

## **Chapter 5, Do what you want but tell me a story**

“Although these methods [as encountered in arts therapies] may be unorthodox to some, people can encounter important self-data by approaching themselves from a new perspective or through a new medium” (Brooke 1996:3)

This self-data is from a narrative point of view always subjectively interpreted. Hanneltjie, a participant to the CAM community discussions and narrative counsellor, works at a drug rehabilitation centre. To her it is possible to make relatively accurate interpretations about the participants in her crafts classes. She is able to read their emotional state of well being since their work with painting and candles seems to be a reflection on their state of mind. They might for instance use darker colours in painting right next to each other and later Hanneltjie would find from the psychologist that recently something has gone wrong at that person’s home again. In the same manner, Hanneltjie says that most often brighter colours are a reflection of more content or happy moods. When they are occupied with Rasta colours, she knows that it is a strong possibility for having recently smoked dagga.

Hanneltjie shares the story of a boy who became discouraged in not getting the candle-making thing right. This changed however radically the moment he started taking his medicine and taking responsibility for his life. To everyone’s surprise, suddenly he made the most beautiful candles, until... He went home for a weekend and upon returning to the centre, it seemed his candle-making ability disappeared. Consequently, Hanneltjie immediately noticed in the art that something was wrong and it was then addressed. Although Hanneltjie takes liberty to interpret certain things, she always uses the arts to open communication. She says she would not however make diagnosis in the manner that psychologists or doctors might.

This type of accurate interpretations is a result of being around the people who often go there, getting to know them and the way new comers often react to the arts. So then, one finds an uncovering of the strategies of the drugs in peoples lives when journeying within a specific field of practise, such as drug rehabilitation. Better interpretations than others are linked to the activity of, and getting to know the landscape of the way in which drugs operate in people's lives. To sum up on interpretation, in Hanneltjie's words: One learns as you go along which interpretations are better than others are ("Mens leer later watter afleidings om te maak").

## **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, we will be focusing largely and more explicitly on the function<sup>150</sup> of the arts, concluding on what we have social constructionistically discovered through the eyes of our co-participants. References will be made back to applicable areas where we have been referring to the arts' function in the context it arose. Also, how this all relate to narrative practise, linking up with the core values of narrative practise in chapter one will be put forth extensively. After this chapter, undoubtedly not everything will have been said as we favour the currents of the arts that our co-researchers directed us in. However, everything regarding the lives and stories of the co-researchers will have been given a voice. Consideration will be given to practical ideas that will serve as guidelines for discussion in each new context.

To a large degree I feel the architectural maxim is relevant to all art forms it is true for all the arts; form follows function. Hence, this chapter is an exposé of the functions of the arts as explored in this research study.

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<sup>150</sup> Some scholars (ethnomusicologists) as referred to by Gregory (1997) does make distinctions where *uses* refer to the way in which music is employed in a society and *function* refer to emotional expression, aesthetic enjoyment, or entertainment. In referring to *function* in this study, please take note that various understandings are incorporated implicitly or explicitly such as the concepts of *uses* or *roles*.

## **5.2 Preface to arts in/ as debate**

Rookmaaker (1970:230) says that art needs no justification. Accordingly, the mistake of many art theorists he says, and not only of Christian ones, is to try to give art a meaning or sense by showing that it does something: So art must open people's eyes, or serve as decoration, or prophesy, or praise, or have a social function, or express a particular philosophy. However, art has its own meaning that does not need to be explained, just as marriage, or man himself, or the existence of a particular bird or flower or mountain or sea or star (Rookmaaker 1970:230).

He does not say hereby that art cannot at times teach, praise, prophesy, decorate, and help social relationships. "It does so, often, just as a bird can be useful, or even as the life of a particular human being can be fruitful and important. But it would be false to say that art is only good if it promotes Christianity...." (Rookmaaker 1970:230). He clarifies by saying further that art and singing can be used to promote worship – indeed, worship without good music is almost unthinkable – and art may be used in evangelism. But art does not need to be justified because it can be useful in this way. He cautions us however, in saying that if we are going to use art for these specifically Christian purposes – adorning a church, or attracting the unbeliever – then we must see that the art we use is really good. Cheap art to Rookmaaker (1970) means cheap worship or a cheap message (Rookmaaker 1970:230).

Rookmaaker (1970:232) contends that people who say that money is what matters most in life are not happy with money alone; they want to have the concrete reality that their money can buy. So it is also with art: In talking about art, we are not just discussing aesthetics in an abstract way. We are dealing with the fullness of the phenomenon in the whole of life, in which, even if beauty, the aesthetic, is very important, there are many other elements (Rookmaaker 1970:232). We find thus with Rookmaaker (1970) the importance of art in *relation* to surroundings. The aesthetic can never be realized in its fullness

without its relation to other elements. Conversely, other elements only get their artistic meaning because they are brought together in an artistic way (Rookmaaker 1970:232)

Art is therefore a complex structure, and as a complex structure, it exists in its realization in concrete works of a reality, a being, a meaning, composed of many elements. Even if it can exist without some of these elements, and sometimes does, Rookmaaker (1970:232) believes it is more often than not poorer without them.

### 5.2.1 Cautionary differentiation: arts *as*, or *in* therapy

It should be noted that according to dominant academic discourse in the arts literature I am supposedly busy with research pertaining to, *arts in therapy* (or research, history, education etcetera) as opposed to *arts as therapy*.<sup>151</sup> Of the arts literature I've obtained this argument has predominantly been informed from the profession of music therapy<sup>152</sup> but it is said to relate to all the arts therapies: "[I]n this approach [therapy in art as opposed to art in therapy, *own insertion*], the therapy is part of the music rather than the music part of the therapy. What may seem a subtle distinction has become nevertheless a perennial issue in the arts therapies in general: the relationship between the art form and theories of

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<sup>151</sup> However, one senses when reading Bunt (1997: chapter 13) that these categories of describing what music therapy is, is somewhat arbitrary; meaning they have not always been so clearly defined. As a result of this, countries differ in the emphasis they place on the musical versus psychological/ medical skills of the therapist (Bunt 1997:250). This results in an encompassing definition incorporating the various strands of music therapy. I propose that it is also true of any narrative therapy process using the arts: "Music therapy [arts in narrative therapy] is the use of sounds and music [a specific artistic endeavour] within an evolving relationship between child or adult and therapist to support and encourage physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being (Bunt 1997:251).

<sup>152</sup> However, Ansdell (2002:110-110) acknowledges radical changes in the profession of music therapy, theoretically and in practice. It is said that "It seems there have always been competing views concerning what 'music therapy' is, or ought to be – and, more pertinently, who should control such practices" (Ansdell 2002:112). He addresses the question as to what flag music therapy is currently sailing under. It is proposed that a great number of therapists are already sailing on a different ship though sailing under an old flag. During and following the European Congress of Music Therapy in Naples Ansdell (2002:111) states that people are now after a proposed period of stabilization of the discipline no longer sure whether they know *what Music Therapy is*. Alternatively, rather, whether the diversity of practices and theories they find themselves engaged in can comfortably come under the disciplinary umbrella of 'Music Therapy' any longer. The questioning of "...Music Therapy's identity in relatively abstract terms quickly filters down to the everyday dilemmas of a Music Therapist: What is my role? Where should I practice? What are my aims? What are my assumptions – about both music and people?" (Ansdell 2002:111).

therapy” (Ansdell 1995:14).<sup>153</sup> True to narrative ideas let me situate this discussion in my personal research experience. My first experience in meeting music therapist lecturer, Me. Pavlicevic paved way for this discussion. At the time of setting up the meeting with me. Pavlicevic I intended to do this thesis solely on the role of music in narrative therapy. However, I got the distinct feeling that day<sup>154</sup> that I am busy with a type of quasi music therapy if I am not busy with art, in this case specifically music, as therapy. I experienced a clash concerning identity of profession, a safeguard for the profession. I would however like to believe that I am also busy with arts as therapy and I will elaborate on this in the upcoming chapter after this present one. I say *also* as I don't think that one needs to choose one form over the other<sup>155</sup> as some do by referring to their work as either art therapy and others art psychotherapy.<sup>156</sup> However, in the resulting chapter I affirm that the subject matter relates more to art *in* therapy than art *as* therapy. Keep in mind though that we are talking about a very particular therapy, *narrative* therapy that according to my understanding is also situated quite firmly within the arts. I do however acknowledge with some of the CAM community especially Hanneljie and Fransien (2005/09/16), saying that to them there seems to not really be a significant difference. Whether there is a difference or not is to them not really helpful since interaction with participants requires both. The

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<sup>153</sup> Bunt (1997:258-264), refers to some useful effects of intervention of both *music as therapy* as well as *music in therapy*. This sometimes let me wonder if some disciplines are not just, like dog's fighting over an identity bone. Should anyone be scrutinized for using music, as music in therapy or therapy in music as was I? Academically... certainly! However, I do caution myself as a result of this. For whom is this distinction helpful? Maybe it is helpful to a protective academic enterprise figuring out it's place in the human sciences, it might not be helpful if this distinction blinds the particular helping profession (whether music- or narrative-/ therapy) to the potential in the alternative.

<sup>154</sup> Read personal reflection notes in addendum.

<sup>155</sup> This statement is made pertaining to Ansdell's proposal of continued reference to the musical content without the need for verbal elaboration (1995, referred to by Bunt 1997:256). You might recall that over emphasis on linguistic ability, also in narrative therapy, is part of the motivating reasons for this study. I have embossed this as a research gap but I do think that great benefit is derived from both viewpoints and depending on the therapeutic context, one route might be preferred above the other since both are in accord with social constructionist understandings of life.

<sup>156</sup> Obviously, a narrative practitioner/therapist will never refer to her/his practice as psychotherapy where the latter suggests reasoning from a worldview other than social constructionism. What this statement does say is that I'm of opinion that the narrative practitioner (as will be explained in the forthcoming chapter) is in reality busy with both art as therapy as well as art in therapy. I would presume that in some professions, especially psychotherapy there is a conflict in adopting a different ontological view other than that which gave rise to the profession. For instance, Griffith and Griffith (2002) position themselves in their title within the psychotherapy model but it is clear to me that the content of their work is in effect deconstructive of the traditional views of psychotherapy. In this regard I have used their input on the workings of *metaphor*, and the ways in which story is a grounding metaphor extensively in chapter one.

difference is insignificant for Hanneltjie since she is of opinion: “Kunste as terapie word kunste in terapie.” Accordingly, one might start off with the primary interaction being the arts, thus arts as having therapeutic value. Then as soon as one is in a position, where one talks about the experience it to her becomes arts in therapy. She explains further: “Wanneer iemand a bak maak is die maak daarvan kunste as terapie sodra iemand dan blomme in sit en daaroor praat raak dit kunste in terapie.” It also makes very much sense when Fransien sees the equation from the other side. Arts in therapy for Fransien evolves in arts as therapy: One might start off by talking about things but the moment one starts exploring drama for instance and the primary activity becomes the drama it becomes arts as therapy.

Let us accept for the moment the differentiation between arts in therapy versus arts as therapy. I ask this since it is necessary to linger a while on the latter, art as therapy, and how it relates to this study and chapter. In discussion with Marinus (2005/09/15) from the CAM community he notes that for him the distinction between the two is that arts as therapy presupposes the person as part of the art. Elna adds that in arts as therapy the participant has a strong voice. For Marinus arts in therapy connote the idea of professional artists' involvement in the therapeutic process. In that discussion (2005/09/15) in arts as therapy, the arts stand central to the purpose and the problem is worked through in relation to the artistic activity as being primary. In art in therapy, therapy is the central idea; the conversation is about the world or problem of the participant that is augmented with arts. For Talitha however any therapist, and not necessarily trained artists could call their work arts therapy if they work through the arts to a great extent. There is a point at which arts in therapy (although starting out as such) is not used as a tool anymore but used as a vehicle or medium of preferred interaction.

Ansdell (1995:16) states that many arts therapies have felt the need<sup>157</sup> to justify the work as 'therapy', doing so by inclusion into established therapeutic theory and procedure. Exactly at this point, as we will see in a moment the need for this study is promoted for Ansdell (1995:16) then follows by revealing that "...many of the arts therapies are based on a psychodynamic approach, involving both an explicit theory of human (psychological) disorder, and of the method of therapy. The danger here and I agree: Most therapies then use the arts as starting point for verbal processing; the art is seen in terms of how it can yield material for analytic reflection. In so doing, a person's experience of making music or painting "...becomes part of an explanation, rather than being allowed to represent itself in terms of its own unique qualities" (Ansdell 1995:16). It is interesting to note from Ansdell (2002:110): "I suggest a 'paradigm shift' may be currently underway in the discipline, with the over-arching model which leads, supports and validates practice turning to one best characterised as Community Music Therapy. This is a context-based and music-centred model which highlights the social and cultural factors influencing Music Therapy practise, theory, and research."

From the perspective of those arts therapists that advocate the idea of art as therapy, the unique qualities of the specific art form is foundational to their viewpoint. Garred (2002:35) writes: "What is unique in creative music therapy is the therapeutic use of the non-verbal medium of music. Taking the central role of music as a point of departure, on what grounds can it be justified as therapy?" Garred (2002:36-45) answers this question by referring to the following ideas:

### **5.2.2 The arts as therapy constituency – a musicological perspective**

I will here refer to Garred (2002) which considers a variety of notions that differentiates music as therapy from music in therapy. Where I do not agree I will say so, although. These are helpful in our search for what it might require to use the arts in narrative practise.

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<sup>157</sup> Wrongly so the impression is given.

*A philosophy of dialogue* – Garred (2002:36) loosely draws on the writings of Buber and in particular the idea of *I and Thou* (Buber 1970). According to this reference there are two ways of relating to the world, the first being an *I-Thou* relationship and the second, an *I-It* relationship. Garred (2002:37) then takes *I-You* to be synonymous with the *I-Thou* relationship from a grammatical viewpoint and *I-S/he* as opposed to *I-It*.

That which according to Garred's interpretation of Buber constitutes direct relating, is *presence*, which is in contrast with *object* (Garred 2002:37). In whatever Garred (2002:37) views as a therapeutic encounter (refer to the deconstruction of therapy) between the *I* and *You*, the relationship is one of mutuality, "...a mutuality of one recognizing, accepting, and affirming the other as an interactive partner. It is reciprocal, a relation of mutual influence" (Garred 2002:37).

This dialogical perspective is one that according to my reading of Garred (2002) is key to what differentiates music as therapy (*presence*) as disparate to music in therapy, where music is used as an *object* in the therapeutic encounter. In the case of the latter, which could also be pinned as *music as a means*, Garred (2002:38) upholds that humans are then used in an objectifying way, namely "...that which this means works upon." The reason why I do not agree is found in his very next assertion: "To use music in a purely technical way in itself actually entails... a treatment of people as if they were things [referring therefore to an *I-It* relationship; *own insertion*], which means defined and placed within a cause and effect chain." May this never be true in narrative practitioners' journey with people and indeed a cautionary remark! Yet, I doubt whether the arts could in true narrative practise be used in a, what Garred describes as a *technical* application (of music). Even if the arts is used in a *technical* fashion (arts as medium) as in some models of health and dentistry for instance, and to some does have worth, it is therefore not necessarily the biggest evil since the fall of



mankind. As a result, I feel that the potential of the arts are in effect downplayed by Garred's argument. Where I do agree is that this *application of mentality* is not very conducive to a transparent relationship between people.

*Intentionality* – According to this notion, in the field of music the issue is raised: “If you do not meet the music as *music*, you hardly can expect the beneficial ‘effects’ of it either” (Garred 2002:38). Garred explains as such:

You do not on the whole decide, for instance, to develop your social skills, and therefore join an orchestra, band, or choir. You join these, *and* receive such benefits. But if you do not put the music, first you will hardly gain the benefit that follows. This is not at all automatic.

Although I agree, the argument of intentionality and Garred's differentiating illustration is of a precarious nature. In my view, which I understand to be a social constructionist linguistic perspective the argument of intentionality has merit and holds; however the argument holds as long as the question “Who's intention?” is postponed. A therapeutic undertaking entails more than any one's intention. A myriad of voices and intentions might be heard, even more than the amount of people in therapy.<sup>158</sup> There is more than one person's intention in a therapeutic relationship. Who are we to judge that someone musically capable can't say “I'm going to join an orchestra and it is my intention to develop social skills” Likewise who can guarantee that any person that joins an orchestra even

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<sup>158</sup> Recall here Gergen's (1999) input in especially chapter one. Even thinking is a social activity involving multiple voices. Who's intention are we talking about; that of the voice of depression, the intention of an imaginary grand mother wanting her grand son to get better and so forth. Current dominant discourse dictates that research has a lot to do with my (the researcher's) independent thoughts and wonderful insights. To the contrary: Although I (the researcher) takes responsibility for the process and am academically accountable, the sum of the research is made up of many voices. Take for instance this remark in a first note relating to Ansdell's (2002:109) article *Community Music Therapy and The Winds of Change...* he adds this to the title ...*A Discussion Paper*. Then follows the first footnote: “I want to thank Rachel Verney, Mercédès Pavlicevic, Simon Procter, Stuart Wood, and Ken Aigen for conversations which have helped clarify some of the arguments in this article, and for reading various drafts.” I would still further suggest that there is a great deal of many other voices that also had a constructive input in this paper whether Ansdell is cognisant of these people or not. The same applies to this current research endeavour, acknowledging that it wants to be, but also that it is hoping to have been collaborative, open, co-constructive, and interactive. We have a good tradition of writers acknowledging the influences of other people on various levels of involvement, see for instance Weiser (1993: xxii) and almost every second book. How then can we claim authenticity in an objectively true manner?

with the intention of meeting the music as *music* will gain any socially significant relationships. See meaning is always co-constructed and thus from a narrative perspective. That person might have such a problem-saturated story that it is only in therapy that an alternative story might be constructed to which the orchestra involvement might or might not be beneficial.

*Cause and Effect* – Garred (2002:38) says that “[i]f one were to discover natural laws of physics for the effect of music, this necessarily would have to be based on a calculation of sound waves, measured in parameters as amplitude, frequency, and wave shape. But this may hardly count as the effects of music as *music*.” I agree with Garred in that the arts as therapy should be positioned along the lines of a dialogical and interpretive perspective as opposed to music as a means in for instance physical or biochemical scheme. (See Hagemann on Cause and effect). While I think that music (the arts), within narrative practise should not be done to someone I also think that the notion of cause and effect is true but needs redefinition. I would be comfortable saying that the arts cause *something*. The effects of the arts are therefore not clearly predefined but are somewhat indeterminate. One could bring these supposed effects in to conversation by asking: “What do you think are the effects of *Schumann* or *Vivaldi* or *Linken Park’s*<sup>159</sup> music in your life?” followed up by: “How does this relate to significant relationships in your life?” Weiser (1993:6) is of opinion that a person experiencing a problem in a given situation is not only “...part of that situation but also partial creator of its definitions and potential. Thus, the person cannot be expected to view the problem from an objective “outsider” position. Nor can the person’s therapist be expected to fully understand I from an outside position, looking in. Also, while effects my accompany causes, they do not, in reverse, define them.” If cause and effects in therapy and organisational life were to be objectively observed and treated, we would only be able to live our lives in chromatic scales and not symphonies: Consequentially white notes will be followed by black notes irrelevant of whether we move up or down our

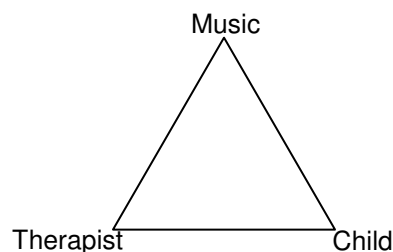
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<sup>159</sup> The first mentioned are classical music composers and the latter a contemporary alternative music band.

experiences. Only rarely in a one or two octave life will a white note be followed by another white note. This relates with Garred's next contention:

*The Encounter with Music not Predetermined* – "How the encounter with music turns out cannot in any case be *completely* predetermined.... Music as we encounter it in the moment, present and real are *immediate* in its effect." It seems, following Garred, that the arts create unique experiences. We can at best, as narrative practitioners take imaginative guesses based on prior experience but these will always be tentative and we should go about them in transparent fashion.

Garred's proposed interrelations in music therapy resonates with narrative therapy. Another kind of perspective is suggested than a linear causal one. As reciprocity is to be the basis in accounting for the dynamics and workings of music in music therapy, a triangle and not a unilateral arrowed line may be set up.



**Figure 4-4 the relationship between music, therapist, and client (Garred 2002:40)<sup>160</sup>**

Accordingly, in the first instance the relationship between the therapist and the child may be seen to be *mediated by the music*. Music therefore facilitates the communication between therapist and child. There is a mutual address and response *through* music. Secondly, the child's relation to the music is mediated by the therapist. The therapist has an active responsibility within the situation for how the client relates to the music. The therapist is seen to mediate how music

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<sup>160</sup> See Garred (2002:40-44) for an illustrative example.

may serve in the therapeutic process of the child. Thirdly, it is suggested that the child is passively/ indirectly involved in mediating the relation between music and therapist. This comes about because of the therapist's functional position of making music *for* the child. As the therapist is also engaged in making music, it is understood that the music making is informed by the child's needs.

It should be reasonably evident that narrative practise coming from a social constructionist worldview is leaps and bounds away from the worldview underpinning traditional psychoanalytic theory that is informative in most cases for the arts therapies, at least within the idea of arts *in* therapy. Therefore, even when I declare that in this chapter I am busy with so-called *art in therapy* we do so from a worldview I believe very similar to the practical intentions of arts specific therapies, referring to amongst other views, meaning as co-constructed, emphasis on process, viewing people as whole. Corroborating this remark, this quote from Ansdell (1995:19): "The arts therapies in general, and Creative Music Therapy in particular, prepare the conditions where a person's potential can be motivated to unfold in its own unique way..." and not according to specific therapeutic or medical desired outcomes. As said, people are viewed as whole beings which is in accordance with chapter one that stands in opposition to analytical models (Müller 1996:20): Accordingly in arts therapies as in, arts as therapy "...the person playing, dancing, painting himself can be seen and heard as a whole, something of quality rather than just quantity" (Ansdell 1995:20).

One last explorative remark before we pursue the functions of art in narrative practise as encountered in this study. For this, we turn to Bunt (1997:253) saying that many commentators feel that the effects of music therapy can best be evaluated if the technique draws on more established psychological and therapeutic models. Bunt (1997:253-258) then chiefly elaborates on four models, medical, psychoanalytic, behavioural and humanistic in the establishment of music therapy as a unique discipline. Why do I direct you as the reader's attention to this? In what follows, namely the *function of the arts*, it appears that

some remarks are situated within certain models, psychoanalytic, behavioural, humanistic, and so forth. When Bunt (1997:255) therefore refers to a tambourine as at first being a prolongation of a child's body this statement draws on what he understands as psychoanalytical theory. I hope that given all that has been said especially in chapter one it is clear that this chapter does not take any model over that of a social constructionist view. I try to remain congruent to this perspective. Any statement therefore on the possible use of the arts in narrative practise is subject to the new context in which it might be used. Otherwise stated it should be true to that future local story, the co-constructed relationship in which it is to be used. These statements should not be seen as ultimately true from a certain paradigm such as psychoanalysis, behaviourist theory, and so forth.

If these functions of the arts are truly the arts' function, it is so to the extent that the narrative researcher has accepted the preferred realities and ways of speaking of co-research participants. This chapter wishes to be truthful to participant's experiences and descriptions, as music therapist Brown (2002:84) states that there should be a need not to only understand and explore our own worldviews but also that of the people whom we are involved with therapeutically and otherwise.

### ***5.3 Possible functions and considerations of the arts***

#### **5.3.1 Art as a function of the assumed inner world**

Simon (1997:1) understands creative initiative to be an instinctive response to mental conflict, and creative art to be a symbolic container for unassimilated experiences. Whether this remark sounds narrative or not the CAM community is of opinion (2005/09/15) that the therapist/ or facilitator is allowed to freely make interpretations, but then with the aim of engaging in conversation with the participant. In actuality, there is a big difference between the Jungian informed arts therapies and arts therapies as it might be used in narrative practise. In Jungian informed practices, the therapist is the one to make the final interpretation according to her/ his knowledge of how the unconscious works.

However, with regard to narrative therapy I would go so far as to say that the narrative therapist could also make statements about the supposed unconscious world. The way in which this will be presented will differ greatly from Jungian informed practises. The narrative therapist will ultimately converse in questions rather than explanations. The ending of the narrative therapist is thus merely a beginning for something else.

I wish for the reader to read this chapter in this light keeping in mind that the narrative therapist will use these functions if one might call it this, as tentative recommendations; tentative to the specific circumstances of a particular person or group. Relating in part to this discussion Gergen (2002:12) notes it is important to realize that while critical of the assumptions of traditional empirical study (such as describing things as 'functions'), constructionism is not set against the battery of empirical practices – for example, systematic observation, interview, statistical records, standardized measures – that comprise the tradition. It does not even attempt to undermine the conclusions based on such studies. Indeed, as Gergen (2002:12) emphasise such information may be of enormous practical importance to the religious community, if not the society more generally. Constructionists invite us into a reflective posture about traditional empirical inquiry and hereby not excluding its own. Constructionists consider the grounding assumptions that ultimately shape the concepts, observations, and arena of conclusions (Gergen 2002:12) He puts it eloquently when saying: “[W]e are asked to remove the mantle of ‘truth beyond perspective’ from the conclusions of such work” (Gergen 2002:12). If in this chapter, I go along with descriptions of participants it is a reflection on their foundational understanding but from an epistemological viewpoint I do not accept this without at least being aware of its formative power.

### **5.3.2 Revisiting medieval art**

To the other side of expressing creativity or even assimilating experience as Simon (1997) alludes to we find a very specific use of art in medieval times

In medieval times, the view of the universe was based on an understanding of Christianity. Therefore, we find a coherent system of values, which is also thus informed. The purpose of art was to point to the spiritual reality that underlay the material world. To do these artists particularly used symbolism and allegory to present their ideas. Pictures, statues, architecture, poetry, hymns, legends and the theatre were all needed to teach those who could not read. The spiritual and educational task of art was embedded in a highly developed system of symbols in which most things had a spiritual as well as literal meaning. Fire for example represented martyrdom or religious fervour. A lily stood for chastity. An owl, the bird of darkness, often represented Satan. A lamb stood for Christ, as the sacrifice for sin. (Clouse 1990:294).

Since art served the purpose of educating the illiterate the market would be established in the area of the cathedral; plays were staged on its steps, strangers slept there, and townsfolk would meet in the side aisles (Clouse 1990:298). Since it was the house of people as well as the house of God, and because medieval art emphasized the unity of all knowledge, the cathedral was meant to be a mirror of the world. Consequently, this mirroring idea was revealed in carvings that were naturalistic and detailed representations of beasts, bible stories, and allegories of vices and virtues. The dominant structure of society was represented in carvings of the hierarchies of both church and state. Thus, it portrayed ministers, knights, craftsmen, peasants, and tradesmen in the various activities. Even the structure of the building reflected theology: One notices the upward striving towards God, the cross-shape and the altar situated in the east facing Jerusalem. Every detail of the creed appeared in sculpture and stained glass; from the Trinity to Creation and from the passion of Christ to the Last Judgement. (Clouse 1990:298)

### 5.3.3 Localised understandings of the arts

Clearly, arts have been put to use in various ways some creative contemporary understandings of expression or assimilation while others had a very functional purpose. Informed by a narrative understanding of life and identity I believe that interpretations on art or its intended purposes localised.

In a way any work of art is an anaseme; like a word that loses its everyday normal meaning in different contexts. Bornedal explains it as follows:

Although the word sounds familiar, its new significance, its so-called 'system-specific' meaning – is perhaps entirely unknown. 'Beauty' is not just beauty, 'nature' is not just nature, 'imitation' is not just imitation, etc. A notion 'x' is called an anaseme when it is inscribed in a network of neighbour notions from where it specifically receives its significance. The systems of these notions are called 'anasemic systems,' and these systems constitute the foundation for the 'meaning'—however vague and ambiguous—of the notions in these systems. Thus, anasemic concepts are never determined with complete certainty insofar as they only have meaning within a system they themselves participate to define. In this indirect way, they rely on themselves. Therefore, in a theoretical system, the meaning of an anaseme is merely a system of other anasemes.

(Bornedal 1996:7-8)

Consequently, we look at the localised ways in which the arts played a role in this research study. Keep the following in mind:

- Headings does indeed relate to each other; yet, I wish to untangle the web a little as to help us consider in more detail what the contribution of arts could be in narrative practise.
- These remarks are merely presented as suggestions and should not be viewed outside this study and applied out of context.



- These remarks are specifically situated in this late chapter; it should not be read without the reader being acquainted with the content of foregone chapters. In this sense, it presupposes knowledge about the research journey and content.
- I acknowledge that much more can be said and so more elaborately than it is presented here, but it is certainly not my aim here to re-write the entire thesis.

Some headings are indicative, not so much of functions of the arts, but of considerations to keep in mind in wanting to use to the arts.

#### **5.3.3.1 Being sensitive**

If any art form is to be released, so to speak, in public, it should be done with consideration and sensitivity to its audience. In our study, the audience partly consists of congregational members. If this sensitivity is not present one may find the audience appalled by despite having put it forward to enrich the congregational members' spiritual experiences.

The above paragraph relates to groups but individual experience is certainly not excluded. Arts therapies might be a challenge to some even though they agree to it. This concept of challenge relates to anxiety induced by the feeling of being threatened.

*Some relevant discussions:* Ds Danie du Toit and the Cape Town conference relating to the educational task of leaders in the church; Conversations with professor Hagemann about conceptual art as it relates to the video art of Minnette Vari; CAM community discussions relating to feeling threatened.

#### **5.3.3.2 Client Centred**

This heading should not be confused with Carl Rodgers's client centred humanistic approach to psychology as found in Sternberg (2001:490) or Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1988:395-420). A more active role is assumed by the

therapist or facilitator. His or her inputs are part of a social constructionist process.

The idea of a narrative practitioner being decentred but influential is essential, but this does not imply withdrawal. If the arts are part of a process, client centeredness implies that the therapeutic partner for example still chooses how and for what reasons they want to use the arts.

Naturally this relates to the notion of being sensitive as described above but the emphasis is situated here on facilitation of what would work for 'client' as opposed to what might not work.

*Some relevant discussions:* The entire research project serves as an example of the type of action that might result from this client centred principle: Beading worked for moré; multimedia worked for Marinus; exploring possibilities of what could be done through the arts has helped Christo and so forth.

### **5.3.3.3 Clarifying/ selling the problem**

It stood out to me in discussions with participants that people have the need to define in some sense a perceived problem (or experience). This equates with the need that people have to tell their stories of grief, happiness etcetera.

Learning theatre uses theatre to, as Henk says "sell the problem." Take note however that this selling the problem is not to say that everyone present have to describe the problem as it is presented. Henk notices that every representation is *asking* the audience to agree, differ, or disagree with the lenses that is presented. Rookmaaker (1970:237) reminds us that art is always an interpretation, a certain view on reality.

In narrative practise, the facilitator or therapist should be aware of his own contribution and refrain from trying not to be subjective. Seen in a positive light

the arts could be used to contribute to the understanding of the problem even if it is a subjective lens suggested by the therapist or facilitator.

*Some relevant discussions:* Moré journals many experiences through poetry and letters. She does so in an attempt to clarify or attain a certain hold on a perceived problem or experience. Further relevant discussions are: Henk's discussions on why they do dramatic representations in organisations; Notions of Forum theatre in conversation with professor Hagemann; Christo's contemplation on writing a play about his experiences.

#### **5.3.3.4 Point of view – Omni directional telling**

Here we go further than just presenting a perceived problem through the arts. We might attain different perspectives on the perceived problem through different arts used even in one process.

One could even involve a participant in trying to distinguish how many points of views their might be in looking at one artwork. Phototherapy serves as a good example: Fransien of the CAM community was amazed when reading in one reflection letter how photos could be used in therapy. It amazed her to see exactly how many points of views there could be found in one photograph. From these multiple points of view, one could explore the landscape of significance of the person who has come to therapy.

*Some relevant discussions:* CAM community discussions; Chapter one on metaphors; Moré's spontaneous expressions in various art forms, beading, stories, stitching and others.

#### **5.3.3.5 Multiple levels of interaction**

Multiple levels of interaction relates to point of view considerations. What is important to me here is the realisation that interaction takes place on various levels and not just on a conversational level.

Narrative practise is dialogical in nature, but this certainly does not exclude arts as being part of communication or expression. People truly become part of their own healing or growth by being involved on another level. Not just is arts used in facilitating different points of view but it involves us physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

*Some relevant discussions:* Conversations on dance and drama therapy; Conversations in the CAM community about the physical aspects of drama (Talitha gives this as a reason for her preference in drama as opposed to drawing)

### **5.3.3.6 Re-membering**

The arts can be used to connect organisations or individuals to incidents, stories, significant people, forgotten identities, and so forth. In remembering one is re-membered (that is, reconnected) to what one values as important. This re-membering establishes the integration between memory with preferred identity.

It is important that re-membering entails the actual recollection of events or people, but re-membering is more than memory involvement. It entails the construction of a sustaining link with *people* especially, but also *things* that is constitutive of the alternative story. In this regard, the use of a genogram as such as done with Christo is not viewed as re-membering.

*Some relevant discussions:* Moré noted that her involvement in the creative activities of the research have helped her to remember things, good things that she almost have forgotten. In our research the beads serves as an example of re-membering (especially so the beadwork on the people in her life; see Addendum J2.2) but also the porcelain doll is in her own life, prior to research participation, an example of re-membering; Bianca's use of digital photography.

### 5.3.3.7 Forgetting

In most instances in the research, following traumatic experience participants used some form of creativity to *forget* what had happened. Most often we cannot just choose to forget what had happened but luckily the arts is said to have helped survive their memories and frame new ones.

Hannetjie shares that one of the reasons that she does constructs at the rehabilitation centre is that it helps the people to for a period of time forget about the drugs. Forgetting helps them to direct their attention to different constructive ways of being with people.

Moré has noticed that forgetting is merely a short-term solution. However, through the constant forgetting, or then, refocusing attention an event becomes bearable.

*Some relevant discussions:* Notable in this regard is Moré's remarks on how her creativity helps her to forget; Charlene attests that it was her quilt work that carried her through difficult times in her life.

### 5.3.3.8 Sustaining alternative stories

When projecting from the future back to the present whereby the imagination is accessed, the arts is used to sustain the developing of alternative stories. Organisations may use art to imagine different scenarios or to explore different possibilities for the company and the individual's participation in that possible story.

Hannetjie working at a drug rehabilitation centre directs crafts classes there. When asked what the function of making candles is on a practical level she says that some parents lock up their children in their rooms when visiting over weekends. In these circumstances the burning candle in the room is often the

only reminder of their worth that serves as a suggestion to the possibility of an alternative way of being.

In the fashioning of a porcelain doll, moré reinforces a particular view of herself. Even if everything would seem to be falling apart at some stage she knows by looking at the porcelain doll that she is appreciated.

*Some relevant discussions:* Some are alluded to above; in addition, especially facilitative workshops; Congregational examples, heading 3.4.1.3 and surrounding vicinity.

#### **5.3.3.9 Framing**

Inherent in re-membering and forgetting lays the notion of framing experience. This could be done quite literally or through the scaffolding of therapeutic or facilitative conversations.

In narrative practise, we creatively involve people in framing experiences other than those accounts situated in problem-saturated stories. This happens through the constructing of narratives. In a more literal sense, we encounter the idea of framing in drama through the practise of *freeze frame*.

One could for instance *freeze frame* a certain desired or imagined outcome by having a professional artist paint this image of a better tomorrow. Usually the participants to a drama therapy group session would be involved in actual body sculptures whereby the group sculpt with their bodies a certain event or feeling.

Freeze frame does not however only entail framing incidents in alternative stories; it also relates to Forum theatre where a piece is performed up to a certain moment and then freeze to involve bystanders in a conversation of what should happen next.

An organisation could for instance ask the children of employees to paint what they perceive to be a successful company. They may draw companies wherein daddy or mommy is smiling and so forth. These paintings/ drawings could be framed and exhibited in the boardroom. These paintings then could possibly play an important role in the transformation of a company.

Employees could be asked to write stories based on Vogler's model on how they have made a significant contribution to the company and so forth. All these are examples of ways in which certain emotions, desired futures, and interaction could be framed whereby it is incorporated into an alternative description of what it means to be a company, a family and so on.

*Some relevant discussions:* White's (1997) book on biblical themes through the ages involves the framing of the narrative of the faith community; other relevant discussions: CFN facilitation workshop; the beading of Moré whereby she frames important people and events; Bianca's quite literal framing through digital pictures. Also, see Kriger's reference to moving slats in paintings (from heading 3.13.6.1) as a means of recontextualising events.

#### **5.3.3.10 Performance of meaning**

In chapter, one I have referred to the performance of tropes. In a sense all, the arts are performative. An artwork does not necessarily acquire meaning as fixed work. Rather, meaning is ascribed in the performance of the art, in its creation.

Performance of meaning also relates to the idea of intentionality: If I were to talk to a therapeutic participant, I might inquire about what it would mean to him if he were to direct a play about her/ his life, what painting the ocean would mean to him and so forth. If this act were to follow through, it entails the performance of meaning.

*Some relevant discussions:* Christo's remarks on what it would mean to him to be an actor or director in a play about his personal narrative; Marinus' multimedia art as a performance of meaning relating to his expression of praise in his relationship with God; Conversations with Gladys Agulhas on the use of dance.

#### **5.3.3.11 Deconstruction**

Following professor Hagemann's ideas, it should be stated that a critical or interrogating spirit (as in deconstructionism) is long partner to the arts. This resonates with others that are of opinion that paradigms that often harbour critical reflection (postmodernism) were in the first instance founded in art and literature. Accordingly, interrogation of monologic claims is characteristic of postmodernism (White 2000:102).

This makes the medium of the arts the medium of choice in working with unseen strategies of certain discourses at work in peoples lives. In this sense, Forum theatre could be a good medium to join employees in collaborative conversations about the values of a company. Without forthrightly judging certain practises, management could also participate in exploring certain consequences of actions as portrayed in forum theatre.

*Some relevant discussions:* The CD recording with the voice of Problem as produced by Christo and myself along with reflections from CAM community members; The fatherhood project deconstructs western notions of masculinity; Dance as used by Gladys Agulhas deconstructs the belief that disability renders one socially, intellectually and otherwise incapacitated; The Phyllis Robertson media presentation and consequent discussions with Gladys and Christo further relativises disability.



### **5.3.3.12 Revealing patterns**

It has been noted by Kopett (2002:85) that reincorporation is a key feature in most stories. These patterns can consist of behaviour, feelings, similar values that stand out in different scenarios and so forth.

In some forms of craft patterns are easily noticeable (beadwork and stitching) and can be made part of any discussion. Not only is patterns seen in specific mediums but also across time at various stages as for instance noted by White (1997) on the popular theme of the Christ in paintings. White notes (1997:7) that there is a wealth of material of Jesus and less on the Old Testament stories. This reflects the overwhelming popularity of Jesus as a subject for artists (or their patrons) for many centuries – as the work range from the third to the twentieth century.

*Some relevant discussions:* Moré on beading; White (1997); Koppet (2002:85).

### **5.3.3.13 Relationship between learning and teaching**

Often the way in which we react to information and knowledge enriches our understanding. This is also true of organisations for otherwise their might not have been a profession such as organisational developers.

As our heading suggests, teaching and learning are related but by no means the same. Learning is not simply the reception of knowledge through teaching. Medieval art serves as an example. Illiterate people learned about faith but these were not the consequence of direct teaching.

Perhaps the best example of learning is found in Learning Theatre's involvement with companies. The arts invite reflection, but are not itself actively instructive about a problem. In this regard, Ewald has said that the shortest way to a perceived truth is through story.

Stories or the arts in this way could be used to make some kind of a suggestion through providing knowledge about the strategy of drugs, the consequences extramarital affairs or unethical business practises and so forth.

In this regard, Sweet (1999:213) calls for edutainment, which is education through entertainment. He emphasises the role of edutainment in the postmodern context. The arts almost naturally have entertainment properties and have a rich tradition (in the church) as far as education is concerned.

I know that one has to be careful in using the arts in this kind of setting. One will need to take into consideration where the power is situated, who is being marginalised by a certain message and so on. This does not exclude it however from narrative practise.

*Some relevant discussions:* Danie du Toit and literary voices relating to our discussion; Henk and Learning Theatre fieldwork; Remarks from Dr. Higgins on indirect learning/ over-hearing.

#### **5.3.3.14 beyond conversational stuckness - process enhancement**

The arts seem to offer tremendous stimuli to any process. Whereas conversations can achieve a sense of stuckness, the arts can propel the process forward. The arts are very practical and surpass theoretical intelligible attempts to construct a better future.

The arts carry us beyond stuckness for reasons that have been mentioned throughout. It is inviting, interrogating, creative, and informal etcetera. Hanneljie working at a drug rehabilitation centre says with regard to conversational stuckness that to her it is possible to see something of in what state of mind the centre people are. From this, it becomes easier to probe and ask questions

about what had happened lately in their lives. This being on the spot experience then becomes a compelling invitation to ongoing conversation.

I have also personally experienced that it is often a lot easier for some artists to use their work as an intermediary vehicle whereby it becomes easier to talk about certain events or emotions.

*Some relevant discussions:* Hanneltjie's remarks in the CAM community discussions; Berna's specific remarks on her experience in therapy (heading 3.4.4); Marinus's explanations of his involvement in video work.

### **5.3.3.15 Discussion stimulators**

Apart from using the arts with the definite aim of moving beyond conversational stuckness, it could also be used, especially in the group context as discussion stimulators. Hereby it could provide the framework for collaboration and a sense of community. Psychologists speak of transference and counter-transference whereby (simplistically put) emotions are carried over from the 'client' to the therapist and vice versa: Where there proves to be some form of resistance for reasons of transference or something else. The arts could be used to refocus the discussion. It becomes a stimulator to a new way of being in the therapist/conversational partner relationship.

Henk relates to resistance that is sometimes felt in organisations. Management would use theatre, which would have a normalising effect: An example might be to introduce theatre sports to carry into the resistance a sense of humour. Resistance is thus, channelled through consequent conversations which is informed by humour and not frustration, anger and so forth. This normalising effect that theatre could have is not necessarily good. It could for instance be used to coax employees into compliance with some or other management scheme.

*Some relevant discussions:* In conversation with Henk from Learning Theatre; CFN facilitation course; Professor Hagemann on Industrial theatre; practical experience and reflection on Kirsten Meyer's drama therapy workshop (2005).

### **5.3.3.16 Expressive purposes**

Over against the normalising effect that arts could have in the organisational setting, it could also serve an expressive function to employees. Instead of using theatre as a medium of management communication it could be used to explore the consequences of perceived management injustice by employee's and be presented to management.

We have also seen that drawings can serve as an expression of things that is to difficult to talk about. Marinus' multimedia serves as an expression of praise. Bianca's dancing or photo's serve as an expression of life.

Whether or not it is this studies view that emotions lay independently under the surface of cognition waiting to be accessed, participants informed by a certain discourse on how emotions function often believe so. In giving them the opportunity in expressing these emotions, they are engaged in healing activities. Often the ways in which participants express themselves is believed to not be that effective than using the arts. Very often in this study people alluded to the arts as providing an outlet for emotions.

Sometimes the mere act of doing arts is enough. It is not always true that there needs to be a consequent conversation on the supposed meaning of art. Fransien for instance that sometimes she just likes to draw or paint and questions whether it should necessarily always be interpreted by someone. Expression in itself therefore serves a therapeutic function.

*Some relevant discussions:* CAM discussions and Fransien's comments therein; Marinus' views on the role of media in his life; Talitha of the CAM community on

the role of drama; Henk's remarks on how they go about doing research and that relating to what eventually is portrayed on stage (employee's feelings, frustrations etcetera).

### **5.3.3.17 Liberating/ re-inventing**

As an extension of having expressive purposes, the arts are often seen as being liberating. A sense of freedom is gained. This freedom for the most part consists of the release of who we believe we are; it constitutes a movement away from our inhibitions in for instance exploring bodily movement in dancing or drama. Hereby we might be re-inventing our perceptions of ourselves.

It was interesting to hear that professor Hagemann has found the endeavour of drama, acting, and theatre and so forth to be liberating in his own life. This struck a cord with me in my perceptions of the role that music had played in my life.

*Some relevant discussions:* Practical dance workshop at the Arts and Reconciliation conference; Professor Hagemann conversations; Bianca on music.

### **5.3.3.18 Accessing emotion**

I recall that professor Hagemann had said (2005 of 2004/03/17) that telling stories requires the plotting of memory, that story is akin to experiences of life but that it is not the experience in itself. There are numerous ways of interpreting this statement. What I understood within the context of our discussion and relating it to our discussion: Through people's recollection of events, they organise their experience or memories in the form of a narrative. We would not have had access to this emotion be it not for the being told.

Take heed that in narrative practise it is not about the truth of the story told nor is it about the ability to portray objective experience as this is never possible. I understand the notion of access as interpretive constructions. In the act of

opening the door (gaining access), to some past experience or desired future people are busy constructing a reality.

One of the goals for Hanneltjie working with crafts at the rehabilitation centre is specifically to access the people's thoughts, to open up discussion relating to their world, their aspirations, and so forth. From these discussions then she collaboratively works at constructing different realities; realities other than drugs informed realities.

*Some relevant discussions:* Professor Hagemann; Hanneltjie's rehabilitative work.

### **5.3.3.19 crossing worlds**

Naturally, we do not share the same experiences and we should not trick ourselves into believing that we know how someone else's life is. However, the arts invite us to cross the world of me/ not me, of the realm of *them* and *me* in order to explore what someone else's life might be like.

Drawing on the notion of crossing worlds that I encountered in conversation with Bianca it is plausible to in some sense journey in someone else's shoes. In this regard, see Bianca's experience of visiting Hillbrow connecting her to those people through the arts.

By crossing worlds, we meet people in their own worlds. Consequently, we may sit down on the floor drawing pictures with foster care children. Hereby we strip ourselves of pretension of the power that belongs to those roughly about one and a half meters tall. We now relate in terms of colours and shapes not on the basis of grownup language. In the world of colours, the letters on degrees means nothing.

The great divides of, race, social status, economic resources, skin tone are left to those standing; for the moment we are, just together, drawing a picture,

excepting someone's reality as it may be constructed through the colours of someone else's crayons.

*Some relevant discussions:* Bianca's experiences in Hillbrow; conversations with moré on being an elementary school teacher.

### **5.3.3.20 Externalising**

Certainly, to me the most useful possible interaction between the arts and narrative practise consists of incorporating the arts in externalisation. This could happen in two ways. Firstly, the arts could serve as a form of externalisation in that it is something taking place external to the self and dialogue taking place. Seen in this way the stage becomes the platform of externalisation. The story might resemble my life story but it is not my life story. For instance, in group therapy with street kids, the actors and the stage might be representative of their lives and it becomes a form of externalisation. It's easier, less intense to inquire about the feelings, beliefs, and attitudes of certain characters on stage. In the same sense, drawing a picture of what had happened might be easier. Herewith one can enter into some sensitive subjects in a manner that might not have been possible otherwise. It might just be true that every form of art or craft aiding the therapeutic process relates to this form of externalisation.

Closer to externalising practises as we have become accustomed to in narrative practise; the arts could also involve focussing one's attention on the problem by giving it a name and a life outside of the person whom sit in front of us. In this respect, we might be examining the effects of Problem as we hear him/her/it speak on an audio CD. At times, we would personify certain feelings such as lust (Lust), anxiety (Anxiety) and so forth giving them a life, a will, a method of interaction.

Something of externalisation could be understood by looking at the idea of internalising, which is not often explicitly alluded to in narrative practise. Hereby

a small child might for instance internalise the power of a tiger in order to aid him or her in doing daily chores. This idea according to Espenak (1981:18) is very primitive: The primitive man would put on a mask and imitate the movements of animals in dancing. Hereby it is believed that the dance in reality affects the animals and gods. By donning, the mask or imitating the movements the dancers acquired their qualities – the courage of the lion, the ferocity of the tiger, and so on. Espenak (1981:18) calls this the dance of identification, or the suspension of self, and mentions that it has appeared as part of virtually every culture (Espenak 1981:18).

Externalisation then could involve the use of arts to set the problem apart from the person as opposed to internalising depression, anxiety, and so forth.

*Some relevant discussions:* Drama therapy workshop at the Arts and Reconciliation conference; Levels of externalisation as it relates to discussions with Henk (amongst others 2004/03/11); the voice of Problem on an audio CD (Relating to discussions with Christo).

### **5.3.3.21 swelling the moment**

This idea could be very useful in developing or feeding the alternative story or unique outcomes that may present itself. I immediately liked the word swelling when professor Hagemann introduced it into our discussions for the first time. The word connotes the idea of anticipation of the ripening of fruit.

Having people become aware of a certain incident/s were they were not defeated by anger; depression etcetera is certainly helpful but only to some extent. Swelling the moment implies hovering on the unique incident and discovering its contributing success factors. This swelling says professor Hagemann could take place through the arts. Through drama or dance for instance – to use professor Hagemann's concepts – renders a *body experience* strengthens the sparkling moments by *being in the moment*. The use of drama he says in the swelling of



the moment *ricochets catches up or pulls together* experiences. Furthermore, he remarks that if one moves one can't stay in the same place. Physical movement contributes to the swelling of the moment.

*Some relevant discussions:* Professor Hagemann; Psychomotor function theory in dance literature; Berna's reflections on her own therapeutic practises (CAM community); Talitha on movement in therapy (CAM community).

### **5.3.3.22 Reflection**

The idea of reflection is integral to narrative practise. We reflect on our own position our presuppositions and everything else that may influence the way in which we live our lives. All the arts could serve this function since our experiences can be brought into language. Note however, that one can also reflect on a dance with a drawing, or reflect on a drawing with a poem etcetera.

Read (1993:101) is of opinion that theatre provides one of the most valuable means through which communities understand themselves and become understood by others. In a way then our reflections become the detour talked about by Paul Ricoeur (Demasure 2005/09/27). In order to attain knowledge of who we are we need to take a detour such as reflective practises

The interpretations of reflections seem important: Any action can be reflected on. Bianca and I considered how one might use a computer game such as *Sim City* to reflect on our actions, desires, and intentions.

Theatre could be an example of reconstructing experiences within a safe environment. We could also reflect on this that may still happen in the future. A picture of a desired future may lead to interesting reflections on what may be important to a person in the present.

The arts and artists could be involved in a reflexive community that act out certain, perceptions, things that may stand out to them, or merely resonates with their experiences; after all, to represent something means that one thinks it to be of importance, and that one is spiritually open and free to do so (Rookmaaker 1970:237). These artistic representations or reflections does not need to be true for whatever reason since truth in art means that the artist's insights are rich and full (as opposed to being a copy of reality). Through the artistic reflections, justice is done through depicting various aspects of a perceived reality, its scope and meaning (Rookmaaker 1970:237).

With a practical tool such as Vogler's model, a person might more easily reflect on her/ his own life. I say this for often people lacks the words or concepts through which they want to explain something of their experiences. In this reflecting activity, they are then busy constructing their own Journey through a positive metaphor.

In this reflection people often finds a sense of resonancy between the arts and their own life predicaments. This is not to say that the arts render universal experiences but some at least may find a common rationality between the way in which art functions and their own lives.

*Some relevant discussions:* Bianca on *Sim City*; CAM community discussions; Professor Hagemann's reference to Vogler (1999) and references to Forum Theatre; Christo on the use of drama; Professor Hagemann's educating principles; Resonancy as explained by professor Hagemann; Notions of transversality as opposed to generalisability; Methodological considerations on the general and the specific.

### **5.3.3.26 Art as Transitional objects**

The idea of arts being a transitional medium has been attended to under various abovementioned headings. In principal, it has to do with creating a safe space

for expression or participation but also facilitates transformations. The concept especially relates to externalisation, discussion stimulation, and moving beyond conversational stuckness. Consequently, the concept will be illuminated through the writings of Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000) where I have encountered the notion for the first time.

Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000: chapter 8) explain how one can use written words in drama therapy. This entails drawing from the riches of poems, novels, plays and all written texts. In these there are often numerous situations and relationships that can be acted. The material does not even have to be dramatic since acting makes it into drama. (Andersen-Warren and Grainger 2000:189).<sup>161</sup>

Acting in a play, extemporising a scene or reading a text are all basically drama; all depend on cancelling out the division between performers and spectators or listeners by creating a situation in which all such differences are removed, and what would otherwise be barriers between us turn out to be grist to the mill of our dramatic imaginations. (Andersen-Warren & Grainger 2000:191).

Often a text let people relax into what they are doing in a way other ways of doing drama does not. Even if people only read texts, they are participating in a significant way. “It is as if the words you are reading both lead you into the action of the drama and protect you from some of its impact” (Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:190). Professor Hagemann makes a distinction between interpretive actors and creative actors. Having people only *read* texts in order to provide an initial safe place from which to start resembles the role of an interpretive actor. For Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:190) this seems enough in the therapeutic context. However if one considers that there is also a sub text, or otherwise viewed, the spatial or temporal text this involves creative

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<sup>161</sup> However, see the addendums for lists of plays and music that could be used in dance and dramatherapy.

acting. It is exactly this quality of the text its, temporal considerations that allows us to redo great plays such as Shakespeare. Through the different context, it is presented afresh. One might also say that the story is inculturated into a different context. Reconstruction of the visual and movement content requires therefore a degree of creative participation.

Often people might not want to take part in this way and so the book or the text in front of us, gives us courage since some things about us, the things that are most important from an emotional point of view, resist being confronted head-on. In this sense, Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:190) refer to the text as a kind of mask. Espenak (1981:18) says that the mask, as used in both primitive and sophisticated dance, also provides safety for the expression of feelings and attitudes.

Accordingly one might also refer to the text as a bridge, a link, and a source of communication or even revelation (Andersen-Warren and Grainger 2000:190).

Like theatre itself, it actually reveals things by protecting us from them. Donald Winnicott (1971) talks about the way in which works of art are 'transitional objects', artificial things that we — or somebody have made up, which have a comforting kind of solidity and allow themselves to be 'pinned down' or, in this case, held in our hands and read by us, either silently to ourselves or aloud with other people. Transitional objects allow us to feel and say things, which we would otherwise find difficulty in saying and perhaps even feeling. They are communication aids, something familiar and unthreatening that carries an unmistakable message about what is important to us.

(Andersen & Grainger 2000:190)