars are for narrative research: research is said to be active, narrative, facilitative, and exuding responsibility. The general criteria to which it is said any good research process should adhere is reliability, validity and generalisation. How and if it relates to narrative research will be discussed consequently.

The concept of reliability suggests that given identical circumstances, if the same technique or procedure be followed this would lead to the same results. This does not imply accuracy as a certain scale may weigh me consistently at x-kg while other scales may differ. In this regard   I therefore differ with Mason (1996:26) who seems to be using reliability and accuracy almost interchangeably. The question therefore is rather: Does an instrument do what it is supposed to do and render consistent outcomes. In referring to instruments which is a conventional research concept in especially quantitative approaches I refer primarily to design and method. I do not situate myself within the conventional quantitative use of relying upon standardisation of research instruments or tools whereby data is crosschecked by different sets of instruments (Mason 1996:26).

Speaking from my understanding of the narrative metaphor and the social constructionist worldview in which it is embedded I'm not convinced that the reliability criteria is as relevant to the 'data' that is generated by participants involved in the process as it is to the research as process itself (in this case

conducted with the ABDCE approach). The primary reason for this is that data or then rather stories, descriptions of experiences and so forth are seen as co-constructed. Mouton and Marais (1993:104) differ with this statement by locating reliability solely it seems in the generated data. They do this by saying that there are two grounds for reliable conclusions: Firstly they feel that the collected data in itself should be reliable and then secondly if we accept the evidence as reliable; does it offer adequate backing for the conclusion? The way this is stated sounds in the first instance like the researcher has made some conclusions and now sets out to find reliable data to support these conclusions. Over against this, situating reliability within what a proper research method or process entail enables us to consistently get to a rich or multifaceted description of some action field even if 'data' does not appear to in itself be reliable. Conclusions then reached are *co-constructed* emerging conclusions and not based on a one-man act: A reliable process leads to *truthful* conclusions as opposed to reliable data leading to *true* conclusions.

In the above-mentioned special edition of *PTSA* Baart comments on the narrative research conducted underlying the articles. Baart (2003:148) writes that there is no doubt that the classic criteria of reliability and validity are hardly or not at all applicable. In the type of research grounding this document I concur with Baart (2003:148) that conventional reliability and validity "…are replaced by the criteria of plausibility, truthfulness to life, richness of meaning and details, recognisability to immediately involved people, the use of different sources (triangulation), communicate symmetry, usefulness, faithfulness to the original language and expressions and so forth. Some of these descriptions (truthfulness as opposed to truth, usefulness as opposed to *the* method etcetera) clearly resonate with notions in the arts; yet another example of how it is believed by the author the criteria for research (as stated above) is congruent with focus of this study conducting inquiry into the arts.

Generally speaking reliability is said to be a prerequisite for validity and that both concepts relate to quantitative and qualitative research.   Whereas reliability leaves room for outcomes different from other approaches as long as it does so consistently validity is taken up in what is said to be true. One would thus ask to what extent an account accurately represents the social phenomenon to which it refers. As far as conventional social research practises are concerned I concur with Neuman (2001:171) that validity in qualitative research refers to authenticity; giving a fair, honest and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of someone who lives it everyday.

Mouton and Marais (1993:50-51) makes a distinction between internal and external validity (See also Neuman 1997:192-195). Internal validity indicates that a particular study produces accurate findings, true to reality with regard to the phenomenon, which is studied. Furthermore in internal validity constructs are measured in a valid way, the data are accurate and valid, the analysis is relevant and the conclusions are adequately supported by the data (Mouton & Marais 1993:50-51).

External validity resonates strongly with generalisability. Hence, conclusions of a specific project may be generalized with regard to all *similar* cases. Given the apparent synonymous use I now pursue the latter description namely generalisability.   Agreeing with Baart (2003:148), normally people refer to generalisation within the framework of statistics, accordingly "…what is valid for a sample should, within well defined margins of probability, also be valid for the whole population." It could be contested that generalisability is not at all relevant *as a criterion* to case-studies or qualitative studies so much the more in respect of narrative research (Baart 2003:148). Following Baart a bit further might clarify the issue for us.   Apart from the conventional conception of the idea of generalisation, as it is often used especially with regard to quantitative studies there are at least two other types of generalisations relating to narrative research. "*Theoretical* generalisation considers research outcomes valid beyond the

context of discovery if they fit into or may be sensibly interpreted in the light of already established, well grounded theoretical frameworks…" and secondly "…*communicative* generalisation states that the question of generalisation is not answered by the researcher (who is an outsider to new situations) but by the (potential or actual) reader or user. It is up to him or her to say: in my concrete situation I can use those outcomes. If so, they turn out, in practise to be *transferable* and inspiring *examples"* (Baart 2003:148), or as Müller and Schoeman (2004:12) suggest: narrative research does not "…pretend to generalize, but it nevertheless points beyond the local, because of the integrity and truthfulness of the stories. These stories are not disguised forms of generalizations. The story is in itself convincing."

This notion of the local (the particular) and whether a study conducted on such values is of any relevance back to a larger community is of concern to this study being a contextual narrative study.[70] If one moves beyond the local, one risks falling into the trap of generalisation. For this reason professor Müller says we want rather to do in-depth contextual inquiries while on the other hand we are challenged with saying something that might have a sphere of influence beyond the local. The question then: Will my local contribution have something to say back to the universal or is my own particular situation so local that it is not going to be of any relevance to the wider community? By what reasoning could a narrative study, point beyond the local? At the Van Huyssteen conference this was addressed as follows:

Professor Van Huyssteen (2005/08/01) remarks that the narrative study, its desire to point beyond the local is good for the following reasons. It forces one to define what is meant by context or local community in a multi-levelled way. By way of example, what it could mean: In South African theology we find Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed and other theologies. Now, the moment we claim to do interdisciplinary work this is already a step beyond the local since the

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[70] See in this regard also professor Hagemann's views on the idea of an expanding moment in drama (See under heading 4.6.4).

theologian is asking beyond the competence of his own discipline. One is actually acknowledging that their may be problems that one discipline cannot solve alone. The example could also be turned around: If there is some theme that is favoured, in say psychology by conducting a theological study this is pointing beyond the local knowledge of what is taken for granted in another discipline and thus provides a different perspective.

Would such a local study be valid in terms of its general applicability? Professor Van Huyssteen mentions that it will probably not be the content or generalisations, but the way in which the study was conducted that will bring it across as relevant. Others may realise it is a very contextual study but may want to see how things were done. It is the methodology that will carry it across and enable a true transversal[71] reach beyond the local context.

Professor Müller (2005/08/01:Van Huyssteen lectures) agrees with this. In other words he says as an individual researcher one should be very cautions to claim that one's research has broader meaning, conversely if you do your work with integrity then there is the expectation that it will be of value to a broader community

This following example in the film industry I believe says something of what is implied here:

> There is a large gap between the typical plot-driven films, especially those produced by Hollywood, and those movies that actually win Academy Awards and other prizes around the world.... [H]ollywood is an industry, and most of the films produced there are aimed at the Box Office and not the Academy Awards or the Cannes Film Festival or even the San

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[71] Transversality is a concept that professor Van Huyssteen uses instead of universality or generalisability. Transversality in this context is used in the semantic field of resemblance or resonancy. In this sense a film may not portray *my* life story, yet I may find that it stirs something in me; there is a resonancy, or then a transversality in the film in relation to my own life. This is far from saying that the film portrays a generally or universally true view of this or that facet of peoples lives.

Francisco International Festival. Yet the pictures we remember and which the Academy most often turns to when it takes a closer look at the end of each year tend to be narratives about strongly etched characters. In addition, because these stories concern people we care deeply about, they have *emotional and moral resonance* [italics: own emphasis].

(Horton 1994:12)

Horton (1994:26) states that we should treat character as a complex network of discourse or myths that cannot be totally explored, explained, examined. The rub is to be able to create characters that have such resonance, even in what may appear to be a stereotypic genre film (western, musical, thriller) that they break out of any limiting stereotypes we are used to (Horton 1994:26).

Therefore, in narrative research although our work may have emotional, moral or other degrees of resonancy we try not to think in generalities as Whitehead asserts: "We think in generalities but we live in detail" (Whitehead,[72]publication uncited by Bridges 1997:7).

Emeritus professor Klaus Nürnberger[73] had this question to ask about how something becomes universal from the specific. In his question he also provides the answer that professor Müller agrees with. I recount his question and answer here in approximation:

Is it a matter of making something that is pretty localised applicable elsewhere or is it rather the discovery of the dimensions of human reality elsewhere in the global system. For instance, you read a novel about a something that happened in Iceland; you've never been there and suddenly you horizons widen and you see your own situation in a much

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[72] American philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead.

[73] From professor Nürnberger's pen comes the useful book how to from a postfoundational view look at foundational texts found in the Bible. See References for full bibliographical accounts.

boarder context.   In other words you don't look for applicability or similarities, but you simply broaden your horizons with new aspects of being human.

<div align="right">(Nürnberger 2005/08/01:Van Huyssteen lectures)</div>

Professor Müller agrees and restates that it is definitely not looking for a way to apply because that puts you in a kind of position, as if you are able to do so. Rather, narrative research believes we cannot make our work applicable; what we can do is do good or truthful work in the specific and maybe find a common rationality perhaps with human experiences and other disciplines and so on.

Professor Müller takes Klaus Nürnberger's example of a novel further and says that it also relates to an autobiography. In approximation: To think that people, even the great ones in the world have the audacity to write an autobiography; there's no proof that anyone will find it applicable or of use. However, the integrity of the writing, the way in which it is done may become something of use to other people in very different contexts (Müller 2005/08/01:Van Huyssteen lectures).

2.6.3 Graphical representations to research design

Arguably the most important factor in storying research is the projects ability to develop the story into a rich conversational experience that carries the research. This brings us to the notion of story development as described above. Most often however participants can't meet eye to eye.[74] Thus the nature of the conversation between person A and B, person A with group C, person B with literature D and so forth is found in various accountability practises.

Story development in storying research is facilitated through a) reflective practises (see schematic research design representation b) staying curious about

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[74] This is a very difficult task if it were to be practically executed. In addition both for ethical reasons, anonymity (and so forth) as well as trusting reasons (the design and process of reflection is more than efficient) participants need not meet.

process and content c) involving co-researchers throughout the process d) especially paying attention to possible connections in stories and being transparent about findings.

Of all of these accountability structures in the research, reflexive practises take the prime position to ensure internally valid research. Not only does this relate to the emerging content of the research but also to the narrative research process. Baart (2003:148) alludes to interjudgemental reliability that enhances reliability and validity of outcomes in that the "…research process, the sources and interpretations are discussed repeatedly in workshops, focus groups and team meetings…" The encompassing graphical representations are indeed helpful since it illustrates that reflexive practices take place on several levels and at different places in the research.

The following pictures depict the most basic reflexive approach aimed at broadening conversation:

The representations here are what evolved from fieldwork with Learning Theatre (forthcoming: chapter three). These I had written down on the 11th and 12th of February 2004. They were transcribed the same days that they were taken. After a reflective process they again ended up at the original interviewee on 25th February 2004.

Representation A. holds the rough draft of the event or conversation. These may or may not include personal remarks dependent on time constraints. Representation B. is the written up material from the conversational/ fieldwork draft. This account does include interpretations and they are made conscious. It is this representation that is sent to/ or back to the research participant. This allows them to comment on the process, content, and interpretations. They would either write up remarks on the document and give it back to or email a brief reflection. Now after they have commented these new reflections are made

part of the broader conversation with other participants; either by sending representation B. To them as is, or with me verbally reflecting on that representation at an interview. The broader community get the chance to say what interests them while simultaneously that discussion becomes a new Representation A. for another cycle. After the broader community reflected on representation B. all this are rewritten in representation C. that encompasses their remarks which the original interviewee gets to reflect on. Representation C. also encompasses proposals for possible themes made by the broader community. Note therefore that the cycle from representations A. to C. does not come to an end, comments are dispersed in new reflections and interview conversations, which at some stage again become a representation A.
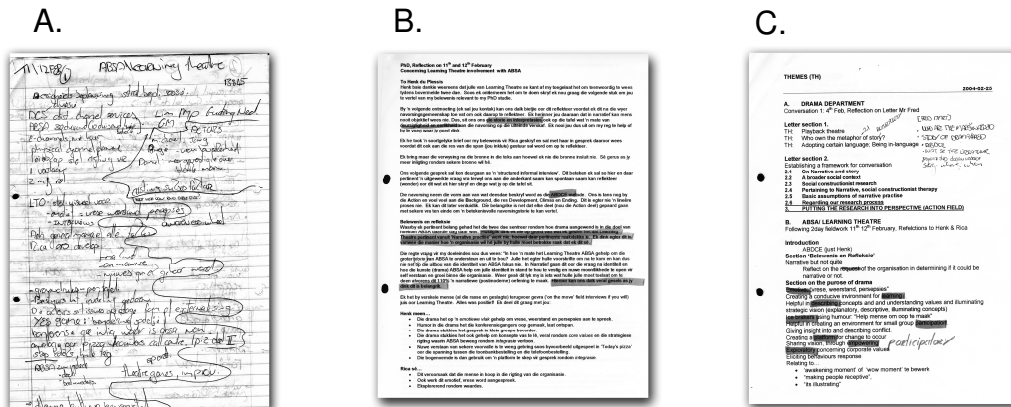
A.   B.   C.

Figure 2-1 Reflective process

Suffice to offer not one but several graphical representations that may each illuminate something of the research process. I believed that the following graphical representations are efficiently illustrative to loosely guide the research to adhere to the above ideas of story development Stated plainly the research design is believed to be congruent with criteria for story development.

Our first stop, as for graphical representations, considers what happens in general in the narrative research process. Take note that this illustration is indicative of the broader movements involved in narrative research and does not comment at this stage on the content of conversations.

2.6.3.1   Graphical representation 1

Doctor Wilhelm van Deventer whom has been involved in mentoring of masters and doctorate students at the University of Pretoria explain the narrative research process with the following representation and use it to speak about inferential credibility.
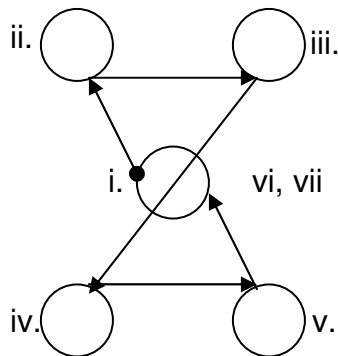

Figure 2-2 the process of inferential credibility.

Description

  i.   All collected information
  ii. Researcher's analytical, hermeneutical and interpretative reflections
  iii. Reflections of co-researchers
  iv. Reflections of scientific community
  v.   Literature
  vi. Integration of 1-5

Although the researcher might have started writing, the cycle continually repeats before the write up is thoroughly attended to.

  vii. Report

Take note that everyone involved in the research is either part of number 3, being co-researchers or number 4, being part of a scientific community. Co-researchers in this representation is thus a general overarching reference to amongst other possibilities, organisations and institutions, affinity groups, focus groups and indeed also consist of individuals.

It is even more important to realise that people are however not categorised as belonging to this or that group. Thus looking at number 3 above we'll find some individuals as separate research partners but we also find that same individual as being part of the voice of a group. For example, it so happens that there are some people in the CAM community (creative arts ministry) also relate to the research in their individual capacity. This happens for various reasons, for more in-depth discussions concerning a specific theme, pastoral or confidentiality reasons etcetera. So in this study both the voice of individuals and groups will be heard.   Concerning number 4, while cumulatively speaking the scientific community could have a voice depending on the themes that surface, some individual members on the scientific community also form part of number 3, in that inquiry is made on a personal level to experiences in the arts.

I also see number one as being broad enough to encompass fieldwork, conferences, seminars and so forth that has been attended in relation to the topic.

2.6.3.2   Graphical representation 2

This representation provides a broad framework for understanding how the research is carried forward in time.
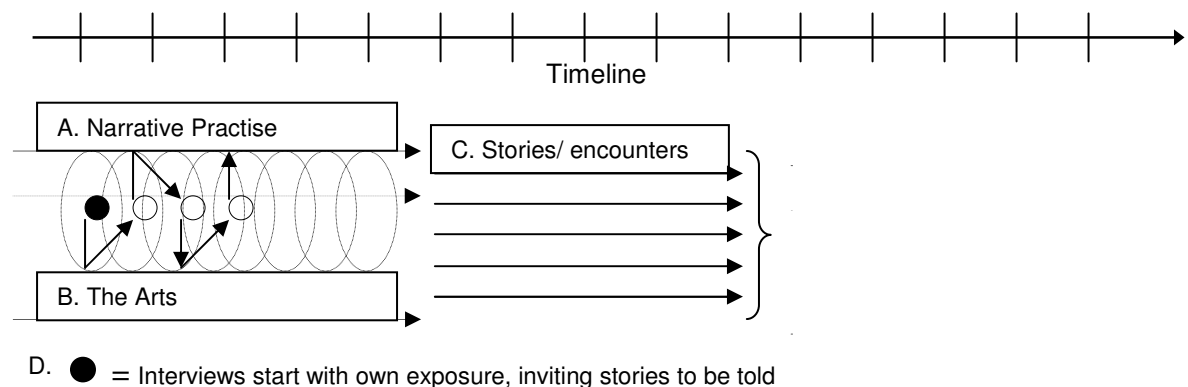
Timeline

A. Narrative Practise

C. Stories/ encounters

B. The Arts

D. ● = Interviews start with own exposure, inviting stories to be told

Figure 2-3 the research process with an emphasis on time.

The undermentioned is an explanation of the involving alphabetical blocks, followed by process notes:

A.   This block represents the practises or practitioners of narrative practise ideas. It also represents any form of practise involved in story as metaphor although not necessarily situated in a narrative worldview such as extensively explained in chapter one. The arrow underneath the box indicates, as for all boxes that this body of knowledge exists but is also *created* and recreated in ongoing practises and dialogue in the field.

B.   The same applies to the arts in a twofold way: There are accepted practices in the field of the arts that include therapy but also formally trained artists.   There are thus communities of knowledge that generate on a formal, practitionary or academic level ideas about the arts. Also inclusive hear are any person with either an affinity towards arts and crafts or that through the research consented to a process involving interaction with the arts.

C.   This block and the arrows underneath is an indication of the stories of participants that come about as a consequence of partaking in the research.   It thus represents conscious storytelling, narrated experience and so forth. In addition, here a body of knowledge is created through experiences shared.

D.   Circles represent the content of actual research conversations and reflections generated as a consequence of these discussions.

Process clarification

The first interview (D.) will start and be informed by the researcher's experience (following the arrow down to B.), in the arts. This is important since it is illustrative of the type of experiences the researcher is looking for. The resulting comments, inclusive of my own reflection is transcribed and taken to A. (narrative practise/ or story metaphor practitioners) whom reflect on the content of the conversation. These reflections are taken back to the first particular participant

or focus group where the discussion originated. Conversations that are conducted here are then again taken to B. (the art communities). Take note that individual participants also represent one of the two communities (A. or B.) in some way. Community members in either A. or B. do not necessarily belong to a physical group. A. and B. are merely one person's outlook or reflection on what s/he judges to be representative in some way of the opinions in a particular community.

2.6.3.3   Graphical Representation 3
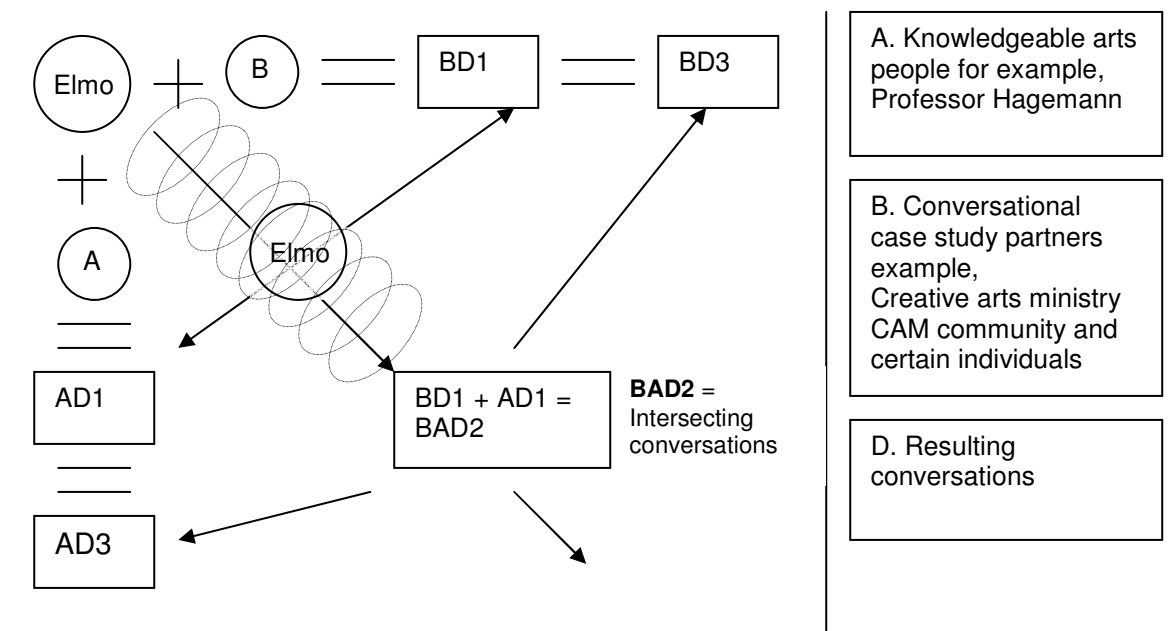
Figure 2-4 Intersecting conversations

It is important to note that in my opinion there cannot be a separate scientific community that clinically reflects from a knowledgeable position. Naturally they are knowledgeable but their reflections are not in the first instance seen as a correction on content. In addition, for example; we will meet Gladys Agulhas later; though she is knowledgeable *about* dance she *is also* simultaneously a dancer; thus, scientific community and research participant.

Integral to the research are any accounts where the metaphor of story or metaphor of social construction is used. In the end we want to know more about

how the arts can enrich narrative practises. At this stage I hold that the arts may contribute greatly to the social constructionist process of co-creating a new story. The research must however help in the differentiation of what the essence of story in narrative practise is as opposed to the use of story as an art form. Anybody can tell a story!

2.7 Data sources?

I am unquestionably reluctant about the use of some terms and concepts stemming from conventional views about research terminology. This is directly related to narrative practise ideas. I am also quite certain that the reader has by now been thoroughly introduced to narrative social constructionist thinking and some of its implications. Some of these implications has been illustrated by remarks about the choice for (to name but one example again), the concept of conversational partners, co-researchers, and at the least participants instead of respondents, research population or research objects. In the following discussion some conventional terminology such as references to data will be used since my hesitance is not aimed at, *that* these concepts are in the first instance used but *how* it is used; often in derogatory fashion. I therefore align myself with writers such as Müller, Van Deventer and Human (2001:77) that does not want to pathologise or victimize their narrators and therefore also speak in terms of the above descriptions. Since this document is an academic document and in this sense cannot break with research tradition some accepted research concepts will be used for clarity's sake while also it will be attempted to state where and how narrative research differs.

2.7.1 Qualitative Interviews

In qualitative research, interviews are often the primary 'tool' in generating data. So much the more this is the case with narrative research. I now take Mason (1996:38-39) as ground text since the manner in which he writes about qualitative interviewing resonates with narrative concerns. Qualitative interviews are characterized he says by:

- a relatively informal style. Efficient use of interviews in narrative research steers clear of the question and answer format akin to survey interviews (Neuman 1997:254,371). Interviews are rather approached with a semi-structured or loosely structured framework. One might even call it "conversations with a purpose" if you want to (Mason 1996:38).

- a thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach. There is not necessarily a structured list of questions but merely a range of topics, themes or issues.

- the assumption that data are generated via the interaction, because either the interviewee, or the interaction itself, is the data sources.

These qualitative interviews may involve one to one interaction, or larger groups (Mason 1996:38) as does this study.

2.7.1.1   Means of capturing information

Mason (1996:51-54) significantly asks questions about how qualitative interviews are turned into what might be regarded as data. I agree that there should be some kind of mechanism/s through which this takes place. However bear in mind that this is only a practical consideration since it is not understood that there should be some kind of complex scientific approach through which conversations are magically transformed into data. As will be explained; everything is data. A significant metaphor could be found in what you are doing right now, experiencing and interpreting data through your senses of sight, touch, listening, smell, and taste. Whether all these senses are actively participating in the reading of, or maybe the struggling through this thesis is not really a valid question since they are not malfunctioning at the moment. Even senses that may not be actively involved in reading the thesis are rather consistently providing your brain with peripheral data that is ordinarily instantaneously registered and interpreted. This allows us to be aware of more than what we are

primarily focussing on. It is for this reason that I find some concepts helpful such as *conversations with a purpose* or *informed inquisitiveness* or *focussed inquiry.*

The question of, how interviews are turned into data should rather be tailored to a few others:

- What is the purpose of a conversation and through what process does relevant information answering that purpose get carried through to other interviews.
- What am I being inquisitive about? What mechanism do I use to eventually inform other participants about my inquiry?
- What makes my inquiry focused and through what mechanism is that focus being carried in the research?

Evidently the answer to the latter part of the above questions entail that interviews and other involvement (conferences etcetera) should in some way be recounted. I am referring to the recounting of information, which consists of speech, non-verbal communication or any other hard copy, or physical illustration that had developed from the research.

I wished to keep interviews as natural as possible since it corresponds with my ontological and epistemological viewpoint: It is argued that participants should feel comfortable with the manner in which information is captured not only for ethical reasons but also informed by the notion that realities are constructed through natural social interactivity. It is mostly spontaneous comfortably shared experiences, viewpoints etcetera that is in this research.

This recounting of information, viewpoints, experiences and so forth relates to Newman's (1997:363) description of field notes; deliberately not interview notes though it is not an important distinction. Interview notes could however easily be seen as just recording the content of the interview as if information could be separated from its context. Field notes have the broader aim of reflecting

however subjectively on the setting/ context non-verbal's and so forth.   Yes Neuman… writing field notes are indeed tedious work and one does spend much more time in doing this than actually being in the field or conducting interviews (1997:363).

The way in which notes are taken entails (in my case) not, *telling* participants that I will write things down but asking whether they think that they would feel comfortable if I were to jot down notes. Only much later in the research I started selectively using a really small inconspicuous audio recorder and only after asking the same question as stated above. It was felt that I could do this only once a trusting relationship has developed between myself and participants. Video recordings were out of the question: Somewhere throughout the research I started getting involved in video work (as art) partly as a result of this study since one of the participants is involved in video and media work. Let's just state this rhetorically: You might know what having to be in front of a video camera could do to spontaneity. It is my experience that in the majority of cases for people not involved in day-to-day work in front of a video camera, even those that say they don't mind really do react differently in front of a camera, they speak differently, they non-verbally present themselves otherwise etcetera. As stated throughout the project this research for ethical considerations, reasons of jeopardising truthfulness and epistemology is not comfortable with video recordings. So much the more this rings true when it involves deception as part of the research. It is mostly for ethical reasons that post-research interviews are sometimes so crucial.[75]

This study desired from the start to keep interviews as natural as possible; entailing that interviews with individuals were often conducted at participants' residence or their otherwise preferred place of meeting such as in coffee shops. This also required – regardless of how information is recounted for – that

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[75] See Neuman (1997:195) on the subject of debriefing, disclosure, criteria for the use of deception and ethical considerations especially experimental research. For deception as a topic see Neuman 1997:449.

participants should be able to experience that the researcher is part of a dialogue and not a monologue (from whichever side). Practically this compelled me not to want to understand notes as verbatim accounts of interviews as in the way an audio devise might record. On the other hand one tries to get as much as is naturally possible as not to be too selective about what gets jotted down. Most often, as abovementioned more elaborate notes were written up electronically based on field notes and memory, away from the interview and always preferably directly after the interview. Not to say that this is what narrative researchers does as default but as described above should not in good narrative research be a problem since the reflexive process underscores the possibility of getting information wrong as written accounts are presented back to participants prior to, if this needs be the case, making it known to other participants. In addition to possibly misunderstanding someone, participants are asked to reflect on whether anything that they feel is of importance is left out. Reflective transcripts, or letters even, is less of a safety mechanism in narrative research than it is understood as a second, third, fourth (etcetera), reflection on reflections in aid of developing a thick description of anything in question.

While all that has been said thus far could indeed be described as (Mason 1996:55) puts it a verbal to text-based data production process it is not only this. Mention was made to audio recordings that have been used. Audio recordings did not however displace transcripts; especially so pertaining to individual interviews. Interviews were conducted largely in participants' native language, which is either English or Afrikaans. Audio recordings helped me in this regard to be able to retain information not of my personal home language that might be of importance. In particular concerning conversations with professor Hagemann audio recordings helped immensely since a great deal of what he had contributed asked to be revisited carefully: Conversations with him yielded topics relevant from epistemology as you might have noticed already in chapter one through to specific language used in story theory.

I realise it may be difficult to remember everything that happens and what is being said during three to six hours of fieldwork (Neuman 1997:363-364). Primarily for reasons it was negotiated with participants that interviews will take up approximately an hour. What with instances of greater length? Here I refer to the *Arts and Reconciliation* conference (four days), a course in facilitative leadership (five days), narrative workshops, seminars, academic discussions and lastly, indeed some field work.

In these instances where I did use an audio recorder it was of great help. Information was recorded in augmentation of notes and captured to computer through which playback could take place with various programs.[76]

2.7.1.2   Reasons for interviews as data

I concur with Mason (1996:39-42); there are at least two good reasons why interviews are used to derive research 'data.' I will now state these and then elaborate on Mason (`996:39-42).

- My ontological position suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which my research questions are designed to explore (This position is informed strongly by narrative ideas).
- My epistemological position informed by social constructionism suggests that a legitimate way to generate data on these ontological properties is to interact with people, to talk to and listen to them whereby access is gained to their accounts and articulations.

In respect of this latter point Mason (1996:40) warns that one should also be aware of epistemological shortcomings of interviews. Mason (1996:40) explains

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[76] I prefer to work with proper sequencing programs such as Cubase or Cakewalk. On the other hand wave programs such as Cool edit, Wave Lab and Audition or those that might come with the installation of a sound card are useful for enhancing the quality of audio (getting a cleaner sound or making it louder). The latter depends largely on the quality of the recording device the environment of recording (hall, studio, room etcetera) and naturally the proximity to the sound source.

that if one is interested in people's experiences, these can only be *recounted* in interviews. "If you are interested in people's interpretations and understandings you must bear in mind that talking to people will not enable you to get inside their heads, and that you will only be able to gain access to those interpretations and understandings which are revealed in some way in an interview" (Mason 1996:40). But to the contrary following the type of research conducted and promoted through this study it is realised that even the recounting of experiences that Mason (1996:40) allude to is already and as such always interpretation. There is no question or format that will ensure "…that the interviewees will hear and interpret the questions in standardized ways, or that their standardized articulations genuinely express standardized meanings" (Mason 1996:41). In this study it is strongly advocated that knowledge and evidence are contextual, situational and interact ional, and therefore that this requires a flexible interview situation where questions can be tailored to responses.

Yet another pro-interview reason is situated in acquiring depth in the ways in which social explanations can be constructed rather than a focus on broad understandings of surface patterns. It should not be assumed that depth and complexity is not to be found in explorative studies such as this one. Even with a relatively broad action field interviews yield rich descriptions of experiences more than would surveys for instance.

A great deal has already been said about reflexivity. Suffice to mention yet again that reflexivity lies at the heart of any social constructionist narrative undertaking; yet again another good reason for interviews above all other methods of 'data' collection since this way of conducting research necessitates that I conceptualize myself as active and reflexive in the process of data generation.

In considering the role of research ethics and politics in narrative research it is believed that in interviews participants have more freedom in and control of the

interview situation than is permitted with structured approaches.   A fuller representation of the interviewees' perspectives is acquired through interviewing.

An interviewing situation allows for more responsive action from the participant especially if the participants want to ask questions.   This responsive space allowed through interviewing connotes something of the respect for the input and worth of a person.

Interviews correspond with the ethical position of narrative research. Considering that qualitative narrative interviews are very much a conversational enterprise ethics is not judged in conventional terms. That which is agreed upon between primary researcher and conversational partner is often regarded very highly. An informed consent form does not necessarily need to be signed. This is the case especially since participants are reluctant about the notion of signing written agreements. Interviews play a critical role in maintaining a good ethos throughout the research, which is situated in the idea of *processual consent* (forthcoming: see heading 2.9.1.1).   Although approval to participation or consent is often recorded in interview notes at some stage it is even more important to continually be in conversation with partners on what is acceptable to them. Reservations that may arise can continually be discussed. Participants hereby don't feel that they have committed themselves. Once for participation throughout the research irrespective of what might happen in their lives at a certain stage. This poses a threat to the research as participants may withdraw at any stage but it is also believed that the personal interest, empathy and so forth that the researcher conveys encourage commitment. Personal interviews validate participants' contribution and it is experienced that most often un-/semi-structured conversations are more enjoyable.

Beyond the scope of this research some might choose to conduct interviews for pragmatic reasons; the data may not feasibly be available in any other form. Others use interviewing as just one of several methods because it is felt that

interviews offer yet another dimension. In our case it is exactly the opposite in that other means of generating data are used but interviews remain principal to the development of the research. Some may also want to use interviews with other methods as a type of methodological triangulation too see if and how far the one method corroborates the other. (Mason 1996:42)

2.7.1.3   Skills required for qualitative interviewing

There are important social, intellectual and indeed practical elements to interviewing wherein the researcher should be adept. The following lengthy excerpt is taken from Mason since it is a well-rounded and relevant description of the elements involved in interviewing:

> At any one time you may be: listening to what the interviewee(s) is or are currently saying and trying to interpret what they mean; trying to work out whether what they are saying has any bearing on 'what you really want to know'; trying to think in new and creative ways about 'what you really want to know'; trying to pick up on any changes in your interviewees' demeanour and interpret these, for example you may notice they are becoming reticent for reasons which you do not understand or if there is more than one interviewee there may be some tension developing between them; reflecting on something they said 20 minutes ago; formulating an appropriate response to what they are currently saying; formulating the next question which might involve shifting the interview onto new terrain; keeping an eye on your watch and making decisions about depth and breadth given your time limits. At the same time you will be observing what is going on around the interview; you may be making notes or, if you are audio or video tape recording the interview, keeping half an eye on your equipment to ensure that it is working; and you may be dealing with 'distractions' like a wasp which you think is about to sting you, a pet dog which is scratching itself loudly directly in front of your tape

recorder microphone, a telephone which keeps ringing, a child crying, and so on.

(Mason 1996:45)

2.7.2 Means of deriving data

These following short paragraphs, a postscript to Research Data merely wishes to acknowledge that there are different means of deriving data and to reiterate the position of this research. Considering means of deriving 'data': Mason (1996:54) suggests that 'data' from sources such as interviews could be derived in a literal, interpretive or reflexive sense. She poses that one might in practise involve all three approaches. I am in accord with her in saying further that it is important to realise what kind of balance between them one is hoping to achieve (Mason 1996:54). The determining factors in concluding that one needs to emphasize one more than others are determined by intellectual and practical terms.

Throughout, Mason (1996) alludes to how one's ontological and empirical stance should inform decisions. She does not do this here again (1996:55). In our research, these considerations play a significant role and I would like to assert that beyond her mention of practical and intellectual considerations one should account for the empirical and ontological fit to one's decisions. Narrative social constructionist research should derive data through primarily a reflexive and interpretive approach and not so much in a literal sense. In fact it is the view of this researcher, grounded in the paradigm as stipulated in chapter one that no reality is something other than interpreted reality. This is true even in the instance where a researcher might position himself within a literal understanding of deriving data, for example, when s/he uses audio recordings if the interest lies in the way in which people articulate their ideas and not just in the substance of what they say.

Despite what is said above this research uses literal understandings but not in the sense that we want to use it objectively; rather it is part of the conversational process, realising that these understandings are at once incognisantly interpreted (but also sometimes wilfully interpreted). These understandings are then consciously verified and thickened throughout using a reflexive process.

2.8   Co-authoring voices and criteria for involvement

In this dissertation, there are co-authors/ co-researchers, inextricably bound up with what is being said and where we want to go.[77] Participants have been co-authoring by means of the process of unstructured, semi structured, and reflective interviewing (Rubin & Rubin 1995:5).[78] From interviews, other means of involvement emerged (forthcoming: chapter three).

Based on various levels of involvement different groups can be distinguished. That which constitutes primary conversational partners [79] is determined by full time participation throughout the duration of the research. It is here that the lived world and experiences of an organisation or individual crosses conversations pertaining to the arts. Then there is also members of scientific communities chosen for there field of interest and expertise. [80]   Secondary conversations are determined by ad-hoc discussions.[81] Criteria for a useful secondary conversation, as with the primary groups, maintain that it should at least be well documented and form part of a reflexive process involving the primary participants. The secondary conversations consist of documented discussions. Some elements of what Strydom and Venter (2002:207; Neuman 1997:206) therefore call purposive sampling are related to our research in

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[77] Take note that most interviews were conducted in Afrikaans and as such some important comments will be presented in conversation partners' own words and language.

[78] This type of conversation calls for the research process to be embedded in flexible, iterative, and continuous design (Rubin & Rubin 1995:43). See Rubin & Rubin (1995:7) for a discussion on 'interviews as conversations'.

[79] This term connotes the link between interviewing and conversation with the active role on the interviewee in shaping discussion predominantly deciding what issues are to be explored (Rubin & Rubin 1995:10-11).

[80] Danie du Toit is a Dutch Reformed minister but is renowned for his views on art. Professor Hagemann of the drama faculty at the University of Pretoria has a special interest in story.

[81] Snowball sampling (Strydom & Delport 2002:336) is relevant to my concept of secondary conversations in that at specific points during the research I was lead to consider interviews other than those with the primary scientific community. Neuman (1997:207) also calls this network chain referral.

that all the participants were purposefully chosen in aid of a rich description of our theme.

These voices will be witnesses to their experience about the arts. In respect of being witnesses, Doctorow (cited in Hobbs 1998:68) writes: "I think the ultimate responsibility of the writer… is to the idea of witness: This is what I see, this is what I feel, and this is the way I think things are. Writers have the responsibility not to corrupt that point of view and not to be fearful of it, not to self censor it."

Social constructionist research does not aim to be objective but embraces subjectivity as part of an honest and transparent process. I will use the co-researchers primarily as a reflection team. They are always allowed to critically reflect on what I say we have been saying. I will do this in humility letting them guide me in to the different currents of their stories. In this sense, I know that. I cannot be un-influential, but make a conscious effort at being de-cantered with regard to the content of their stories.

To sum up the minimal criteria that informed this research process:
i.   As this study is a pastoral and practical theological endeavour it should be grounded in the faith community wherein I live.
ii.   Participants should be comfortable with the reflexive process and ethical considerations that would aid internal validity.
iii. Primary participants should be readily available over the period of the study.
iv.   There must be an ongoing interest in the arts, whether this is formal or informal does not matter.
v.   They must reveal an affinity towards the chosen theme since data does not necessarily exist but in some instances would be jointly generated.

Within the great and vast community of science and research, especially referring to natural sciences, the word criteria it seems have become a revered word. To such extent legitimacy have been given by scientific discourse that if

certain objective *criteria* are not met, statistics would not be reliable and therefore not valid, generalisations (often being the aim of research, Neuman 1997:20) could consequently not be made. Certainly questions and debates has been going on for a while regarding whether the human so called sciences could indeed follow similar notions of criteria leading to objectively verifying truth claims. This pertains to academic positioning of which I have written extensively in chapter one. I do however mention this yet again since I would like to reflect on a more practical level on why certain that will be introduced just now are part of this study. This question of why some while not others clearly touches on the notion of sampling and criteria for efficient sampling.

Customarily sampling relates to statistical theory and is used extensively in many other enterprises beyond social research such as accounting, astronomy, chemistry, manufacturing, and zoology (Neuman 1997:201). In Social research, sampling is used predominantly in survey research, content analysis, and nonreactive research (Neuman 1997:201). It is used as a means of making the research more manageable and cost effective than it would otherwise have been working with large groups. A distinction is made between samples that are based on the principles of randomness from probability theory and those that are not. Noticeably Neuman (1997) makes a case for the superiority of probability sampling over against nonprobability sampling. The following table is adapted from Neuman 1997:205 for illustrative purposes as an aid to our discussion.

Nonprobability	Probability
A1. Haphazard: Select anyone who is convenient. A2. Quota: Select anyone in predetermined groups. A3. Purposive: Select anyone in a hard-to-find target population. A4. Snowball: Select people connected to one another	B1. Simple: Select people based on a true random procedure. B2. Systematic: Select every kth person (quasi-random). B3. Stratified: Randomly select people in predetermined groups. B4. Cluster: Take multistage random samples in each of several levels.

Table 2-1 Nonprobability & Probability sampling

To reiterate: It is not the proper place to explore all the aforementioned sampling methods in this document but rather to reflect on those that illuminate the choices I as the primary researcher has made on a practical level.

Neuman (1997:206) asserts that serious quantitative researchers will avoid A1-2, while on the other hand purposive sampling (A3) is an acceptable kind of sampling in special situations; explorative research is especially noted in this regard. In as far as, we refer to acceptable approaches to sampling in research this research is also situated in purposive sampling and in addition, snowball sampling often used by social researchers interested in an interconnected network of people or organizations (Neuman 1997:207).

In an attempt to align the concepts ontology and epistemology (chapter one) with a discussion on criteria and sampling, I elaborate on what I refer to as an environmental approach. This approach deliberately stays away from probability notions and sampling methods since the notion of statistics and probability is not congruent with narrative practise that wants to enquire about localised knowledge and are doubtful about the applicability of generalised outcomes.

2.8.1 Criteria, an environmental view

Informed by a social constructionist epistemology and a specific narrative paradigm I refer to criteria from an environmental view. In what I here dub as an environmental view the word *process* criteria becomes more important than objective criteria (forthcoming: on facilitation, chapter three). The word criteria in this sense become an embodied concept:

i.   Criteria are embodied by the primary researcher, what his or her initial thoughts are on where s/he wants the research to go; thus referring to the intended aim of the research. This is obviously informed by some personal story of what is important to the researcher.

ii.   Criteria are also informed by the environment of the primary researcher, this could be geographical, but it could also be demographical.

iii. Criteria are furthermore informed by the resources available to the primary researcher.

iv.   Criteria for a useful study are furthermore embodied by the personhood of the researcher him-/herself. To what degree is the primary researcher comfortable with those that could be selected for a research team? For example, should s/he or she try to get highly knowledgeable professor x on the research team or should s/he rather take doctor y if the primary researcher will be able to form a more significant relationship with the latter.

Ultimately the question to be answered in favour of the verdict whether research within this paradigm is valid or not is a much more local and personal question. Is the primary researcher truthful and transparent and are there at least some set minimal criteria within a certain chosen paradigm.

These questions are raised given the enormity this study would take on if it were to at once conduct an exhaustive study within all under mentioned tracks of the arts. Because of the arts encompassing five big tracks (dance, drama, music, multimedia, and visual or fine art) this research project cannot conduct an in-depth study on all five tracks. For this reason, I would like to reaffirm the personal aim of the research project that of conducting an *explorative* study concerning the interaction between the arts and narrative practises.

Naturally, one would hope the word explorative is not the word that every second researcher tosses around if s/he lacks the ability to purposefully confine a research topic. However, the criteria in this regard would entail that the field of interest is indeed somewhat of a barren field, meaning where little generally significant inquiry has been made. The case for this explorative study could also be made in light of narrative research being *local research,* meaning we are not

dealing with the arts globally, universally but within certain communities or even specific individuals.   In addition, the notion of an overarching cumulative description such as the arts, thereby referring to its many divisions, is a socially constructed reality. As the primary researcher, I acknowledge the social reality that has been formed by artists from various skills that there is indeed such a cumulative way of referring to various skills and that these skills or competencies are certainly related in some way.

So then, borrowing from, and economical metaphor, what does this mean in hard cash? The challenges therefore lies not in necessarily choosing the correct people according to preaproved scientific criteria, but rather choose those people, organisations etcetera that meet the criteria for an honest research process to develop. The criteria for the process involve facilitating enough contact between the arts and the people chosen. The minimal general criteria would be that chosen people depending on the function they have in the research process should have some interest in some form of the arts and be committed to a journey involving the arts relating to a specific topic. The approach taken for this is an organic approach wherein space is created, for whatever form of arts to surface in the researcher/ conversational partner relationship.

Part of creating space, in this instance, had to do with selling the idea behind this research project within my sphere of influence, as ministry leader for the arts. Consequential to this I had the idea behind this research, along with an open invitation to join the research, advertised for a prolonged period in the weekly church bulletin. This leads to people becoming involved through feedback mechanisms around what the arts ministry is busy doing.

Outside the borders of the church ministry, I sourced for a scientific community from various arts tracks to sojourn with the research. In an environmental approach to criteria sourcing means that people for the scientific community are

considered if there, work or names relate to the multiple stories of those already involved in the research. Smythe and Murray aver that narrative research is often done in a naturalistic setting over and extended period through interviews as main 'data collection' device (Smythe & Murray 2000:314). Although, note that in some instances knowledgeable people cannot manage to join such a lengthy research process. Effort was then made to at least informally acquire feedback for relevant research themes on an ad-hoc basis doing semi-structured qualitative interviews. Needing to hear these voices were still important although ongoing participation could not be secured since

In a moments time I will introduce those people that influenced this research as co-participants and co-authors. I will also, from an environmental approach to criteria reflect there on how they had gotten involved in the research.

2.9   Ethics and accountability

One can appreciate the emphasis that Mason (1996:55-85) places on ongoing ethical considerations (Mason 1996:55). This encompasses more than the usual themes in thinking about ethics such as physical harm, psychological abuse, stress, or loss of self-esteem, legal harm, discrimination, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and so forth. Most of these will consequently be addressed. These aforementioned ongoing ethical considerations as Mason 1996:55) puts it, is in my view constitutive of the term what I refer to as processual consent. In this one finds a deconstruction of the idea that informed consent is an agreement that is to be signed once[82] prior to the initiation of the research and, that this constitutes the totality of ethical considerations.[83] Hence, ethics also has to do

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[82] In my masters dissertation (Pienaar 2002) there is an indication that Christian young people might all the more start seeing the notion of marriage and sex not as certain once-off incidences but that marriage is first and foremost a relationship and that sex is situated in the idea that we are sexual beings; that sex amounts to more that coitus. This underscores the idea that informed consent is not a once of act of will, it certainly may include this but the focus is replaced with the idea of continual confirmation of participation in the relationship, or in research for that matter.

[83] Neuman (1997:444) reminds us of scientific misconduct as unethical, such as research fraud and plagiarism. The best illustration of research fraud is possibly the scandal of Sir Cyril Burt, which is said to be the father of British educational psychology: "Burt died in 1971 as an esteemed researcher who was famous for his studies with twins that showed a genetic basis of intelligence. In 1976, it was discovered that

with the small ethical judgements that have to be made on the spot. What the researcher foresees as possible ethical scenarios should be thought about. It is impossible to think of all the scenarios but an ethically principled approach will aid on the spot decisions.

The scenarios that are foreseen, for the most part are determined by the subject or action field in question as well as the means of 'data' collection. In our case, considering people's experiences relating to the arts, there are no anticipated complex ethical scenarios: This research does not inquire about traumas, tragedies, mistakes, illegal activities and so forth. In some instances, this does not suggest that tragedies for example will not inform participants' experience around the arts. If it were to form part of the research it is of secondary inquiry and relates more to the under mentioned.

2.9.1 Ethical considerations in interviewing

Now turning to ethical considerations relating to means of 'data' collection (principally being interviews) the following taken from Mason (1996:56) were helpful guidelines:

- How you ask

The emphasis is placed on co-constructive story telling. There are no trick questions or attempts to doggedly pursue a particular issue. Questions are also not asked wilfully in a blunt way to check reactions and so forth.

- What you 'let' your interviewees tell you

This relates to the conflict of interest questions which is already asserted to in chapter one. Suffice to elaborate and make the following appropriately chapter

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he had falsified data and the names of coauthors. Unfortunately, the scientific community had been misled for nearly 30 years" (Neuman 1997:444).

two remarks. What I 'let' my interviewees tell me is an important consideration in my research: That which determines what they tell me is related to the concept of relational selves (Gergen 1999:115-141). Being a minister they tell me x, while as a ministry leader they might tell me 'y' and so forth. In general, I am a researcher, I am a pastor/minister, I am head of the arts ministry, I am an entrepreneur, I am a therapist, and a friend. I am not all of these to all participants but I am at least a couple of them to some. In the latter instance, the roles that I fulfil are not necessarily always chosen and definitely not advocated, other than my role as researcher that is.

Ethically speaking I do hear things that I judge to be personal and highly confidential to participants even if they do not tell me that it is. Unless for some purposeful reason participants think something personal should be taken up in the research, criteria for its inclusion will be discussed. However, this has not been the case. Hence, these descriptions of personal events will never be referred to in written or spoken format in conversation with other participants. They are also not taken up in provisional notes.

▪ Whether and how you can guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of interviewees

Confidentiality and anonymity are discussed at first meetings with participants. Participants are specifically reminded that everything is generally considered confidential. Outside the context of the research, I will not blurt out personal information and content of conversations. Participants understand that other participants will from time to time reflect and share their own experiences. This has not been mentioned under research design but participants in this regard form a type of *outsider witness* group.[84]

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[84] See in this regard White 2000:71-85.

Specific confidentiality matters also apply. I regard this as information that participants perceive as confidential or personal and indeed relate to the research. They might share this information with me in my capacity as the primary researcher. They could do so with the agreement that the information is not be taken up exactly as it is shared, neither in the final document nor transcripts, nor definitely not with reference to them.

- The power relations of the interview interaction

Mason (1996:56) asserts that it is generally assumed that the interviewer exercises power over the interviewee in and after the interview, for example in setting the agenda and in controlling the data. In this context she says that the researcher clearly have certain responsibilities to those interviewees. This resounds true even in interviewing very powerful people in which case the primary researcher might think that ethics do not count. Since Mason (1996:56) speaks generally, I agree generally. However, from an ethical, empirical, and ontological fit with narrative research the researcher takes on a decentred, though unavoidably influential role. Given that Mason (1996:56) uses the description of *power* relations one could fittingly say that narrative research aims to restore the inequality of power in the interviewing relationship.

This does not ensure that the narrative researcher needs to concern her-/ him with this issue since s/he ultimately carries the responsibility for the research. In addition s/he initiates conversations and do have to control through interpretation of experiences, although it is conclusions or interpretations subject to the scrutiny of the participants.

2.9.1.1   Informed consent

Despite the apparent straightforward procedure of gaining informed consent in qualitative interviews, [85] Mason (1996:57) proposes the consideration of the

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[85] Participants are clearly identifiable and can be asked face to face before interviews (Mason 1996:57).

following two issues: Whose consent to ask and, how to be sure that the consent you have gained is actually informed consent.   Pertaining to the latter the question is also raised as to what *informed* consent practically entails. Does this include the following?

- With regard to participation in the interview: Are participants consenting to answer anything I might ask? Are they given the opportunity to withdraw their consent at any stage?   Is consent negotiated at various stages of the research as participants become more fully aware of what consent in fact implies.
- The use of data: Giving the researcher the right to use the data generated through the interview in ways, which s/he sees fit? Do they understand my perspective on what counts as data for example drawing on more than the spoken words: intonation, body language, pauses, and so forth.
- The interpretation of data: For instance depending on the type of research, analysis, and comparisons to be made in connection with other interactions. Again, this is dependent on epistemological and ontological views which participants might not understand the complexity of in full.
- Post-research use: Do I have the right to publish or reproduce the stories (data) and its accompanied interpretations or analysis.

I share Mason's (1996:58) opinion saying that in her view there are limits to how adequately one can inform all interviewees about all these aspect. Questions relating to this ask? What should one tell interviewees in informing them? How much can and should one tell?   At what level of detail, complexity, and sophistication does one engage in discussion with participants? At what point in the interaction does one engage in conversation about these issues? Participants may not be very interested in the detail and are not minded about "…academic skills and conventions which are needed to understand issues about what counts as data, what principles of analysis will be used and so on"

(Mason 1996:58). At the onset of the research journey, the primary researcher might not her-/himself knows the answers to all of the above considerations.

This subsequent paragraph explains and underscores what has been said abovementioned. In view of the fact that informed consent does not equal, agreeing to be interviewed (Mason 1996:58) this author is situated in the notion of processual consent: Participants are fully informed about the process of research what it's implications are inclusive of how 'data' is used. This is not recounted for in the form of an official consent form that participants need to sign. Rather, this discussion and participants' remarks are transcribed. Participants are assured of their voluntary participation and are reminded and invited to withdraw at any stage of the research for whatever reason and with no consequence or penalty to them or the organisation they might represent. If this should happen this involves a discussion on whether, and how information may be used that has thus far contributed to the research. Confidentiality and anonymity are discussed prior to the research and put into place according to the above-mentioned discussion. That which in the end is accounted for in the final research document is presented to the participants for approval prior to publication. All the participants are also provided with an electronic account of the dissertation after publication.

Section B

2.10 Once upon a time…

The phrase *once upon a time* has become a textural or auditory marker for realising that what follows is a story. It is a given in the makings of a narrative that no good story can do without characters. These characters, depending on the genre, fables, myth etcetera need not be human. Whatever form these characters take, they always portray some human quality and primary to these qualities entails having a voice. This does not mean characters need to talk. The business of talking, is not something that one dissociates oneself from easily

but is indeed in the spirit of this document is situated in a discourse that benefits those that are eloquent.

Having a voice, apart from the implied physical qualities entail standing for something. All the co-participants serve to function as co-authoring voices, which in relation to the arts stand for something. Thus, before I introduce them I wish to underline the importance of co-authoring voices by aligning myself with writer James Kelman (cited in Hobbs 1998:71): "I feel the business of finding a voice is something that should be examined more. For me the thing is to find thee voice of your community, of your culture."

When Mason (1996:37) therefore refers to data sources, it is acknowledged that some researchers (as do this one) would see all of the possible data sources in Mason's list as being essentially to do with people. To merely illustrate the diversity of possibilities I refer to a few data sources from her list: speech, texts, art or cultural products, visual images, publications, archives, policies, narratives and more.   It is this writer's view that none of the above could be separated from human social interaction that is resulting from our human interconnectedness.   When Mason (1996:37) suggests that some researchers see the individual references on the list as data sources and others see people as data sources narratively speaking a critical refinement should be made: It is the view of the narrative researcher that all things, photos, documents etcetera is embedded in the framework of narrative or story. Whether or not a researcher uses photographs (as an example), the weight of the inquiry will fall on the *narrative* about the photograph in relation to the person who is saying something about it.   Inquiring only about photographic content will not be sufficient. One should also inquire about how the person relates to the photograph, why it is interpreted in a certain manner.

What this argument suggests is that we cannot really *only* speak about photographs as data, neither can we refer to people or participants as data: That which constitutes data in narrative research has to do with that which happens between the photograph

and the person. What happens between them *always* consist of being embedded in a narrative framework. The primary data for our study is neither the arts nor participants as such but the contributions or realities that are constructed through the narratives that co-authors generate. It is therefore entirely incorrect in viewing data as being collected. Data is mostly being generated since qualitative researchers dispose of the idea of the researcher as a completely neutral collector of information about the social world. Despite the fact that Mason (1996:36) comments on qualitative research in general, a remarkably constructionist notion is woven into the argument: "[T]he researcher is seen as actively constructing knowledge about that world according to certain principles and using certain methods derived from their epistemological position." The construction of data is what happens. However I would like to make a refinement to Mason's statement (1996:36) suggesting that we rather speak of co-constructing, or socially constructing knowledge, realities, and data etcetera.

2.11 *Sojourners/ co-researchers*

It is been stated strongly that narrative practise turns its focus to minute details of stories, instead of focussing on generalizations. Müller and Schoeman (2004:11) speak of the *small story* over against dominant stories. This is primarily an ethical consideration. The objectivist-approach to science is often abusive towards minorities and the marginalized. Those without power are silenced because of the interests of the powerful as it is represented the discourses in society. It is through the narrative-approach that these voices and stories can be heard (Müller & Schoeman 2004:7-14).

A few cursory remarks to what follows and some more criteria for involvement:

i. Participants that are involved in the arts were naturally chosen because of already being part of the arts community. In addition, they were chosen especially since they are part of the congregation (thus relating to the criteria of being a pastoral study).

   ii.   I will only state participant's principal involvement in this study. Elaborations will follow in forthcoming chapters.

  iii.   I will only state where I chiefly refer to them in this document. This is most often chapter three.

  iv.   Some had affected the research more than others had. I will not make a distinction here. However, turning to chapter three and glancing at the names will reveal those that were most formative to this study.

   v.   Most of these references help me to reflect on my own Reformed Protestant theological tradition.

  vi.   Most of these references situate this study in the local context of a congregation and community.

 vii.   The preference for these specific, where it is the case, *individual* participants has to do with valuing the non-expert opinion while bringing them in conversation with so-called expert opinion. In the case of the latter professor, Hagemann might be viewed as being part of a scientific community. Within this community, people do have tremendous experience in their fields of interest.

viii.   I realise that the reader may find that I don't say enough about these participants. Remember these are only introductory remarks. I merely want the reader to acknowledge their input in this study as part of the method explained in this chapter. Additional information will follow there where their voices come into being.

2.11.1   Jo Viljoen

Dr. Jo Viljoen is a narrative therapist that forms part of the scientific community of this research.

My intention with having another narrative therapist (other than myself that is) involved is situated in wanting to be accountable to practical narrative approach principles. Oh and how I was held accountable! (See Addendum M that is an example of Dr. Jo's reflections.) Thus, having her on the team should say that I

was not contend only with narrative *academic* situatedness (the PhD focus group, professor Müller and other mentors in the narrative approach) was not enough. It was important to me that someone likes Jo that is situated in the community and is in daily practise busy with narrative therapeutic concerns from part of this study.

She is also co-responsible for the teaching of people that enrol at the narrative counsellor's course in our congregation. Her situatedness not only in the community but also in the congregational community is viewed as beneficial to this study.

For these reasons of being situated in the community and the congregation, I approached her in my capacity as head of the Creative Arts Ministry (CAM). My aim was to build a feedback mechanism through her. From time to time, she would inform me about what people say or experience with regard to the CAM productions.

Her creative approach to therapy aids this study in a way that other therapists might not have. Her counselling space is filled with collages, journey drawings, conceptual art pieces made by therapeutic participants and so forth.

I do did view her involvement as ongoing throughout the research. At times, I would informally reflect on the research and she was always willing to help where she could. Her voice is therefore heard in reflections on reflection letters I write and through feedback from individuals in the community.

2.11.2   Pastoral community

In referring to the pastoral community, I allude to the influence of my colleagues in the congregation. I am part of a diverse team of ministers whom I see regularly. A study such as this one is not done in a year and as time passes encouragement comes. More important than encouragement is the things that

they refer me that relate to the research. I welcome there input since they share the tradition that unquestionably influences this research. I have indicated in my theme that this is a pastoral perspective and in part therefore, I see the pastoral community exerting an important influence in a direct or implicit manner.

Jo, abovementioned was also the facilitator of a reflexive process amongst this pastoral community in the congregation. For some time all, the ministers in the congregation would come together once every two weeks for reflection on various themes. These experiences were loosely structured and specifically narratively informed since we have in the ministerial team a strong narrative contingent. We could have conversations about anything relating to being a minister having to interact with people. In addition, involved in the process, enriching our discussions were narrative scholars not from South Africa inclusive someone from the Jewish community. I am not at liberty to share these names as they have a specific connection to Jo and specific clearance were not acquired with regard to their reflections.

I gained clearance from Jo and my colleagues that I may use our reflections in aid of this research. I viewed this process as a way of being transparent about my research experiences and staying accountable to the community, to narrative ideas and to my colleagues. I considered this research open to local influence of my personal context by this mechanism. Only rarely will explicit contributions stemming from the pastoral community process heard. Yet I do not regard its existence and worth to this study as trivial.

The influence of the pastoral community is also found in reflections on a book that we had contemplated for this purpose, that of Griffith and Griffith (2002), *Encountering the sacred in Psychotherapy; How to Talk with People about Their Spiritual Lives.*

For this process to form part of the research as I had wanted it to, setting it apart from informal discussion, I had to at least write up notes and file emails as received from colleagues and from across the borders of South Africa. See Addendum L, for an example of notes taken in such a meeting. These notes portray colleague's reflections on our own comments and on emails received abroad. They were compiled by Jo and circulated via email.

2.11.3   Berna

Berna is part of the CAM community that seeks to enrich congregational members' experience of God. It is as part of this community that her remarks are important. She is especially involved in décor and creating atmosphere with candles sheets and so forth (See Media 3 on décor ministry).

One of the reasons why Berna is also valuable to this research is that she is a narrative counsellor. She presents the youth counselling course, which is informed by narrative principles.

Her voice will be heard in the contributions of the CAM community, general research reflections, and décor that has been produced and reflected on. Sometimes comments will specifically be linked to her.

2.11.4   Marinus Loots

Marinus heads the multimedia current in the creative arts ministry. He is part of this study on two levels: as creative arts ministry member and in his personal capacity. Together we have and are busy discovering insightful ways in which multimedia could be used in the faith community but also on a personal therapeutic level.

During the research, we started a multimedia/ video company, which is building steadily and is now known as *eminent productions*.   I see the birth of this company as directly related to questions asked in this research.

His voice is being heard especially in chapter three relating to his personal interpretations and life story. Naturally his voice (as part of *eminent productions*) is also heard on the accompanying multimedia disc where fulfilled the role of the technical director.

2.11.5   Bianca Pretorius

Bianca had long been part of the creative arts ministry where she edited the weekly digital bulletin. Besides being part of this study as creative arts ministry / community member, she asked on her own accord to take part in the research after having listened to a multimedia (audio) production of one of the other participants.   This person was Christo and the audio production related to suicide. There was a resonancy in Bianca's life with the content of this audio production that moved her to approach me.

Her voice is noticed in chapter three in relation to amongst other things digital photography.

2.11.6   Talitha Broos

Talitha heads the drama department in the creative arts ministry and is as such part of this research. Her voice is also heard in chapter three in the creative arts ministry reflection discussions. Unlike above mentioned Marinus and Bianca (and others that follow) she did not take part on an individual level.

2.11.7   Hannetjie Straus

Hannetjie is one of the key counsellors in the congregation and in this respect underwent narrative training. She was approached by me because of having to do with narrativity and arts.

She strikes me as particularly creatively artistic in her work with young people that suffer drug addictions. She is not a creative arts community member yet her

voice will also be heard in chapter three along with the creative arts community reflections.

2.11.8   Suzette van Tonder

Suzette is another more experienced counsellor in the congregation. Suzette as for the same reason with Hannetjie en Berna was chosen for her exposure to the narrative metaphor. In this regard, I remember, and it was strange to me that I should meet someone from the congregation at a conference of Michael White.[86]

Suzette is not in an ongoing manner part of the creative arts community. At times, she had attended our meetings and her voice is heard in chapter three in some reflecting conversations and the media montage.

2.11.9   Fransien Schoeman

Fransien is currently a student at Pretoria university, but for our purposes a gifted musician (she plays the flute). She heads the youth praise and worship team. This youth music ministry is a shared endeavour of the youth and the creative arts ministry. As part of the creative arts community, her voice will be heard in reflecting conversations.

2.11.10   Moré Niehaus

Moré although not initially part of the creative arts ministry is now a member thereof, to a greater extend because of our research partnership.

We met during an unfortunate time in her life, of ending her betrothal amongst other reasons since her fiancé affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. Her expectations of the future grew dim upon realising that difficult choices await them with regard to religious upbringing etcetera.

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[86] Conference held by the Institute for Therapeutic Development: White 2003, *Narrative Therapy and trauma: the scaffolding of therapeutic conversations.* Pretoria, 11 & 12 August.

As I have to know her and her fiancé in this time of their lives I realised that given Moré's extraordinary, potential that seemed to be constitutive of her life she might contribute greatly to the research.

Her voice is heard in her individual capacity in chapter three but later also in affiliating with the creative arts ministry in reflecting conversations

2.11.11   Christo Möller

Christo is not a member of the creative arts ministry but revealed a particular interest in the arts. In this regard, he participated in the drama ministry of which Talitha heads (earlier mentioned). I wanted however to at least have someone on the research team that had not been significantly predisposed or been involved in the arts.

His primary participation is that of being individually involved in the research. Notably it was the audio presentation (above mentioned) that we had produced with his voice on that had moved Bianca to become part of this study.

2.11.12   Professor Hagemann's contributions

Ensuing conversations that I had with Henk from Learning Theatre and between professor and myself Müller moved me to stop by the Drama department. A friendly arty person answered that I should speak to the faculty head to find out with whom I can talk to with regard to this research study.

After explaining the motive behind the research to the faculty head, we discovered that the appropriate person would be himself. As I explained to Professor Hagemann in one reflection letter, it was as though we were talking the same language. I just briefly include part of the first reflection letter of our first conversation (2004/02/04).

Anew I realised that 'story does not belong to any one faculty.[87] Story is a friend to all who would dare to entrench themselves in its possibilities to enrich life experiences. Hereby meaning is socially constructed.

It seems that we have adopted a certain grammar, a way of speaking that shapes our reality (Lindbeck 1984 cited in Gerkin 1997:108; Gergen 1999:124).   We own a similar language using related linguistic constructions (Brown 1994:13).   We used terminology such as re-formulating, re-framing, deconstruction, stories not only belonging to an individual, relational selves and so forth.

That our paths have intersected filled me with delight and I always looked forward to our discussions.

I would like to acknowledge here that he said that his remarks were made in his personal capacity and from personal thoughts. Our conversations therefore do not in the first instance reflect the views of the drama department and doesn't have any bearing on the views of the university as such.

## 2.11.13	Congregational creative arts examples

See multimedia disc for illustrations of congregational productions and illustrations that I judge to have had a notably influence on the way I think about the arts in the congregational milieu.

See in this regard any of the media presentations from Media 1. to Media 4. Forthcoming I will reference more specifically where applicable.

## 2.11.14	Literary voices

See references

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[87] Meaning a tertiary academic faculty.

2.11.15   Mercédès Pavlicevic

Mercédès unknowingly provided the catalyst for the broadening of this research, from only music to all the arts. She is a distinguished lecturer in music therapy and head of that department at the University of Pretoria. I would have wanted to have her personally on the research team; alas, this was not possible. At time of our meeting, she was busy with on a project with notable music therapist Garry Ansdell.

However, our first meeting introduced and sensitised me to the very important consideration of music (or arts) as therapy versus music in therapy. I then went further to invite her academic scholarly presence along with that of Garry Ansdell.

I might have not referred to her here since she is also an academic literary voice; still consequent interpretations about music therapy are grounded in a specific moment in time and space. That which I have written about music, the academic voices I chose was informed by our meeting.

2.11.16   Henk du Plessis

Henk is part of our congregation, which was an important consideration on having him on the research team.   He was referred to me by one of my colleagues. The company of which Henk is part *Learning Theatre* is not situated in the life of the church. They work with large companies, notable banks and so more. Their involvement is specifically about the interface between narrative (as in exemplified in theatre) and organisational work. Since I wanted to explore the idea of talking about narrative *practise* in not just therapy, (also organisation, facilitation etcetera) I engaged in discussions with Henk and he became an ongoing research participant.

His voice will be heard in chapter three where I reflect on themes in our conversations and also the fieldwork I had conducted in their involvement with a

large South African bank. Henk's remarks were valuable to me in my process of differentiating between narrative as a tool or as identity.

As with professor Hagemann, the content of our discussions does not reveal in any way the opinions or beliefs of the company *Learning Theatre.*

2.11.17   CFN Facilitation

Upon being forwarded a message wherein I saw the content of the weeklong facilitation course I realised I have to attend. This workshop served the purpose of expanding the sphere of narrative practise. There seemed to be relevant similarities between the narrative stance of being not knowing, non-directive and therefore is in a sense facilitative. My involvement here helped me to reflect still further on the primary metaphor of story in narrative practise.

The content of CFN's (Church and Community Facilitation Network) contributions is situated in chapter three. The same as with Mercédès Pavlicevic, CFN will primarily be used academically (providing large part of the workshop material); however, I engaged in discussions on the theme of this PhD during the workshop with the presenters David Newby and Arnold Smit. In this sense, information is also founded in empirical contact.

2.11.17   PhD Focus group

The PhD focus group played a significant role in the contemplation of chapter one and two issues (that is mainly epistemological and methodological concerns). I use there remarks directly as opposed to only having been informed informally since it is important to me that I will through some medium embody the narrative values of reflexivity and transparency.

2.11.18   Voices from the interface between the arts and theology

I liaisoned with two artistically informed ministers that are also part of my theological community, that of the Dutch Reformed Church. The first then is Nic Grobler and thereafter Danie du Toit.

As the head of the creative arts ministry, I want to expose congregants sensibly to the arts so they may derive some multisensory benefit of it. For this reason, I invited both to our congregation.

Nic Grobler is an artist himself working with bronze (amongst others) as a medium. I incorporate illustrations of his work since it touches on the question whether there is something as Christian art, which proved to be an important consideration in the earlier stages of the research.

Danie du Toit is an acclaimed speaker pertaining to art. His voice his heard in chapter three under the heading and references to what I refer to as my *theological home*.

Our in-depth discussion was very insightful. On occasion, I also emailed him with reflection letters. Sadly, our time schedules did not run in unison and I could not, as I had wanted have him on the research team in an ongoing manner.

2.11.19   Arts and Reconciliation conference

I was advised by one of my colleagues that it may be a good idea to enrol for the international arts and reconciliation conference held at the University of Pretoria. This was said specifically in reference to my creative arts ministry involvement.

Looking at the themes, I realised that this would be of great benefit to my research. Hereby I gained exposure to considerations that I might have missed. Why this and not another conference: There are not many conferences such as this one that is accessible financially and otherwise. This conference theme also revealed that it was of particular interest to theology since the concept of reconciliation is shaded strongly with theology. More so, it was organised from within the faculty of theology. This does not imply however that only the voice of theology will be heard.

To the contrary, The notion of reconciliation was not so prevalent in the tracks and workshops that I had attended. Still, it was a good opportunity to hear voices from the world of the arts.

Why some tracks and not others. I chose to undertake the workshops that (1) related to emergent themes and practises in the study and (2) some of the arts that I said I wanted to hear from had not had the opportunity to speak. By way of example: I would not have met Gladys Agulhas that we hear from in chapter three had I not attended the dance track. Therefore, I needed a way to introduce some pivotal forms of the arts, in this case dance, without going to academic literary voices first. It is as professor Müller (2005/08/01) later noted at the Van Huyssteen lecture: Narrative practise cannot claim interdisciplinarity based on literary sources only. We cannot therefore say we know something about dance without having made an empirical connection.

2.11.20   Cape Town conference

What does it mean to be church in our contemporary time, or renew/ transform responsibly?   These were the considerations at the Cape Town conference. Different tracks, as with the arts and reconciliation conference, could be followed. Naturally, I saw this as an opportunity to gain more exposure to the arts.

For views expressed here to be part of the research and not just the result of a collegial excursion, I had to embed the conference in the reflective process of the research. For this reason I took elaborate notes, transcribed it along with my interpretations where after it was reflected on at various levels of the research and from different participants' perspectives.

Reference to the conference is made in chapter three. In fact, this is the first experience I reflect on in chapter three. For the reasons I give prominence to this experience please see that chapter three.

2.11.21   Leonard Sweet conference

Since I have attended relevant conferences and lectures of professor Sweet, I do not regard his contribution as exclusively an academic literary voice. I reiterate that I chose to incorporate professor Leonard Sweet's views for two reasons. The first concerns *a way of doing*: He represents a practical approach to what it means to be church in the postmodern era. Secondly, his voice is the voice that many churches regard as important in thinking about church in the postmodern era. His ideas have been constitutive also amongst our collegial team. Our collegial team had the privilege to listen to professor Sweet (2004/09/01-02) over a period of days while he was in South Africa s

Since he is not quoted primarily as an academic scholar (although he undoubtedly must be, being a theological professor and looking at the academic scholarly writers he cite) he is mainly referred to in chapter three reserved for notable participation in the study.