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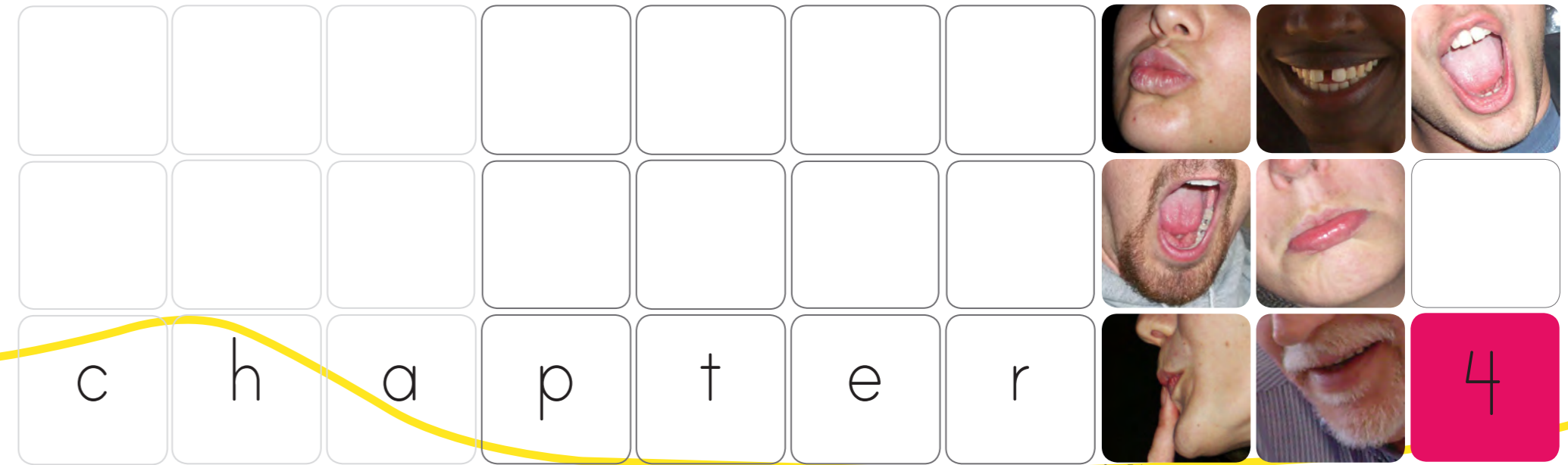


Fig. 5.1

4.1 THE CLIENT

Currently the site is the property of the National Cultural History Museum resorting under the Department of Arts and Culture, and this project will maintain the ownership. The mission statement for the Tswaing Crater Museum written in 1993 reads thus:

The Tswaing Crater Museum is a non-aligned independent people's project for the conservation and sustainable utilisation of the environment (natural, cultural, human) resources of the Tswaing area. Resources will be provided for the environmental management and education, training, research, tourism and recreation. This is done in a democratic, participatory manner to enrich the quality of life of people in a healthy environment.

(Reimold et al 1999:117)

The framework for the development of the Tswaing crater stipulates the chosen site as a semi-public space. This implies that the site will be visited for a certain purpose and may focus on specific theme.

Firstly, one should consider by whom the site is currently being used in order to determine possible future development. Today, the site is mainly promoted for its natural beauty and hiking trails. The spiritual users such as the church groups and sangomas are tolerated, but not focused on or specifically catered for. Earlier, it was stated that the author considers the spiritual quality of the site to be universal. The spiritual interpretation should be facilitated by the experience of the inherent qualities of the site, while remaining accessible to a wide variety of visitors.

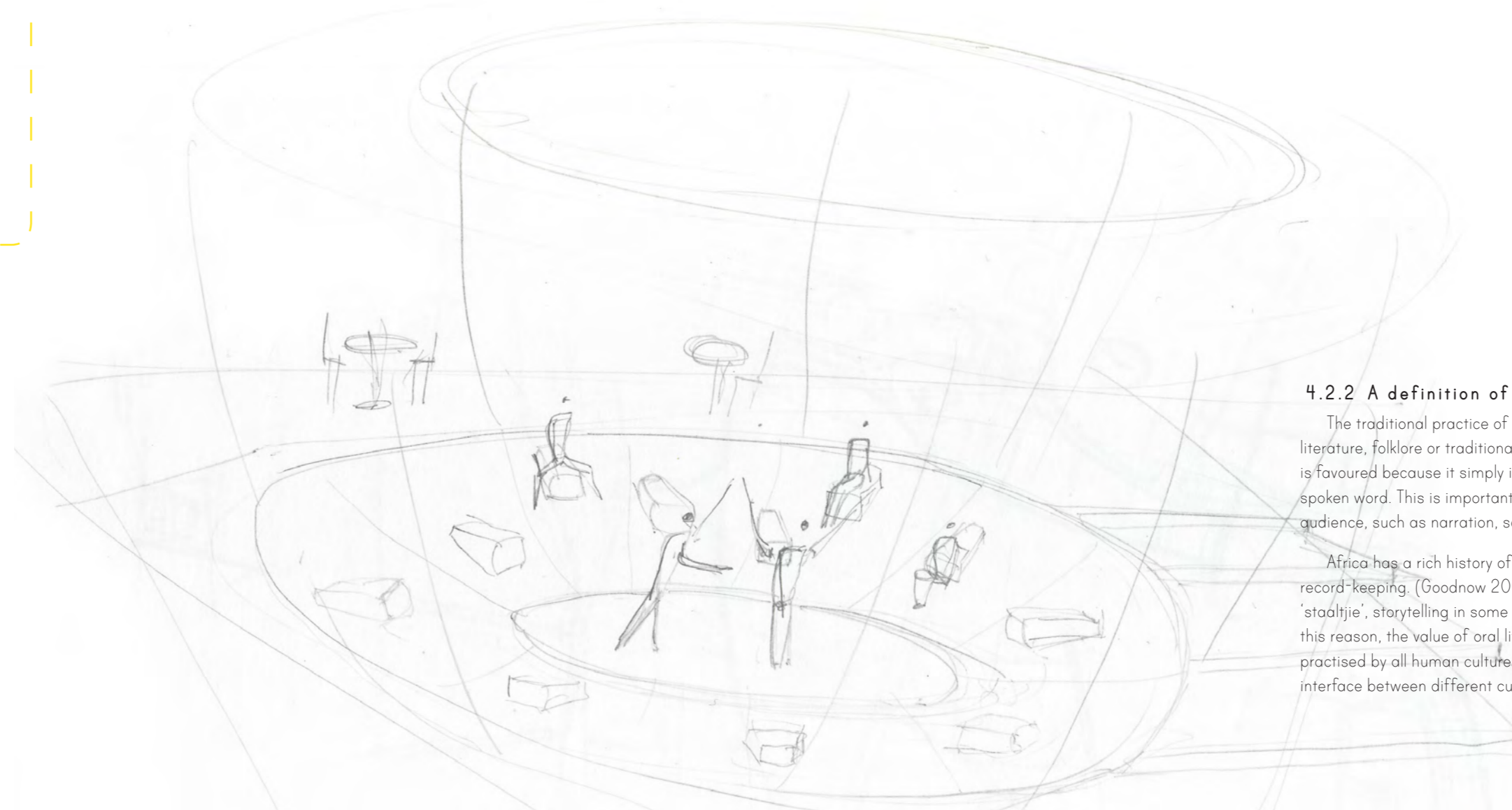
The location of the site presents some opportunities. Located within a low income community, the project has the potential to make a great social and economic contribution. The programme should encompass functions aimed at the local community as well as exploiting tourist potential of the site and programme. This will not only create a universally significant site, but will also provide an economic injection to the community. For this reason the development framework is zoned to specific uses. A community centre area, a public visitors centre, and a semi-public zone are specified. The semi-public zone will be visited by tourist and local community members at different occasions and provides job opportunities and exposure to local performance artists.

The programme of storytelling, or oral tradition, was selected as an appropriate medium for a meaningful experience.



4.2.1 Introduction

As a medium of information and entertainment, storytelling (or oral literature) has great value as a universally intelligible activity. The structure of storytelling can translate history, fantasy, traditional values and actual matters into an enjoyable and simple pass-time. The Tswaing Oral Literature Experience will provide a platform for performers of all cultures to exhibit their art and expose the audience to their culture and background.



4.2.2 A definition of storytelling

The traditional practice of storytelling goes by a variety of names, such as oral tradition, oral literature, folklore or traditional literature. (Okpewho 1992:3) In this instance, the term oral literature is favoured because it simply implies the transmission of creative writing, literature, (wiktionary) by spoken word. This is important as there are many different methods of relating oral literature to the audience, such as narration, song and poetry that are all covered by the blanket term.

Africa has a rich history of the oral literature that developed in an environment void of written record-keeping. (Goodnow 2002) From the Xhosa ntsomi, to Zulu praisepoetry to the Afrikaans 'staaltjie', storytelling in some form or another has enriched the life of every South African. For this reason, the value of oral literature in this study lies in its universality. Oral literature has been practised by all human cultures at some point and is therefore a powerful and understandable interface between different cultures.

Fig. 63 The art of storytelling

4.3 ORAL LITERATURE IN AFRICA

4.3.1 Different styles of oral literature

It would be impossible to discuss all the different forms of oral literature here. Reference will be made to the most prominent forms in South Africa. Zulu oral performance varies from praisepoetry (izibongo), to folktales (izinganekwane) to various music styles such as isicathamiya or maskandi. (Groenewald 2003:87-88) The ntsomi is a dramatised Xhosa narrative. This a good example of the flexible nature of African oral literature. The ntsomi is based on a single image which is the expanded, linked to other images and embroidered into a production. (Scheub 1975:4) When considering this, it is important to bear in mind the context of the performance, the audience. Throughout his narration the performer is aware of the audience and their reaction to the story. He can thus accordingly choose alternative methods to entertain a specific audience. In fact, the audience expects the performer to be highly innovative in manipulation of the story. (Okpewho 1992:45) Performances may be done by a single oral artist, or he may be backed by music, dance or vocals (Okpewho 1992:45)

4.3.2 The role of oral literature in society

Although storytelling may be practised by many people within one village, there are those individuals who possess a greater appreciation for the expression of images and idioms and who have the ability to capture an audience more effectively. In short, these are the oral artists. (Okpewho 1992:20)

The oral artist is not selected and trained, but simply absorbs stories and techniques from observing them from a young age. (Scheub 1975:17) Repeating and adapting that which the young oral artist sees, their ability to build the complexity of nuances, stylistic devices, plot and body gestures grow and are honed by a critical audience. (Scheub 1975:19) From this we can deduce that the very best way to learn and understand the art of oral literature is to experience it.

Today, however, there is the danger of talented oral artists disappearing in an urban environment and their skill and art being lost. Alternatively, the artist compromises his art as a mere form of entertainment in order to make a living in an environment that knows nothing of his cultural background. (Okpewho 1992:41) This point is significant in realising what the role of oral literature is within the society. Additional to the function of entertainment, oral literature is a way to express certain interests and outlooks shared by a community or a group within a community. (Okpewho 1992:110) Perhaps in South Africa this can be seen in the prominence of oral literature in political protest and work circumstances. Praise poetry is often used in mine compounds to comment on superiors and was a tool in orchestrating resistance to rulers in the Transkei. (Brown 1998:4) Religious groups have also retained the heritage of oral

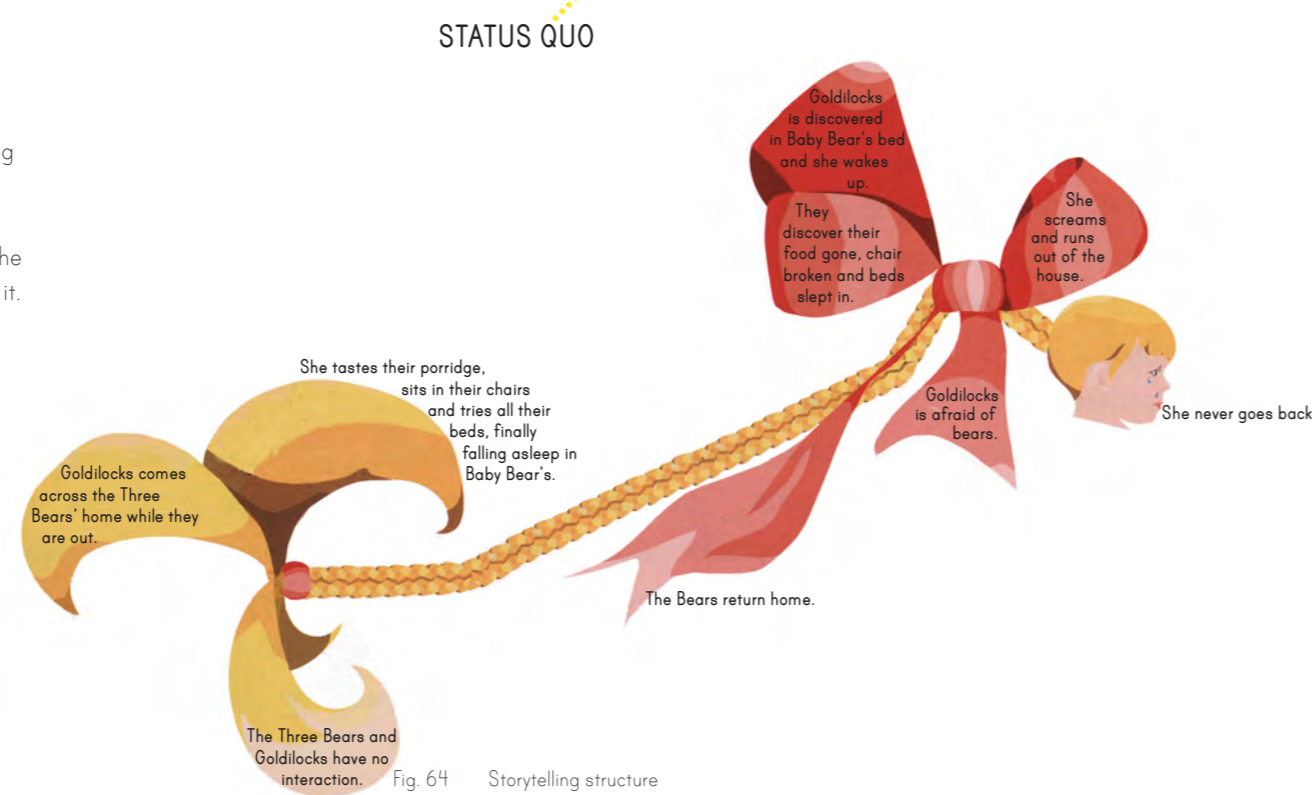


Fig. 64 Storytelling structure

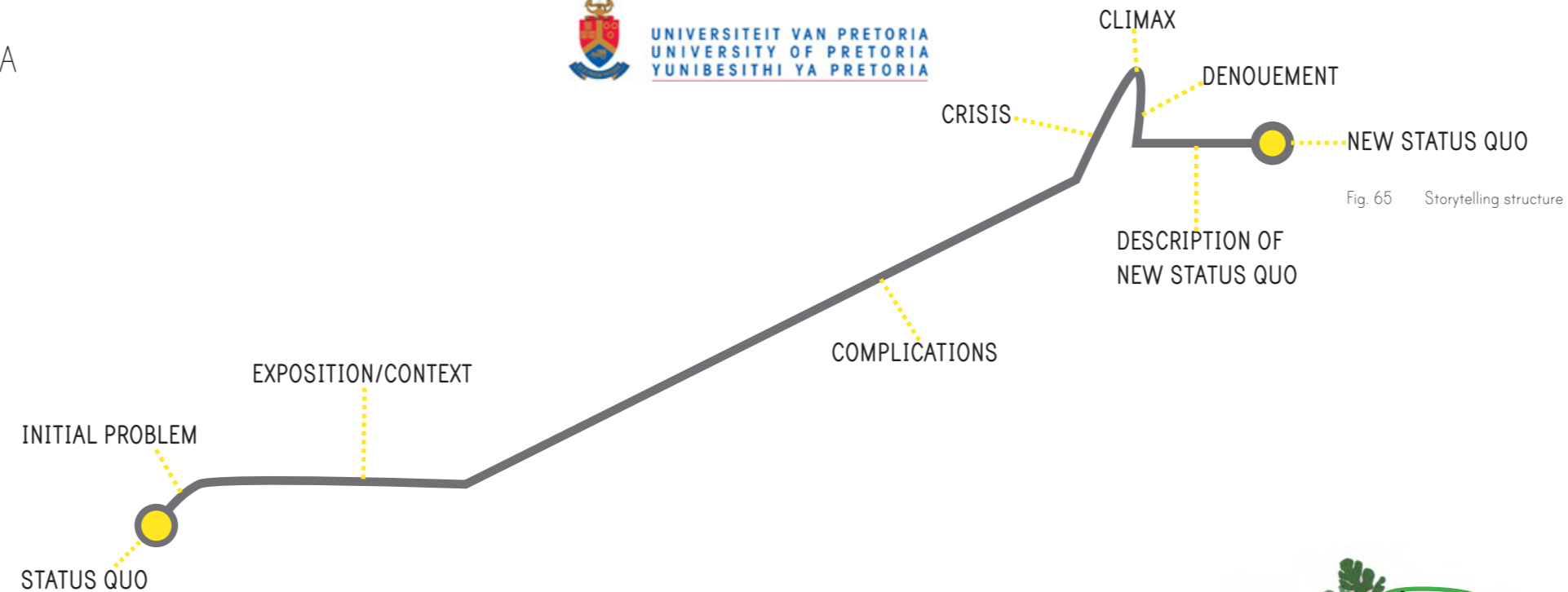


Fig. 65 Storytelling structure

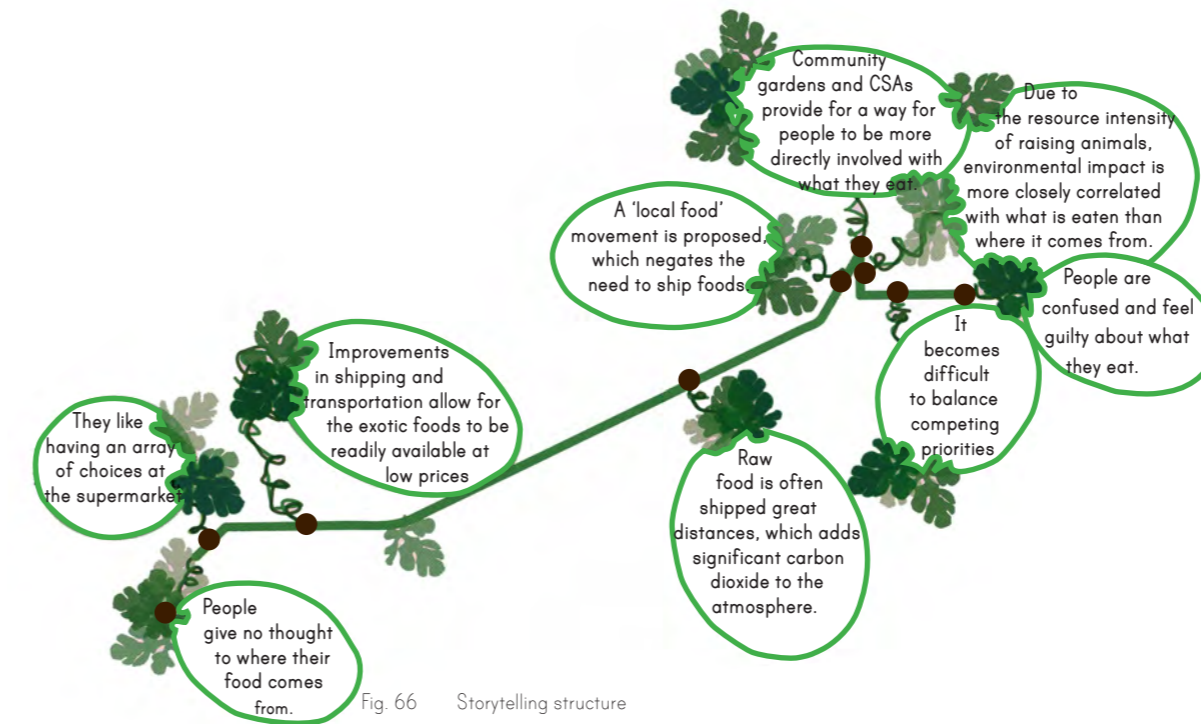


Fig. 66 Storytelling structure

literature, but infusing this with Western religious beliefs, such as the church of the Nazarites. The founder, Isaiah Shembe, sought to revitalise the customs and values of Zulu society, enriched with Christian beliefs. This system of beliefs was expressed in a hymnal, the Izihlabelo zamaNazaretha, that synthesised the tradition Christian hymn with Zulu poetry and song. (Brown 1998:120) This ties with the function of oral literature as a way of teaching ideals and conduct. (Okpewho 1992:115) In Western culture, the story, such as the fairy tale, shares the function of elevating beliefs.

Further, oral literature plays a role in marking the course of an individual's journey through life. (Okpewho 1992:119) The naming of a child, not only tells the story of the birth, but also serves as encouragement for the future. (Groenewald 2003:87) The rites of passage such as initiation, a proposal for marriage and a wedding itself are occasions for much singing and dancing, in Zulu culture this is called izigiyo. (Groenewald 2003:88) The qualification of a traditional healer would also be marked with song and ceremony. (Groenewald 2003:88)

4.3.3 The role of oral literature in museums

Katherine Goodnow (Goodnow 2002) argues in favour of storytelling having a place in modern museums. She believes that storytelling has shifted from being a mere cultural activity, to being a recording of historical fact. This historical fact is necessarily the result of the teller's framework of knowledge, and can therefore afford multiple perspectives on the same subject. (Okpewho 1992:34) Duncan Brown states: "The retrieval of oral poetry and performance genres for critical debate is an important part of the larger process of human, social and political reconstruction currently taking place in South Africa." (2003:2)

Jeffrey Inaba describes the value of the Western fairy tale in addressing crisis. "... the ability of a children's story to make sense of hard-to-describe events, given that its format addresses emotional-difficult, moral-complicated and ethical-charged issues with concision." (Inaba 2009: 2-3) A museum in South Africa is inevitably faced with the problem of telling morally and ethically charged stories, given the political history. At a tourism location the problem is elevated by the fact that the story is told to people of very different backgrounds. Simple narrative as a means of understanding our times and constructing a response (Inaba 2009: 2) may thus be a great asset to museum.

Although Western storytelling tradition is not identical, it comparable to that of African storytelling, and therefore should be understandable to the audience. The typical narrative arc such as the example developed by Gustav Freitag (Inaba 2009: 4) shows us the structure of the Western narrative. The interpretation done here by C-lab (Inaba 2009: 4) is worth noting in order to illustrate the ability of the narrative to explain and argue contemporary, real-life problems.

4.3.4 Precedents

Various projects have been undertaken here, as well as abroad in an attempt to preserve and perpetuate the art of traditional storytelling.

Iziko Stories

In South Africa, the Iziko Stories program is such an attempt. The Iziko Museum in Cape Town partnered with a Norwegian university to develop a cross-continental network of storytelling. Traditional storytelling skills are preserved and passed on to younger generations by involving Elders and presenting workshop in various communities. Mobile units and technology enable the program to build a database of stories that can be taken to different locations in order to expose participants to a wide repertoire of perspectives and cultures. (Goodnow:2002) In addition to traditional stories, participants are encouraged to tell their own stories. Thus contemporary culture is introduced to a traditional medium, rendering the art relevant for the future and accessible to a younger audience. The participants also gain exposure to other cultures of storytelling and another's framework of experience, thus promoting understanding.

Scottish Storytelling Centre, Malcolm Fraser Architects, 2006

In Edinburgh a Scottish initiative was created in the Scottish Storytelling Centre. The building hosts functions specific to the art of storytelling. A variety of spaces and theatres for storytelling vary in scale and intimacy from the 99 seat Netherbrough Theatre, to the informal 30 seat Global Story Bothy right down to a storytelling nook.

Where these functions are mainly interior spaces, the Storytelling Court opens the building to the city and gardens outside with views on street level. A library provides the opportunity to conduct seminars and workshops.

4.3.4 Conclusion

Storytelling holds great and significant importance in the traditional environment, and the practice has to be preserved and exhibited. There is, however also great scope for the traditional practice to grow and evolve into a contemporary medium of understanding and education, as can be seen in the examples from C-Lab (fig.67,fig.69). This firmly establishes firmly the relevance for storytelling as a programme for a museum such as at Tswaing.



Fig. 67 Scottish Storytelling Centre facade



Fig. 68 Scottish Storytelling Centre

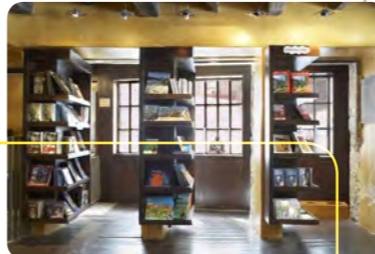
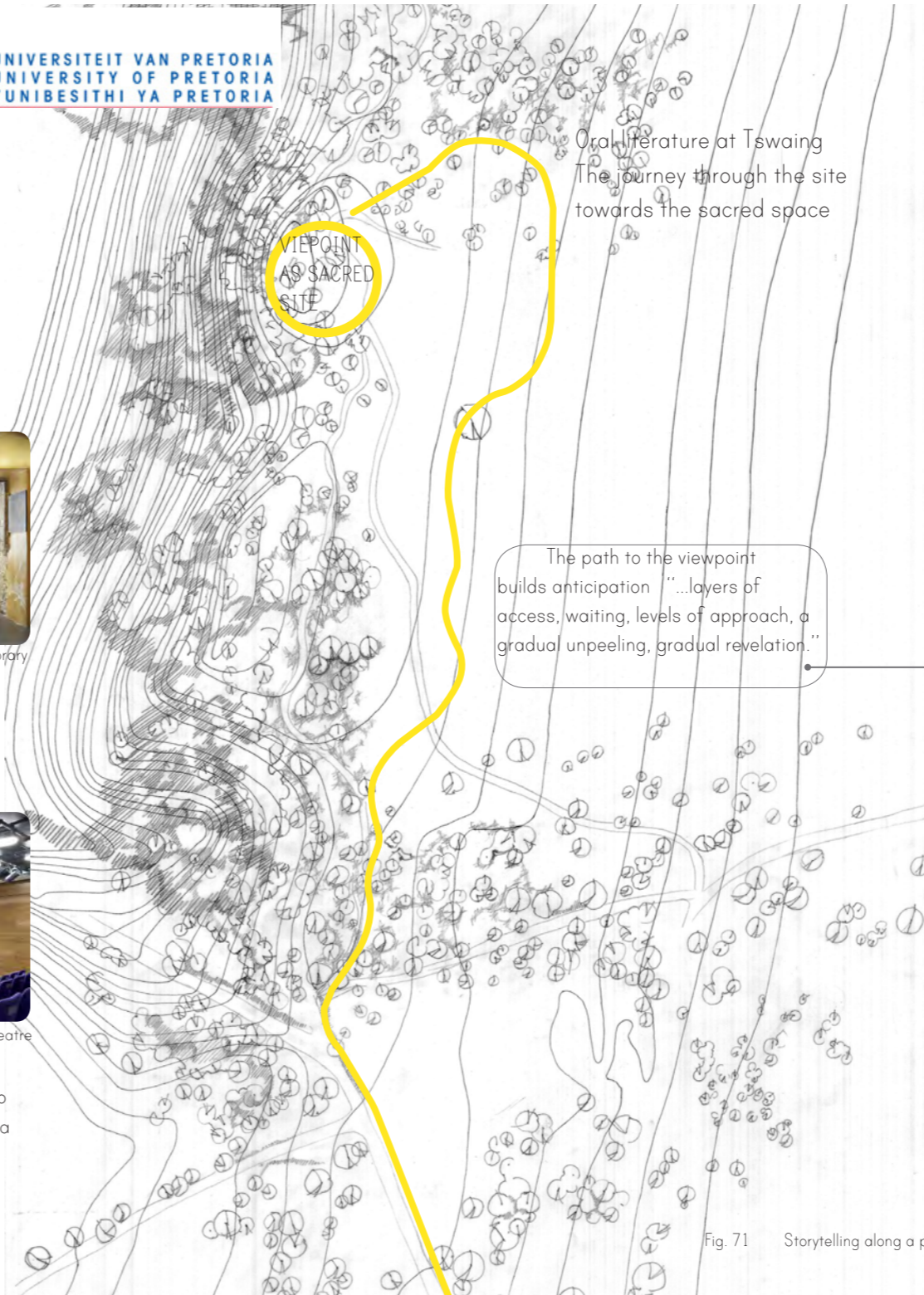


Fig. 69 Scottish Storytelling Centre library



Fig. 70 Scottish Storytelling Centre theatre



Oral literature at Tswaing
The journey through the site
towards the sacred space

The path to the viewpoint
builds anticipation "...layers of
access, waiting, levels of approach, a
gradual unpeeling, gradual revelation."

Fig. 71 Storytelling along a path

4.4 PROGRAMME

4.4.1 The aim of the programme

The goal of the project is to reveal the significance of the site and through creating awareness of this, establishing a reconnection to the environment and self.

The idea of the reconnection of the individual to the cultural and biophysical environment as well as to their own identity has been discussed at length. Tswaing should be a place where one can reconnect. In the landscape, we are reminded of our place in the world and of our world in the universe. Oral literature should remind us of our roots in our own culture, as well as the wealth of cultures that we are fortunate enough to learn from every day.

As we have seen, Tswaing is a place of inherent value. Thus, the interventions should serve to add to the experience of the place. For this purpose the audience is led through the site on a path that passes, crosses, goes through, goes under and in between different opportunities to be connected to and to experience oral literature. The viewpoint remains the destination, and is anticipated as such, while remaining hidden throughout the journey.

Currently at Tswaing, the people who visit the site for spiritual reasons confine their activity to the crater floor and reach this by a direct route that does not afford the experience of descending into the crater. Christopher Alexander describes the ritual of reaching a truly sacred place as such: "...it requires layers of access, waiting, level of approach, a gradual unpeeling, gradual revelation. Passage through a series of gates." (1977:333) This echoes the concept of ritual-architectural experience. Lindsay Jones adds to the theory of sacred space as a representation of the universe. Although this has been found true in many cases, he argues that this is not the entirety of the builder's intentions. He claims these methods to be an invitation for the participation of interested parties that is then substantiated by a deeper spiritual message. (2000: 45) This is then conveyed by the architectural experience. (Jones 2000: 46)

Thus, the journey through the site and changing perspective that this affords the visitors is of utmost importance. The path connecting different gathering places leads the visitor through different layers of access that eventually renders the moment of revelation more meaningful.

The programme thus aims are introducing the art of oral literature to the site, as well as accentuating the journey through the landscape towards the sacred space.

4.4.2 The influence of oral literature

Although it has been discussed that the use of paths and gathering places can involve the visitor of the site in a more meaningful experience, the nature and structure of the journey is still unclear. The influence of storytelling on the project is not confined to that of function. Narrative structures can be seen as a possible framework within which to ground the physical experience of the site. Throughout the many forms, academics have identified a structure, and various stylistic characteristics that are discernible in African oral literature.

It is the, "... ways in which the words are organised and the resources within the words that ensure the effectiveness of the oral performance." (Okpewho 1992:70)

Structure

Oral literature is an art based on that of performance. The true artist can manipulate the reactions of the audience and adjust the course of the narrative according to their response. Because of the spontaneous nature of the narrative, storytelling is very seldom a linear process. (Goodnow: 2002) Despite the involvement of the audience, the framework and eventual outcome of the story is within the bounds set by the teller. The structure in the narrative is followed roughly as a method of effectively moving the story towards a point, as well as guiding the experience of the audience. In the same way, the path guides the visitor through the site and different activities towards the viewpoint.

Before the story begins, the performer is transported from the present world to the world in which the story is set. This is referred to as the 'capturing' of the audience and storyteller. (Okpewho 1992:223) A 'crisis' follows that throws the subject into turmoil. (Okpewho 1992:224) The enjoyment of the story is prolonged and enhanced by 'stabilizing' events that do not necessarily add any new information. (Okpewho 1992:224) The emotions of the audience is then 'depressed', or lulled, before the story ends with an ironic twist. (Okpewho 1992:224)

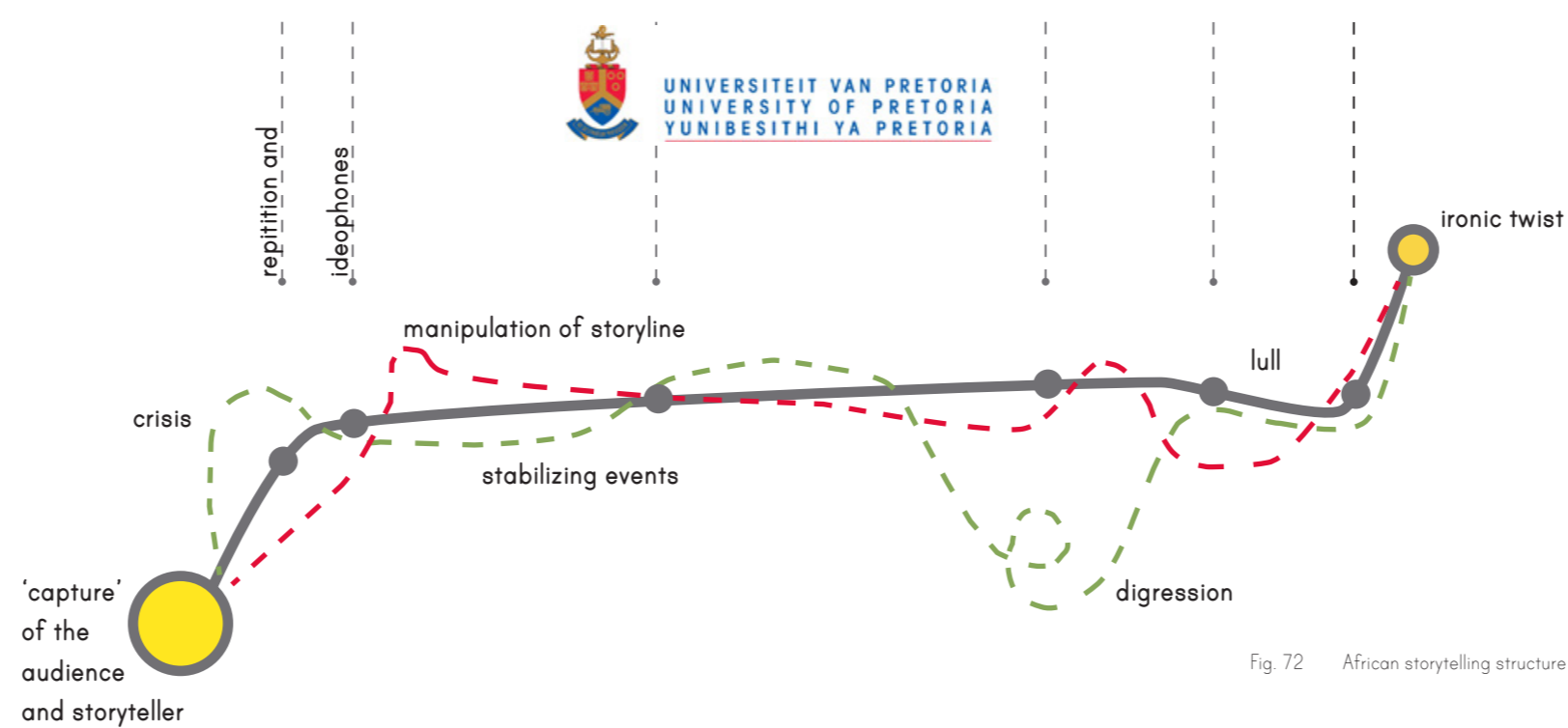


Fig. 72 African storytelling structure

Stylistic characteristics

As this storyline will always be part of a performance, it is inseparable from the stylistic characteristics of a good performance. (Scheub 1975:19) The stylistic tools aid the performer in keeping the attention of the audience, emphasizing a point, as well as linking together ideas. (Okpewho 1992:70-87) There are numerous such devices, but only a few will be discussed here.

Repetition is the main method of achieving these goals. The audience is delighted by elements that recur after intervals and their attention is gripped. (Okpewho 1992:71) Other stylistic characteristics are variations in repetition, such as the piling of meaning and parallelism. (Okpewho 1992:78, 83)

The main idea or storyline is sometimes abandoned for a while in order to address a related object or theme. This is called a digression. (Okpewho 1992:96)

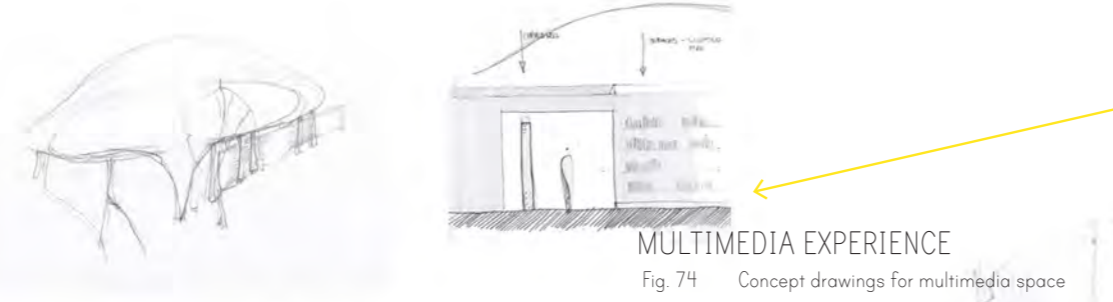
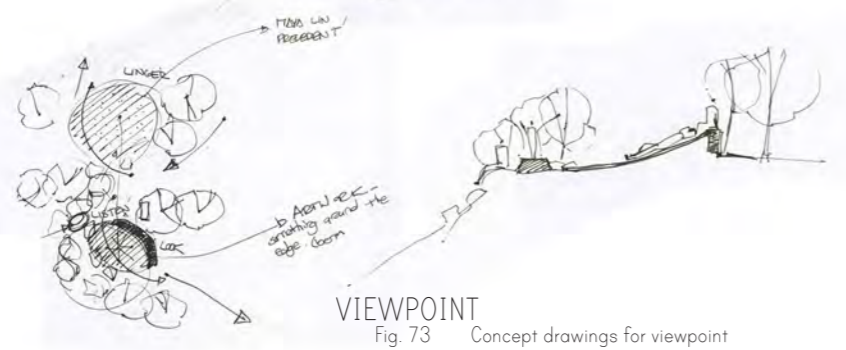
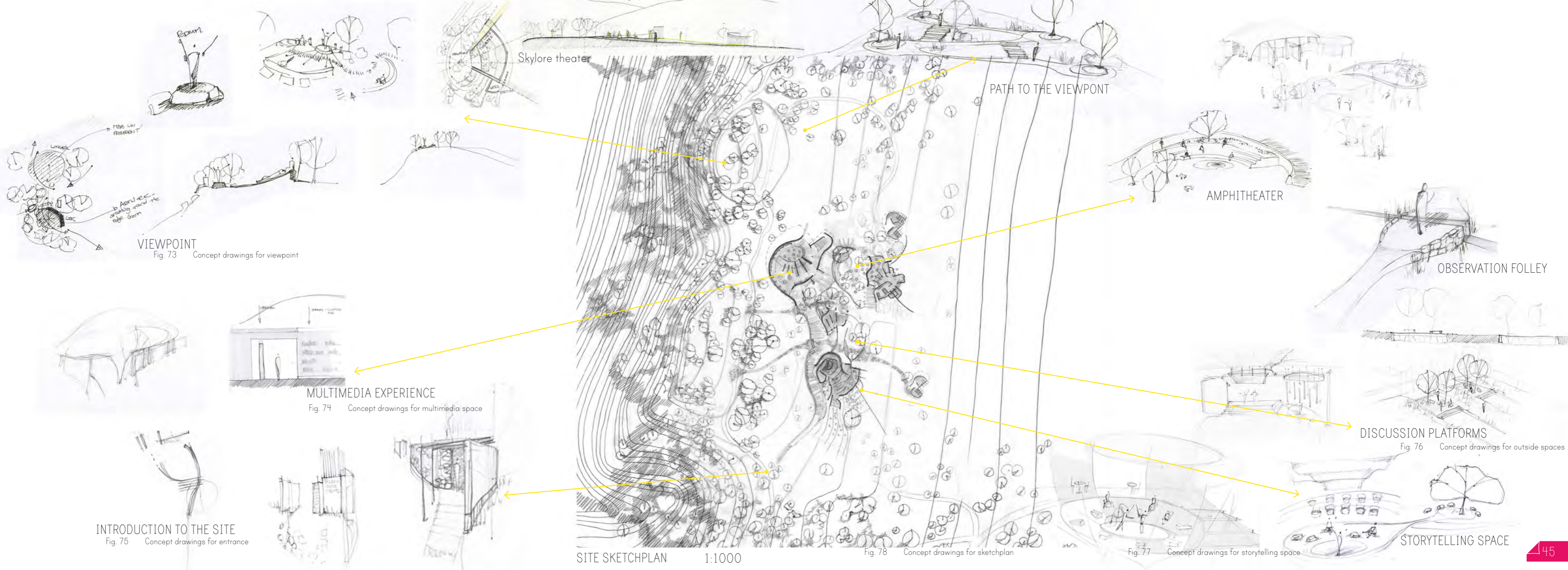
Finally, a popular tool is that of the ideophone. These are nonsensical sounds that are repeated throughout the performance to convey certain impressions. (Okpewho 1992:92)

Give me pear
Parrot's pear
Give me parrot
Wren's parrot
Give me wren
Moth's wren
Give me moth
Palm's moth
Give me palm
Earth's palm
Give me earth
Wealthy earth
Give me wealth
Wealth is hatred! (Egudu 1975: 207
(Okpewho 1992:84)

Little bird, little bird
Tuluzamzam tuluzam
What are you doing up there?
Tuluzamzam tuluzam
I'm up there fetching food
Tuluzamzam tuluzam
After fetching what will you do?
Tuluzamzam tuluzam
After fetching I'll light a fire
Tuluzamzam tuluzam
(Okpewho 1992:92)

4.4.3 Site programming and concept development

The programming of the site involves many encounters with storytelling as an art in different settings and forms. The diagram illustrates the conceptualisation of the programme as a complete experience, while only selected were fully developed.



SITE SKETCHPLAN 1:1000

Fig. 78 Concept drawings for sketchplan

Fig. 77 Concept drawings for storytelling space

DISCUSSION PLATFORMS
Fig. 76 Concept drawings for outside spaces

STORYTELLING SPACE

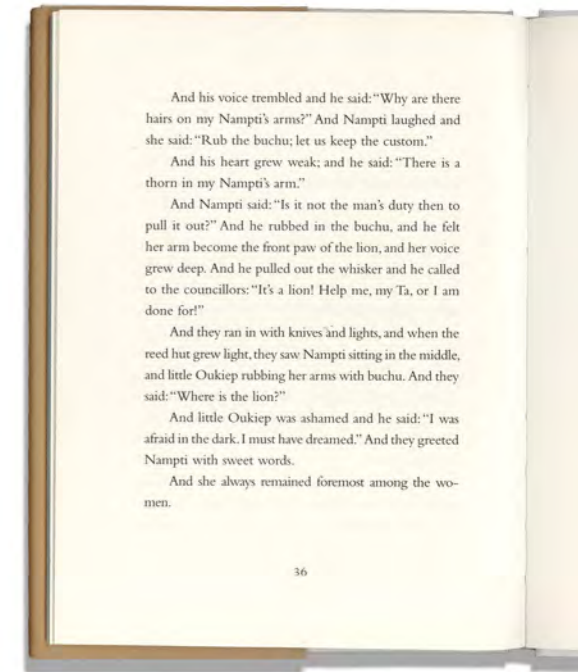
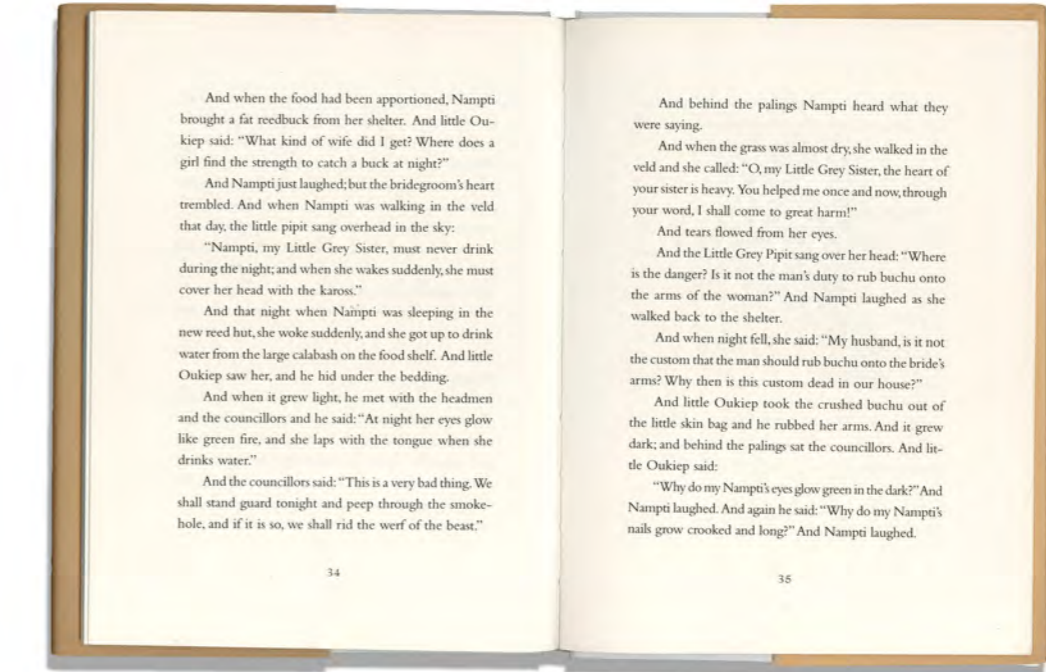
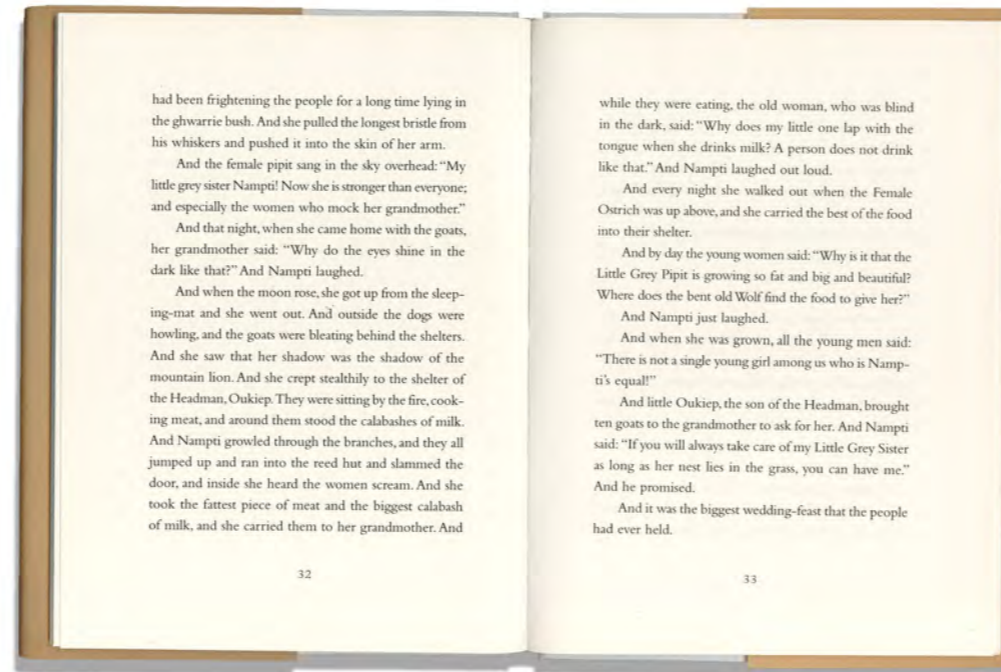
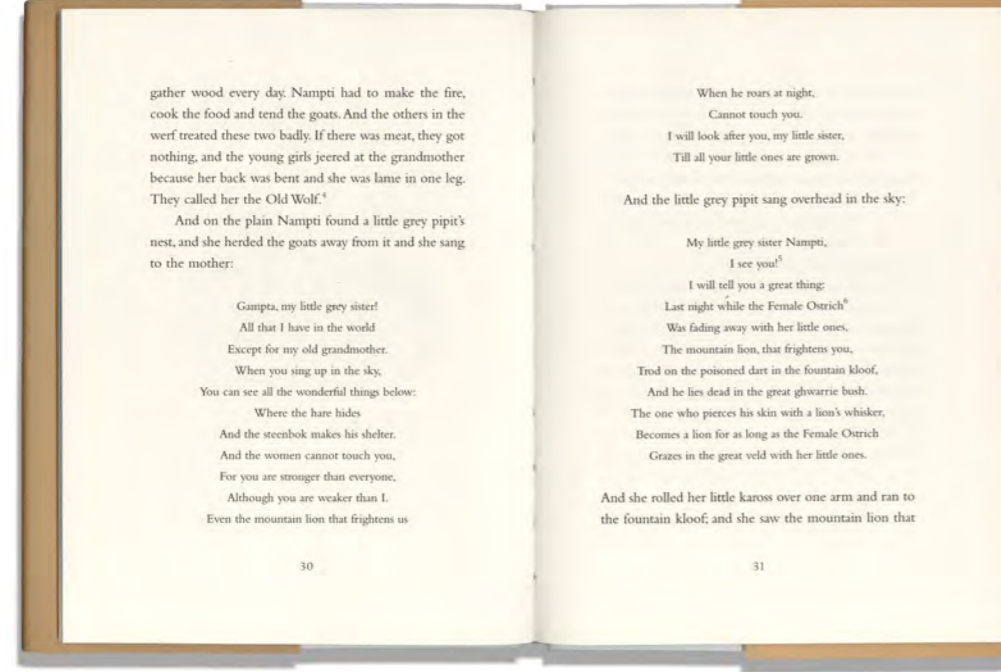
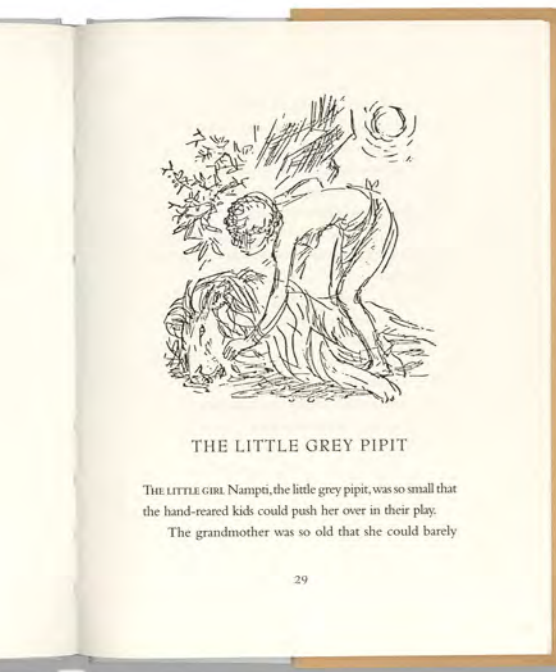


Fig. 79 Written interpretation of african storytelling