

CHAPTER 3

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES – TRADITIONS OF INTERPRETATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Eventually Magoda had had enough of this kind of life, and he decided to run away. Early one morning, he crept into the cattle kraal and jumped onto the ox's back. It was as if the ox understood and quietly walked away from the village. Together they took to the road. They travelled through villages with people going about their business. Nobody shouted at Magoda, or told him what to do, and he felt good. Later Magoda began to feel hungry and wondered where he would find food.

Then suddenly a herd of cattle and a fierce looking bull charged towards them. Magoda's ox spoke, saying: "Get off my back. I will fight this bull and I will defeat it!" So Magoda jumped off the ox's back, and it rushed towards the bull, a furious fight developed, but this did not last very long, and soon the bull was dead. Triumphantlly the ox said: "Now I have proven my strength".

Magoda jumped back on the ox's back and they resumed their journey. By now, the boy was very hungry and, as they passed another village, he could smell the evening meals. "What would I not give for a good meal?" he said with longing. To emphasise these words, he smacked the right horn of the ox and, to his amazement, food began to pour from the horn. Beans, pumpkin, mielie meal and meat, all cooked to perfection, flowed forth, and he grasped the gifts with both hands and ate to his fill.

“This is wonderful!” exclaimed Magoda, and smacked the left horn with his hand. The right horn stopped yielding food, and that which he had not consumed disappeared back into the left horn. “So that is how it is!” laughed the boy. “Thank you, my good ox! My father truly did look after me that fortunate day he gave you to me. By striking your right horn I need never go hungry!”

They continued, but as the sun set they came upon another herd of cattle. This time the ox gave a deep sigh and said: “Here I must take leave of you! I have to fight this herd too, but they will kill me. When I am dead, break off my horns and take them with you. They will provide for you at all times, whenever you speak to them, but they will never work for anyone else”. Magoda begged the ox not to fight: “Don’t leave me, you are my only friend and companion”. But the ox wouldn’t listen and made his way towards the herd.

A fierce fight started and it looked as though the ox would win, but this time there were too many bulls and eventually, they killed him, and the herd trampled over his body. Sadly, Magoda took off the horns, hid them under his clothes and went on his way.

(Adapted from Greaves 2004:106-109)

Finally, things were going Magoda’s way. He left behind his village where he was seen as nothing more than cheap labour, found a friend in the ox that was loyal to him and discovered that his beloved ox’s horns could provide him with food. The euphoria he must have felt however soon was overshadowed by the death of his friend and provider when the ox died in a fierce bullfight. Feelings of despair must have surged through Magoda as he removed the horns from the dead ox.

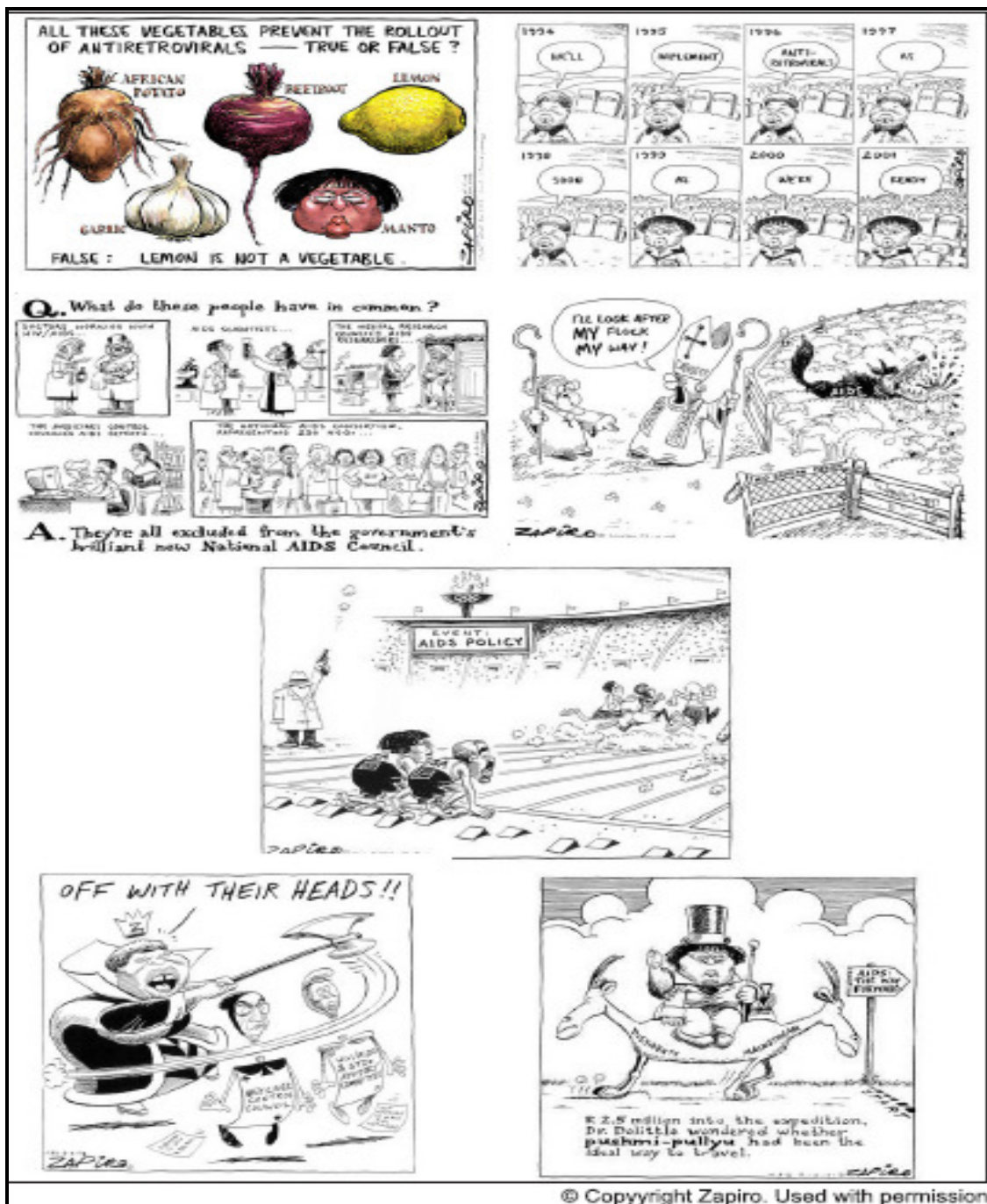
Just like the two stampeding herds of cattle that approached Magoda and his ox, endangered their lives, and ultimately Magoda's ox was killed by the second herd's bull, so too is HIV and Aids encroaching on the lives of people – people who could have been Magoda's parents.

We live in Africa, sub-Saharan Africa to be more precise, the region hardest hit with HIV and Aids in the world. It is home to over 70% of the total world HIV-positive population (<http://www.aidsinafrica.net/map.php>). To try to ignore it is not only futile, but also ignorant and in fact extremely dangerous. Yet, many people – including the former president of South Africa – Thabo Mbeki as well as the former health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang tried their utmost to sweep the harsh reality and consequences of HIV and Aids under the proverbial carpet. Even the first democratically elected president of South Africa – Nelson Mandela – made and acknowledged mistakes he made during his presidency regarding HIV and Aids. Not even to speak of the current president – Jacob Zuma's – escapades. Being polygamous, he has entered into several marriages, and has fathered many a child. Not all of whom are with his legal wives. His adulterous behaviour even made headlines on numerous occasions. The HIV and Aids discourse are in constant interplay with other – like these aforementioned political – discourses and as such it is important to take note thereof if one wants to investigate HIV and Aids as a phenomenon, as well as look at the impact – directly or indirectly – it is having on the lives of my co-researchers. Although not all of them are so-called Aids orphans, HIV and Aids impacts on the contexts wherein they all find themselves and as young adolescents become aware of their own sexuality, HIV and Aids are an imminent threat, always lurking and waiting to charge like the bull in the second herd that ultimately killed Magoda's trustworthy ox.

This chapter therefore focuses on different traditions of interpretations as the fourth movement of PFPT suggests – interpretations of HIV and Aids, HIV and Aids statistics and parental bereavement.

3.2 MAKING THE NEWS: AIDS AND RELATED DISCOURSES

Mostly Manto Madness

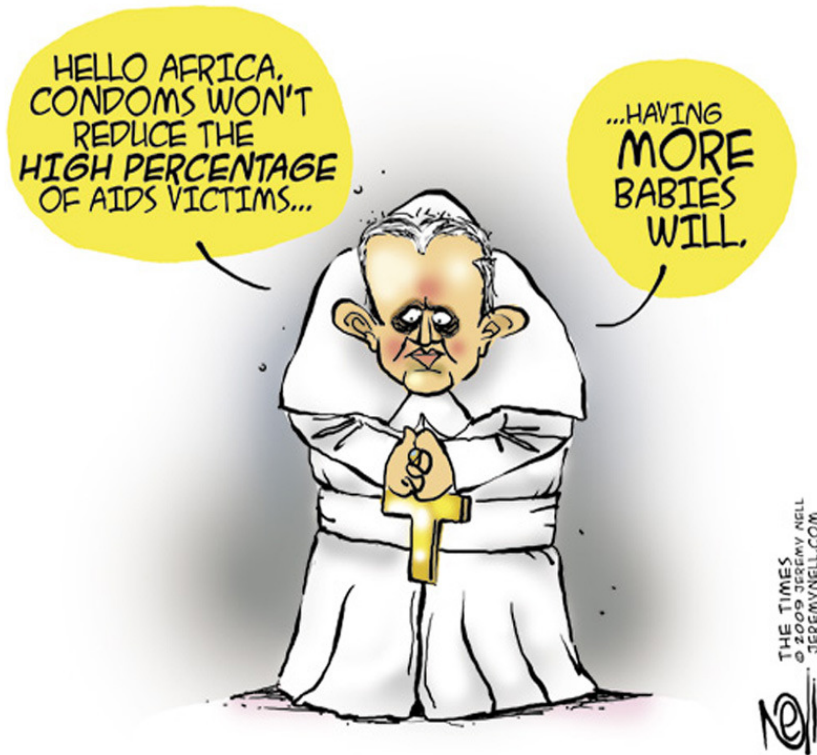


Aids – not again! I can almost hear some of my readers’ sighing at reading the word ‘Aids’ in the heading above. Most of us know – at least something – about Aids and the consequences thereof. In order not to bore my readers to death with a regurgitation of well-known facts regarding HIV and Aids, I have instead opted to go a different route and make use of cartoons as a tradition of interpretation, regarding the phenomenon. Well-known South African cartoon artist Jonathan Shapiro otherwise known as Zapiro, has a knack when it comes to seeing the lighter side of serious issues. While I was playing around with the idea to incorporate cartoons about HIV and Aids and related discourses in my research report, I came across Zapiro’s website (www.zapiro.com). If it is true that laughter is indeed the best medicine, then I found the best pharmacy ever the moment I accessed his website. While issues surrounding HIV and Aids made headlines in the media the last couple of years, he has built up a whole section devoted to these issues. I contacted him via his website and was granted permission to use cartoons relating to HIV and Aids in my research report. The cartoons on the previous page represent some of Zapiro’s best work regarding HIV and Aids and statements made by the former minister of health, Manto Tsabalala-Msimang on the topic. The fourth cartoon – featuring Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Pope – will be referred to at a later stage in this discussion.

Doctor Manto Tsabalala-Msimang is probably most known for her statements regarding the value of foods like beetroot and garlic in the fight against HIV and Aids. There was a public outcry after the South African exhibition at the 2006 International Aids conference in Toronto when South Africa’s exhibition showcased amongst others garlic and beetroot as a treatment for HIV and Aids. The United Nations’ special envoy for Aids in Africa Stephen Lewis said South Africa promoted a "lunatic fringe" attitude to HIV/Aids (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5319680.stm>)



The Pope in Rome and Tutu in South Africa



The cartoon at the start of section 3.2 depicts Archbishop Desmond Tutu's criticism of the Catholic Church's stance against the use of condoms. Along with the other two cartoons above, it is a tongue in the cheek look at how the Church and more specifically, the Catholic Church is involved in shaping believers' opinions about the use of condoms and protecting themselves against HIV and Aids infection. The cartoon first mentioned was sketched by Zapiro and was published on February, 24 2004 (www.zapiro.com). Zapiro also sketched the daring cartoon of the Pope in a condom on the previous page. It was originally published on March 22, 2009. An artist with the pseudonym of Jerm sketched the second cartoon on the previous page. It was originally published in *The Times* newspaper on March 19, 2009 (www.africartoons.com/cartoon/365).

The last two cartoons refer to statements made by the Pope in February 2009 during a visit to Africa about the use of condoms in the fight against HIV and Aids. The pontiff stated that condoms were not the answer to Africa's fight against HIV and Aids and that it can actually worsen the problem (Butt 2009). Rebecca Hodes of the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa reacted on the statement made by the Pope and said that if the pontiff was serious about preventing new HIV infections, he would promote access to condoms as well as about the spreading of information about how to use it (Butt 2009).

The Roman Catholic Church still chooses to object to the use of condoms, even after other Church leaders like Archbishop Tutu have urged them in 2004 already (see first cartoon) to change their stance in order to save lives. Instead, the Roman Catholic Church encourages sexual abstinence and fidelity to prevent the further spread of the disease. This policy has divided clergy working with Aids patients (Butt 2009).

3.3 HIV AND AIDS ORPHANS: THE SAD STORY OF STATISTICS

A single death is a tragedy,
A million deaths is a statistic
- Joseph Stalin -

Africa south of the Sahara has the youngest population in the world (Watson 2001:12). Youth is synonymous with new potential, a fresh outlook on life and boundless creativity. What should be a continent full of new possibilities and endless growth potential, is rather a continent in dire straits. As Van Dyk (2001:61) puts it: "Africa is not doing well in her battle against Aids." We are (not so) slowly losing our youth in the battle with the HIV and Aids pandemic. Already before the turn of the millennium, it was recorded that Africa had 70% of the world's Aids sufferers and 83% of the world's Aids related deaths (Swanepoel 1999:3). Since HIV and Aids infections among adults in Africa are mostly attributed to unprotected sex between men and woman (Van Dyk 2001:60), it is then no wonder that Africa also has 95% of the Aids orphans of the world (Swanepoel 1999:3). These young adults are 'jumping the que (sic)' (Van Dyk 2001:62) when it comes to dying, or as Overberg (1994:3) puts it: "A generation of young adults is dying before its time, leaving many children orphaned...".

According to the Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>) in 2008 an estimated 22.4 million adults and children were living with HIV and Aids in sub-Saharan Africa. Also during that year, 1.4 million Africans died from HIV and Aids infection. Two of these adults were Dee's mother and Zee's father whom both succumbed to the disease in 2008. Also according to the Avert website, 14.1 million children have also lost one or both parents to the disease during 2008. Since these statistics only take children up to the age of fifteen into account, in reality these statistics are skewed. Dee and Zee, both still at school and dependant on their parents, also lost their parents.

However, in Aids literature they would mostly not be included in statistics of this nature as they both were sixteen years of age when they lost their parents.

The situation regarding HIV and Aids statistics is no better in South Africa. Again according to the Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>) 5.7 million people in South Africa were living with the virus in 2008. This amounts to 18.1% of the adult population of South Africa. In the same year it is estimated that 350 000 South Africans succumbed to the disease, which contributed to 1.4 million children left orphaned. Roughly speaking, the South African HIV and Aids orphans of 1.4 million represent 10% of the HIV and Aids orphans in sub-Saharan Africa (14.1 million). In 2002 Landman (2002:270) estimated that around two million children in South Africa would have been orphaned by the year we are in now – 2010. However, the official statistics tell a better story. But, if this story is to be believed is the question, as we have seen that most statistics only regard children up to the age of fifteen who have lost their parents as possible ‘orphans’.

These statistics are shocking by any standards, yet most of these statistics are outdated by the time they reach the news media. Barrett and Whiteside (2002:199) state in this regard that the bare statistics are troubling and that these statistics “... tell of a generation of children deprived of their childhood”. These children, deprived of their childhood are mostly also living in dire poverty, and in reference to the impact of poverty, Mandela himself stated in his 1964 “I am the First Accused” (Montefiore 2005:131/132) trial speech that:

Children wander about the streets of the townships because they have no schools to go to, or no money to enable them to go to school, or no parents at home to see that they go to school, because both parents (if there be two) have to work to keep the family alive. This leads to a breakdown in moral standards, to an alarming rise in illegitimacy, and to growing violence which erupts not only politically, but everywhere.

3.4 FROM THE PULPIT: THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Paterson (2009:3) underpins the importance of faith communities to become involved in the fight against HIV and Aids, for as he puts it:

For us, the concept of 'compassion' has a particular theological significance, which includes an emphasis on the importance of long-term and sustained commitment that is modelled on God's faithful and compassionate commitment to God's people. In Jesus Christ, who suffers alongside us, we find a non-stigmatising dimension of shared suffering that frees Christian understanding of 'compassion' from the 'us and them' baggage that often accompanies the notion of pity.

In reference to HIV and Aids prevention, Paterson (2009:2) actually pleads for transversality when he states that theology must partake in discussions of public interest, and that these discussions must involve other disciplines as well. Paterson (2009:2) goes on to say that the international community is becoming more aware of the role that faith communities can play in the process of development and change. In line with postfoundational practical theology, Paterson (2009:3) also states that "(n)ext, we would wish to affirm the focus on the importance of context". In terms of context and community participation, churches and Christian organisations have according to Paterson (2009:4) important contributions to make. This is because "(o)f all local forms of organisation, faith communities are often the strongest, most effective, and most clearly embedded in family and neighbourhood life" (Paterson 2009:4).

Heath (2009:69) furthermore reminds us that "HIV is a virus, not a moral condition". This is important to remember because within the Christian concept of common good, is also the recognition that "...each person is created and held in being by God, and therefore has intrinsic dignity and value" (Paterson 2009:22).

For churches and other Christian communities to become active in the field of HIV and Aids care and prevention, churches must first become what Okaalet (2009:84) termed an 'Aids competent church'. A church like this will turn its back on denial and start to acknowledge the reality and enormity of the Aids problem. Okaalet (2009:84) describes this type of church as follows:

It is a Church that knows its own strengths and weaknesses, and uses its strengths as a starting point for a scaled up response. It is a Church that recognises vulnerability and risk and works to reduce them. It is a learning Church that listens and shares; a Church that has zero tolerance for stigma and discrimination, a Church in whose ministry people living with HIV or Aids are playing a central role. It is a Church that is living out its full potential, both as an organisation and as a congregation.

In light of this and in reference to specifically the Zambian context, Mulenga (2009:97) hypothesises that the empowerment of church-based communities can contribute significantly towards the mitigation of the impact of the HIV and Aids crisis. Okaalet (2009:85) proposes a holistic critical approach to empower an Aids competent church. He uses the word 'CRITICAL' as an acronym for this approach that would bring together the following:

- **C**ommunity – how it influences our society;
- **R**eligion – how it imbues our actions;
- **I**nvovement – what it means for us;
- **T**echnical capacity – what it means in a global health crisis;
- **I**nfrastructure – what challenges us in rural and urban Africa and elsewhere;
- **C**apital – why it is more than money;
- **A**ccess – how globalisation can pull Africa forward;
- **L**eadership – what is necessary for success at all levels: local, national, regional and international

3.5 AFRICAN STORYTELLING AS A TRADITION OF INTERPRETATION

UTSHINTSHA NOMNYAMA (Tshintsha and the rainbow)



A man named *Tshintsha* owned a garden. The garden was situated alongside a riverbed. One rainy morning *Tshintsha* went outside to watch his garden during the rain. When the rain cleared up, a rainbow (**umnyama*) descended into the river. Some of the old people say that the *umnyama* is a sheep, which comes out of great pools. Others say that the *umnyama* lives with a snake, that is, where the *umnyama* is, there is also a snake. But as for *Tshintsha*, he neither saw a sheep, nor a snake in his garden that day. All of a sudden the *umnyama* came out of the river and into *Tshintsha*'s garden. When *Tshintsha* saw the *umnyama* coming closer to him, he became afraid and tried to run away. The *umnyama* dazzled *Tshintsha* and struck his eyes with a red colour. Men say that the *umnyama* is a disease. If it rests on a person, some illness will befall him. Afraid *Tshintsha* wondered why the *umnyama* poisoned him. Struggling to see, he ran from his garden with the *umnyama* still chasing him. Because the *umnyama* poisoned *Tshintsha*, he became very ill, and developed swellings on his body which later erupted. As a result of the eruptions, his body assumed an unnatural colour. Sick with worry, *Tshintsha* finally decided to leave his home and family to undertake a great journey in search of a rainbow doctor, in an effort to rid himself of the poison of the *umnyama*.

(Adapted from Canonici 1993:58)

The Zulu folktale of Tshintsha and the rainbow (*umnyama*) tells the story of how a rainbow that appeared after a storm caused great illness for a man called Tshintsha and even led to his death. Although *umnyama* is translated in Canonici (1993:58) with the word 'rainbow', it literally means 'darkness'. When used metaphorically, as in the context of the story above, it can also be translated as 'pollution' (Ngubane 1977:78). I also used this folktale in my Masters dissertation and referred to the *umnyama* as a metaphor for HIV and Aids. I wanted to include it here again, since this folktale links up with the one told in chapter 7 also about a rainbow. The reader might wonder why I chose to use the art of African storytelling in this thesis. I am of the opinion that the narrative approach to therapy and research has much in common with the art of African storytelling. This research tried to employ this common ground as this section will explain. As I have already postulated in chapter 1 (Introduction), I, as an African, are doing research on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of African children, some of whom are HIV and Aids orphans. Chapter 3 is therefore not only about traditions of interpretation, of which the art of African storytelling is one tradition. It is not just about stories from African tradition that are told and interpreted, it is also about Africans – my co-researchers and I – that tell stories.

Orally transmitted myths and folktales of African people, such as "*Utshintsha Nomnyama*", are based on human experience. They tell of people's "... wrestlings with the mysteries of existence, life and death". These tales are products of African people's reflections on "... the relations among humans, .. responses to the challenges of the unknown, and to the universal need to create order and reason out of chaos and accident". (Courlander 1975:1). The following story – "Hare and the King of the Beasts" – formed part of an exercise with my co-researchers. The lion in this story became representative of the HIV and Aids crisis and some questions were developed to get the children actively thinking and talking of the dangers of this disease. The story, conversation questions and some of the co-researchers' responses to it follows.

Hare and the King of the Beasts

The elders tell us that in the earliest of times Lion, the King of the Beasts, was the most feared of all creatures, and that his hunting skills were extraordinary. So many animals were being eaten by the King that all the creatures of the wild called a special counsel to see how they could be saved from extinction.

Eventually, they decided they should go to the lion and suggest a compromise - an offer to sacrifice a few for the safety of them all. When asked if he would agree to eat only one animal a day and leave the rest alone, the lion pondered on this offer at length. Eventually he nodded.

So the animals drew lots each day, and it was a task of the loser to present himself or herself to the lion to be devoured. The first day the steenbok was the loser. Bravely she walked to the lion's den and he pounced on her and ate at his leisure. Next, it was the turn of the impala, then the kudu, and then the reedbuck, and so it went on day after day.

Eventually, it fell to the lot of the hare to be the next victim, and the other animals prepared to drag him, kicking and screaming, to the lion's den. But Hare told them he was prepared to meet his fate, and that he would walk there calmly. There was no need for any undignified dragging. But the hare did not go directly to the lion. First he went home and slept till noon.

By then the lion was hungry and most displeased that his meal had not arrived in the agreed way. So he set off through the bush, roaring his displeasure as he went. Eventually he found Hare, who had climbed up a tree that overlooked a deep well.

As the lion drew near, Hare shouted down to him, 'What are you making all that dreadful noise for?'

The lion replied that his daily meal had not arrived, but that he was searching for it, and that he was very angry that it had not arrived as he had agreed with the animals. He was beginning to wonder if he should start hunting again, to remind them who really was the King of the Beasts.

'Well I was chosen by the lot to be your meal for the day,' replied the hare.

'And I had brought you a present of honey as well. But I met another lion and he took the honey from me!'

'Where is this other lion?' roared the King furiously.

'He is in the well,' said Hare, 'but he is not afraid of you and says that he is bigger and stronger than you.'

Now that made the lion angrier than ever, and he went straight over to the well. He peered down and saw another lion looking up him, and he looked angry. The King of the Beasts shouted insults at the intruder, but silence was his only reply. The lion then resorted to shouting every insult and slander at the impostor, even insulting his parents, but to no response. This incensed the King so much that he could no longer control his rage. He leapt down into the well and on top of the other lion.

Too late did he realise his foolishness, for it was only his reflection that greeted him before he splashed into a watery grave.

And that was how Hare tricked the King of Beasts, and saved the animals of the bush.

(Adapted from Greaves 2004:32-35)

HARE AND THE KING OF THE BEASTS. A Sotho tale.

Some conversation questions pertaining to the story.

For group discussion:

- Why do you think Lion had such good hunting skills?
- Do you think he only hunted when he was hungry?
- If so – why was he still so feared by the other animals?
- How do you think the families of the animals who were hunted by the Lion feel?
- When do you think did the animals finally had enough of him terrorising them and what was the council thinking when they came up with the compromise?
- What did the rest of the animals think when the council announced their decision?
- Why were they willingly going along with the council's decision?
- What made Hare different from the other animals?
- Do you think he was afraid to die?
- Or was he the only one with courage to face the Lion? Why do you say that?
- Did he only act for his own benefit in order to stay alive?
- Or did he act for the benefit of the community as well? Why do you say that?

After talking and discussing the story and the questions with the adolescents, the idea of externalising HIV and Aids as the hungry lion would be suggested to them. The questions above will then be reframed to focus on HIV and Aids and how they experience this Lion in their lives.

By making use of an African tale, the discourse of HIV and Aids will be introduced in a non-threatening manner. Thus making it easier to discuss and educating them as to the dangers of HIV and Aids in a creative way, while also instilling an African sense of community; empowering them as only Mama Africa can.

We are all facing our own Lions (TOL – 'storms') at some point in our lives.

For some of you that Lion might be HIV and Aids lurking around your family, friends and loved ones. The AIDS Lion might even have already preyed on somebody close to you, like your parent(s), family and friends.

Even if HIV and Aids isn't a direct threat to you at this moment, we are all influenced by the presence thereof in society in general. Schools are integrating information on it in their programmes on sex education and even ministers are addressing the dangers thereof from the pulpit. It seems like more and more people and organisations are standing up and standing together against this raging AIDS Lion, yet much more still needs to be done before we can overcome and defeat this Aids Lion.

The following questions based on the story ***HARE AND THE KING OF THE BEASTS. A Sotho tale*** pertains to the presence and influence of the Aids Lion in your life:

1. Why do you think the Aids Lion has such good hunting skills?

I wouldn't say the lion has good hunting skills, it is just scary and it is very strategic plans before it attacks the (prey) - **Annie**

Because he was the eldest and he had learned a lot from his past - **Dimakatso**

Defined in skills means killing then yes because people go ahead and be caught by the Lion, they know he's dangerous but they still go. So the AIDS Lion has good skill because he knows his prey - **Dee**

I think it is because it was (it) realised the weak points of the target. It has done its homework - **Michael**

I think it is because it has to have a meal so it has to come up with the way to eat something - **Shaun**

2. When do you think the Aids Lion likes to hunt?

When there is a lot of promiscuity in the family - **Annie**

When there are a lot of animals out in the bush - **Dimakatso**

In the dark when no one is looking nobody will know if it got you are not and most of the time no one cares - **Dee**

When it finds the weak points - **Michael**

It is when it is hungry - **Shaun**

3. Do you think people fear this Aids Lion? Please give reasons for your answer.

Not really, because AIDS is not a physical thing meaning that it is not a sickness that people can see with the right treatment - **Annie**

Yes, because he ate a lot of animals per day and didn't only eat one - **Dimakatso**

I think it's only when one sees or is gotten by AIDS Lion that they fear. People think that it will not get them - **Dee**

I wouldn't say that because we still have people having sex without condoms -

Michael

Yes I think so because it keep(s) us away from our loved ones through death -

Shaun

4. How do you think the families of the persons who were hunted by the Aids Lion feel?

Some families don't understand AIDS so they end up isolating them because of their lack of knowledge - **Annie**

Very sad and maybe hurting - **Dimakatso**

Very sad and angry about it - **Dee**

Horrible, embarrassed etc - **Michael**

At some point I would say they are angry because of foolishness of someone who let the Lion catch (them) but the truth is they are sad - **Shaun**

5. How does these feelings you just described, influence their thinking about HIV and Aids in general and about contracting HIV and Aids themselves?

Some people just believe that they will never get Aids they tend to think they are immune to it - **Annie**

It makes them think that it kills. People think they will suffer the rest of their lives - **Dimakatso**

In general I think people do nothing about these emotions and just live with it.

And it only those that decided they will learn not to repeat the same path as those hunted - **Dee**

I think they see it as an enemy towards - **Michael**

They should be afraid of this virus and they probably don't want to get infected and they now believe that this disease is real - **Shaun**

6. Do you think enough is being done to combat the Aids Lion reign of terror in our country? Give reasons for your answer.

Yes, because I feel that Government can only do up to so much, the rest that people should meet the Government halfway - **Annie**

No, because the country and the people are not looking after themselves and AIDS is spreading - **Dimakatso**

Yes. It has gotten to a point where condoms are given at schools. And schools are supposed to be a safe environment. But the country (Government) knows it's not safe so they are trying their best. I just don't think about the nation since its 50/50 everyone - **Dee**

Yes! I think so. There are so much books about AIDS, there are condoms given away for free but people don't want to listen - **Michael**

I do not think so. The Lion still catch new people every day and people are still not responsible enough - **Shaun**

7. Who do you think needs to take responsibility to stop this Aids Lion in his tracks? Explain your answer.

Most of the time the man should take responsibility because for men they just go and sleep around - **Annie**

Yourself, because you have to protect and look after yourself - **Dimakatso**

That every individual, just like the hare - **Dee**

Myself and others because I'm the one who makes (the) decision to sleep without a condom - **Michael**

Everybody has to take responsibility because changes are brought on by everybody's commitment - **Shaun**

8. What more can organizations like NGOs (for instance PEN) and Churches do to help in the war with the Aids Lion? Explain your answer.

They can only teach and tell them the pros and cons of HIV and Aids - **Annie**

Pray, counsel them or give them more antibiotics - **Dimakatso**

To teach people more about AIDS and how to prevent it - **Dee**

Keep telling people about the danger of HIV / AIDS and sex before marriage is a sin - **Michael**

They can provide condoms and really encourage people to always protect themselves and built a place where they can teach about the Lion - **Shaun**

9. What can ordinary people, like you and me, do to become like the hare in the tale – to be brave and face the Aids Lion to help to defeat him?

Accept that there is AIDS and we are not immune to it by treating ourselves well we will be okay -**Annie**

Help them because they seem to be suffering - **Dimakatso**

We can decide not to follow Aids lion and tell those around us to get away from AIDS Lion - **Dee**

Set an example to the next generation - **Michael**

Use a condom at all times or abstain from sex - **Shaun**

10. What role can communities take in the war with the Aids Lion? Explain your answer.

Just explained to them there is HIV and we have no choice but to accept it -

Annie

Try and defend themselves and maybe kill them - **Dimakatso**

To teach the children the right morals and ethics and how to respect yourself and not just to surrender yourself up to be AIDS Lion -**Dee**

Campaigns could (be) worked out advising youth about condomising - **Michael**

If they get together and agree on one thing and that could be to protect themselves against the disease through condomising - **Shaun**

Reflection-in-Progress: African storytelling as a narrative tool

As can be seen from the responses to this exercise, stories like these can be well utilised to get children, even older adolescents like my co-researchers to engage in discussions on serious matters, like the HIV and Aids crisis. From their responses, it seems like most of them were able to understand the metaphor of the Aids Lion and responded well to it. Most of them showed good factual knowledge and interesting enough – during one of the last sessions of the second TOL camp – I asked the co-researchers point blank if any of them have ever tested for HIV and Aids. Only two girls responded negatively. Although I did not want to press the issue, some said they only tested because it was an organised group activity.

3.6 YOUNG PICASSO AT PLAY: USING THE ARTS TO EXPRESS

3.6.1 Roots and all: The *Tree of Life* metaphor in full colour

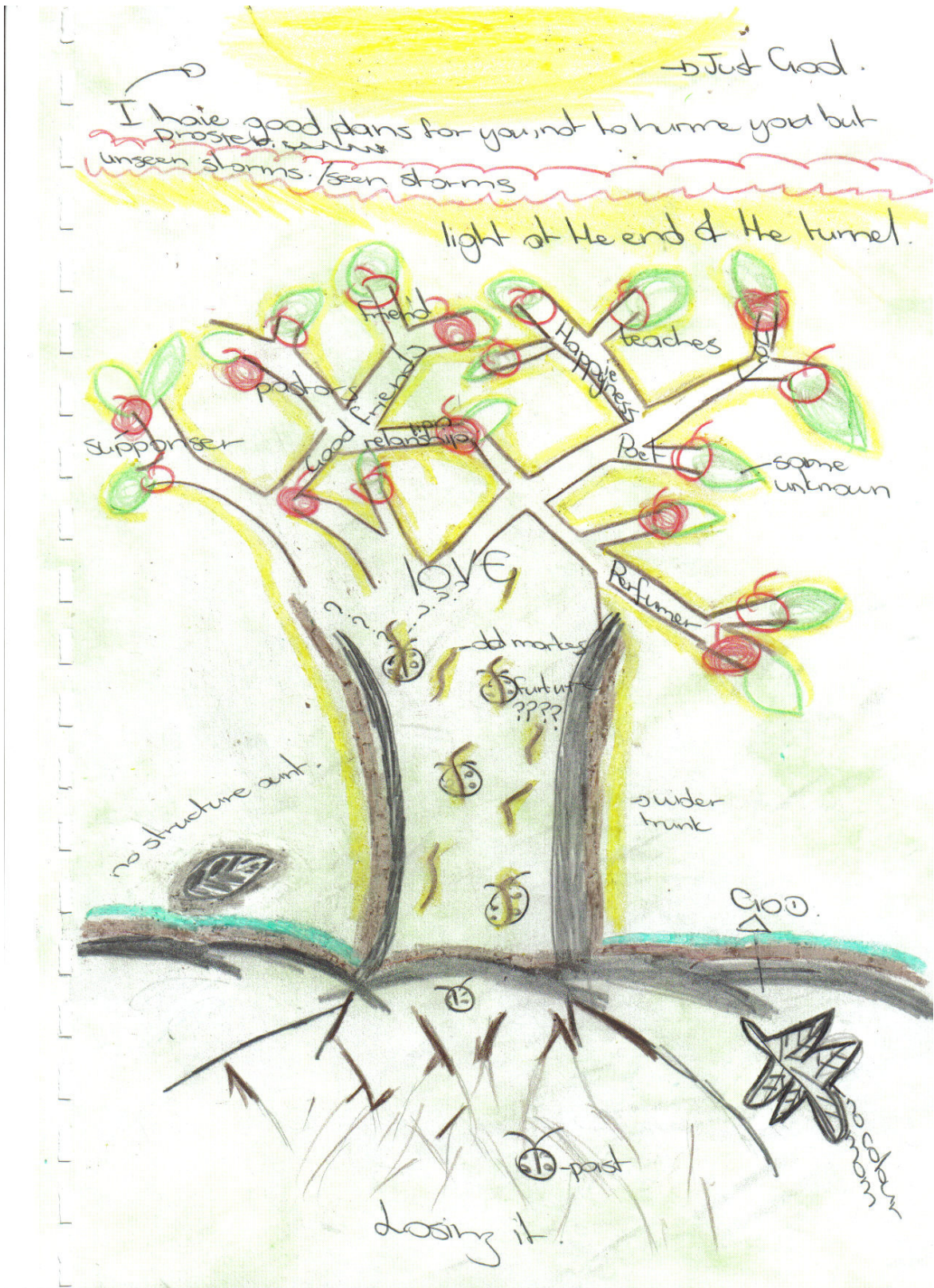
Art tells the story of the culture and the discourses informing it. This section focuses on employing the arts – drawing, photography, song writing and storytelling – as a narrative tool to elicit more of my co-researchers' own stories, thoughts and feelings regarding their bereavement.

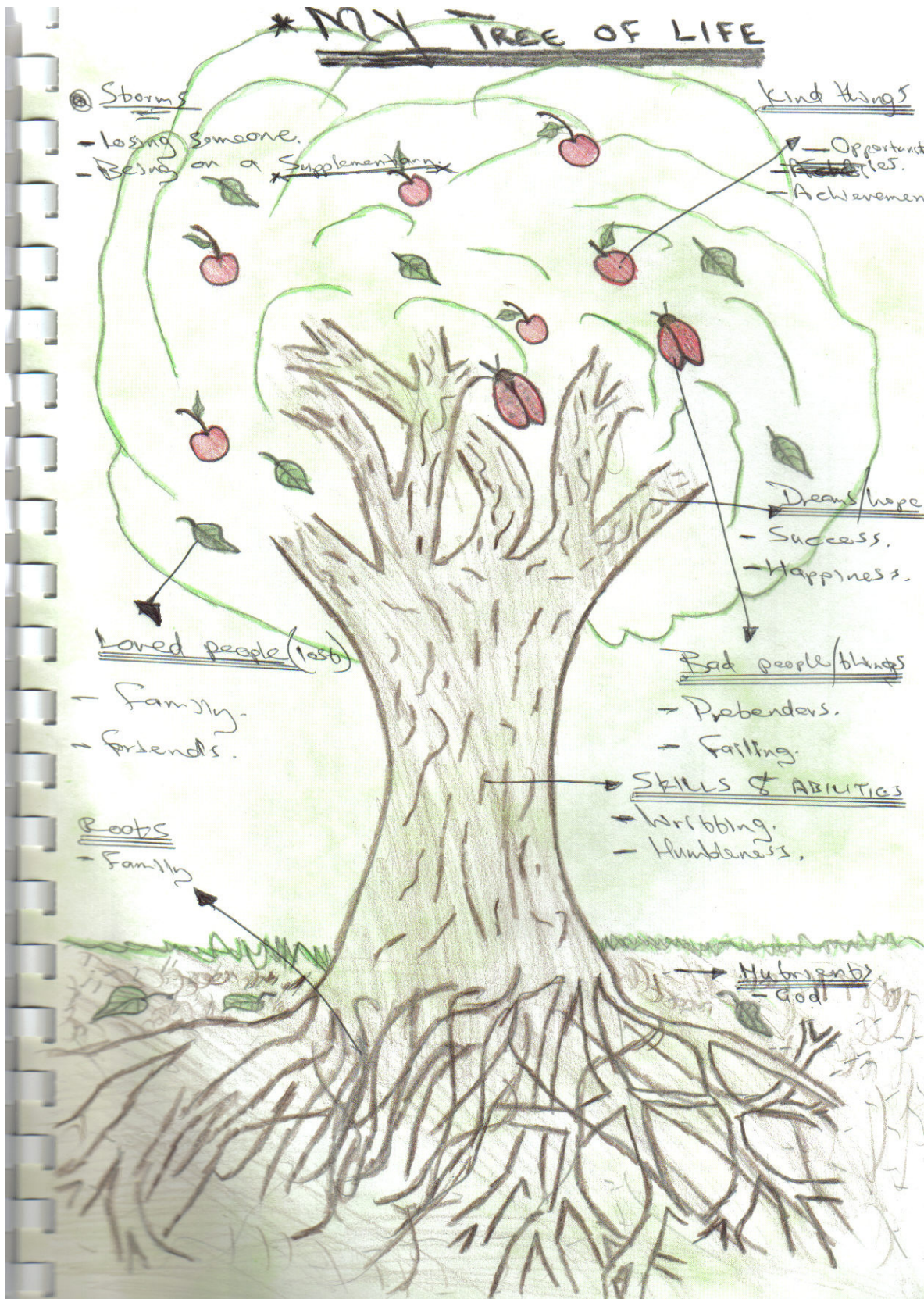
As part of the second TOL camp's activities, they were asked to once again draw their own *Tree of Life* as representative of themselves and their stories. During the TOL camps, I gave the boys and girls two disposable cameras with which to take photos as part of the research. Collages of some of these photos follow the two Tree pictures as an insert.

They were also asked to write their own *Tree of Life* song as well as their own African folktale, similar to that in the previous section (3.5).

To be able to make sense of the two *Tree of Life* pictures on the following pages, the reader first needs to familiarise him or herself with the *Tree of Life* metaphor as explained by Ncube (2006:6). The pictures included are firstly that of Dee, one of the girls who lost her mother, and secondly that of Victor, one of the boys who were regarded as a vulnerable adolescent having lost his aunt, who was his primary caregiver.

The **roots** of the tree represent significant people from the co-researchers' ancestry, origins and family history. The **trunk** is representative of significant events that shaped the co-researchers' lives. Both positive events and negative events are included. The **leaves** represent people or significant relationships in the co-researchers' lives. Fallen leaves act as a metaphor to represent important people in the co-researchers' lives whom have died. The **branches** of the tree represents the co-researchers' hopes and dreams they have for themselves. The **fruits** were representative of the co-researchers' achievements – the things which he or she was proud of. The **bugs** on the tree that eat away at the fruits and the leaves are a metaphor for the problems and challenges the co-researchers are facing in their daily lives (Ncube 2006:6).





INSERT TO SECTION 3.6.1¹

A PICTURE'S WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS: *TREE OF LIFE* PHOTOS

As was mentioned earlier my co-researchers were equipped with disposable cameras during both the TOL camps. During each camp, I gave them two cameras, one for the boys and one for the girls. I wanted them to also capture the TOL camps as part of their own life stories. They enjoyed this activity very much, and all of them participated in taking photos. Although my co-researchers did not mind me using their real names and some even insisted, they did not want photos showing their faces posted on the research project's website (www.hivorphans.co.za). As I wanted to include some of these photos in my thesis, I came up with the idea to cover their faces with specific smiley face stickers. This way the reader are able to identify them, without actually being able to identify them. In doing so, the reader is able to gain insight into the interactions between my co-researchers themselves as well as with the researchers.

¹ Please note that this insert has been omitted from the electronic version of the thesis.

3.6.2 Annie – ‘Save me from my troubles’

Own TREE song: Life Hurts

Life has been hard / I have been in positions where I felt so unloved and neglected
and till this day Lord I ask

Chorus

Lord lead me into greener pastures / Save me from my troubles
Father I need you now more than ever / I am sitting in the stillness
and trying to find answers to my troubles / but all I see darkness but no light at the end of the tunnel

I have shed so much tears / Lord you say you will guide and protect me so
Lord show yourself
Life has been hard / I have been in positions where I felt so unloved and neglected
and till this day Lord I cannot find / answers so Lord I ask you to

Chorus

I have shed tears I never thought / and Lord in your Word you say that every tear I cry you will wipe it away / back to Father I always end up asking myself whether you really (do) hear me when I call unto you

Own African folktale: Tshelane

Tshelane was a young girl who had been staying with her grandmother, Tshelane was a girl who was self disciplined and a very helpful girl, the whole village knew that Tshelane was a girl who use to help old people.

One day she was sent to go and fetch wood but on her way she saw the cloud covering in and then there came a huge storm started she had nowhere to go so she started running and hiding under trees and bushes but when ever she tried it would catch up with her after running the cloud ended up telling Tshelane that 'Why are you running away from me I am trying to protect you so please stay under my shelter.'

Reflection-in-Progress: Annie's TREE song and African folktale

Annie's TREE song reminds strongly of the well-known Psalm 23 – "Lord lead me into greener pastures". It tells of the emotions the writer is struggling with: despair – "but all I see darkness but no light at the end of the tunnel", "Lord show yourself"; sadness – "I have shed tears I never thought"; and anger – "I always end up asking myself whether you really (do) hear me when I call unto you".

Annie's own African folktale entitled "Tshelane" refers to characteristics of Tshelane that is also easily recognisable in Annie's own character – self-discipline, helpful, kind towards others. The cloud that at first scared Tshelane turned out to be her saving grace during the storm – "Why are you running away from me I am trying to protect you". If one looks at this story in relation to Annie's TREE song, it seems like Annie as the writer of these two stories might sometimes feel as if God has forsaken her during the storms in her life.

At times, she might even run away from Him because she fears Him, yet she also acknowledges that He is always present during the storms in her life and that He wants to provide her with shelter and protection during these difficult times.

3.6.3 Dee – ‘Feeling not so lightly’

Own TREE song: Time Stopping

Carrying all these bags, and / walking on bugs
Inside not looking that heavil(e)y / Feeling not so lightly
When did I pick it up

Chorus

Picking up feels undecided / so takes time
Stopping feels natural / The thinking takes time to stop
Takes time stopping

Ask for help to bring it up / Get company to walk up
Splitting to go further / Now it's time to put it down
Thinking takes time

Chorus

Ask again but no one there / Look around and there
Find no one / till Jesus put it down / Finally stopped

Own African folktale: (Mmosteso and the helpful ant)

Mmosteso (the questioner) was known in the village to help people with everything where he can.

One day he was trying to pick up a huge rock but he was alone. He looked around, he found nothing, he looked for (someone) but (found) no one. There he was alone and no one to help. Then it started to rain there was no way of running with out the rock moving.

As he was pushing and pushing the rock started moving. When the rock was moved the rain stopped. Mmosteso looked around to find the person who helped him and he saw a tiny, little ant still pushing the big rock. Mmosteso thanked the ant because if it was not for the strength of the ant and him the rock would have not been moved.

Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's TREE song and African folktale

Dee's TREE song has elements in that refer to her self-acknowledged depression – "If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed". It tells of carrying many bags (troubles) and walking on bugs (represented in the TOL metaphor as bad things that have happened in your life). In her one TOL workbook, she even acknowledges her death wishes:

When my mom passed away I was left to confront and be with my negative family. And during that time I wanted to commit suicide. At that moment I was angry with God and told Him to take me away because I can't kill myself - **Dee**

The song goes on to tell of how thinking about these troubles takes up her energy: “Thinking takes time” and that it helps to ask for help and get some company: “Ask for help to bring it up / Get company to walk up”. But in the end – even when no-one listens anymore, Jesus is still there, and He not only listens to her troubles, but takes it from her and frees her – “Find no one / till Jesus put it down / Finally stopped”.

Dee’s African folktale tells the story of how Mmosteso was helped by a little ant to move a heavy rock in the rain and when the rock started to move, the rain ceased. Something as small as an ant seemed to be the unique outcome in this story of Dee – as small as it was, it proved to be very strong and helpful. I would have liked to talk to Dee about her story and see what she sees as the helpful ant in her life. But if I read her life story as compiled during the two TOL camps and the TOL workbooks, it seems like the ant could represent courage in her life. Once she has enough courage to face the storms in her life, nothing seems to get Dee down, although she struggles constantly not to be pulled down by the storms in her life as is evident in both her TREE song, as well as her African folktale.

3.6.4 Dimakatso – ‘I think about her each night and day’

Own TREE song: I

I sit and I stand / I think about her each night and day
I wonder why God took her / I wonder how life be
I turn to God day and night / I just think about her

Chorus

What goes around comes around / What goes up must come down
It does not matter who you are / but I just think about her

Own African folktale: The One Way

Long long back there was a shortage of rain in a village called Moholoholo. The water from the river had also dried out. They went up and down the hills, side to side just to go and look for the mother of rain Mapula. Some of them took shortcuts some decided to take the long way. While they were on the way there the clouds started to become black/grey. One of the people was happy and said finally! Just only to find out that it was soot. Some of them died from inhaling it and some manage to survive it. When they got to Mapula they begged for rain. All of a sudden it started to rain and people were excited. After the rain they saw something that they never saw before. It was seven colours up the sky. They called it the One Way.

Reflection-in-Progress: Dimakatso's TREE song and African folktale

Dimakatso's TREE song simply entitled "I", tells of the heartache for the love of a deceased loved one, and how that longing never goes away: "I think about her each night and day". Furthermore, the onus is put on God for the mother's death – "I wonder why God took her". However, during this loss God is also always there to turn to for comfort – "I turn to God day and night".

Her African folktale entitled "The One Way" sounds vaguely familiar and I wonder if she has not adapted an existing African folktale for the purpose of this exercise. Yet, it is still a beautiful tale of people searching, struggling and ultimately finding the mother of rain, Mapula, to ask for rain during the drought, and not only receiving rain, but also hope in the form of the rainbow – the "One Way".

3.6.5 Palesa – ‘We going to make it in life challenges’

Own TREE song: (The pain of losing a parent)

Life have full of challenges / Obstacles that we faced
As people, that makes / us to be strong in our
Faith to overcome the / storms or problems

It is very hard and / difficult to love someone
That you really care about / and lose that special
Person that means everything to you

And you have to live with that / pain for the rest of your life
Not having your parent or the love of your parent / very painful

Own African folktale: A good shepherd strong and brave

There was a boy called Thabang he was a shepherd for his father's flock. He was always humble, faithful and trustfully to his father's flock. His father knew that when his animals are look by him everything was fine.

One day he was at the field as usual looking for the animals and suddenly a lion just came near the animals sheep, goats, cattle etc. And he was shocked and did not know what to do at all. Because it was a brave guy or boy he just told himself that he is going (to) save is the life of that animal by fighting the lion. He just stood up and fight the lion with a spear at the chest and the lion fall down and died immediately.

And that shows that he was brave and powerful men who make something that was impossible to become possible.

The story is related to our daily life storms. It shows that nothing is impossible even if we can face problems but still we going to make it in life challenges. They are not here to stay they will come to pass.

Reflection-in-Progress: Palesa's TREE song and African folktale

Palesa's TREE song tells of the challenges one faces in life, obstacles that make us stronger in the end and help to strengthen our faith: "As people, that makes / us to be strong in our / Faith to overcome the / storms or problems". Sometimes one of these life challenges is losing your parent to death. It is very hard to lose someone like your parent whom you love very much and this causes much pain in the life of a child: "Not having your parent or the love of your parent / very painful".

Her African folktale entitled "A good shepherd brave and strong", tells the story of a young boy, Thabang, herding his father's animals and caring for them. He was very good at what he did, and his father was proud of him for being so responsible with his animals. One day however the animals were in danger because a lion was trying to attack them. At first, Thabang was "...shocked and did not know what to do at all". However, because he was very brave he "...just told himself that he is going (to) save is the life of that animal by fighting the lion". This he did and killed the lion with his spear. Palesa related his braveness to the ability to "... make something that was impossible to become possible".

Palesa herself seemed to be a very brave individual, having lost her mother only the month (August 2008) before the first TOL camp (October 2008) and still having the ability to fully engage in all the camp activities.

Unlike the rest of the co-researchers, Palesa ends her story off with an explanation. Telling us, the readers, that this story is related to the storms we all encounter in our lives. She assures us that these storms too will pass and that “nothing is impossible” if we face our problems – like she faced the death of her mother head-on.

3.6.6 Zee – ‘(B)umpy drives sometimes happen for a reason’

Own African folktale: (Bumpy ride)

Our lives' is like a long road that we are trying to reach at the end of the road. But as we walking or driving along this road these potholes and bumpy rides. That's how I see life bumpy drives is sometimes happen for a reason and we don't know why these things happen.

Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's African folktale

Unfortunately, Zee did not complete the exercise on writing her own TREE song, and she possibly misunderstood the exercise on writing her own African folktale, as her answer above does not really reflect a story format, but rather looks more like a life lesson. Yet, it tells us something of her life and experiences. If life is like a road, then Zee's life personifies the state that the South African roads are in – full of bumps and unexpected potholes when you least expect it. Much has happened in her short life – her mother committed suicide when she was still a toddler and her father died of HIV and Aids, due to possible infection from her stepmother. Her uncertainty regarding life and the death of her father comes through as she contradicts herself by stating that “bumpy drives is something that happen for a reason”, yet she also says that “we don't know why these things happen”.

3.6.7 Michael – ‘(M)y heart keeps bleeding’

Own TREE song: (Without you mommy)

Mommy I missed you / Life ain't the same
Mommy and without you / remember all the good day good time
When I used to cry / by your side
Yeh! I miss that / my heart keeps
bleeding when I'm down / by your grave
I right now / mommy I'm somebody's slave
I wonder / how it feels
to be right where / you should my angel

Chorus

Throughout my struggles
through my pain
but I stand I stand

Reflection-in-Progress: Michael’s TREE song and African folktale

Michael unfortunately did not complete the exercise on writing his own African folktale. Yet, his untitled TREE song tells, like Palesa’s TREE song, of the loss a child experiences when their parent passes away. He acknowledges that life isn’t the same after his mother’s death, and remembers the good time, while also expressing his intense sadness “my heart keeps bleeding when I’m down by your grave”.

He feels confined by his life at present: “I right now / mommy I’m somebody’s slave” and wonders how it feels to be where his mother is now: “I wonder / how it feels / to be right where / you should my angel”.

I am uncertain if ‘my angel’ refers to his mother who is dead or if it refers to Michael himself as his mother would speak to him, but it does seem like he has contemplated what death would be like. Yet, as difficult as his life seems at present and how saddened Michael is by the untimely death of his mother, and though he feels despair at being without her in this world, he is still coping: “but I stand I stand”.

3.6.8 Moses – ‘(S)tarted to take life as it is’

Own TREE song: The morning

I wake up every day / and I don't feel the morning shine
I took another look into the sky

Hoping that the sun will shine / and all I feel is the rain
that brings me pain

I keep on praying and praying / preparing for any pressures of life
until one day morning

When the rainbow was in the sky / The pain went away and I flew into the
sky

I cry tears of joy and I prayed / Thank you Lord

Own African folktale: Three magical stones

Long long time ago, there was a boy named Molimi. He was a very lonely and sad boy without parents but only a brother was there to support him financially.

One day Sunday afternoon he decided to rest a bit and slept. He had a dream and in the dream he was very successful but not rich. He could afford life. In the dream he was visited by three angels and every angel gave him a wish stone.

The first stone, he wished that his parents were alive and they were staying together. The second stone he wished that he had all the riches in the world. The third stone he wished that he was the best DJ in the whole wide world. Everything was the way he wanted. He lived all his life with everything he wanted.

Until one day's parents had to divorce, everybody wanted all the money he had and his wife gave him HIV/AIDS. The phone ringed in his dream and that was an alarm waking him up. He woke up relieved that it was all a dream. So he started to take life as it is and stop blaming God for taking his parents. He started to work his way up and focus on God.

Reflection-in-Progress: Moses' TREE song and African folktale

Moses' TREE song entitled "The morning", captures the essence of the TOL camps beautifully. It tells of the writer waking up everyday looking forward to a beautiful sunshine day, but all he finds is one rainy day after the other, which causes him much pain. In response to this situation, he does two things – he keeps on praying, but also prepares himself for the struggles of daily life: "I keep on praying and praying / preparing for any pressures of life".

Moses' own African folktale entitled "Three magical stones" is an absolute gem of a story. It tells the story of an orphaned boy Molimi whose brother cared for him. In a dream he has, he sees himself as "... very successful but not rich". In the dream three angels visit him and provide him with three magical wish stones. As it usually goes in these kinds of stories, he uses his three wishes. But unlike the typical story of this nature all does not end well after the fulfilment of his three wishes and everybody does not magically live happily ever after. Eventually his parents, who were brought back to life through Molimi's first wish, divorce. Everybody is now only interested in his riches and he contracts HIV and Aids from his unfaithful wife.

This dream Molimi had about the three magical wish stones, made him realise that he had to face reality and he "... started to take life as it is and stop(ped) blaming God for taking his parents". Consequently he started to do two things – he took responsibility and "... work(ed) his way up ..." and also made God a priority in his life by focussing on God.

3.6.9 Shaun – '(R)each out to my dreams'

Own TREE song: (My treasure chest)

I was born to live like a tree / growing through my challenges
The bad times, the good I live through it all
With the strength I hope I (have I) will make it through
as life pass different stage / nothing stays the same but I still though
After all that I've been through and I still keep pushing hard
even though it seems so far / I reach out to my dreams
I survived through storms and heavy rain
my pain and sorrow are hidden in my treasure chest

Own African folktale: Power within the believer

Long time ago there was animals is living in the most biggest jungle in the world. This animals were always boarded (?) by hunters. Every time they saw a rainbow that always made a wish for peace with in their lives. With a very high hope that one day the rainbow will perform a miracle and they would be free from the hunters and other problem they had was a stormy season as the storm would blow away their food all the time. One-day hunters were taking them on that day was very stormy, baby animals got together and throughout the storms they reached the top of the mountain and they made a wish and eventually it became true. Through their powerful belief they were free and they lived happily ever after.

Written by Shaun.

Reflection-in-Progress: Shaun's TREE song and African folktale

Shaun's untitled TREE song tells the story of how the writer compares himself to a tree that lives through life's different stages – good as well as bad. And that by being strong and "... still keep push(ing) harder" the writer reaches for his dreams although at present "... it seems so far". This reminds of the song 'Keep pushing' Shaun and his twin brother Michael recorded and graciously gave Juanita and myself permission to use in our research reports. The lyrics of the song are discussed below as part of the interdisciplinary conversation process by a music therapist and a recording of the song is included on a CD as Addendum C. In the abovementioned song lyrics of Shaun's TREE song, the writer survives the storms and heavy rains he is experiencing in life and packs away his sorrow and pain in his treasure chest. This is much like I experienced Shaun during the TOL camps – he does not like to show his sadness and tries desperately to hide his feelings.

Shaun's own African folktale "Power within the believer" tells the beautiful tale of wild animals being hunted and experiencing hardships. Though they constantly wished upon every rainbow they saw, to be able to experience peace in their lives, it never came true. Until one stormy day when the hunters were after them again and the baby animals were able to save them all by going up the mountain and wishing. It was up to the youngest of all the animals to save all of them, not the strongest or the smartest, but the most vulnerable of them all – the babies. They faced their fears and climbed the mountain where they found the power within themselves to save the animal kingdom.

Like them, I experienced Shaun as someone who, though scared at times, faced his fears and in doing so relies on his own power to help him through difficult times, something that is both evident in his untitled TREE song as well as in the "Keep pushing" song.

Lyrics to the song "Keep pushing"

(Reproduced with permission from the songwriter. Transcribed by A Richter.)

Ay yoh man, this one goes out to anybody who has lost people they love the most - the most important people in their lives. I just want to give you an inspiration, you know what I mean? And it goes ah something like this -

*I went through the struggles man, I cried in this life
Life goes hard when you ain't got parents, but you got to step it up
And focus on your dreams and the goals to achieve
Even though it's hard when I'm moving on my own, I pray for a ride
Questions running in my mind -
Is God really dead? Does He really hear? Wanna look alright*

And my granny ain't here, she got shot - nine bullets on her body,
Mommy rest in peace, oh I miss her any day
I got backstabbed by a friend, I don't bleed,
My twin on the side, you're the person I can trust,
I can let my soul shine

And stay strong
Have faith in myself,
Believe that I can do it
And a future so bright
from the dark to the light
Tomorrow be a blessing if today was a gift

--- **Chorus**---

Life has different stages
Nothing stays the same,
But I still broke through (still broke through)
After all that I've been through, (I've been through)
I still keep pushing higher (pushing higher)
Even though it seems so far (seems so far)
I'm reaching up to my dreams (my dreams)
And you can't tell me a thing ---

I can't go to sleep all alone on my own
My momma passed on last night
Why me?
Life goes on...

So I'm trying to get it on, man I'm doing all that I can,
But my mother on my mind, so I cry all day

My nigger Wiseman tell me - life's useless, make it better if we can
I'm praying -

Oh God, I need to be free from the world we're living in

Life's kinda house, oh my credit came around

Be the mother on the side

This thing we call life comes once, then it's gone

Life's never good, man my life's half lived

All the tears on my face but the things I've been

My momma came along in my dream as an angel

Only if you here to see your son grow

And now I'm all alone with the big boy Plat

Anything is possible you said that last

Chorus

Hey man, rest in peace to my mother, to my little sister,

Tell you about who passed on in my life - yoh, my mother man, you gotta
make it

Hang, do beats boy, it's your future, you know what I mean?

Now it's a must, we're all have to make it, you got to push hard

It is very sad you know

But I love you all man

Chorus x2

The lyrics to the song “Keep pushing” were analysed by a music therapist Hanré Hattingh and her analysis as well as my reflection on the song and her comments are given below. This section starts by Hanré Hattingh introducing herself.

Hanré Hattingh

I am a therapeutic music educator and have started my own practice at the beginning of 2010. I have obtained my degree in Music in 2009 with Music Education and Piano as main subjects. I am currently enrolled for my BMus (Honours) degree in Music Education, Music and child development.

Lyrics (Keep pushing) summary

It is clear that Shaun uses the song as an outlet for his emotions. He feels that he wants to help people and he wants to encourage people that experienced similar sorrow as he has experienced, not to lose hope. He wants to inspire them with his music. He wants to have a voice in the world.

In the first verse he tells of how difficult his life is, but that he is overcoming it by focussing on his future and what he wants to accomplish. He wants to be better off than his current situation. The phrase where he says: “Is God really dead? Does He really hear?” and the phrase just before the chorus: “Have faith in myself, believe that I can do it” give the impression that he feels he can rather trust in himself than in God to get his life in order (See conclusion). He feels he has control over his life, despite the fact that situations are not within his control. He says throughout the song that everything changes but that his brother is his only constant. His brother is his pillar of support.

With the chorus, I get the impression that he, together with the fact that he wants to inspire others through it, rather wants to motivate himself. The phrase: “And you can’t tell me a thing” says that he knows life, that he can understand other people’s sorrow, but that not everyone will understand his situation and emotions (See conclusion).

“I can’t sleep all alone on my own, my momma passed on last night”: He is scared and uncertain and it is clear that he struggles with unresolved feelings, if it is still thoughts that he feels he need to capture in a song, even though so much time have elapsed. “Why me?”: he feels powerless regarding his situation and he feels *it is me against the world*. Furthermore, he says that he still mourns his mother; that he is trying to move on but that he struggles immensely to accept it.

Shaun’s life up to now made him feel as if life is never good and he says his life is half lived. Nevertheless, he tries to inspire others and tries to make their lives better by telling them how bad his life is but that he manages to live through it by relying on himself. In great contrast to the fact that he tries to inspire others is his anger, despondency and cynicism about life. How can it influence the people he tries to reach? He had experienced too much-unresolved traumas in his life and it is clear that it is still unresolved. He tries to convince himself and others that he will overcome it by ignoring it and trying to be better than his situation. It would be possible because he wants to overcome it but counselling, preferably trauma counselling, together with his brother to work through it would be more effective.

Conclusion

Shaun has written the song because he believes in his abilities as an artist, because he uses it as an outlet for his sorrow. He trusts himself and relies on his brother. Something that was striking is the fact that Shaun never refers to God or his religion in his story, but that there is reference made of it in his song.

Michael however refers to his religion and God in his story and says that he always turns to God in times of need. It may be possible that Shaun is experiencing inner conflicts relating to his religion, possibly because of his brother's religious influence. Does he feel that his brother turns to God in times of need but that he – Shaun – can't see how this will help? Does he also want to turn to God like his brother does, but is afraid that 'God will fail him again'? It is an issue that needs to be approached very carefully, specifically because it becomes clear in Shaun's song that he does not want to talk to other people and that he has already decided that he is the only one capable of helping himself. Shaun's trust must first be won before his problems can be solved. He shall need to WANT to talk. I suspect that he has been left with serious emotional scars due to all the deaths he has lived through in his life and that he is projecting all that emotions to his mother's death, therefore it is her death he has trouble accepting.

I furthermore conclude that Shaun is very confused and that he cannot identify the origin of his pain / emotions (based on all the different unrelated ideas in his song). The song does not have one stanza that deals with a specific theme. It is a lot of different thoughts and he does not seem to know how to express himself. It is an all-in-one song. I would have encouraged him to write more songs, it is obvious that he enjoys it and he feels that it gives him a purpose in the world. I would have guided him to write about one theme per song. Thereby he would have started to arrange and sort out his thoughts about his situation and other events in his past. It would help him and his counsellor to come to the realisation about what the actual problems are and this way they can address one issue at a time.

Shaun clearly does not have peace about his past that would be necessary to inspire other things. The message he now sends out is: "Life is crap, ignore it and keep on living". The message should rather be: "Life hits you hard, this is how I got up and how I hit life back". Shaun must be helped to come to that point.

When his songs carry that message, his soul is healthy. It is very clear that he needs help urgently to help him to overcome the unresolved issues of the past.

Reflection-in-Progress: Music therapy addressing bereavement issues

The music therapist mentions that it seems like Shaun trusts more in himself than in God: "... gives the impression that he feels he can rather trust in himself than in God to get his life in order (See conclusion)." She also mentions that it seems like Shaun "... feels he has control over his life, despite the fact that situations are not within his control". She also picks up that Shaun never referred to God or religion in his story, yet he makes reference thereof in his story: "Oh God, I need to be free from the world we're living in". She notices that Michael however refers to religion and God and "... says that he always turns to God in times of need". It must be mentioned here that the music therapist was provided with the lyrics of the song "Keep pushing" as well as an audio version thereof and the stories of the twins Michael and Shaun, as it is also provide in chapter 2. She furthermore states that it might be possible that Shaun is experiencing conflicting feelings regarding God and his religion – though he wants to turn to God like Michael he might be afraid that "... God will fail him again".

As mentioned earlier, Shaun did not at first want to speak as openly as Michael in the TOL group sessions about the losses he has experienced, his emotions as well as his religion. Although I do concur with Hanré Hattingh that Shaun is experiencing conflicting feelings regarding religion and the role of God in his life, I don't want to assume that he therefore prefers to rely on himself instead of on God for his well-being. While Michael was more in touch with his thoughts and especially his feelings, he did not hesitate to speak about God and religion, and he believed without question that God played a positive and caring role in his life. Shaun was more rational in his approach to life, God and religion. He did not hesitate to ask hard questions from God.

The music therapist continues with her analysis of the song and in reference to the chorus mentions that although his stated aim with this song is to inspire other people, he also uses it to motivate himself. She says that by mentioning the fact that he can't sleep on his own, because his mother died, he acknowledges that he is very scared and uncertain and still struggles with unresolved feelings regarding his mother's death, who did not "... pass (ed) on last night ...", but a while ago. By posing the question "Why me?" he acknowledges his powerlessness regarding his situation, although she also mentioned earlier that he feels he has control over his life, although not over the situations in his life – like his mother's death.

Hanré Hattingh also mentions that Shaun tries to convince himself and others that he will overcome his feelings by simply ignoring it and trying to be better than his situation. According to her his anger, despondency and cynicism about life come to the fore even as he tries to inspire others with his song. It seems to ring true that Shaun tends to ignore his emotions in an attempt for it to simply disappear, as he at one stage, early on during the first TOL camp, became quite agitated with his brother Michael for becoming emotional while sharing his own story during one of the group sessions. Yet, later on when he trusted the group, Shaun also shared his emotions quite openly and even become overwhelmed by all the emotions he has cropped up for so long. He did appear to be very cynical about life during the two TOL camps, possibly because life has already hit him hard at a very young age – violence has claimed both his father, who was stabbed to death, and his grandmother, who was shot dead.

The music therapist concludes her analysis by mentioning that it seems like Shaun, together with Michael would gain from trauma counselling to work through their issues together. She also mentions that music therapy in conjunction with counselling will help Shaun and his counsellor work through the issues he is experiencing. This seems like a great idea to me as he and his brother both love music and uses it as an outlet for their emotions.

3.6.10 Victor – ‘everybody deserves to see the light’

Own TREE song: (We still stay green)

After the pain / still we smile

We seem so fine / But I guess it's alright

'coz everybody deserves to see the light / In the world it seems so hard

When everybody make it and still you try / And then you don't cry

You let your tears fall they all dry / later on you feel better

Try to talk about it and then you feel better / But I guess it's alright

'coz everybody deserves to see the light

Chorus

Even though our leaves will fall / we know that we'll grow tall

We're like the strong trees / even though it's dry out we still stay green

(x2)

Own African folktale: After it rains

Well, in a black people's culture it is well-known that when it rains or rains heavily, and even after the storm especially in those undeveloped villages around South Africa. After it rains or even when the storm has just fallen, the sky clears and when all they can see is nothing but the red-orange like sky, above the wet soil with a smell of the pure heavenly water as a result of rain / even the storm; they say: "It is a symbol that a king somewhere has died".

Adapted from the logic of: Victor.

Reflection-in-Progress: Victor's TREE song and African folktale

Victor's untitled TREE song tells about life after loss and the pain it brings about. When one puts up a brave face and tries to go on with life, not showing the pain the writer is experiencing: "still we smile / We seem so fine". Yet, this attempt to stay positive is made harder by people around you succeeding in life, though you feel to just cry: "When everybody make it and still you try / And then you don't cry". But, the writer eventually acknowledges that there is a place under the sun for everyone: "coz everybody deserves to see the light". The chorus section reminds us that even though we will experience loss (leaves falling in the TOL metaphor), that will make us stronger and "we'll grow tall". The writer compares everybody who has experienced loss to strong trees that keep going on and growing, despite the hardships: "even though it's dry out we still stay green".

Victor ends his African folktale with the words "adapted from the logic of Victor", which gives the impression that he is actually referring to a known tale within the African culture "... in a black people's culture...". He beautifully describes the earth after a rainstorm: "...when all they can see is nothing but the red-orange like sky, above the wet soil with a smell of the pure heavenly water as a result of rain ...". According to him, this is seen in the African culture as a "... symbol that a king somewhere has died". When I read Victor's story, I was struck by the sheer beauty of his description after a rainstorm.

If Noah received the rainbow as a symbol of hope from God after the devastating flood, I wondered how such an artistic expression would have looked in a painting with Jesus, our King, on the Cross. For me, it would have made sense if a rainbow or a "...red-orange like sky ..." featured somewhere in the Crucifixion narrative – to symbolise the hope His death and resurrection brought humankind.

3.6.11 Wiseman – ‘My life is travelling’

Own TREE song: (All that I do)

My life is full of ups / and downs, and now
All that I do is x2 / Give praise to the Lord

My life is travelling / different places
And run through / different crises x2
So I ask the Lord / to help me to
Go through it once / again

Chorus

So my life it feels like a dream / challenges come and go
Lord Almighty help me once again x3

Own African folktale: Sunny rain!!!

Once upon a time in the place called Limpopo, there was two different villagers who had a serious argument and this argument was about what does it mean when the rain rains while the sun is still glowing.

One of the villagers believed that when the rain rains while the sun is still glowing it means that Baboons are getting married and the other villager believed when this happens sick people are being taken by God but both the kings from the different villages believed that when this happens it shows God's happiness.

Reflection-in-Progress: Wiseman’s TREE song and African folktale

Wiseman’s untitled TREE song tells of the writer’s life as being filled with happy times and sad times: “My life is full of ups / and downs, and now”. During all these situations – good and bad, he praises the Lord: “All that I do is x2 / Give praise to the Lord”. Different crises have an influence on the writer’s life: “My life is travelling / different places / And run through / different crises x2”. He pleads with God to help him go through these crises again: “So I ask the Lord / to help me to / Go through it once / again”. In the chorus the songwriter asks God to do what He has done many times before – help him: “Lord Almighty help me once again x3”.

Wiseman’s African folktale tells of two opposites meeting – sunshine and rain. They come together as one to show us according to the chiefs of the two villages God’s happiness. Wiseman hereby tells us that God can also show us emotion, and He can also – just like us humans – experience happiness. What seems to be important from these two exercises by Wiseman is that we must not only turn to God when we need him and our lives are on the downward spiral – as we tend to do – but that what we all we must do, is “... (g)ive praise to the Lord”. In good times and in bad. Then He will show His happiness to us as believers.

3.6.12 Storytelling as a group effort: (The story of Kewame)

Seven of the ten co-researchers and I met up one last time after the second TOL camp. We met at the Dutch Reformed Church Bronberg in Sunnyside, Pretoria on Friday 12 March 2010 in the afternoon. Moses, Palesa and Zee were unable to make it due to study and work related responsibilities. As part of this session I asked them to all help to construct a story much like the African folktales they did as an exercise. Together we all sat in a circle right in front of the pulpit, and piece by piece the following story was socially constructed. Each member of the group could only contribute one sentence at a time as we went round in the group.

Our contributions (they insisted I be part of the process) were transcribed by Dee:

There was a girl, Kewame (mine) she was 17 years old. She lived in a village called Sun where everything seemed perfect. There she lived with her uncle and aunt. She lost her parents. And in her life everything wasn't that perfect. Her uncle raped her and she used to cry the whole night.

Then one day she told her friends and no one believed her. She was very sad and angry about no one believing her. (As the story goes). And she cried even more. Then she decided to go to the pastor.

The pastor told her about the story of Jesus and that the bible says that God has good and prosperous plans for her. After that she started to worship God and go to church.

And as God was healing her she saw her Father is good and started to trust male models again.

As she grew older young adult she never told anyone what happened to her. But inside she wished she could stop woman and children being abused.

Later on she met a wonderful man. And at last she could find someone she could trust and tell her story to.

Soon they got married and had 3 children.

Watching her children grow it gave her the courage to start a campaign against woman and child abuse.

And the campaign was successful and many were helped.

During this time she communicated with other abused people and she started to doubt her husband with her children.

But she knew her husband was innocent. And even with her feeling she knew she had to trust him all over again.

Reflection-in-Progress: True African storytelling in the making

We took about thirty minutes to compile this story, and if it wasn't that we were pressured for time, I am sure that this story would have evolved even more. As I also took part in the creation of the story, I tried not to make any leading comments, but rather let my co-researchers direct the direction the story was to take as I was interested in their combined effort to create a narrative. One of the girls, if I'm not mistaken, Dimakatso started our story and gave our main character her name – Kewame, meaning 'she is mine'. Later on she stated that that was the name she wanted to give her firstborn daughter as well.

The story starts out where Kewame is approximately the same age as the co-researchers – 17 years of age. She lived with relatives – her aunt and uncle, since she – like most of the co-researchers – was also an orphan. On the surface her life seemed good – although losing her parents, she was in the care of people who had a bond with her and who loved her. One should think they should love her, being her family and all, but unfortunately for Kewame this was not the case. Her uncle did the unthinkable to her and raped her. As bad as her life was before – having to go through adolescents and young adulthood without her parents and having to be dependant on family members for her survival and well-being – her life suddenly took an even worse turn. She would cry herself to sleep at night thinking about what happened. When she eventually tried to talk to her friends about it, they did not believe her and she probably felt even more isolated. Then she met up with a pastor who helped her, she took Jesus as her Saviour and as a result started to trust men again. She met and married a wonderful man, and had three children with him, and started to realise her dream to help woman and children who were also experiencing abuse and trauma. Although this campaign of her helped many people, it also made her remember her own pain and as a result she started to distrust even her husband with their children.

However, she managed to overcome these insecure feelings of her which once again crept up on her, and she saw him for the good husband and father that he was.

Although as far as I could ascertain none of my co-researchers went through the trauma of being raped like Kewame did, they all showed empathy for children who also went through hard times growing up. One of the co-researchers – Annie – stated during the first TOL camp that she wanted to open a house for orphaned, neglected and vulnerable children. Her own experience of losing her mother, gave her new insights into what it means to go through tough times, and like Kewame she wants to use this experience not only to help herself, but also other people and children in similar situations.

For many of my co-researchers God, religion and even the NGO PEN, played a significant part in overcoming their grief after the death of their parent(s) / caregiver. Kewame also found solace in God and this relationship with Him helped heal her relationships with others – even her future relationship with her husband.

The fact that Kewame eventually lived the life she always dreamt of – being married and being a parent herself and also being able to help other people – it did not protect her from her past sneaking into her life and threatening to destroy all she held dear.

I suspect that my co-researchers might themselves feel threatened by how their past of losing their own parent(s) / caregivers and the associated trauma they went through is going to affect their futures; not only their futures, but also their future relationships with their husbands and wives. I would have liked to have heard from Dee and Zee how they felt about the impact HIV and Aids and the fact that their parents died due to it might have influenced their lives socially – now and how they perceive it to influence their lives in the future.

3.7 CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 was a very interesting chapter to compile. Looking at the phenomenon of Aids and related discourses through the satirical lens of cartoons as a very specific tradition of interpretation proved to not only be informing, but also handling this very serious matter more tongue-in-the-cheek style. Looking back in 20/20 hindsight at Aids related discourses as represented in these cartoons, as well as at the statistics related to the phenomenon it seems like much of the fears that were expressed regarding this phenomenon and HIV and Aids orphans have not been realised – at least not yet. Some of the earlier statistics – much of which is skewed due to incorrect and even blatantly falsely reported information – appear to be exaggerated. However, while statistics look at the bigger picture, the aim of this research was to focus on individual stories – like those of Dee and Zee – who form part of this bigger picture. We also looked at theological interpretations of Aids and related discourses and how theology proved to be a tradition of interpretation in its own right regarding this research.

Closely related to tradition, is the concept of culture. In our research context this happened to be the African culture. In talking and interacting with my co-researchers, it seemed like for them, as more urbanised African youths, their African culture and background might not always play a big role in their daily struggle to survive, as some scholars would have us believe. Yet, I found a willingness and a keen interest from the orphans' side to engage with storytelling as a research collection method, and to get acquainted with stories from the broader context of Africa. They, in my opinion, also enjoyed the tasks in which they had to express themselves through arts – like drawing the trees, writing songs, telling their own African folktales.

In the next chapter, we will focus on how my co-researchers experience their bereavement and possible psycho-spiritual issues related to their bereavement.