

Chapter 6, Personal reflection

6.1 Introduction

Bunt (1997:249) suggests that the clinical practise of music therapy straddles many disciplines. Bunt (1997) then refers to awareness and knowledge about relevant psychological and therapeutic processes as well as appropriate medical background but not only these. It is said that every music therapist brings to the profession a unique blend of musical and personal skills and experiences.

That which I bring to the process of narrative practise (amongst other endeavours that of therapy), is a certain ontological and epistemology view, perceptions, presuppositions, inherited traditions, and these in relation to specific interests, experiences and skills. In this study my interests and skills along with my interpreted history bears consequences on what comes of this research. There are many questions: Can I add to my personal skills? Have participants been enriched? What have I learned from co-researchers? What investment of personal skill did I contribute? Who benefits from this? Where are we going with all that has been said? Some of these questions will be considered in this chapter wherein I consciously reflect on the research journey.

Take into consideration that that which anybody has, I hope, gained serves only as a temporary platform. The theatre is open to different actors that may play there part when they see fit. In this sense, even this reflection provides a temporary foundation. Recall Gergen (2002:280) who emphasises:

[O]ne of the most important elements of a constructionist orientation is often disregarded by those carrying out constructionist inquiry.... [T]his is the caveat that *constructionist proposal are not themselves truth bearing* about such matters as mind/ world dualism, material reality, knowledge, and the like. There is no foundation upon which constructionism rests.

Rather, constructionist proposals constitute a domain of intelligibility that invites, enables, or facilitates certain forms of cultural practise. The question is not whether constructionist proposals are accurate or true, any more or less than realist claims. Rather, from a constructionist standpoint we are move to reflect on the value of the various forms of cultural practice e invited by the way we talk – both realist and constructionist.

(Gergen 2002:280)

6.1.1 Outline to chapter six

I will follow an uncomplicated outline for this chapter. First, I will reflect on the personal research journey. Thereafter I will reflect on what this could mean to other communities such as the arts communities, theology, and so forth. Take note that I have already mentioned on occasion what participants think should come of this study, but I will reiterate those voices as needed. Lastly, I reflect on the process that informed this study.

It may be judged that I am in fact restating things that have already been mentioned in chapter five. This is not at all my intention: Chapter one is viewed as a positioning; this chapter is again viewed as a positioning whereby I stand still and reflect on what has happened now that the story is drawing to some kind of closure.

6.2 *Personal remarks*

6.2.1 Cursory remarks on some things I have learned

I now provide remarks on what I have found to be truly significant in this study. Thereafter after, I will reflect on two themes that relate to some of these cursory remarks:

- i. Narrative therapy could also be seen as an arts informed therapy
- ii. There should be a high level of reflection on whether I believe I am conducting arts as therapy or arts in therapy (or research, historical inquiry, facilitation etcetera).

- iii. Skills could play a very important role in the quality of experience. This is true for skills of the conversational partner or a professional artist taking part in narrative practise.
- iv. I value the insights and capabilities of other professions and disciplines, and recognise their contribution to, and interaction with narrative practise.
- v. If ever I was under the impression that artistic experiences render universal outcomes across cultures I am not so anymore.

6.2.2 On wanting to use art in therapy

Apart from things I have generally learned, what does this mean to me having an affinity towards the arts, wanting to use the arts in narrative practise?

Firstly, in narrative practise I cannot force people into making any of the arts part of the process, as narrative practitioners should indeed take a non-directional, not-knowing stance in therapy. I cannot possibly know best what might work for an organisation or conversational partners apart from engaging them in the process of direction and meaning.

This is so different from how some might use the arts: Professor Hagemann and I had discussed how theatre in the industrial setting is sometimes used didactically, having a normalising effect. Theatre is then put to use of the power structures in society or organisations: Those that have the status, have the money, have the loudest voice. The arts are then used as a vehicle of authoritative communication, wanting to get a message across.

A preferred non-directive,¹⁶² not-knowing position aligns with a social constructionist understanding of knowledge on which narrative practise is based. A Social constructionist stance will have a propensity to a critical attitude towards

¹⁶² In saying that the narrative practitioner is non-directive this does not take effect in doing or saying nothing. Naturally, any facilitator even, has a directive influence but not a directive role. Our emphasis lies in that we do not want to actively decide irrespective of a conversational participant what might work for her or him. Excellent in this regard is White (2000:97-116) that in an interview speaks about *direction and discovery, a conversation about power and politics in narrative therapy*.

taken for granted knowledge. This might be best explained by the interrogation of generalisations by the following questions that serve as examples: Is it... like that? Really? How can you be certain? Is this what we should be talking about? Is this useful? Is it okay to go there? Would it be helpful to use some or other art form in our being together? The social constructionist is critical of the attitude that our observations about the world (therapy, facilitation etcetera) without any problem yield its nature to us. For this reason in narrative therapy, informed by social constructionism we urge ourselves not to understand too quickly. We are therefore suspicious about our assumptions of what the world appears to be, about the nature of things, and categories in which we think and act.

If someone however would invite any art form into our being together, the following assertion would probably be true: “Within Creative Music Therapy and the arts therapies in general there is a subtle and irreducible interweaving of aesthetic and personal goals and of artistic and therapeutic developments” (Ansdell 1995:20). Thus it is imperative to note that “[a]rt does not force or coerce: it offers itself as a *possibility* [italics: *own insertion based on chapter one’s possibility-theory*]” (Ansdell 1995:20).

Therapy in art similarly offers a new form of experience; a new experience of form. This is art working as it works for all of us, but within the special and necessary conditions of a therapeutic context. For in every new experience of creativity, communication or beauty there can be a glimpse of the possibility of growth, potential, and transcendence.

(Ansdell 1995:20)

6.2.3 Dissemination of once clearly defined boundaries

Along with the distinction that has been made between art as therapy versus art in therapy what stood out to me clearly was the dissemination of boundaries between therapeutic practices and even traditions of thought.

Interviews were conducted with Michael White (2000) wherein Jeff Zimmerman questions White about distinct traditions of thought; constructivist, social constructionist, postmodern and so on. Zimmerman observes in their conversation that White is quite particular in identifying different traditions of thought and how they influence therapeutic practise (White 2000:102-103). White avers that these traditions of thought are starting to blur. Yet it is imperative to him that the distinctions remain clear and that even more be drawn. His reason is that blurriness makes it very difficult for narrative therapy to experience a degree of conscious choice in terms of the ideas and practices that they wish to engage with, and to reflect on these ideas and practices as they monitor the effect of these in their work with people who seek consultation (White 2000:103).

I agree with White in so far as we talk about epistemological concerns. One should be able to separate traditions of thought. What is however interesting to me is considering what happens when different practises and disciplines starts drawing from the same epistemology. This has for instance moved me to think about the deconstruction (or broadening of the concepts) of therapy or psychology. Another example is that Andersen-Warren and Grainger equates healing with learning (2001:219) which is also relevant to our study. In the case of the prior: One might find a therapist that has travelled with another road as the psychologist but they both have arrived at the same metaphor of story situated in social constructionism. This entail that their views and maybe so their practises resemble each other greatly. A similar deconstruction relates to narrative practise and facilitation that seemingly employs and uses concepts in like-minded fashion.

Yet another example, but this time augmented to other professions as well: One is left with the impression that practices relating to the concept community are also congruent. For instance, if one looks at the goals of Community Psychology (Duffy & Wong 1996:ix) - a sense of community, social change, collaboration with

other disciplines, choice among alternatives, empowerment, respect for diversity, importance of the ecological perspective, emphasis on strengths and competencies, prevention rather than treatment. Then one distinctly notices various values that the narrative therapist but also the community musicologist, facilitators, drama therapists working predominantly with groups, and so on would acknowledge and promote. Duffy and Wong (1996:238-250) for instance compare organisational psychology and community psychology and find that they have much to learn interchangeably since they both examine the "...effects of social and environmental factors on behaviour as it occurs in various levels in communities, including the organizational level, in order to produce beneficial change" (Duffy & Wong 1996:240).

There are furthermore notable similarities between the abovementioned and related practises such as organisational behaviour approaches and organizational development. Although approaches might differ they do so at the more only marginally. A possible reason for this: It is my understanding informed by this study that differences in related practises decrease based on at least three observations. Boundaries blur if practises focus on the same landscape (audience, action field etcetera), this factor is augmented by our second consideration; whether or not they draw from the same tradition of thought or worldview. Lastly, the role of language in creating related realities cannot be left unnoticed. When distinct practises start using related concepts as they are exposed to a tradition of thought or just practises they draw inspiration from their own practises start being shaped by this use of language. Furthermore audience-/ or action field directedness also informs language in the same manner that this study is exposed to a certain use of language derived from the sphere of the arts and or arts specific therapies.

Consequently, what happens in this convergence of practices is that we find a move away from the tradition of thought that at one time strongly informed practises. This suggests that such practises are in effect more the result of

social construction entwined with depth psychology entwined with modernistic influences and so on. There are all the more then a discrepancy between what they currently practise and the initial situated tradition of thought.

This was something that I did not expect in the research but I noticed this discrepancy when trying to plot narrative practise in some kind of thinking. When one asks if and how social constructionist narrative practise is similar or different from music-/ photo-/ drama-/ dance therapy etcetera one pays attention to the traditions of thought underlying such practises. Let me provide an example of the intricacy of the matter: At times I thought that narrative relates strongly to drama therapy only to find there is a difference between that and psychodrama, to find further that in some instances they converge in their practises and values. This is something that I had especially noticed in music therapy versus community musicking. I provide an elaborate example in Addendum C.

I believe that it would be true to say that most arts specific therapies have been very much psychoanalytically informed as earlier contended. If and where they move away from this school of thought, one finds a discrepancy in name such as to refer to psychodrama and so on.

It should furthermore be noticed that it is likely that therapy practises in the arts did not start out from consciously drawing on one tradition of thought or the other. Although it has been contended that practises are historically informed greatly some traditions this is not necessarily so. A case could be made for arts specific practises having been constructed from various other practises at the time of its earlier days. From Kirsten Meyer (2004) we understand that sandplay and play therapy informed drama therapy greatly. However, this is still not acknowledging the rich traditions of thought that influence for instance play therapy (from which then drama therapy supposedly draws). Taking just the topic of children in therapy as an example: Schaefer and Carey (1994:xiii) note that since the turn of the century, four major approaches to child therapy have been employed – psychodynamic, play, cognitive-behavioural, and family therapy.

Referring to the above traditions they aver that there has been a trend toward greater integration of these major schools in recent years. In particular, the principles of play therapy and family therapy are being combined into a new approach, which has been termed 'Family Play Therapy.' They further state that their book (1994) is designed to be comprehensive, eclectic, and interdisciplinary in nature (Schaefer & Carey 1994:xiii). For this reason they include what they call four specialized therapeutic techniques that relate to their topic of Family Play Therapy namely, Family Sandplay Therapy,¹⁶³ Family Art Psychotherapy,¹⁶⁴ Psycho dramatic Methods in Family Therapy¹⁶⁵ and Kinetic Psychotherapy¹⁶⁶ in the Treatment of Families.

Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:222) can be made to comment on this by saying that the drama therapy model has certainly been found extremely useful by members of other professions – psychologists, teachers, community workers, psychiatric nurses and occupational therapists are just a few of the representatives of other disciplines in which individual practitioners have become so involved in this approach that they have undertaken special training and can now call themselves genuine inter-professionals – and not just tourists. "To be a drama therapy tourist, however, can be a refreshing and deeply stimulating experience, just so long as you are willing to take in the landscape itself and not simply its most obvious landmarks" (Andersen-Warren & Grainger 2000:222).

All this had moved me in starting to think that everything could be therapy but not everything naturally is. What is often formally experienced as being therapeutic, is the idea doing focussed inquiry into ways in which something might be therapeutic. For this reason, it is advisable to be part of a community of practise

¹⁶³ Carey (1994:205-220).

¹⁶⁴ Landgarten (1994:221-234).

¹⁶⁵ Blatner (1994:235-246).

¹⁶⁶ Schachter (1994:247-258).

that continually inquires into the way, which a practise under consideration could be therapeutic. What does this mean for me as a narrative practitioner? I remain a narrative therapist since having had formal training in the tradition and community of knowledge that sustains the practise, but furthermore I should situate myself in continual conversation with arts communities that does their own focussed inquiry into what they argue to have therapeutic merit.

6.2.3.1 Arguing for responsibility and unity

Subsequently the reader may find an argument for the integrity of the arts therapy in question. Yet it is also acknowledged that some practices does not necessarily belong to this or that arts therapy and is free for all to use.

Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:220), say that practises that are often used in drama therapy are all available for use by anybody who is interested in exploring the ways in which people relate to themselves and one another. The underlying purpose of the exercise is to find a way of improving communication within a task-orientated group, or one of identifying the unconscious dynamisms described by psychoanalysis (Andersen-Warren and Grainger 2000:220). To the contrary they emphasize that drama therapy should not be used thoughtlessly or be automatically applied in every situation involving a group of people where there might be some difficulty in 'getting things off the ground.' Drama therapy has its own integrity, in the sense of being a process rather than a technique (Andersen-Warren 2000:221).

Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:221) assert that a drama therapy session is to them in the first instance a freestanding event, with a beginning, middle, and an end. Furthermore, for an interpersonal event to be drama therapeutic it must reproduce this sense of movement into and out of a time of concentrated awareness of one's own and other people's immediate experience. I would like to bring this into conversation with Moré's experience of seeing a psychologist and relate this to our research gap: Moré upon asked asserts that her

psychologist does not utilise the arts. At best, she says that Moré needs to keep on doing the artistic things that she does. To a degree, the psychologist therefore acknowledges the worth of the arts in Moré's life. She does not however utilise its full potential as a medium. This is okay for Moré since she's been involved with this psychologist for an extended period of time and has become accustomed to their way of being. I cannot however help but wonder and be excited about a process for Moré that requires work that is more direct with her creativity. I say this in light of the fact that Moré feels that in this research the *doing* part of the arts had most significance but which was then extended with dialogue. It seems, and Moré agrees with this description that her psychologist acknowledges her creative endeavours by way of almost prescribing it as a doctor would in prescribing medicine to a patient. She agrees that her psychologist had never used the arts in their therapeutic encounters, ever. How does this relate to the research gap: Either the arts are used as a tool in therapy it seems, or its use is just acknowledged and prescribed. However, there should be a concern for the process of undergoing a creative journey that is both enriching and therapeutic which indeed has some kind of a beginning, middle, and an end. This process could also be facilitation or educational and so forth but even if it is some kind of eclectic therapy it needs to reflect some kind of integrity for the type of profession that utilises these practises. It is my belief that the concept of story (thus narrative therapy/practise) provides this kind design integrity through in which these practises could be embedded responsibly.

Andersen-Warren and Grainger (2000:221) in the field of drama therapy elaborate by saying that it is not unusual for people to include some features of drama therapy sessions in the plans they are making for meetings not intended to be even implicitly therapeutic. Hence, they inevitably discover that the thoughts and feelings expressed by those present are dramatically changed in the direction of increased frankness and self-disclosure.

At the same time, some of the things that have come to be regarded as typical ingredients of drama-therapy — group games, role-reversal exercises, mirroring, speaking as if you were your neighbour in order to express what you sense he or she is feeling but cannot put into words ('ego-ing'), leaving a chair empty in order to be able to address an invisible person imagined to be sitting there are by no means original to drama therapy and are certainly not confined to it. These techniques and others like them are carefully devised ways of working towards the central purpose, which is the imaginative liberation of personhood. They are included in drama therapy because they are useful to this end but are certainly not essential to it and should not be allowed to obscure the overall process of change through imaginative experience mediated by the symbolic shape of the whole session. It can only be hoped that people who interested enough to include specific drama therapy techniques in ... will be encouraged to look more deeply into what it is they are using and so discover its ability to transform an entire approach, rather than simply adding to the effectiveness of the ways in which it already functions. All the same, there is no doubt that these individual techniques are useful in themselves — which is how they found their way into drama therapy in the first place.

(Andersen-Warren & Grainger 2000:221)

6.2.3.2 Argument for eclecticism

It is evident that there are therapists that feel that they should not be restricted to a particular framework. Weiser (1993:7) declares that she prefers to use all the tools she can discover for helping her clients: Hypnosis *and* dream review *and* Gestalt... or role-playing, *and*, of course, also art therapy and phototherapy techniques are use when any of these seem to her the most sensible and promising approaches. She does not do the same thing with every client, nor does she force the same identical sequence or selection of Phototherapy techniques onto each one, as if following a prescription list. Instead, she fits the

amount of phototherapy involvement to each individual client's particular needs. Consequently, although many might refer to her as a photo therapist she strongly resists using the term Photo Therapist. She believes that any good therapist isn't going to stick to one single approach or technique, any more than a photographer would always use only one lens or an artist just one colour from the palette (Weiser 1993:7).

A related viewpoint is found in Espenak's (1981:63) view of dance therapy. She asserts that dance therapy itself is and should be eclectic; it should draw upon the best and latest in physical education and dance as art form and from behavioural modification concepts in psychological and psychiatric theory. Dance therapy it is believed can also borrow effectively from certain concepts in oriental philosophy, such as Zen, which emphasizes the *letting go* of intellectual stress, and *emptying* of the mind, so that perceptive intuitions can rise from the deeper sources of awareness, and the body can then express these intuitions directly and spontaneously, as in Zen archery and fencing, both of which require the absolute unity of body and mind for expert performance.

In addition, music therapist Gary Ansdell suggests that practises should be directed to what the coming generation will need from music therapists. In this regard, he argues for a Community Music Therapy Model (Addendum C) and asks whether this model will help bring about a more fruitful match between what musicians are best equipped to give, and what society in the coming generation will need from them? (Ansdell 2002:139)

6.2.4 Expectations

6.2.4.1 Shortcomings and frustrations

I think a shortcoming and a frustration are situated in the fact that this study is an explorative study. There is a vast amount of information but has limited depth in terms of the actual practises of various arts specific therapies. I don't know whether therapists in dance, drama etcetera would say that I have done justice to

their disciplines. However, I feel safe in these two answers: Firstly, I think that since this study is very contextual it has limited capabilities of doing in-depth research in any one therapy. If then I have done justice to the participants that were involved in *this* study I am satisfied for now. Secondly, it seems that many therapists and scholars are not in accord with the practises relating to their own fields. They draw heavily on other disciplines too. Maybe this merely reflects the idea of postmodernism of pluriformity and so forth.

I surely would want to know more about each specific art therapy and will invite conversation from these disciplines in order to gain a deeper sense of understanding both on a practical and a theoretical. Only through ongoing discussions will this frustration of knowing only partially be attended to.

6.2.4.2 Surprising moments

Some of the things on the journey came as a great surprise to me. In Voglerian terminology, these surprises are part of the elixir that I bring back to my tribe or community.

The discovery of Vogler (1999) was very refreshing. It has provided me with an extensive framework that I might use loosely in research, therapy, or even keeping a meeting. To think that one might even incorporate creative practises such as the *six thinking hats* of De Bono (2004) fills me with enthusiasm. In considering the notion of narrative identity these ideas may be very useful in connecting theory and practise. What I appreciate about a model such as Vogler's (1999), or more elaborate schemes such as the exegetical process is that it is just a little bit more nuanced than a three stage approach (mimeses 1-3 from Demasure 2005/09/27; theatre supposedly having a beginning middle and end; three acts in screenwriting and so on.

I was furthermore surprised about the level of fluidity with regard to various disciplines and their perceptions of where these disciplines are headed. It would

for instance be interesting to hear from Me. Pavlicevic (Addendum A) what development might have taken place in her own thinking about music therapy as I see a progression in her views on community music therapy in relation to our first discussion. Naturally, it is not the same as music therapy but was distinctly influenced by community music. This distinction relates very much to the differentiation between drama therapy and psychodrama. Similar distinctions are found various other practises such as dance as therapy and psychotherapeutic dance approaches found in Espenak (1981).

Not only were interesting differentiations made within disciplines some were all together foreign to me such as phototherapy. That there are in fact people who have thought extensively on the use of photos in therapy is invigorating since it opens up new vistas of conversation in the arts therapy and I now included narrative therapy.

6.3 Reflections on communities

6.3.1 Who benefits, is heard, is silenced?

Gergen (1999:62) urges us to question the repercussions of the realities we have created through ways of talking; who gains, who is hurt, who is silenced, what traditions are sustained, which are undermined, and to judge the future we have created. This cumbersome task is not done easily since every endeavour sustains some parts of different realities while obscuring others.

6.3.1.1 In consideration of who is heard...

The voice of arts are heard: Considering the marginalisation of the arts – some forms more than others – in the Dutch Reform church (not excluding various other denominations) this study raises the voice of the artistic whisper in religious contexts.

The voice of arts are heard and not so much the voice of the professional *artist* or the arts specific *therapist*. Yes, I would have wanted to know more about them

but keep in mind that I have not heard of them in trying to stay truthful to the emergent design of this contextual study. I don't judge this to be terrible since this study do provide a thorough platform from where we can start more in-depth discussion.

Saying above that the voice of the arts (in general) is heard is vague, helpful still, but vague. The embodiment of the arts is found in the voices of the contextual (congregational) stories of people that are not necessarily the professionals. Yet I do regard that significant discussion has taken place between these people and scientific voices or then voices that are situated in the practise of the arts on a daily basis.

Is the voice of theology heard? This is a rather tricky question to which the answer is I think, yes and no. Theology, broadly speaking has not been made part of this study in so far as we think of ongoing co-research participatory voices. On the other side this study has been significantly informed by theology; professors Karlijn Demasure, Wentzel van Huyssteen, more indirectly and contextually so professor Leonard Sweet, the PhD theology focus group and so on.

What this means for practical theology and what it could be saying in the same breath is the following: Pay attention to the storied nature of what it means to be human; realise that our storied relation to God and to others is not situated on a linguistic level alone.

Maybe the question is not only what does theology has to say but what do the arts say to (and through) theology. In considering this question there are still wonderful explorations to be made. The arts suggest along with Paul Ricoeur's use of *idem* and *ipse* (following Demasure 2005/09/27) that our human nature is

roughly stationary¹⁶⁷ as in fine arts, a painting, or sculpture, but also fluid, moving as in the performing arts, drama, or dance.

Some have started to move in the direction of a link between arts and theology: Paul Ballard (2000:34) uses the artist as a metaphor for the theologian when thinking about the in-between position of the theologian; in the midst of the Church and the midst of the world. According to this metaphor then the following illumination is provided:

- i. The artist brings to the creative act (interface between Church / world) the skills, experience which is constantly trained, nurtured, and put in service of freedom, and need.
- ii. The artist brings to the creative act, a sense of discipline; the knowledge of how to work with material that has its own properties, strengths and beauty.
- iii. The artist brings to the creative act, imagination and attention, the ability to see in the ordinariness the tender realities of joy or pain, fear and wonder.
- iv. The artist brings to the creative act, a vision of the world, a glimpse of the ultimate that is both beyond reach and yet infinitely near.
- v. The artist brings to the creative act the ability to pour out one's being into the beloved object, to know that what is made is greater than the maker. This *greater than* alludes to sacrifice and redemption.
- vi. The artist is the most individual of all people yet never alone. The artist has a compulsion, an energy that cannot but express itself.
- vii. The artist participates in and is created by the artistic process. Through the act of creation the artist both bares the inner spirit and exposes it to being transformed into a new image, re-created through the struggle.

Our theology should be colourful, spatial, rhythmic, and textured along with all the other wonderful qualities we find in the arts. So if we then claim to have a

¹⁶⁷ This should not be understood as implying *unchanging*.

creational doctrine ('creation' relating to 'art') we should be receptive to such suggestions.

6.3.1.2 In consideration of who is silenced...

Despite an exhibited choice for the arts, to degree arts practises that are silenced are those that are situated in the kind of epistemology social constructionism opposes. This study says: I'm not all too sure that you can use the arts in such a confident manner as you have been doing from a psychotherapeutic depth-psychology informed epistemology; so take caution since the road is still under construction.

These kinds of themes are specifically relevant to social issues, ethics and so on where dominant discourse has a marginalising and indeed a silencing effect. Caputo (1993:4) for instance says that ethics hands out maps, which led us to believe that the road is finished and there are superhighways all along the way. Derrida was trying to persuade us that deconstruction is on our side, that it means to be good news, and that it does not leave behind a path of destruction and smouldering embers (Derrida 1997:37). Reiterating in this voices of Caputo (1993:4) deconstruction "...does not put a stop sign that brings action to a halt... [b]ut issues the warning that the road ahead is still under construction."

6.3.1.3 In considering who benefits...

Wilson Kendrick and Ryan (1992:66) say that one cannot assume that individual counselling will be good for all children under all circumstances. Likewise, arts informed practises may not interest or fit everyone (therapeutic or otherwise) and for this reason as well as from innate constructionist sensitivity (Gergen 1999:62) this questions is raised: Who does benefit?

I think first of the therapeutic inclined arts communities: This study legitimates practises that take one-step away from overly reliance on linguistic ability to the validation of the arts. It exudes a choice for *arts* specific therapies.

I personally think that the concerns in this study are of great benefit to any disciplines that specifically favour the metaphor of narrativity. Especially considering the interface between drama and story, this study stimulates discussion on a formal level. In my view narrative therapy, theology (narrative anything) can no longer disregard what theatre/ drama has to say about what is also their primary concept, namely story.

6.3.1.4 Social issues, marginalised voice, power relations

The abovementioned are things I think the narrative practise (research) process are par excellence capable of illuminating. In absence of such issues, I reasoned this narrative study has an inferiority complex. In this regard, I think of my own MA Practical Theology research project on sexual morality (Pienaar 2002).

With appreciation to my PhD focus group colleagues, I have mistaken. An abbreviated explanation follows:

We find a deconstruction on the part of linguistic reliance in therapeutic practises, relating to power; this study alludes to the unheard (maybe rather unexplored), marginalised voice of the arts in theology and more so narrative practise.

Furthermore, one could speak of the oppression of depression, resentment etcetera in participants' lives. Participants' hopes for their futures were in some instances marginalised and the arts played a significant role in raising their voice against Problem (personified).

Following more nuanced accounts and descriptions one could speak of the marginalisation of a culture, as for example the millennial generation that Sweet (1999) refers to. This marginalised position is sustained by dominant ways of thinking or traditions of practise; how to look, what to sing, having to hush, having to sit, having to listen, having to read and so forth. In this the arts fulfil a

significant role in making a younger generation's voice heard; but not just heard since the art's serves as a transition to millennial spirituality.

Audiences are also often silenced, their voices marginalised. I think of certain manners in which Industrial theatre is used (drawing on professor Hagemann). The better choice would be Forum theatre, which is inviting to collaboration and the opinions of audience (community) members.

This study has even stimulated discussion on social issues. One should here consider our topic on disability. Conversations with Gladys Agulhas and Christo, also relating to the presentation of the home for the disabled Phyllis Robertson, put forward deconstructive ideas on disability.

6.4 Reflection on the process

6.4.1 A dream is a goal with a deadline

I have often heard this catchphrase (refer to heading) in organisational motivational genres. May I say what I mean by its use here: When considering doing something that is of worth to one somehow, that thing must be accompanied by an intended time span in which to complete it. This time span encompasses one's own goals but in addition, the university also poses time constraints.

Judy Weiser had two financial supporters who believed in her efforts to pioneer the field of phototherapy and thus have literally bought her the time and confidence to complete her book (Weiser 1993:xxiii). What tremendous privilege she had?

It is with regard to the consideration of time given, in which one should complete a PhD study – normally three years – that I would like to remark on this research process.

The conversational nature of narrative research assures a wealth of information and stories from which the researcher draws. Not only does he draw from this, the researcher should account for the way in which he works (methodology). The transparent reflection, writing up of conversations, its distribution not only via email but hard copies etcetera is really cumbersome. The researcher should have the internal integrity and commitment to sit long hours not only in conversation but in writing up material. For most of us this is done in pace with daily activities, a work and a family. Put these together with a very patient methodology¹⁶⁸ and you are sure to have frustrations, things you still would have wanted to do.

I would have wanted to see even richer conversations take place between participants (meaning still more transcriptions and hours of work). Yet I realise one could have gone on for another three years. In addition, I would have wanted to have met some people like Gladys Agulhas (in dance) much earlier. I also did not get to follow up on some links that I had planned. Here I refer to drama therapist Kirsten Meyer whom I have spoken to and have attended her workshop. However, few more interviews would have helped.

When I refer to the need for richer conversations, I touch on a very delicate matter. I speak of not only my time constraints but that of the participants and especially the scientific community's. I would have wanted to situate, for instance, professor Hagemann's remarks more in his own life story. I have done so to some extent but these are not taken up thoroughly in the thesis for the following reason. I think narrative practise needs to be extremely careful about the way in which participants' stories are portrayed. I did not feel that I had grasped professor Hagemann's story (both concerning facts and his own interpretations) in order to include it in this study. Not only would richer (more) conversation aid in respect of personal stories but one would be able to acquire

¹⁶⁸ Refer to chapter two for the difference between active and passive waiting. The basic concern is that narrative research waits for the plot to emerge. Themes and meaning should not be forced.

opinions on peripheral issues as well. Acquiring such interpretations would assure that the themes taken up are not only those of interest to the participant but those of concern to the disciplines involved.

Again due to the vastness and intensity of a narrative study in relation to the given time constraints the idea of ethics come to the fore. Christo has for instance said that he is glad that the study is through. In a way if I understand him correctly it revisited an incident in his life that as time passed he realised he had wanted to forget. This has not really harmed him he says but still my concern is for the emotional well being of participants.

A further concern is that providing the end result of the thesis to the participants prior to handing in the project – as I had wanted to do – is an unthinkable task. The reason that I wanted to do this is so that participants could thoroughly acquaint themselves with where and how I represent them. This has naturally been part of the whole research project and I have gone through great lengths earlier in providing participants with specific references of their input. Now I realise that there comes a time after which participants need to trust that you will do them justice (that is of course if you have proven to be trustworthy).

The last remark concerning time and which is relevant to the whole of the research enterprise is this: The social constructionist narrative inquiry, as it relates to peoples interpretations, no matter how elaborate will always provide transitory contentions. Participants' opinions might change, indeed, they have in this study with regard to the role of the arts. As such, this document is not complete once it has been bound and examined; it is always open to more reflections. We might have only laid the foundation and a couple of bricks for a small two-bedroom house. Others will come along and complete the building plans. Some will build an extra room. Years later a developer (referring to different paradigms) might largely tear it down and rebuild it to office space.

What am I to make of it all? I can merely acknowledge with dramatist Tom Stoppard (uncited) as quoted by Bridges (1997:27) that...

...every exit is an entry somewhere else!