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Images of Swazi women living with HIV

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Images of Swazi Women living with HIV

Deborah Ann Nodder
2009

I declare that this is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts in Fine Art at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Acknowledgements

A special thanks to Gunilla Hallonsten and Phillip Hewitt for the willingness to discuss my research, for insights, affirmation and friendship.

I would like to record my gratitude to Professor Alan Crump for supervision of my dissertation under personally difficult circumstances and for his guidance and encouragement in my journey as an artist.

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Abstract

Swaziland has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world and a society marked by gender inequality. HIV positive women are therefore a marginalized and stigmatised group. This research explores the therapeutic potential of art for a group of nine Swazi women living with HIV. It is a qualitative exploratory study of a group's experience and the artwork produced by them. The images made within the art group were examined in order to discover what they communicate about the women's lives and what effect the image-making process has on the participants. An eclectic approach was adopted with concepts from art therapy theory, especially psychoanalytic, analytic, feminist and group art therapy, informing both the methodology and the analysis of the artwork created. The art work reveals how the dominant ideologies concerning motherhood, HIV and poverty inform the women's identities. The image-making process was found to be therapeutic in that it provided a useful way for these women to explore their identity, trauma and assess their future goals. The social value of the group was clearly evident. The art group was presented as a practical strategy which can be used to give marginalized woman a voice.

In my own practical work I explore the physical manifestation of AIDS deaths in the natural environment through the genre of landscape painting. My paintings are a witness to my empirical experience of the pandemic. A brief discussion of the concepts of the "uncanny", "The Sublime" and palimpsest in paintings by Paul Nash, Caspar David Fredrich, Paul Cezanne, William Kentridge and Anselm Kiefer are used to establish a conceptual framework to understand my work.

Introduction

> Art soothes our lives. Art may bring the craved relief of sheer delight in this world.
> But art also shows us how we have disfigured ourselves.
> Art feeds on what befalls us.
> Art arrives at the sight of agony; art agonizes there.
> Art keeps us going in our wounded state (Spivey 2001:6).

In Swaziland the HIV and AIDS pandemic has had a profound impact on citizens' lives. As a society we search for ways to alleviate the pain, distress and suffering caused by this virus. The approach needs to be multifaceted and this case study is an attempt to understand more about a group of Swazi women living with HIV, through creating an art group that that will help mitigate some of the psycho-social suffering that these women experience.

The theoretical framework and methodology of this study is based on psychological theories and specifically art therapy theory and, in particular, art therapy group work. Art therapy is "based on the idea that the creative process of art making is healing and life enhancing and is a form of non-verbal communication of thoughts and feelings" (American Art Therapy Association, 1996 cited in Malchoidi 2003:1).Art therapists use different art media with their clients. They work with the images created in the context of an enabling relationship established between the client and the therapist. The creative process and the art product are used as a focus for discussion and analysis. Malchoidi says that art therapists working from different theoretical premises are divided between those who see art as therapy in itself or those who view it as an adjunct to psychotherapy (2003:2).

In this study, the focus will be on the way in which art is healing in itself. Like in art therapy, the group is formed to provide a safe place to discuss the women's lives and emotions. The focus of this research and analysis will be the artwork. However, psychological insights will provide the framework for the most effective way to establish a support group and the tools to find meaning in the images created and to make sense of the emotions experienced. The artwork will be evidence of the women's understanding of their world and it will also provide some insight into the issues in the wider society that impinge on their lives. Through the art production it is also hoped that the women will have a greater understanding of themselves and that this will lead to an improved quality of life. In groups that are marginalised by society and stigmatised by their HIV status, it is also important that they are acknowledged and seen. Debra Kalmanowitz and Bobby Lloyd's assessment, after their art therapy intervention in South Africa and other countries such as Yugoslavia, whose populations have also suffered trauma, pain and bereavement, is that for healing to take place people's concerns need to be witnessed (1997). The art group should provide a safe space in which the women can discuss subjects that are considered taboo in everyday life.

As already pointed out, the research has been undertaken in Swaziland[1]. Many Swazi people are infected and almost all are affected by the HIV / AIDS epidemic. Women's social, economic and political position in society as well as their biological structure

[1] In March 2004, Swaziland officially became the country with the world's highest HIV prevalence, 38.6% of the total adult population. Life expectancy has fallen to pre-modern levels of 36 for Swazi males and 39 years for Swazi women. (NUAIDS/06.13 2006:460) These figures testify to how important a factor the HIV epidemic is in the lives of people in Swaziland

makes them particularly susceptible to contracting the virus. [2]The importance of addressing woman's issues in relation to the AIDS pandemic is highlighted by Kofi Annan in a speech to African leaders: "AIDS in Africa and around the world is more and more wearing a woman's face. We will gain control of the pandemic only if woman are at the very centre of our strategy". He emphasizes his point by reflecting on their vital role within society: "If you want to save Africa, you must save the African woman first… It is they who care for the young, the old, the sick and the dying. It is they who nurture social networks that help societies share burdens" (Agence France-Presse: 20 February 2003).

Women have a low status within Swazi society. The legal system entrenches the unequal access to power and resources. The country is governed by a dual legal system (Roman Dutch Law and customary law) and a new Constitution is pending. However, at present customary law is adhered to especially in rural areas and this severely constrains women's rights and ability to own land, inherit property, find employment and conduct business. Roman Dutch law describes women as legal minors needing male guardians: their fathers before marriage and their husbands afterwards. Married women are prohibited "from securing bank loans, opening bank accounts, leaving the country, making major decisions, registering property in their names or suing in court without their husband's permission" (Physicians for Human Rights 2007:75). Polygamy, although

[2] "Women are disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Swaziland.
Of the 220, 000 adults in Swaziland estimated to be HIV positive at the end of 2005, 120, 000- 54.5percent – were women. UNDP reported that 52.8 percent of female hospital inpatients in Swaziland were HIV-positive at the end of 2003, compared with 45.6 percent of male." (Physicians for Human Rights 2007:70)

not recognised by civil law, is allowed by customary law. Customary law allows men to take an unlimited number of wives.

Marriage rites in customary law also reinforce women's subordinate role. Many Swazi marriages involve the bride price or 'lobola'. The lobola is typically an exchange of cattle, although cash is often a substitute. "Customary marriage rites and laws reinforce the concept that women's social and familial status is derived from their reproductive role. For example, lobola can be recalled if a woman fails to fulfil her reproductive or labour capacities" (Physicians for Human Rights 2007:75).

"Sexual domination is one of the symbolic and actual privileges of the ruler" (Achille Mbembe cited in De Waal 2006:20). Swaziland is ruled by a Monarch. Traditionally, one way in which the King extends his power and patronage is by marrying wives from the different clans within Swaziland. His example legitimises the idea that men are superior and that men's status is associated with multiple partners. Moreover the King is the head of the regiments and thus a warrior, militaristic tradition of masculinity continues to have resonance within Swazi society. As Raymond Suttner writes in an article entitled "Access to women's bodies and the warrior tradition": "being a soldier and inheriting a warrior tradition is to inherit a legacy that allows for both noble deeds and also the potential of sexual abuse" (The Sunday Times: August 12 2007). As a possible consequence, in the Swazi civil law system there is no specific law criminalizing domestic violence. "Domestic violence complaints must be brought under general assault or rape laws, which exclude marital rape" (Physicians for Human Rights, 2007:75). In Swaziland, there

is a high incidence of sexual abuse and the courts and non-governmental organisations are ineffectual in dealing with it.

The unequal power relations between men and women and gender discrimination are key factors in the high prevalence of HIV in women in Swaziland. Physicians for Human rights say that one of the key factors driving Swaziland's HIV/AIDS epidemic is inter-generational sexual transmission. Women are forced by poverty and rising food insecurity into high-risk behaviour such as exchanging sexual intercourse for food, money and other resources (Ibid 2007:71). Derek Von Wissell, the National Director of Swaziland's National Emergency Response Council for HIV and AIDS (NERCHA) cited these reasons for the high HIV prevalence rate in Swaziland: "The breakdown of traditional norms and values in a strongly moral society that has been buffeted by colonialism, consumerism and the throwaway culture" (Evans 2006:11). He further recorded other contributing factors such as the high degree of mobility with men and women working and having families in different places, and the fact that recently infected people have very high viral loads which insures high transmission rates, so that in a polygamous society and a society where people have an informal network of concurrent partners, infection spreads rapidly"(Ibid 2006:12).

Not only is Swaziland a relatively poor country with 69 percent of the population living below the poverty line, but it is also a society that is marked by stark inequality. "The top 10 percent of the population controls 40 percent of the country's wealth while the bottom 40 percent of the population controls only 14 percent of the national wealth" (Physicians

for Human Rights, 2007:69). Unemployment is high at 30 percent in 2005 and Swazi women are considerably more disadvantaged than men with Swazi women in 2004 earning 29 percent of men's income. HIV/AIDS epidemic exacerbates the already harsh effects of poverty in Swaziland. The economically active workforce is shrinking; in 2005 alone, an estimated 16 000 Swazi's died of AIDS (Ibid 2007:71).Health care provision is stretched and the number of economically dependent orphans is alarmingly high, with an estimated 63 000 children orphaned by AIDS (Ibid).

HIV/AIDS treatment has been free at six public health institutions in Swaziland since 2005. However, access to the hospitals, increasing number of people seeking help, supply shortages, especially antiretroviral shortages and inadequate staffing has meant that the provision of health care for HIV/AIDS patients has been far from adequate. Testing for the HIV virus is a relatively recent practice with 22 Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) sites having been created in the last few years. The Physician for Human Rights have highlighted as an important theme in their Swaziland study "the fear of knowing one's HIV status, high levels of HIV stigma and fear of being stigmatized should one test positive for HIV"(Ibid:114).

Education is not free or compulsory in Swaziland. However, 59 percent of men and 57 percent of woman attend the formal schooling system. The school fees are a constant financial burden in most Swazi households. The government is making some contribution to orphans schooling costs, but in reality many children are made economically and

socially vulnerable by the AIDS epidemic and consequently struggle to have access the formal school system.

In Swaziland, most people are Christians and many people hold traditional beliefs. Some Christians believe that AIDS is a punishment from God, especially as it is often associated with sexual intercourse outside of marriage. This type of belief can lead to discriminatory and stigmatising practices within both the church and in society. The belief in witchcraft can also encourage stigmatisation. Many Swazi people believe that illness is not just a biological fact, but rather the result of people's evil intentions towards them. Biology and science may account for what is wrong with a person, but witchcraft will explain why someone has fallen ill. Anyone can be a witch and their crimes are, "manifold and attack every aspect of social life, threatening political and economic security, ancestral benevolence, justice in the courts, the essentials of bodily health and mental ease" (Kuper 1947:174). Because some people attribute their illness to bewitching they do not get tested or seek treatment from the medical establishment, but rather from traditional healers.

"Alongside sorcerers, the main wielders of invisible power are ancestor spirits, whose authority provides stability to a collective moral and social order. Individual spirits can support or torment the living, depending on the circumstances in which they died and the manner in which their continuing needs are met - or not" (De Waal 2006:23). In a society where death is common, funerals routine and far too many people die young from this "dishonourable" and debilitating disease, people do not complete their life time

obligations and die surrounded by children and grandchildren. These events lead to a feeling amongst people that the ancestors cannot be content and the spirit world is disturbed and this has direct consequences for society. In a Study on Swazi mortality and its consequences in Swaziland, Christopher Desmond found that funeral costs were disproportionately high in comparison to the Swazi population's income. He attributes elaborate funerals to the belief that an investment in earthly resources will maintain the invisible order. AIDS is seldom mentioned at Swazi funerals and he proposes that this is also to uphold the veneer of normality: "Insisting on 'normality 'in funerals serves to retain faith in a cosmic normality" (De Waal 2006:23).

Denial can be a refusal to recognise reality or it can be thought of as a "determined effort to reconstruct a 'normal' social and moral order in the midst of the epidemic" (Ibid: 9). Alex De Waal, in his attempt to answer why, in the face of widespread personal loss in many countries and significant burdens on households, the AIDS pandemic is not named as a priority public issue, proposes that the continent is in a state of collective denial. This accounts for why, in the face of knowledge about HIV, behaviour does not change and why, even though the epidemic is acknowledged, significant government policy changes have not been adopted. Stan Cohen's research on how individuals and societies deny knowledge of atrocities is quoted. The first type of denial mentioned is referred to as literal denial, the second type is 'interpretive' in which basic facts of events are acknowledged, but the meanings are disputed, and the last or 'implicatory' denial is where people absolve themselves of responsibility for what has happened. The extreme form of this is a justification or 'normalization', as described above. Alex De Waal says

that “the silence about sex, gender and power is, in its way, a metaphor for the silence over AIDS.” This, he believes, is interpretive denial (Ibid: 22). Thus, even though illness, bereavement and orphan-hood are an every day phenomena in Swaziland, many people pretend that everything is continuing as before.

It is within this context that the research took place. As already mentioned, this research project will explore the therapeutic potential of art for a group of Swazi women living with HIV. It is a qualitative exploratory study of this group’s experience and the artwork produced by them. The aim is to discover what the images made by the women communicate about their lives and what effect the image-making process has on the participants. Concepts studied from art therapy theory have informed both the methodology and the analysis of the artwork created.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

Art therapy has some distinctive characteristics which distinguish it from other types of therapeutic interventions and give it unique benefits. Primarily, art therapy involves the use of images. Images are powerful, as English metaphors in common usage demonstrate: 'a picture is worth a thousand words' or 'seeing is believing' (Schneider 1993: 41). Images can be useful when words fail, or when a person is unable to express him/herself verbally, either because of physiological inadequacies or because of having been silenced by cultural constraints, such as when talking about subjects that are taboo. Piccirillo states, in her article on medical art therapy with children living with HIV: "For those responding to family and societal pressures to keep the secret, they can both have their silence and break it too. Art makes their guarded internal worlds accessible through an encoded vocabulary that does not betray their caregivers" (2000: 124).

Images can be rich in information; their spatial nature seems to allow many aspects of experience to be expressed simultaneously (Liebmann 1986:9). For some people, a picture's ability to communicate a lot of information makes narrating their stories far more accessible. Alex Fattal, who worked with children in a participatory documentary survey of children's rights, "Children's Visions and Voices: Rights and Realities in South Africa", found that the children responded positively to photography as a means of narrating their stories and one of the traumatised young people said: "Sometimes, just telling a story without pictures, you don't really seem to get the picture of what someone is talking about. It's easier talking with pictures: it just feels easier" (July/August 2004:36).

Art-making (whether painting, drawing with charcoal and sculpting with clay) is experiential by nature; one is required to use one's senses, sight, touch and sometimes smell and sound. The body is directly required not only to exercise perceptual skills, but to act on the world moving in a deliberate and focussed way.[3] The use of the body on objects in the world shapes not only the clay on the board or the marks on the page, but has an affect on our consciousness. Having control, gaining mastery over physical objects in the art room can help a person overcome a sense of helplessness and loss of control in other areas of life. The art therapist McNiff writes that "the material processes at work in the act of creating have greater potential for transformation than the notion of 'changing the intangible idea of the self" (Fabre-Lewin 1997:121).

Research in neuroscience affirms a connection between art and self-esteem. Sylwester says that the amount of neurotransmitter serotonin in the brain has implications for the quality of movement and the level of self-esteem. "High serotonin levels are associated with self-assurance and controlled movements while reduced levels result in irritability and impulsive behaviour" (cited in Kaplan 2000: 65). Human life depends on our ability to move, and our awareness of moving gracefully and purposefully gives us satisfaction. Skills training in the arts can improve our ability to move with agility and mastery. In

[3] The poet Jean Tardieu in this short poem on painting captures the physicality of painting:
"The painter rolls unrolls
folds unfolds flattens
breaks scatters frays
gathers festoons tangles
sets up fastens divides
stretches tightens unravels designs throws- and goes.
(Thomson 1989:89)

addition, art products that are skilfully crafted and admired by others can also help to heighten self-esteem.

Art-making can also be enjoyable and give us pleasure. One can focus on the immediate concerns of doing a task well and forget some of one's worries. Sensual gratification which one gets from working art media - the act of poking, tearing, painting, pasting - can soothe and relax us. Art is often a form of play and the joy that is associated with the release of creative energy can be significant. The value of art as a form of play will be elaborated on later.

Art-making as an activity meets the conditions of what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2000) calls "Flow" or "optimal human experience". This is not exclusive to visual art; it could also occur during sport activities, other art forms or even ritual ceremonies. Flow occurs when a challenge is met with a commensurate amount of skill. This results in a feeling of accomplishment and a sense that one has grown psychologically. For Flow to occur, it must have the following characteristics: clear goals, feedback regarding progress, exercise of skill, intense concentration, diminished awareness of mundane concerns, a sense of control, loss of self-consciousness, an altered sense of time, and enjoyment of the experience for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi cited in Kaplan 2000:72). As an artist, this has been my experience at times when involved in art-making.

One of the pleasures of visual art-making is that one is left with a product, a lasting tangible record of one's creative work. It is a witness to life, the life of the creator and the

life of the group. It was possible to give expression to this through the groupwork which is described below. For those who live with poverty and disease, this is a positive outcome, an inspiration and possibly some compensation for the losses, doubts and frustrations that life has brought. As Piccirillo says, the art product "represents growth-beginning with nothing, conceiving possibilities, affirming the struggle, and culminating in creation" (2000: 128), a process which is also discussed later in the dissertation.

For people who have a life-threatening condition, one's artistic creations can remain as a testament for family members who may survive one. One's art becomes permanent proof of one's existence. The University of Cape Town's Memory Box Project in Khayelitsha[4] was started with the idea that parents who were living with HIV could prepare legacies for their children. This project culminated in a collaborative book that is not only a legacy of its creators but has now become a political and educative document. It affirms that HIV is a treatable condition and that there is hope and life for those who are living with HIV (Morgan: 2003).

Another group who employed art to reclaim their identity and to express memories of the life and journey from war-torn countries in Africa such as Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia and Angola, are children in Glynis Clacherty's Suitcase Project. The facilitators of this project found that working with a mixed media approach within and on a suitcase, was a gentle, non-threatening way in which to work. It allowed the children some

[4] In 2002, Jonathan Morgan, from UCT, ran the Memory Box Project, in conjunction with the Bambanani women's group in Khayelitsha, Cape Town.

emotional distance to tell their stories and "over a period of time to reclaim and integrate their memories and restore their identities" (Clacherty 2005: 4).

Art allows one to externalise one's vision and problems, and thus makes them more accessible as material with which to work. Eric Harth, physicist and researcher, has developed a neurological model of perception which proposes that mental images activate the same neural pathways as images from the external world. He believes that when people learn "to objectify their inner visions, the raw material in art and invention become available" (cited in Kaplan 2000:65). He proposes that the creative loop that begins in the brain can extend into the environment.

Art facilitates communication because not only does it objectify your inner visions, but enables you to share them with people around you. The social aspect of creating art in a group can be affirming and counteracts isolation. Not only can art highlight what is shared in common by people, but the act of creating objects and displaying them can be positive. Everyone can participate simultaneously and at their level of ability. Art has the potential to deepen the therapy experience and one way in which it does this is by what Ellen Dissanayake calls 'making special' that which has significance for human beings (cited in Kaplan 2000: 76).

Art therapy history and some theoretical perspectives:

The term art therapy was first used in 1942 by the artist Adrian Hill who used art as a means of helping to rehabilitate tuberculosis patients in a sanatorium in Sussex, United Kingdom (Thomson 1989:3). At a similar time, in the United States of America, Margaret Naumberg suggested that art expression was a way to manifest the unconscious and she proposed that images made in this distinct form of psychotherapy were a form of symbolic speech (Malchoidi 2003:17).

Art therapy theories had their historical and intellectual origins in psychoanalytic theory and analytic psychology. Psychoanalytic and analytic theories are still the most popular theories used by art therapists and they have been the basis from which almost all art therapies have developed. For example, humanistic theories of psychotherapy partly developed as a protest against certain ideas proposed by the psychodynamic tradition such as historical determinism, its emphasis on aggression and neuroses. Art therapy is now a hybrid of different theories and approaches including developmental art therapy, cognitive-behavioural approaches, narrative approaches, expressive art therapy and feminist art therapy.

Psychoanalytic concepts:

Sigmund Freud, whose views form the foundation of psychoanalytic theory, proposed that consciousness is always mediated by the unconscious and affects our understanding of the world. Freud described his work on the unconscious to a "Copernican revolution, where the ego, or consciousness, like the earth itself, is no longer mistaken for the centre

of the universe" (Grosz 1990:2). Freud considered dreams, material derived from free association and symbolic content of psychotic symptoms, to be evidence of the unconscious and provided a language for the expression of feeling. As stated, Art therapy was fundamentally influenced by Psychoanalytic concepts and approaches. One such influence is the use of projective drawing techniques to reveal unconscious material in images. Freud's theory of defence mechanisms, especially the concept of sublimation, influenced the course of art therapy. Sublimation is the name given to the process whereby repressed instinctual energy and unconscious motives derived from the past are diverted into a socially esteemed channel such as artistic creation, physical, or intellectual endeavour.

Melanie Klein and Freud's daughter Anna, both psychoanalysts, used drawing and painting as part of their clinical practice with children. Donald Winnicott, a child psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst, also used the squiggle technique, a form of drawing, in child psychotherapy. Contemporary psychoanalytic practices, too, places emphasis on children drawing, talking about their work which psychologists interpret as part of the treatment: an example of this is Rorschach.

An influential category of psychoanalytic thinking that has been applied to visual arts since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and has direct implications for art therapy is symbolism. Reference is made to psychoanalytic theory which refers specifically to Freud's theory and orientation. Other theorists within the psychodynamic tradition, which is a broader set of constructs that includes psychoanalytic theory as an

important foundation, will also be included in the dissertation and informs my work with the group.

Symbolism:

Symbolism is a vital mental operation that in psychoanalysis is implicated in the formation of symptoms, dreams, myths, religion and also the arts. Freud and Carl Gustav Jung both studied symbol formation in dreams. They believed that symbolisation was an important stage in both conscious and unconscious life, although they took different paths with regard to wider psychoanalytic theory.

In Greek antiquity, 'sumblon', was a coin, medal or object that could be broken in half and fitted back together to identify someone or something. This token or symbol came to mean, "a thing which conventionally is regarded as typifying, representing or recalling something else commonly an idea or a quality" (Illustrated Oxford Dictionary 1998. Sv "symbol"). The link between symbols and symbolised in Freud's view is that:

> symbols are related to what is symbolised by analogical criteria such as shape, size or usage; small animals can symbolize children, long thin objects a phallus, and windows and doors orifices of the body. Both Freud and his English follower Ernest Jones insisted that, although there is an enormous number of symbols, the objects or ideas symbolized are limited in number. (cited in Schneider 1993:5)

Freud and Jones felt that most symbols referred to the human body or its functions, family members, birth, love and death. Jones stated that "the characteristic of a true symbol is one that when it is interpreted evokes surprise and repugnance" (Symington 1986:174). He also specifies six attributes of true symbolism: Symbols are representations of unconscious material. Secondly, they have a constant meaning which

applies cross-culturally. A house therefore can symbolise the body. The tendency to have constant meaning is derived from the cognitive-perceptual manner in which man constructs the world around him. Thirdly, symbols are independent of an individual's conditioning factors. Symbols are universal in that they are related to the fundamental and most basic interests of mankind; these interests provide the source of symbolism. Fourthly, symbolism has an evolutionary basis so some animals can understand symbols. Fifthly, in a symbol there is always a connection between symbol and the signified. This connection is perceptual (auditory or visual) even though it may be difficult for us to immediately recognise the connection. Sixthly, symbols are ubiquitous and are similar in different cultures and in different times. For instance, teeth represent childbirth in dreams, in the present as well as in ancient literature and in Mythology (Symington 1986:175-179).

Human infants developed the ability to symbolise early in life. In the earliest stages of life the infant's mental processes are concrete and literal. They feel pain, hunger, are satiated or need to defecate. By way of association, the infant develops the capacity to know that he is hungry and hallucinates the nourishing or withholding breast. As a way of coping with frustration he symbolises the breast in the mind or latches on to a substitute object. Psychoanalysis maintains that any substitute formation is symbolic. D.W.Winnicott, a leading member of the English Object Relations School of Psychoanalysis, made an important contribution to this theory of symbolisation by proposing that this substitute object or 'transitional object' is the infant's first symbol. In

psychodynamic terminology, "objects are nearly persons, parts of persons, or symbols of one or the other" (Rycroft cited in Case and Dalley: 1992:78).

Transitional objects have special characteristics; from our point of view they are real objects such as a soft cloth, but for the infant they are not hallucinations nor are they objects from the 'outside'. They are physical substitutes for the mother's breast which can often be sucked and smell like mother but they are not her. The infant has complete right over this object and these rights are not challenged. These phenomena exist in an intermediate space between inner psychic reality and the external world. Winnicott proposes that:

> The intermediate area to which I am referring is the area that is allowed to the infant between primary creativity and objective perception based on reality testing. The transitional phenomenon represents the early stages of the use of illusion, without which there is no meaning for the human being in the idea of a relationship with an object that is perceived by others as external to that being (Winnicott: 1971:12).

This space is conditional on the mother providing 'good enough mothering', a term first coined by Winnicott. He stresses that the environment that the mother creates for her infant is essential for its healthy growth and development. The mother's ability to adapt to the needs of the infant will influence the infant's ability to separate from her. This has implications for the child's ability to allow objects to become real and separate and have a relationship with external reality.

Initially, in the early months of its life, the mother is preoccupied by the infant and through her close attention to its needs she maintains the illusion for the infant that they

are one. This early stage of development allows the infant the illusion that what he creates really exists. A 'good enough mother' gradually lessens her attention according to the infant's ability to cope with her failure and his frustration, and eventually the infant is weaned. The infant through this separation begins to experience a relationship to external reality. However, the task of reality acceptance is a constant factor throughout one's life. This ongoing tension between inner and outer reality can be relieved by the intermediate area of experience offered in religion or in the arts: "This intermediate area is in direct continuity with the play area of a small child who is 'lost' in play" (Winnicott 1971:13).

Winnicott emphasised the centrality of play for good mental health and creativity. He says, "to control what is outside one has to do things, not simply to think or wish, and doing things takes time. Playing is doing" (Winnicott 1971:41). He contrasts playing which is associated with dreaming and living, to fantasy. Fantasy is wish-fulfilment, an alternative to interaction with the world. Its passivity is negative in that it interferes with the motivation associated with acting on dreams and with a person's sense of reality.
On the other hand, playing which is a universal phenomenon has distinct benefits and leads to health. Winnicott elaborates on the benefits of playing:

> playing facilitates growth and therefore health; playing leads into group relationships; playing can be a form of communication in psychotherapy; and, lastly, psychoanalysis has been developed as a highly specialised form of playing in the service of communication with oneself and others (Winnicott 1971: 41).

To play, certain conditions are necessary: it occurs in the area between inner psychic reality and the external world, to be done in the context of trust, as the dependent child plays in the presence of a caring mother figure. Playing is essentially satisfying, although

it may involve a degree of anxiety. Conversely, too much anxiety will destroy playing. It involves the body, not only because of the manipulation of objects, but because it can lead to certain bodily excitement. Playing involves an acceptance of tradition and elements of inventiveness, just as a child is in union with mother and separate from her. Children have to enter a near-withdrawal state or as Winnicott expresses it "need to start from formlessness" or from "a non-purposive state…a sort of ticking-over of un-integrated personality" (cited in Thomson 1989:47). This state is reflected back to the infant by the mother, by the therapist to the patient and by the conscious mind in a healthy growing individual. Many of the qualities of play would directly apply to art. Marion Milner describes how:

> In play there is something half-way between daydreaming and purposeful instinctive or expedient action. As soon as a child has moved a toy in response to some wish or phantasy, then the scene created by play is different, and a new situation sets off a new set of possibilities; just as in free imaginative drawings the sight of a mark made on paper provokes new associations, the line, as it were, answer back and functions as a very primitive type of external objec" (cited in Waller and Gilroy 1992:17).

In summary, psychoanalytic theory posits that from the capacity to symbolise, as in the experience of the transitional object or space, creativity and invention develops. The transitional space is complex and multi-layered which gives potential for infinite possibilities of creation. Thus, "Cultural experience develops out of creative living manifested in play" (Case and Dalley 1992:88).

Jung and symbols:

Jung had different ideas to Freud about the symbolic role of images. He used images for his own self-analysis and encouraged his patients to draw and paint. Some people even

consider Jung to have been the first art therapist (Schaverien 1999:81). Not only did he use images for analysis, but he had an abiding respect for images from the unconscious. Images could arise from pictures made by patients or could arise from their dreams. Whatever their source, he encouraged people to let things happen even though the material that emerges may not be fully understood. He encouraged artists to draw upon the healing and redeeming forces of the unconscious:

> Consciousness, no matter how extensive it may be, must always remain the smaller circle within the greater circle of the unconscious, an island surrounded by the sea: and, like the sea itself, the unconscious yields an endless and self-replenishing abundance of living creatures, a wealth beyond our fathoming. We may long have known the meaning, effects, and characteristics of unconscious contents without ever fathomed their depths and potentialities, for they are capable of infinite variation and can never be depotentiated. The only way to get at them in practice is to try to attain a conscious attitude which allows the unconscious to cooperate instead of being driven into opposition (Jung 1946:14 cited in Schaverien 1999:8).

Jung's concept of the unconscious is far richer than Freud's who typified it as the remnants of an "archaic' past" (Jung 1964:57), "an instinctive deposit that is shared by all men. Where there is a difference is that Jung held that the instinctive deposit is shaped into a variety of symbolic images" (Symington 1986: 220). These unconscious images of the instincts are called "archetypes". Jung believed that they influence our imagination, thinking and perception and that they have existed from the evolution of man. They form the collective unconscious which is the part of the unconscious which is not common to one person, but is common to all. Archetypes underlie fairy tales, myths, religion, rituals and are recognisable in dreams and art. These archetypes are not experienced as images but as "forms without content, representing the possibility of a certain type of perception and action. The archetype therefore exists as a potentiality for actualisation" (Ibid). He

also perceived them to be found at a deeper level than the personal unconscious. The unconscious's personal aspect contains repressed memories, emotions, wishes and subliminal perceptions pertaining to a specific individual. Jung believed that the unconscious, whether collective or personal, can be represented in art through images and symbols. The unconscious is for him the seat of creativity. When archetypal symbols arise, we are touched by their content even though they carry a meaning we do not fully grasp. Complexes, however, derive primarily from the personal unconscious, even though they seem to draw power from a deep connection to the collective unconscious. Jung was the first person to talk about parts of self, as though they exist outside of the personality. These parts he called complexes.

> A complex is an agglomeration of associations - a sort of picture of more or less complicated psychological nature - sometimes of traumatic character, sometimes simply of a painful and highly toned character. Everything that is highly toned is rather difficult to handle…Complexes are an autonomous group of associations that have a tendency to move by themselves, to live their own life apart from our intentions (Jung 1935:71-73 cited in Symington 1986:217- 219).

Greg Furth, in his book "The secret world of Drawings: healing through Art" (1988), favoured a Jungian approach to understanding art expression. He draws our attention to the way in which complexes both positive and negative are manifest in drawings. Negative complexes, although they originate in the unconscious psyche, will draw attention to themselves by manifesting in outer world difficulties. These difficulties and adaptations will appear symbolically in drawings and in dreams. If we focus on the symbol, in effect we will be approaching the complex in which the problem is intermingled. This attention unblocks the flow of psychic energy and the unconscious material is then brought to consciousness.

For Jung, the way to effect healing within a patient is to release blocks and help them to live meaningful lives. “He felt the key to treatment lay in dialogue between analyst and patient and conscious and unconscious, through the language of symbols” (Case and Dalley 1992:89). He believed that this dialogue would bring about psychic equilibrium within an individual. He also conceptualised the psyche as a “self-regulating system,” and that “there is no balance, no system of self-regulation, without opposition” (Jacobi 1980:53-54 cited in Furth 1988:7). One way in which the balance within the psyche could be achieved is through tapping into the transcendent function of symbols. “The capacity of symbols to unite consciousness and unconscious into a new synthesis is what Jung called the transcendent function” (Case and Dalley 1992:91).

A symbol coming from the unconscious acts either in a complementary or compensatory way to the individual’s consciousness at any given moment in an individual’s life. Jung’s theory of compensation is based on the theory of opposites. If the conscious attitude is unbalanced and one-sided, the psyche will seek wholeness and balance by compensatory energy expressing itself in a symbol. The compensatory symbol will express the neglected area, in either a dream, fantasy or in a drawing. It is the task of the analyst to accompany the patient on his journey to individuation and allowing the patient’s unconscious to reconcile conflicts. The example given to illustrate this point in Furth’s book is the patient who has difficulty in expressing anger, but who always dreams about fighting, bombing and murder of other dream characters. These dreams compensate for his overly passive approach to life. However, if a travelling salesman whose daily life

involves many air journeys dreams of boarding an aeroplane, this dream will be seen to complement his conscious world. (Furth 1988:9)

To activate the healing power of symbols, Jung used two basic techniques: One was the way of creative formulation which would involve dreams, symbols, art and active imagination and the second was the way of understanding of intellectual concepts, conscious awareness and insight. (Case and Dalley 1992:91)

Jung deliberately used fantasy and dreams as his method of healing, "I was led to conclude that dreams are the most frequent and accessible source for the investigation of man's symbolizing facility" (Jung 1964:8). Jung and Freud both acknowledged the value of dreams for understanding the unconscious. Freud used the method of free associating from dream material with the belief that this would lead the analyst to the complexes that were the source of the neurosis, whereas Jung insisted that the patient dwells on the dream material to amplify the affect, returning constantly to the exact nature of the dream content. He felt that these dreams were not making generalised comments on complexes, but were offering metaphorical messages which pointed to the nature of the complex as well as containing clues that would resolve the dilemma.

Jung's technique of active imagination is "a way to release creativity within the individual by using fantasy and dreams as the primary mode of healing. It is the dynamic production of inward images in which the individual is encouraged to observe those images" (Jacobi, 1942 cited in Malchoidi 2003:50) or, as Thomson expressed it, "the task

consists solely in observing objectively how a fragment of fantasy develops" (1989:19). Art is believed to be a form of active imagination by many art therapists. The active element is the engagement with some material such as paint or clay. Art expression can thus be regarded as a form of active imagination as long as images are allowed to arise spontaneously. One can amplify the effect of the image by making additional images in response to it, or by spending time with the mental imagery associated with the image.

Transference:

In psychoanalysis the concept of transference is crucial in psychoanalytic treatment. Transference was discovered by Freud through his work with patients who transferred on to him feelings which originated from earlier significant relationships. The patient would relate to him as though he was their mother, father or family member. The analysis of transference phenomena gives the patient insight into his significant relationships and informs his emotional condition in the here and now. Greenson, a Freudian analyst, makes the point that all human relationships have elements of transference and that it can occur even towards inanimate objects. He says transference reactions may occur towards:

> People who perform a special function which originally was carried out by the parents. Thus, lovers, leaders, authorities, physicians, teachers, performers and celebrities are particularly prone to activate transference responses. Furthermore, transference reactions can also occur to animals, to inanimate objects, and to institutions, but here too, analysis will demonstrate that they are derived from the important people of early childhood (Greenson 1967:154 cited in Schaverien 1999:16).

Schaverien's thesis in her book 'The revealing image' is that transferences are made to pictures in what she calls "analytical art psychotherapy". She says that in analysis the intense form of relating that accompanies transference mobilises affect and this provides

the opportunity for the patient to change and transform patterns within his inner world. She proposes that elements of transference that are reflected in the picture made in art therapy have the same potential for transformation:

> These pictures produce an empowered form of relating which draws the artist/patient and the therapist/viewer into a deep transference to the picture itself; and also to each other through the picture. In these pictures, that which usually remains unseen, unstated, even unconscious, between people is evident and cannot be completely denied. The purpose of therapy is to mediate in the divided, inner world of the patient and the picture offers a means of just such mediation (Schaverien 1992:23 cited in Dalley, Rifkind and Terry 1993:9).

Schaverien distinguishes between two types of images made in art therapy: diagrammatic images that describe what the artist is conscious of and embodied images which contain deeper symbolic and unconscious meaning and reflect the transference in a significant way:

> It is possible to understand the diagram as an image in relation to which feeling is expressed - the image and the feeling are connected through association, but the one is not embodied in the other - whereas in the embodied image form and content are unified, and so the meaning and the feelings associated with it are inextricably linked….The picture may be experienced as an extension of the feeling world of the artist/client (Schaverien 1999: 92).

Central to the distinction between diagrammatic images and embodied images is Cassirer's notion that action is formative (Ibid: 88). A person creates an image and the image in turn evokes a reaction within the creator and consequently the creator's response to this reaction will result in subsequent changes in the picture. This dynamic within the creation process is felt to be formative and the way in which "I come to grips" with the world. An image where the artist abandons himself to the process of creation and

allows the mental image to give way to the pictorial or artistic imperatives will be more embodied and formative than if the artist's tentative marks are kept in conscious control.

Just as the image evokes a response in the artist, the client and his images evoke a response in therapist:

> Counter-transference is the therapist's own feeling response to the client and the image in a therapy situation. The therapist's feeling responses can be understood as a useful indicator of the client's experience and feelings, and there is thus a need for the therapist to differentiate these from her own personal agenda (Dalley, Rifkind, Terry 1993:9).

Initially, counter-transference was thought of as a maladaptive response and therapists needed to be acutely self-aware and vigilant that their responses did not contaminate the relationship. This is still an important aspect to keep in mind, however, recently the positive aspects of counter-transference have been highlighted by different theorists. Margarita Wood quotes Fordham (1974), saying that the therapist needs to have empathy for the client and identify with the client on an unconscious level. In this way she can become "a pliable vessel with good enough fit" (Wood 1984: 70), who can contain the feelings and ideas, until the time comes to discern and discriminate which feelings are from the overt situation and which arise from a different, more unconscious, source.

The idea that the therapist should act as a container for the client's intolerable experiences was formulated by Wilfred Bion. Bion was profoundly interested in how people could become their own subjective self especially in the face of powerful projective mechanisms. He felt that a patient could so burden a therapist that his imagination, memory, thinking and feelings could be immobilised. He conceptualised the

therapist as a maternal container and he thought that the mother's capacity for reverie was essential; with this capacity she became a mother capable of holding her child's anxieties. He believed that the baby projected his deepest fears of annihilation and death on to the mother. If the mother is able to contain these fears, then they become modified and the baby could receive them back in more manageable and acceptable form. How does the mother contain the child? She does this by responding appropriately to the child's communications. She satisfies him by her attention and presence. The 'good enough' mother does not become so depressed by the infant that she is unable to respond, nor does she fear him or become disgusted by him.

Bion, following Freud, felt that the analyst's proper relation to the patient was one of reverie and that he should not be so consumed by his own theories and formulations that he could not make sense of the patient's communication. He believed that the therapist should be open to new thoughts and, as Neville Symington, explains: "Therefore the state of reverie essentially means that the analyst is prepared to be changed by his patient" (1986:291). Once the patient, like the child, is understood, meaning has been generated. As Hannah Segal, a Kleinian psychoanalyst, explains it, this is "a beginning of mental stability" (Segal 1975:135 cited in Case and Dalley 1992:63).

Tessa Dalley (Dalley and Case 1992:184) suggests that making an image in a safe therapeutic setting can have the same containing function as mother. Fantasies, anxieties and distressing feelings can be expressed in an image and these can be held in the image until the client is ready to accept them back.

Another aspect of art therapy which would influence the relationship with the client is the therapist's own experience of being an artist and her attitude and ability to reflect on the inner processes that accompany the art-making process. Margarita Wood says that "It is essential that the high anxiety surrounding symbolic processes (Kris 1952; Ehrenzweig 1967) can be held by the therapist" (1984: 71). She can only do this if she understands the creative process herself.

Feminist art therapy:

Art therapists agree that art is an effective means of communicating personal information about the artist. The feminist approach to art therapy is challenging these personal approaches to art therapy, forwarding the argument that as long as therapy is simply a means of self expression or catharsis, it is not addressing the societal and cultural conditions in which people find themselves.

Feminist art therapy is a new trend within the field of art therapy which explores how art therapy can be seen within a social context. It offers alternative points of view on how art therapy should address gender issues in its theory and practice. It highlights the fact that art therapy is not a neutral practice and it questions the role of the therapist.

Feminist art therapy expresses itself in a diversity of methodological and theoretical approaches. Susan Joyce, an Australian feminist art therapist, prefers to see feminist theory as a "philosophical approach to the practice of art therapy rather than a

prescription of technique and consequently can be applied to a wide range of practice" (Joyce 1997:90). Joyce highlights certain areas in which feminist art therapists should focus and she says that the primary goal of feminist therapy is: "to help women overcome the effects of oppression in their lives. The commitment was to change, not adjustment, and to the client's definition of change, not the therapist" (1997:90). Joyce is opposed to what she sees as a patriarchal 'micro-culture' within the client-therapist relationship, where the therapist is knowledgeable about human behaviour and the client is passive and lacking in understanding. She feels that therapists committed to this way of working should try a methodology that addresses the power differences in the relationship and demystifies the therapeutic process. Feminist therapy she proposes should emphasise women's strengths rather than their psychopathology. In addition she notes that provision of therapy in the form of groups for women is particularly effective because it can address the effects of women's sex role socialisation and it reduces the power imbalance between women clients and the group leader.

Helene Burt, Canadian art therapist, affirms most of Joyce's statements about feminist therapy, saying that there are a variety of approaches, such as psychodynamic, cognitive behavioural and family therapy models, which feminists need to respond to and expand upon. By acknowledging that the personal is political, they are recognising that some of the clients' problems are socially constructed and feminist therapists should strive to empower their clients. This can be done if the therapist acknowledges the power that she has in the therapeutic intervention and works towards a more egalitarian therapist-client relationship. Burt is especially mindful of the ethical issues that feminist therapist could

face and she stresses that they must develop a clear, thoughtful model of therapy. According to this perspective, feminist therapists should avoid an abuse of power, be mindful of confidentiality issues and make sure boundaries are appropriate for the therapeutic relationship (1997:99-100).

Feminists are critical of some of the traditional theories of psychoanalysis, psychiatry and developmental psychology which are entrenched in the training and practice of art therapy, saying that they are patriarchal and misogynist. Joyce quotes Kravetz saying that in the traditional psychoanalytic theories, women are presented as "innately passive, dependent, anatomically inferior, and emotionally immature. Motherhood is required as a universal fulfilment" (Joyce 1997:83-84).These stereotypes in the theories affect practice as they are the basis on which female clients are assessed, evaluated and treatment is formulated.

Cultural theory can help us conceptualise women's subjectivity in a different way and some feminists are proposing that we adopt cultural theory to challenge the way that gender is traditionally presented, so as to help us find a theoretical approach for working with women who do not come from a European, Western culture. Cultural theory has added to our understanding of how social and political structures impact on the lives of individuals and, more recently, how language and discourse not only reflect our notions of reality and self, but construct them. In art therapy, visual images and verbal communications are regarded as discourses which are essential in the construction of subjectivity and understandings of self and the world:

> The words that are chosen to talk about and describe social groups, the images that portray them, are integral to the ways that individuals come to understand themselves, to construct their sense of self and embodiment, to define themselves as members of some social groups but not others (Lupton 1997:3).

Linda Nochlin, in her essay ,"Women, Art and Power," goes so far as to say that not only the articulated world view of the artist is important, but the things that go unsaid, un-thought and un-represented. She believes that ideologies are so ingrained in commonsense views and assumptions about the world that they are deemed to be self-evident and therefore they become relatively invisible to the artists as well as to other contemporary viewers (Nochlin 1989: 2). Nochlin says that there is a relationship between woman's lack of power in the social order and her inability to critique her situation pictorially, because

> the need to comply, to be inwardly at one with the patriarchal order and its discourses is compelling, inscribing itself in the deepest levels of the unconscious, marking the very definitions of the self - as women in our society - and almost all others that we know of (1989:32-33).

Clifford Geertz and other anthropologists and cultural theorists have critically examined the concept of 'the self' proposed by most developmental psychological theorist saying that this notion is a western notion:

> the notion of the person as a bounded, unique, integrated, and dynamic centre of judgement and action is precisely the concept that most developmental psychologists would say has to be there in childhood in all societies, not only in the West. That is, the force of interactional experience in infancy and early childhood with the physical and social world would lead to a universal differentiation at the skin of self from others and external events (Shweder 1984:12).

This, however, is contested by Geertz, who supports his statement by saying that in the cultures he has studied, that is the Balinese, Javanese and Moroccan, their concept of self is not defined by Western norms.

Relational theory:

Feminist theorists like Carol Gilligan and the Stone Centre writers, especially Jean Baker Miller, have challenged the traditional Western psychological notion that the self: i.e. an autonomous, self-sustaining and integrated entity, emerges as a person moves away from dependency on their early relationships. They propose that the human psyche develops through the relational process and the goal is self-differentiation, but this is only achieved by an appreciation of the multiple relationships in which a person is embedded. The objective of development is the ability to participate in healthy, fulfilling relationships, or "relationship competence" (Spiro 2005:138). They believe that the existing theories of separation, such as relational psychoanalysis and infancy research, are a construction that reflects the value that the patriarchal western societies place on autonomy and independence. Their theory, by including cultural analysis, can also address social injustices imposed and perpetuated by patriarchal societies:

> The focus on girl's and women's voices, and more recently on issues of race, ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation, gives expression to women's psychological experiences and addresses how dimensions of power operate to suppress marginalised voices and safeguard positions of power and dominance(Spiro 2005:139).

The relationship model postulates that 'the self' grows when actively involved in healthy and life-giving relationships. Miller does not see these relationships as static but ever-changing where there is flow between connection, disconnection and reconnection as part

of normal experience. Circumstances in life which produce chronic disconnection lead to individual and psychological stress. If this state of disconnection without reconnection continues, it can lead to alterations and changes within the self or restrictions in the emotional responses of the individual.

In this model, shaming and stigmatising individuals is an effective means of silencing a person's reality. Not only do people become unable to articulate their reality, but they move to a position where they don't even know their reality. The dominant socio-political group within a society can entrench their power by dividing people so that there are chronic discontinuities and relationship breakdowns. Opportunities for embracing diversity are curtailed, the minority voices are silenced and they withdraw from interaction, because they are plagued by self doubt and feelings of worthlessness. This leads to the power structures in society remaining unchallenged and therefore unchanged (Jordan1997 cited in Spiro 2005:141).

The relational model proposes that an individual can heal if a relationship opportunity is created with the therapist which is characterised by mutual empathy. The relationship is to be "dialogical" with both people being open, attentive and responsive to one another. The relationship is not mutual in the sense of equal disclosure. An effective setting for creating relationship opportunities is group therapy. Fedele in her paper 'Relationships in group: Connection, Resonance and Paradox' (1994), says that relational/cultural theory differs from the traditional psychoanalytical group theory. The goal of the traditional therapy is the development of the individual self and the group process as a means of

achieving this end, whereas the relational/cultural model gives primacy to the relational movement and connection as the primary task of group work. The group provides opportunities for individuals to form new relationships that can help to undo the harm and challenge the restrictive inhibitions imposed by previous relationships (Spiro 2005:142).

Group art therapy:

The focus of this research is not with group therapy as such but rather 'art group therapy'. Art therapy in groups has developed from two bodies of knowledge: that of art therapy and verbal group therapy. Creating an artwork is mostly an individual process and so the distinguishing feature between art therapy in groups and verbal groups is the time taken apart from the group to create.

Models of group therapy are distinguished most clearly by the relationship between pictures and words. This is a central thesis in a book by Sally Skaife and Val Huet, titled: "Art Psychotherapy groups. Between pictures and words" (1998). There are three models of group work: the studio-based open group model, the theme-centred model and the analytical group model. In the studio-based open group, art plays a prominent role and verbal interaction is mainly limited to interaction between the individual and the therapist. (Shaun Mc Niff 1998, Catherine Hyland Moon 2002). In the theme-centred group, the therapist, who mostly introduces the theme, directs the interaction between members of the group and the artwork is seen as a way of understanding the individual person's problem (Marian Liebmann 1986). In the analytic group or interactive model,

the image-making is considered as part of the group dynamic, and interaction is between all members of the group (Waller 1993, Cathy Malchoidi 2003, Shaife and Huet 1998).

Historically, these models have evolved with the open-studio model being the earliest and the analytic group and theme-centred models developing later. In contemporary art therapy practice, the different models are used once the particular needs of the client group and setting have been considered.

Summary:

In summary, making images can be therapeutic. Of special importance to this study is the way in which an image can externalize one's feelings and understanding of the world so that the material becomes available for discussion or analysis. In this way, we get an opportunity to discuss issues that are enclosed in secrecy or taboos. This is especially important for people living with HIV and AIDS. Images are valuable as a witness to life and are tangible reminders of certain experiences. Making art has many social benefits; it can develop mastery and control, self-esteem, give pleasure and highlight what we value in our lives.

Art can be therapeutic, as well as supportive of other psychotherapy. Although I am not a therapist, psychoanalytic and analytic theory has influenced my thinking about the art support group, hence it is examined in the dissertation.

Psychoanalytic theory, reminds us that symbolic content of our artwork is a manifestation of our unconscious. Symbols are related to what is symbolised by analogical criteria. Symbols have constant meaning and do apply cross-culturally. Human interest is a source of symbolism. Our ability to symbolise develops early in life in the intermediate space between the infant and its mother. This space is conditional on "good enough" mothering.

The good enough mother provides the child with an emotionally safe environment in which to play. Play is important for mental health, creativity and cultural expression and art is part of this. Fantasy, unlike play, is passive and does not involve action in the world and is unhealthy.

Analytic theory also stresses the importance of images from the unconscious and maintains that they communicate important wisdom. Archetypes are possibilities of certain types of perceptions and actions which derive from our collective unconscious and evidence of them can be seen across time, place and cultures. Complexes exist within the personal unconscious and these are parts of self that we relate to, as though they exist outside our personality. Negative complexes are a manifestation of our outer world difficulties.

Paying attention to symbols can have a transcendent function. They unite conscious with the unconscious material and this can liberate energy within the psyche which leads to better health. One can activate the power of symbols by active imagination, which is the spontaneous production of images or you can amplify their effect by dwelling on them

and by making more images in that theme. The power of symbols can also be triggered by new insights or understanding.

Transference can be made to people and to inanimate objects. In art therapy, transference to the picture and to others through the picture is important. The difference between diagrammatic and embodied images is explained. Embodied images are important in that the transformative power of symbols is activated.

Counter transference the feelings one has in relationship to others gives one insight into how others are feeling. To provide an enabling environment for therapy or when establishing a support group, one has to be available to others, have an attitude of reverie and be able to hold difficult or unpalatable feelings.

Feminist art therapists have drawn our attention to the fact that a therapeutic intervention exists in a socio-economic and political context, and one can choose to perpetuate this order or subvert it. One way to subvert it is to empower women to see themselves differently, by emphasizing their strengths rather than their weaknesses, and by being aware and countering the effects of power imbalances in therapy, group work and society. Cultural theory articulates how language and discourse reflects the notion of reality and self. Words and images also construct self. Ideology can be manifest in what is said and represented as much as what goes unrepresented and unsaid.

We are formed by our relationships with others. Chronic disconnections originating from the powerful narratives in society lead to stress. Stigmatised and marginalised people find it difficult to articulate or even know reality.

Group work is particularly helpful in forming and transforming connections between people. Art in groups can be carried out in different ways; the theme-orientated approach directs the focus of the research group.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This research is a qualitative exploratory study of an art group of Swazi woman living with HIV. The group was established to conduct my research. The artwork, photographs and the written records of the group process are to be used as case material. The purpose of the research was to discover what Swazi women living with HIV communicate about their lives, using art as a medium to enhance their understanding and improve the quality of their lives.

For the purpose of my research, the art production needed to be done within a group so that their experience could mirror everyday relations as well as give individual expression to the women. In addition, groups are a natural setting for communication, and individuals within a group tend to moderate each other's extreme views and motivate each other so that it is easier to get a sense of their commonalities and shared views. Not only do groups create their own culture, but they reflect the dominant cultural assumptions and values within their own society.

Groupwork is also more congruent with the Swazi indigenous knowledge systems for explaining human behaviour. In African culture, to be human means that one is part of a social group. This ethic is enshrined in the Zulu maxim 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye' ('one is a person through others'), which is often summarised as the concept of "ubuntu".

> Afrocentric worldviews may not separate 'self' from the 'other' or from the ancestral world under certain circumstances. What Western paradigms call 'illness or maladaptive behaviour' may be understood in Afrocentric paradigms as significant communication from ancestors requiring prescribed

> individual and group healing responses such as cleansing ceremonies (Becker 2005:36).

Essentially, their collective understanding of self is best explored within a group setting. As mentioned before, groups are an effective setting for developing the connections between people and offering them opportunities to restore and develop themselves as people. Irvin Yalom (1995) has named curative factors within group therapy which include: instillation of hope, universality, altruism, group cohesiveness, catharsis, the collective recapitulation of the primary family group, interpersonal learning. Diane Waller elaborates on these factors in her book on "Group interactive art therapy" (1993:35-37) and Sandra Drower describes how many of these factors are pertinent when working with people living with HIV (2005:108).

Groups can instil hope by providing mutual support for people living with the HIV virus. They can give these people an opportunity to see how others manage to live productive lives. Members in a group often reassure each other that they are valuable and that being a member of the group is worthwhile. Group cohesiveness is an antidote to the isolation and stigma that many people living with HIV experience. Feeling that you belong may enhance self-esteem and challenge feelings of powerlessness. Universality means that people find out others have similar problems, anxieties and fears and that they are not alone in their struggles with life's challenges. Catharsis is the feeling of relief that is often felt when a secret is shared or the circumstances around a traumatic event are relived. HIV/AIDS is often shrouded in a culture of silence and denial and the provision of a safe environment in which people can openly acknowledge and share some of their secrets

can be an antidote. In the small group, there are reflections of the reconstructed family. The group can provide the individual members with a network of relationships in which there is the potential for connection and reworking of past relationships.

Just as working with a group has distinct benefits so too does the use of art as a means of expression. The benefits of using art have been elaborated in an earlier section. Emily Piccirillo in her article "Hide and Seek: The art of living with HIV/AIDS" explains how art therapy has the comprehensive capacity to provide for the five central needs of children living with HIV/AIDS. These are mastery, communication, enjoyment, belonging and legacy (2000: 39). The needs of adults are similar. They need to have empowering experiences that allow them to take control over parts of their lives. The opportunity to work with art media allows for people to learn new skills and to participate in constructive work. It also has the potential to be developed into income generating skills.

The art therapy is a means of communication between members of a group and can facilitate an inner dialogue within individuals. Creating artwork with other people is often enjoyable because the common task focuses the participants on the present and many of the chronic worries and distress can be temporarily banished. "The social aspect of art creation and display builds acceptance, establishing and normalising common themes while highlighting the individual. This has a profound value with a socially stigmatising condition like HIV/AIDS" (Piccirillo 2000:45). The artwork provides a tangible record of

the group process and the artist's existence is recorded in a manner that can be shared, seen and remembered by others.

This study is cross-cultural. Although the presentation of the culture of others has some ethical and methodological challenges, this research was attempted with the belief that even though people are different from each other, they share many commonalities.

Cross-cultural research, especially anthropological research, traditionally employed the technique of participant observation, believing that the observer could be detached and objective.This assumption does not always recognise that we are living in an interconnected global world and that the process of studying others comes from a particular tradition which has a specific world view that needs to be assessed (Swartz 1998:7-8). People who study others are not able to do so in a positivist scientific way. In practice, participation and observation are so interwoven that it is impossible to detach the knowledge from the knower.

Whilst my account of the Swazi women in this study addresses the work with this group of women, it also became my own learning experience. I had to examine my background and understanding of art therapy. It was helpful to consider James Clifford's view: "What one *sees* in a coherent ethnographic account, the imagined construct of the other, is connected in a continuous double structure with what one understands" (1986: 101). Therefore my research is not a scientific, empirical study, but a qualitative construct of what happened within a specific art group at a particular time and place. I believe, like

Clifford Geertz, that "all texts in the social sciences are in one way or another "fictions"… not inviolable, unassailable statements of scientific truth" (Olson 1991 online).

A hermeneutic study of culture is one that was adopted in this study. In other words, I attempted to understand and draw meaning from my ongoing interactions with Swazi people and their culture. The definition of culture that I worked from is that:

> man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun; I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explanation that I am after (Geertz 1973 online).

Ten women were invited to join my research project. They were all members of the support group PORECO.[5]All the participants in my group are Swazi mothers, HIV-positive, and were unemployed when the group met. The primary criterion for group selection was that the members should be Swazi women who were HIV-positive. I decided to work with women because the low status of women in Swaziland renders them largely voiceless in many areas of Swazi community life. As already noted, Gender inequality is also a fundamental contributing factor to the prevalence and spread of HIV.

The group participants' ages ranged from 17 to 42 at the time of the study. All participants had some schooling, the least educated person had completed two years of

[5] PORECO is a support group that was established by the Swaziland Infant Nutrition Action Network (SINAN) in 2004. SINAN is a non-governmental organisation who works with other agencies to implement the Swaziland 'HIV prevention of mother to child programme'. This programme includes hospital delivery, antiretroviral prophylaxis for mother and child, voluntary counselling and testing services during pregnancy and food supplements for the mother and child. All but one of the women who attended the group are members of PORECO. PORECO has 400 members. 200 of the members are HIV positive mothers, 25% of them are employed full time, 5% are employed as domestic servants and 70% are unemployed. (Information provided by the treasurer George Jones)

schooling and the most had completed high school; the average participant had completed primary school and the first two years of high school. Half of the participants were married and most of the single women lived with a partner. All the women had children, most had two or three and one mother had five.

The group met at Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa. We had the use of an art room except for two sessions which were held in the Emhlabeni Common Room. The group met from the 26th of September 2006 to the 21st of November 2006. The group met once a week for nine sessions. All sessions lasted for one and a half to two hours except for the last session which was about three hours long. A snack was provided for all sessions and lunch on the last session. The school has an extensive community service programme and it was not unusual for members of the community to use the facilities at that time.

In a previous group arranged by the researcher, regular attendance and group consistency was a debilitating problem, so it was decided that to avoid this, a small stipend of twenty Emalangeni would be offered to defray transport costs. In addition, transport was provided for the women from Baylor Children's Clinic to Waterford Kamhlaba School.

I planned this group as a structured art group which met at a specific time and place each week to share a common task or theme. The structure was not designed to be heavily prescriptive, but rather as an aid to providing a safe, contained environment, where group

participants would not be overwhelmed by anxiety or confusion. The themes were open-ended and were not predetermined before the group began, but arose out of the art activities, discussions of the previous week as well as the research questions. A variety of art media was used because it allowed the participants to gain new skills as each medium evokes a particular range of feelings, different content and the facility for alternative forms of expression.

The group was initially envisioned as being a closed group. However it proceeded to become a slow open group, meaning the membership of the group gradually increased. However, at the seventh session I asked that the group not invite any new members and only members who had attended during the previous sessions were to attend the remaining sessions. Two new members joined the group for the fourth session and they brought their infants. After that, all sessions were attended by children, toddlers and babies.

All adults participating in the study signed the informed consent forms and returned them promptly. The informed consent forms contained information about the purpose of the group and stressed that attendance of the group was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw or leave at any time. It also included a general explanation of the group format and it explained that the participants would not incur any expenses. They were required to be mindful about the information shared in the group as I did not want participants to share information that they would consider too personal and revealing. They were also requested to keep personal information shared in the group confidential. Confidentiality

needs to be a strong ethic within groups of HIV-positive people, as revealing certain information could have damaging effects on the participants. The positive outcomes were that they could acquire a greater understanding of themselves and different art media. It was hoped that they would be more willing to take part in, and promote, art activities with the children in their care.

The group was conducted in English as English and Siswati are official languages in Swaziland. However for most Swazi people Siswati is their first language and English is a second language. Schooling affects fluency in English. Consequently all the participants were operating in a second language and I simplified explanations and the type of language used accordingly. I also asked members of the group to translate for participants who experienced difficulties.

Two ways of understanding which have helped me think about language are the empiricist approach on the one hand and the hermeneutic approach on the other. (Good and Good cited in Swartz 1998: 27-28). The empiricist approach looks for corresponding labels in different languages to describe the reality of things in the world. The hermeneutic approach proposes that language shapes and constructs the reality that we discover. As there were limitations on direct verbal communication between me and the group, I found the hermeneutic approach particularly useful. For example, while the group was engaged in an exercise called body-mapping, I used the word ‘power’ and asked the participants to mark on their body silhouette where they located their source of power. The aim was to reflect on their strengths as a person and to find a symbolic place

on their body which was associated with this strength. Many Swazi people believe in an active spiritual world which intervenes in the physical world. One of the participants made a joke about me wanting this information so that I could bewitch them. Operating from different cultural assumptions, I was surprised by this association.

My understanding of what was occurring within the group and in the artwork was reliant on the interpretations I made of my feelings. In other words, I relied heavily on counter-transference as an interpretive tool.

A limitation in my study was not being able to speak Siswati because I could not understand the casual Siswati conversations and asides. However, I was therefore more reliant on assessing mood and atmosphere as well as considering their artwork. Talking about emotions also proved to be difficult; not only were the participants unused to expressing themselves in English, but they were also unfamiliar with the practice of speaking about their emotions. This is partly due to differences in the way that our cultures approach the subject of emotions. In the western Post-Freudian world that I operate within, the differentiation of different emotions and expressing them verbally is highly prized (Swartz 1998: 5). Siswati however has a limited vocabulary of words addressing emotions, whereas English has a fairly extensive vocabulary exploring various emotions. Siswati has some onomatopoeic expressions that reveal what the speaker is feeling. [6]

[6] In Siswati there is no word for emotions but rather the expression: "this makes me respond…."There is no distinction between the 'like' and 'love', they share the same word 'ukuthandza'.

In looking at images, there is a temptation to find equivalences in language. This can be problematic in that images code information in different ways to language. For instance, words are ordered in linear, discrete and successive ways, but images can present their constituents simultaneously and illustrate relationships spatially. Images in this research have to be contextualised in a specific cultural matrix, although usefully some symbols are universal and have deep resonances within our common human culture. It is important to reiterate that in interpreting an image, we are reliant on "prior knowledge of possibilities; we can only recognize what we know" (Gombrich 1996, 54). However, my knowledge was expanded and challenged by contact with these women and so, consequently, I know more than when I began.

The group process:

The objective for the first two sessions was to establish a working relationship with the group. An effort was made to establish a group routine and a ritual way of operating to gain the participants' trust and to establish a reliable framework that could meet the expectations of the group and accomplish my research purpose. Groups began with an introductory activity in the form of a short discussion, song, or a dance to create a relaxed atmosphere and to explain what was expected of the participants. We would then move into that day's activity and at the end of the activity we would look at the artwork together and discuss what had been produced. Each session ended with a snack before the participants left. The room in which we met for most of the sessions helped to establish an intimate working atmosphere for the group. We were able to work around one large table and the art materials and water needed were readily available for use.

In the first session, the purpose and parameters for working with the group were introduced and discussed. The activity was designed as a non-threatening way of introducing the group to the facilitator. The four people who arrived were asked to decorate an art folder with their name and a symbol that represented them. They could use felt tip pens or coloured pencils to colour their images, but the participants chose to use pencils. The task took a disproportionately long time to complete. The participants were open and friendly towards each other and had come as friends from PORECO. There was some anxiety around the use of unfamiliar art media, so the introduction to painting in the second session was an opportunity to experiment with mixing colours and playing with the paint. They used fabric inks in dilute form to paint on cloth.

By the third week, we were sufficiently comfortable with each other to ask them about their childhood histories. Instead of listening to their verbal response, I asked them to write down the information before they shared it with the group. This took a long time because the women found it difficult to write in English. The discussion about their childhood began with me singing the first line of a Siswati children's song so as to evoke some memories of their childhood. The women eventually took pieces of cloth and painted the houses where they had lived as children. While they were painting they shared stories about their siblings and a grandfather.

The fourth session took place in the common room of one of the school's residences. I was pleased to be in this room as it was private and there were fewer interruptions; it was

a better setting for confidentiality. I was anxious about asking the women to reveal their status and to talk about how they discovered that they were HIV positive. They openly narrated their stories, but they were very reluctant to draw. The task set for that day was to draw the journey that they had made to find out their HIV status. I offered the group long pieces of brown paper on which to draw their stories. I chose charcoal as the medium because it is a looser medium and does not allow for tight, deliberate drawing that tends to happen with the use of pencils. Three of the participants drew with care and in a focussed way, and the other two expressed resistance to drawing, saying that they preferred words. All the drawings were a combination of diagrammatic drawings and written word. Most women had copied elements or at least the style from their neighbours. Their defensiveness did not worry me and I felt confident that once they started, some of their reluctance to draw would disappear. A new member of the group did not speak until the end of the session when she revealed through her drawing that she was a rape victim. Her body language had been subdued so I was concerned and her revelation was a relief because at least I could understand her shyness and lack of participation. I tried to be accepting and non-judgemental when she produced her drawing. As a fifteen minute exercise, once the women had completed their drawings, I asked them to express various emotions as drawings in linear form. This was an interesting exercise as many of the words needed translation and only a few of the participants could discriminate and express the differences between the emotions. I felt that this session was productive, but I had to work hard to maintain their attention and trust.

The fifth session took place in the common room with an unprecedented group of eight women and three children. With a growing sense of confidence, I used a body-mapping exercise as a structured format to help the group participants to explore their own life stories and to recognise and understand more clearly how HIV/AIDS has affected their bodies. I modified the questions found in the book, "Care for the caregivers" (Dullaert: 49) and choose to exclude questions that focused on the medical and biological nature of the virus. I also modified the language as I felt that it was too sophisticated for use with a group of second language English speakers. The exercise also needed to be shortened as my group was unpredictable in attendance; I did not want to extend a project beyond one session. In previous art groups, I had used body outlines as a means of getting people, and especially children, to talk about themselves. Group participants have responded positively to this exercise because the use of a larger format on which to work. Also, using their bodies for creating an artwork seemed to inspire a deeper level of personal involvement.

The group began with a circle and an action song as a relaxation exercise. The unexpected number of participants plus their children made setting up the activity difficult. Not only did we have to find space for body length pieces of newsprint on the carpet, but we also had to settle the children. The body-mapping exercise was done with black markers on newsprint. Crayons were available to augment the drawings. The exercise began with a friend drawing around the participant's body to achieve a body outline. The friend's body outline was then superimposed on the participants outline. These linear outlines provided the background for the rest of the drawing. The space

between these two outlines was used by the participants to write the names of people, both living and dead, who have loved and supported the participants in their life. The group was then asked to look in the mirror and draw their faces onto the body outline. Next they were asked to locate the position on their body where they felt their personal power presides. Participants were then asked to draw a symbol of themselves on the paper. Then they drew an illustration of their first memory, followed by a drawing expressing their dreams for the future. Each task was followed by a discussion of what each participant had drawn.

The women became involved in this activity quickly although the verbal discussion at the end of every sub-task was not spontaneous, I deliberately asked everyone to share with us, and some of the women's more animated response loosened up the conversation considerably. As a facilitator, I felt that a lot of energy was needed to keep everyone on task, as well as supported. This session was perceived as hard work because remembering the past, contemplating life experiences and discussing emotions are not work that is familiar or often done in a large group setting. The participants were contented with this session and while they were drinking their juice at the end of the session they toasted one another for time well spent.

Between the fifth and sixth sessions I spent time with a counsellor and discussed the group's progress. This was helpful because I began to understand more about the dynamic relationship between me and the women. The result was that I realised how important it was to understand more about how the women were feeling, specifically

about being mothers. I also understood that my experience of motherhood was one way in which I was able to identify with the women. The subsequent sessions were planned using these insights.

Marian Liebmann, a group art therapist, suggests as one of many exercises to: "Use collage images to represent how you feel inside and outside yourself, by using the inside of a box, bag or other container" (1986:138). Liebmann's exercise is a very powerful one because it helps the women discriminate between external factors such as families, churches and employment which influence their lives as opposed to those internal thoughts, fears and secrets which colour their private worlds. Each woman was presented with a shoe-box and all group members had access to a large pile of magazines and newspapers. Collage was a particularly helpful medium as it could liberate people from their limitations and lack of experience as artists, by providing them with images that they could appropriate and personalize.

The women engaged with this task in a focussed way. They spent an hour silently selecting images from the magazines. Once they had pasted the pictures onto the box, they were very keen to explain their choices to me, not necessarily to other members of the group. I felt privileged to receive this information and appreciated their boxes as they were crafted with care and pride.

For the seventh session, ten women arrived, four of whom had never attended any of the previous sessions. The new-comers' presence was a testament to the success of the

previous sessions. Nevertheless the fluctuating group composition presented challenges for the research. Although I allowed the new members to participate on this occasion, I asked all new participants not to return again. Given the altered group, for this session I channelled my energy into the practicalities of allowing the women to manipulate clay and create objects pleasing to themselves.

I was gratified when eight of the original participants, many with their children, attended the eighth session. This demonstrated the value the original participants placed on the group. I decided to give them some responsibility and asked them to choose between painting and creating with clay. Most participants wanted to try the medium with which they had previously not had the opportunity to work. In this session I asked them to make an object which spoke to them about their own mothers or was a gift for their mothers or an object which reflected some quality about themselves as mothers. This activity was designed to promote group unity and promote cohesion between the group members, including myself.

Printing T-shirts was chosen as the final activity because I wanted the group participants to produce work that could be displayed and worn so as to affirm their identities as well as be a physical reminder of the group process. The final session lasted three hours so that we could cut the stencils and print the T-shirts in one session. I invited two students to assist us. The designs were planned and cut by the women, but the inking and ironing was done by the visiting students. The five women that attended were proud to be photographed wearing their T-shirts. As I witnessed the poses, I was moved by an

appreciation of how much they had participated in the unfolding group process. In addition, I realised just how much of a personal journey this had been for me, as I had learned from them through direct experience. My journey was that I had tried to remain open and receptive to the women's experiences, as the necessary basis of facilitating the group, so that they would feel heard and safe. There had been difficulties in this, but now I could see that these were outweighed by what we had achieved together.

Chapter 3: The Analysis of the Women's Artwork

Each session will be examined by assessing significant artwork produced by the women. Firstly, the nine women who were part of the research group will be introduced, after which I will analyse the artworks according to the order in which they were created.

Nomvuselelo [7], an eighteen year old woman and a mother of one child, was the only woman to attend all the art sessions. Busisiswe is a thirty-four year old single woman who has five children. She says she lives with a partner, but also told me that her husband has died. Busisiswe has worked as a dressmaker and in a craft project. She attended all the sessions except for the last. Thandekile is a twenty-two year old single mother of three. She joined the group after two sessions and then attended consistently. She is employed by a family as a child minder so she attended all sessions with this baby. Thandekile has only had two years of schooling and is not conversant in English, most of the time she needed a translator. Khanyisile is a twenty-eight year old single woman with two children. She joined the group after a few sessions but attended regularly after this. Nomcebo is a thirty year old woman who is married with two children. She joined the group on the day we did the charcoal drawings and she attended consistently until the last session. Beatrice is thirty-nine year old married woman who has three children. She lives with her parents. Lindiwe is a twenty-two year old woman who is married with two children. She lives with her husband. Although she is not a member of PORECO, she is HIV-positive. Lindiwe joined the group because she was invited by another participant. The first session she attended was the sixth one and was the last person I included in the

[7] Surnames of the women have been omitted to keep their identities confidential.

group. Her addition to the group was seamless and she attended all sessions after that. Sisana is a twenty-three year old married woman with two children. She attended five sessions, four at the beginning of the group and one near the end. Phumzile is a thirty-eight year old woman who attended four sessions at the beginning of the group process.

Sessions 1 and 2:

Drawing and painting for all the women in the study were unfamiliar activities. For many of the women, moving the pencil or brush along the surface of the paper was a physical effort. They drew as they wrote, holding their drawing implement firmly in their hand with their shoulders and hand tensed. Their tense way of making marks had implications for the speed at which they could work. As a result spontaneity and freedom of expression were constrained.

Their drawings were often stereotypical and lacked detail. This reflects their lack of opportunities to draw and experiment with art material, as well as a fear to depart from what they consider to be the conventions of drawing and my expectations of them. For instance, in Nomvuselelo's drawing on her folder (Figure 1), she chose to draw a stereotyped rabbit head, a Mickey Mouse and between these a diminutive Christmas tree. She talked about herself as being as restless as a rabbit, but did not draw attention to the other signs. Cartoon rabbits are also associated with fun and relaxation; perhaps these were qualities of the experience she hoped for. The Christmas tree, with six presents on the ends of branches, drawn on the 26th of September is rather unseasonal. It seems to

suggest that she anticipates this group will bring material benefits. The size of the tree and the tentative stereotypical drawings hint at the anxiety involved in the new group situation and a desire to please. Nomvuselelo would have drawn these images before and felt comfortable in repeating them, with the hope that they would fulfil my expectation of her.

The women's difficulties in expressing themselves visually were mirrored in the difficulties they experienced expressing themselves verbally. It is partially accounted for by the fact that they were using a second language. However, in a society where woman are largely voiceless, they are not encouraged to express opinions in public and therefore find it difficult to do so. Communication did, however, improve as the group progressed; the participants became less anxious and more comfortable about sharing their experiences. The women did show an eagerness to learn new skills and seemed to derive satisfaction from their new learning experiences. For example, they enjoyed learning to mix paint and experiment with the way that paint blends into fabric.

Session 3:

In the third session the task was painting on cloth with diluted inks; the theme was to draw something about their childhood. Initially I had the sense that they were uncertain about how to proceed, but once I began discussing the homes that they had lived in as children the women seemed more able to respond. Most of the paintings of their childhood are idealised and suggest that this was an untroubled time. Nomvuselelo's

painting is vibrant with points of colour (Figure 2). Her childhood home has many rooms and a large car parked out front. A grandfather, with a walking stick, is situated close to the sun and three children are beneath him skipping. Her grandfather, an influential, patriarchal figure, seemed to be associated with the sun, which symbolizes power and light. The overall impression I received from this image was that Nomvuselelo was happy as a child, she belonged and had been given a space in which to play and be herself. Her ability to involve herself in creative activities as a young adult seems to have been nurtured in her childhood.

Busisiswe's drawing of her childhood is jewel-like in colour (Figure 3). The two playing children are placed at the top of the image, close to the sun and the house. The tree, grass and bushes are in the foreground but not at the bottom of the image. The effect is that nothing in the painting is grounded; everything appears surreal, gravity-defying and other-worldly. Busisiswe is a brown person but in her drawing she is a blonde-haired child playing with a green-coloured child. These colour changes add to the improbable tone of the idealised rendering of her childhood.

The house is often used as a symbol for the human body. In mystic tradition "the feminine aspect of the universe is associated with a chest, a house or wall, as well as an enclosed garden" (Cirlot 1971:153). In Phumzile's painting of her childhood, a large house with a multi-coloured, striped roof and chimney dominates (Figure 4). The house appears to be a face with two eyes and a mouth, except that the mouth has a cross over it. Nothing will be allowed to enter or leave through this opening. The figure which

represents her is jammed in the corner of the picture and the nose is painted with a large upside down ‘w’ and with the green mouth closed. Although this painting has many colours, the overall effect is gloomy, largely because of the muddy brown colour used to outline the house. This subject matter and the muted colours suggest that she may feel depressed and certainly feels unable to express herself freely.

Session 4:

In session 4 the group is asked to discuss how they found out about their HIV status and the journey that all participants had made to verify their status. Opening up the taboo subject of their HIV status as well as creating a space for the remembrance of a traumatic and painful time in the women’s life was difficult. The women seemed to be comfortable to talk about their experiences, but they were resistant to drawing. They debated whether it was preferable to use words or pictures; all but one came out in favour of words. This debate verbalizes their issues of trust. Words communicate their meanings in a direct way while images are multivalent and are open to false interpretation. Pictures were perceived as less safe and out of their control, therefore potentially more threatening in the new group setting.

Nomvuselelo was amongst the most resistant. She clearly articulated that she preferred words to pictures. Her charcoal drawing (Figure 5) tells of how when she was four months pregnant. She travelled to the VCT for testing, proceeded to her husband’s house, had a baby at Maternity and joined PORECO. This is done by drawing houses connected

by tentatively drawn paths. Words feature largely and she repeats the drawing of her homestead connected to her husband's house. She underlines "my husband's house" and writes in large words, "NOW IS A HAPPY & HEALTHY FAMILY". There are two erasures: she crosses out homestead when describing her husband's abode and she deletes a repetition of "happy" and corrects it with healthy. When rereading Colin Furth's account of focal points in drawings and how they often highlight complexes in the person's life, the erasure and the rectification seem to allude to issues about where Nomvuselelo was to live and her emotional condition. The connection between her husband and her homestead seemed tenuous and all the erasures and underlining suggested that it may not have been as harmonious as it was portrayed.

The space was created in this session for revisiting trauma as it took place in a closed room and confidentiality was assured. The women were respectful of one another and listened to each other when they related their story. The group became a holding environment. The only person, who chose not to share verbally, revealed in her drawing that she was a rape victim. This reinforces the idea that encoded vocabulary of images can be a safe place to reveal secrets or painful experiences. Thandekile's picture consists of a sequence of drawings (Figure 6).It begins with a stick diagram of a man and woman. The woman is wide-eyed with no mouth, the man faceless. The next drawing is of her reporting the crime to a bigger woman, followed by a small woman next to a large policeman and then a small, dark human shape jammed into a corner of the hospital. A large, pregnant woman going into a VCT (voluntary counselling and testing unit), two small, dark figures inside the building with the label: "kaselling me (counselling me)"

and a much smaller woman emerging from the testing and counselling centre, walking towards a building labelled PORECO. The diagrams that were drawn are clearly autobiographic; in them there are many instances were she communicates that she feels powerless and without an identity. She is drawn without arms and a mouth in the rape scene. She is drawn as a smaller person in comparison to all authority figures. In the hospital she is portrayed as a black spot and after her experience in the counselling centre she emerges small without any facial features.

Busisiswe's charcoal drawing is a mixture of words and pictograms (Figure 7) her drawing was a model which the other women, except Thandekile, chose to follow. Her name at the bottom of the paper and a large drawing of herself as heavily pregnant on the left hand-side of the page and are disproportionately larger than the rest of the objects drawn. She ends the sequence of drawings with the words "healthy baby girl". She draws herself three times in this drawing, but there are no other people in the drawing except for the newly born girl. Busisiswe's drawings and later artworks locate her identity primarily as a mother. I perceive this as being a lonely and unsupported role for her.

Her style of drawing is also a testament to her fearfulness and timidity. This drawing is in what Simon calls the 'Traditional Linear style' (1992:161). The attitude to drawing is detached and the drawings are like a visual short hand illustrating the artist's thought processes. The scale of her drawings is small, the objects within are stylised, orderly, naturalistic, and almost pictograms. The posture adopted to make these drawings was tense and reflects an effort to co-ordinate the hand and eye. The work is deliberate and

planned, it allows for little spontaneity and all expression seems to be done by conscious intention. The unconscious intention seems to be suspended and can only be perceived after the drawing is completed. Lines in these drawings define reality and create order out of chaos. Marion Milner sums this up as, “a fear of what might happen if one let go of one’s mental hold upon outline which kept everything separate and in its place (Simon 1992:164). Art may be used in this way to control fears and translate emerging dreams, visions and impressions into meaningful wholes.

Sisana uses her drawings to illustrate clearly what she was thinking. I sense that she liked to be in control of the information she was asked to share. Sisana’s drawing (Figure 8) begins at home, then she takes a bus into town to the VCT followed by a visit past PORECO to the Maternity, and it ends with her carrying a baby out of the hospital to a waiting car. Inside the VCT, PORECO and Maternity she does elaborate stick drawings describing what happened to her in these institutions, the drawings are more detailed than the other participant’s.

Phumzile drew her charcoal drawing with focus and care and did this with Busisiwe. Phumzile has a naturally bold and an aesthetically pleasing way of drawing. Her journey begins at home where she had started coughing. Three months into her pregnancy she goes to hospital followed by the VCT. She has repeated “HIV positive” on the path going into and out of the VCT. She then goes to PORECO where she is depicted alone in the building which represents the support group headquarters. Then she proceeds to the

maternity ward of the hospital. Just outside of the hospital she draws herself holding an umbrella over a small baby (Figure 9).

All the drawings by the women were empty of significant reference to men. No husband was illustrated, the only reference to husbands was text on two of the six drawings: “I stay with my husband” and “my husband’s house”. The only illustrations of men were the man responsible for the rape and the policeman. The absence of significant men in these women’s lives is reinforced in the subsequent body-mapping exercise; it speaks of a break down in the relationship between men and women in this society.

The charcoal drawings were more spontaneous than previous images, but they could be described as ‘diagrammatic’ rather than ‘embodied’ drawings. These initial drawings and the body maps were never collected or taken home. Schaverien would regard these works ,which are not invested with emotion, as ‘tokens’ without the lasting value and effect that embodied images have.

Session 5:

The value of this session is that the women were given an opportunity to formulate their thoughts about who they are and their goals for the future. The images are a tool to expand their understanding of their lives. The body-mapping is a structured exercise in which symbols are drawn on to the participants body outline in response to certain questions. After the body outlines were drawn, the participants were asked to find a

symbol to represent themselves. Nomcebo represented herself as a sun (Figure 10). The sun is drawn as a circle. The circle, as a symbol of self, is commonly found in children's drawings; one of the developmentally earliest representations of self is a circle, followed by the circle with legs. Jung says the square represents the pluralist state of man whereas the circle is the symbol of unity, perfection and oneness (Cirlot 1971:46-7).The most common image used by the women to describe themselves was the flower or plant. Flowers are associated with beauty, transitoriness and spring. For the women, the ephemerality of life was an overriding concern.

Khanyisile describes herself as a flowering plant in a disproportionately small pot; there is too little space in the pot to sustain growth in the plant (Figure 11). The plant becomes a metaphor for her life which is being constrained by the HIV-virus. Beatrice, a confident person, represents herself as a flower (Figure 12). Her drawing is of a flowering plant that is rooted in a proportionally large pot. She describes this image by saying that just as a pot plant sometimes has flowers, times could be good or bad. For her bad times are times of loss, when you lose your parents or a good friend. Busisiswe's body map is dominated by the image of herself as a cut flower, a protea with a large head and no means of supporting life. She described herself as beautiful, but said this was short-lived, because she was to die. Thandekile, agreed with her saying that they were beautiful now, but they would die.

As mentioned before, people see themselves not only as bounded entities but as people connected to others. In the space between the participants' body outline and her friend's

body outline, the women were asked to draw onto their body map people who they perceived as caring and helpful in their lives.

Women see their primary support coming from female members within the family. Men do not seem to offer significant support. Out of seven body maps there were four references to male partners as part of the women's support system. No man was considered the primary support person and most were listed after three or four significant others. One reference was made to abuse by men: Phumzile's earliest memory is of her father beating her. This is a pattern that reflects the power imbalances within Swazi society; women support women, because they are beneath the realm of men.

Men's function in these women's life is often related to the women's reproductive or sexual functioning. This can be noticed in two of the body maps, mostly by observing the placement of certain information. Khanyisile's body map has an interesting placement of the two bodies (Figure 11). Her image has arms reaching out to the left and her friend's shadow is curled around her. The pose conveys desire and it is also very intimate. Her support group in order of priority is her mother (written between her arms), her younger sister (written on her back), her boyfriend (written on her bottom) and her church (written on her leg). The placement of a name on a particular part of the body seems to be indicative of the relationship, for instance the mother close to the centre of her world, her boyfriend close to the reproductive organs and the church a literal support.

Thandekile, when asked about her dreams for the future, drew money in denominations of E5 and E10 (Figure 13). Unconsciously she placed both of these drawings over the genital area of her body. Perhaps she perceives her sexuality as a source of money. Transactional sex is common in Swaziland, where women trade sex for essential items such as food, shelter or transport. Thandekile represents herself as the most unsupported person in the group, stating that her social worker is the only person to help and care for her.

A common theme in the body-mapping exercise was the women's interest in basic material goods such as food, money, clothes, houses and cars. Their interest stems from their material deprivation. These women are poor. Lack of food, money and shelter have a profound influence on their lives. Perhaps it is true to say that unless one's basic needs are met, very little else matters. Khanyisile's earliest memories are of food: porridge, rice and fruit. Her dreams are a house, a car and a man and woman carrying bags. These dreams are drawn significantly just outside the parameters of her body and just beyond the reach of her hands. Busisiswe's childhood memory is a plate of rice, and her dream is to own and drive a car. Nomvuselelo's dream is to have a house; this she represents as a double-storyed house with round and square windows. Thandekile, when asked about her earliest memories, wanted to draw the rape scene again but the other women told her that was not necessary and she drew herself begging for money.

Beatrice's memories of her childhood are of chickens running around. Her dream for the future is to have lots of money, unlike Thandekile, she thinks of money in denominations

of thousands. Nomcebo's first memories are connected to food, rice and oranges. Her dream is to own a house; this she draws at the bottom of the page. She draws her dream house as two connecting houses, one house has a triangular roof and the other has a square roof. They are linked by a path. This drawing appears to be an architectural metaphor for the connection between man and wife, with the triangular roof being more phallic compared to the more contained feminine square. Sisana said that her first memory was her first day at work in the natural resource office. As I reflect on this, I doubt that this is her earliest memory but perhaps it is one which distinguishes her from the rest of the group as their previous employment has involved manual labour, craft work or work as a domestic worker. Her dreams, like the many others, are for material security in the form of a house and a car.

One of the last tasks for this session was to identify where on their body, the women would locate their source of power. This slightly ambiguous question was asked to get the participants to consider their personal strengths. Out of the eight participants all locate their power in their hands or arms and in addition, five locate their power within their head. This suggests that these women pride themselves on their ability do physical work; this is congruent with traditional Swazi cultural norms. Kuper says: "In a woman, Swazi admire above all else industry and obedience" (1947:160).They also perceive themselves as thinking people who make conscious choices. Sisana's response to this question was to ask me: "Why, are you Delisiwe? Do you want to use your power against us?" She was asking if I, as a sorcerer, was going to use my knowledge of her to bewitch her. This is an example of transference, where a person in leadership is given attributes projected onto

her by another person. With this question, she is acknowledging my relative power over the group and is questioning if I am trustworthy.

Session 6:

The boxes were created in the sixth session. They became powerful testaments to these women and were treasured as objects. Most women took them home. These boxes are what Schaverien would call embodied images. They are invested with deep transference, regarded as meaningful and valuable and are 'talismans'. These are artworks that are embodied with affect, the power of symbols has been activated and they have a value to the artist that should endure.

The outside of the boxes were used by most women to elaborate on their role within society. This includes their belonging to families as wives and mother, women's work and even women's connection to nature. For instance, Thandekile covered her box with pictures of people interacting with each other. The doctor talking to his patient, the nurse handing over pills, the street hawker selling fruit, a mother talking to her children. These are all activities that would reflect her daily life. On the top of the box are a group of smiling men with sticks and an image of two cows (Figure 15). When asked to explain, this she said that she would like someone to pay lobola for her. She wanted to be married; this would have implications for a raised status in the community and she would belong to someone. This desire links to her perception of herself as being lonely and lacking support.

Beatrice's box expresses how she enjoys spending time with friends and her family (Figure 16). Her box is decorated with pictures of families, the MTN family and friends from an AGFA advert. On top of her box she has pasted a woman gathering reeds. Beatrice explained that to gather reeds and to weave grass mats is women's work. Another aspect of women's work is to look after children. On the side of her box she has stuck an image of a toddler who is resting on her head on the ground. On top of this image Beatrice has stuck the words: 'Discover the undiscovered'. She explained this by saying the child is becoming aware of her genitals. Her other interests in driving, nature and good food are expressed by the captions she has chosen to paste on the outside of her box such as: 'driving in the third word', 'Love affair with nature' and 'good stuff' indicating garlic. Although she conforms to advertising 'truths', these are still in line with her reality.

The boxes also express the women's material aspirations. Nomvuselelo's dreams about material goods are expressed most clearly in the photos that she chooses to stick on the inside of her box. Nomvuselelo invites us to look at them with the words pasted on the lid of her box, 'come share a dream with me' (Figure 17). She has images of a Cape Dutch house, a cell phone, a dream bedroom and her aspiration to be a street vendor selling vegetables. Like many young people she faces the challenge of establishing a family as well as securing employment plus those problems associated with living with HIV.

Inside her box Thandekile stuck pictures of luxurious gardens, good furniture, an Isuzu pick-up truck, a man eating healthy food, 'a country escape' and a bridge (Figure 18). She explained the bridge as the bridge between rich and poor people and she desired an opportunity to cross it. All these images demonstrate her desire for an escape from poverty. They are repeated so often in her artwork, this would also refer to a psychological complex, as previously explained. On the inside of Busisiswe's box, there is an illustration of her dream house and holiday. The outside of her box is decorated with seven images of white women, two of whom are associated with babies and one of whom is pregnant and another being embraced by a man. On the side of the box she has the interior of a luxurious house next to women saying, 'Feel like a million bucks?'(Figure 19) The ambiguity of this message is striking. Is it asking its audience if they feel good or is it asking them if they would like a lot of money? I sense that Busisiswe would have understood it to mean that she would like a lot of money. On the other side of the box she has also interpreted an English idiom in an alternative way, she has placed a woman next to a baby breast feeding and pasted the words, "dinner for two," over the combination. Inside the box, the bottom of the box is covered by an image of bread labelled: "the food of love".

Looking at the box one is struck by how disconnected the images and the sentiments are from Busisiswe's reality. Even words do not convey the meanings one would expect. I do not understand how Busisiswe feels about herself, except that she is preoccupied with whiteness and babies. In African tradition, women acquire status through their children and being white is associated in Swaziland with wealth and status. She does have five

children and this could be a source of pride for her. However, the absence of any defining image of herself and her preoccupation with what she is not is a sad indictment of how she perceives herself, as nothing of value. The magazines, newspapers available to create the collage on the boxes offered the women a limited variety of images. Some women used the images in a way that was congruent to their lifestyles and others, like Busisiswe, chose to represent their dreams or chose images that were indicative of white, wealthy lifestyle choices which are popularised in women's glossy magazines.

Nomvuselelo chose an idiosyncratic collection of pictures and words for the outside of her box. This reflects the relatively limited choice of media from which she could appropriate images, but it also speaks of a disconnection between her reality and her fantasy life. On the lid of her box she has a large Penguin with a heart superimposed on it saying: "I love PE" and on the side she has a small image of a surfer (Figure 20). These are strange choices for a person who has not been to the sea. Perhaps that is why they intrigued her.

On the underside of the box is a multiple image of David Kramer, a South African satirist, dressed in various ways such as an astronaut, Sheikh, business man and a tourist. Nomvuselelo could not articulate why she had chosen these images, but she did point out the tourist as being particularly amusing. On reflection, I wondered if these images were not archetypal, expressing the male aspects of her psyche: the traveller, and the stranger who could bring fame or fortune.

Many of the images used to embellish the boxes, referred directly or indirectly to the women's HIV status. In Nomvuselelo's case she uses an image taken from an HIV/AIDS educational magazine, "IHIV ne AIDS…Sukumeletulu!" (Lusweti: 2004)[8], of a man and woman sharing their HIV status. Her fears of not surviving and of the suffering associated with unemployment and poverty are shown by the photo of a Kosovo refugee with her head in her hands next to which she has pasted the words: "In the wilderness" and "We're almost out of food, and I don't think the children will survive the winter".
Her desire to survive, to be on old woman, is reiterated by the image of an old woman that she has pasted on the outside of the box. She specifically drew my attention to this image saying, "I want to grow old". I was moved by this, as many people within a Western tradition are distressed by the thought of aging whereas for her it would be a symbol of her survival in the face of HIV.

Khanyisile has covered her box with an MTN advert which has a man and woman embracing their child and below it are the words: "Making the right choices can save the whole nation. Swazi MTN cares" (Figure 21). These images are part of a local advertising campaign to promote safe sex in Swaziland. She indicated that she wanted a husband, but she only had a boyfriend and repeated that she wants to be a family. At the back of her box she has pasted a picture of a white woman and her daughter and underneath the photograph is an article on 'Talking to the Kids about AIDS'. Sharing her HIV status with her children was something she felt was important. Inside Khanyisile's box she has also used the image found on Nomvuselelo's box, of a man and woman

[8] Translated it is an educational booklet called: HIV and AIDS…action now! Soul City developed the material with the original design and production by Jacana Media. The Swaziland adaptation was by Lusweti.

sharing their HIV status; she has images of men and a woman having sex and instructions on how to use condoms.

Lindiwe has chosen images to paste on her box that reflect her anxieties and fears, many of them closely related to her HIV status. She was one of the few people in the group who looked sick and was very thin. Her box was covered by many images of good food. On the top of her box she has a white woman and man lying in a field and a little girl meditating in search for peace. On the base of her box she has an image of a white doctor and on the lid she has pasted the captions: “trouble everywhere”, “because life is too short to waste time.”(Figure 22) And on the side: “trade wars we don’t need”. Inside the box, she extends the theme of a troubled world by pasting a picture of a girl from Gabon who has been rescued from child trafficking. Lindiwe identified child abuse as a problem which she particularly disliked. As a mother, who may die before her children were grown, this is a significant worry. Along the sides, of the interior of the box are images from the AIDS magazine on eating good food and seeking advice from a doctor. On the base is an image of a man in evening wear carrying a woman and underneath is the caption: “a dangerous trust deficit”. Not only is the world a troubled and disturbing place for Lindiwe, but relationships with men are also unreliable. Inside her box she has stuck the text, “Nowhere to go but up”. Lindiwe is a religious person and a faithful member of a Zionist church and I interpret this statement as indicating that her only escape from the troubled world is heaven. Her baby drew attention to her regular church attendance because she kept on shouting “Alleluia”.

Most of the women have pasted images of sex and images related to relationships with men inside the box. These women consider their sexuality a private matter and hence it takes courage on their part to share their thoughts on the matter. Some women have chosen to perpetuate myths that are common in society: romantic love will save you, the nuclear family is the ideal and children are essential for your identity. Many of the women have also chosen to represent the accepted teachings that are part of popular HIV and AIDS education, for example, drawings of how to use a condom. It would be interesting to know if these practises were followed by the participants. Beatrice, for instance, has glued a series of words and phrases from magazines which express her views on sex and identity: "Fall in love", "once a dream now a reality", "make yourself useful", "a very personal experience", and "complete the collection" (Figure 23). In addition, she has pasted two images of couples embracing each other and the instructions on how to put on a condom. This is her view on intimacy with a man. She manipulates texts so that they take on new meanings. For instance: "Complete the collection", she says refers to having more children.

In this session, all the women were very keen for me to look at the boxes they had produced and they wanted to make me aware of certain images that they felt were important. They wanted to be seen. The value of 'being seen' is highlighted in Thomson's book on art therapy:

> It seems that being seen for what one is - and Stanislavsky calls the ultimate experience in acting the state of 'I am'- being seen in this way has an empowering effect. This is true both in acting and in therapy, and in both it calls forth spontaneity and trust in unconscious processes (1989:42).

The excitement the women were experiencing was twofold, their own creation was descriptive of their identity and my attention to their images indicated that their concerns were important and of value.

Session 7:

For ease of discussion, the clay work will be discussed in session 7 and the painting in session 8, although some of the pottery was done in session 8.

Traditionally, women and men had a clear division of tasks, as Ali Mazrui explains in his series of films "The Africans". "Symbolically, African women are linked to earth, fire, and water, three of the four elements in traditional culture. This gives women responsibilities for food preparation, acquisition of cooking materials, and tilling the soil, in addition to other productive and reproductive tasks. There is ample documentation of the gender division of labour, which also gives men responsibility for the fourth element, air, which carries speech and verbalized ideas" (Mikell 1997:9). Times and technology have changed, but in research done by the Women in Law in Southern Africa Research Trust(WLSA) on men and women's responsibilities within families, in general, women continue to have the primary responsibility for ensuring the family's survival. This means providing food, water, fuel, clothing and often school fees. Men generate money for major capital expenditure, such as for the house, car and in rural areas for ploughs and cattle. (Mvududu, McFadden 1997:140)

Symbolically, the use of clay has deep resonances within Swazi culture. In the Swazi monarchy the King's mother has a vital role to play in the ritual maintenance of the nation. Her elevated position is bestowed on her through motherhood. Interestingly she is referred to as "the earth' from which the king drew life" (Kuper 1947:102). This reference links women, motherhood and earth. Women are associated with the earth, the material of clay. Traditionally, women have made pots out of clay; these are used for storing water, beer and food. The women in the research group felt at ease with this medium. The medium invites physical contact and handling of clay is often described as relaxing and soothing. The women enjoyed the clay and were happy to work independently. The responsiveness of the medium resulted in creations that were spontaneous and expressive.

Nomvuselelo enjoyed her experience with clay and was, in comparison to the others, fairly prolific (Figure 24). In the first session she modelled a mother with her baby and a three-legged pot with a lid. When using clay to make a gift for her mother or a symbol of a mother, she chose to model with skill, an armchair, a cup for her mother and a pot for home brew. Looking at her work, I reflected that she has a strong sense of her mother as a container, provider of nourishment and comfort. The importance of good enough mothering has been discussed earlier because of its vital role in fostering an environment which is conducive to play, creative and symbolic thought. Her image of her mother as container could also reflect her feeling that she is being 'held' by the group and the facilitator in such a way that she is able to express herself freely.

Symbolically, a vessel in Egyptian hieroglyphic "is the context in which the intermingling of forces takes place, giving rise to the material world. From this sense arises a secondary symbolism - that of the female matrix" (Cirlot 1971:360). The female body with it reproductive function can be a container for an infant. The functions of the mother as provider, supplying drink and food, are given from a cup or bowl. The mother as vessel has deep resonance within a person's psyche. This can be seen in the models made by the women. Thandekile moulded a large pottery container which she said was a washing bowl. The following week when asked for her work to reflect motherhood, she made a pot with a lid and a cup (Figure 25).

Busisiswe constructed a woman with a baby as well as a coil pot and lid with a plaited coil; she did these with considerable skill. Nomcebo formed a rondavel with roof made of strips of clay and a water tank (a pot and lid with a hole at the bottom).Sisana joined us for the last time when we were creating pottery as a gift for our mothers or symbol of motherhood. She chose to create a three-legged cooking pot. Lindiwe crafted herself as a woman seated in a chair with big eyes, breasts and a belly button. The breasts and belly button emphasize her femininity and reproductive role; the large eyes and upright and watchful pose reflect Lindiwe's observant and perhaps fatalist approach to life.

Session 8:

Many of the themes elaborated on in previous sessions are repeated in this session. Many of these paintings, unlike the idealised paintings of childhood (session 3) are expressive

of a troubled existence.

Khanyisile did three paintings on the topic of motherhood (Figure 26). Her first is a long painting of: a three-legged cooking pot, a square house with windows like eyes and a door like a mouth and a plant (a copy of the symbol she used earlier to describe herself). These symbols reinforce the idea that a mother is associated with food, shelter and growth or life. She has chosen a limited colour palette of black, dark green and red. There is a small yellow smudge in the sky, but the overall effect is gloomy. There is an oppressive green line above the house. These colours are expressive of her depressed mood. The pot, the house and the tree are all the same size. Rita Simon, in her analysis of different styles of painting, would classify her type as 'the Archaic Linear style' (Simon 1992:57). She says a dominant characteristic of this style is a painting which gives the impression of a huge scale, through the simplicity and geometry of the shapes which are clearly outlined. The effect of this style is to flatten all representations and many of the shapes can be reduced to circles and squares. The artist is seduced by the sensuous pleasure of painting and the art materials help the artist to withdraw into what Winnicott describes as "a desultory formless functioning, or perhaps a rudimentary playing as if in a neutral zone" (1971:64 cited in Simon1992:59). The painting is an expression of basic concerns of inner and outer, self and not self. These basic concerns need to be affirmed before the reveries and fantasies can become more explicit and embellished.

In this same style she paints two cooking pots on a gas cooking stand. The simple shapes of these pots suggest male and female. The last painting is of her mother and step-father

as red figures on opposite sides of a house and fire. They are surrounded by a black fence with the fence posts painted as though they are thorns. The gate to this homestead is closed. The colours are associated with anger and violence and the distance between the two figures and the closed gate suggests that there is a hostile conflict characterised by little communication within her mother's homestead. The simple geometry suggest that the boundaries dividing inside from out are a source of conflict.

Nomcebo painted four pictures, the first has four children outside a house with a ball and a bowl of dishes next to a dripping tap (Figure 27). The second is her daughter, a house and a book. The third is three plants, a ploughed field and a hoe. The fourth is a woman and a man with two children going to church. They could be understood as drawings in the Traditional Linear style: pictograms illustrating thoughts. However, they are strange and unworldly in that there are no connections between the objects in a picture. The tap does not drip into the puddle or dish, the children do not kick the ball, the cross indicating the church is not on the building and the people do not touch the ground. She did not seem to be aware of these dislocations. These dislocations in her drawing suggest chronic disconnection in her life which is indicative of stress and trauma.

Lindiwe did two paintings about motherhood (Figure 28). The first was a faceless and armless woman carrying a burden on her head. This is a powerful metaphor for an undefended young person who is carrying a life-threatening virus in her body. She has a pot on one side and a house on the other, a giant teacup above her head on the left hand side a field with two plants directly above her head. The image with its scale shifts and

surreal layout mirrors her perception of an unpredictable world. The second is a painting of herself and her husband watching television on a Saturday with the children playing ball outside. This picture is disconcerting in that the television is behind the couch, out of sight, and the couch is drawn in such a way that it looks like a coffin about to snap closed on them. Lindiwe's box and painting convey her imminent expectation of death and her sense that the world is a threatening and rather terrifying place.

Beatrice chose to paint in the last session that she attended. She produced three paintings in the traditional linear style; the first was a flower, a house and a man and woman. When I asked her who she was drawing she said: "Oh it could be Busi and her husband". Her next painting was of a pot and kettle on the stove, a more finely crafted version of Khanyisile's painting. Her third painting is of a square-shaped woman with her hand protecting two faceless children (Figure 29). The children are also covered by a large triangular rainbow with splodges of blue suspended in the sky. The rainbow is colourful except for the last stripe which is a muddy brown. Beatrice seems to be drawing an image of herself with her children; certainly her body shape is similar to the one in the painting. She seems to be offering protection to her children in an unpredictable world.

Session 9:

In the final art activity, Nomvuselelo chose to print an image of a woman with her hand stretched out in front of her saying: "Speak to the hand" (Figure 30). The unexpressed sentiment is: "speak to the hand because the ears are not listening." This may be seen as a

defensive posture that she adopted at the termination of the group. I interpret this as a fairly rebellious expression of her identity, suggesting she has the power to choose how she relates and responds to other people's words. A photograph was taken with her wearing her newly printed T-shirt, in it her posture is assertive and her head is held rather proudly.

Thandekile chose to print on her T-shirt an image of a heart with an arrow pointing inwards with 'I need you' written inside the heart (Figure 31). It seemed to me that this was communication directed at me as the group was ending; she wanted to continue our association. These words made me sense her desperation, loneliness and brokenness. For me the measure of her desperation was imagining myself wearing a T-shirt with those words on it.

Khanyisile's T-shirt has an outline of a woman with a raised hand and underneath this outline are the words: 'Think about your life' (Figure 32). I think that the woman is an image of me creating a space in which she could contemplate her life. The group and the creation of art objects provided the opportunity to evaluate herself in new ways. In particular, it gave her a chance to reflect on her relationships with others, an opportunity to formulate her dreams, to think about her needs and her goals.

Khanyisile was very positive about her experience in the group. She wanted to keep a photograph as a tangible reminder of what she claimed was an unforgettable experience. I have seen Khanyisile a few times since the group has ended and she has told me how her

life has changed. She describes the period in which she attended the group as a difficult time and she is now in a better position as she has a job which involves distributing food aid at a nearby clinic.

Nomcebo brought a complicated image of a teddy bear which she had copied out of a colouring book to print on her T-shirt. She did not have the time or fine motor co-ordination to cut the shape out of paper to print this image. After a frustrating time she gave up this plan and she cut out a Nike tick which was printed on the back of her T-shirt (Figure 33). Although it is a stereotyped commercial image, the logo can be seen as a positive affirmation of the process in which she had participated.

Lindiwe's final artwork was the printing of the Swazi shield on the back of her T-shirt (Figure 34). The use of this symbol is indicative of her pride in being Swazi and perhaps it also suggests that she found this group to be a protected space away from her daily concerns, or that she needs ongoing protection in a warring world.

The T-shirt project was the final project for the research group. They were designed for public display but the designs were expressive of the individual personalities as well as their conscious and unconscious reactions to the termination of the group. For some the group experience had been affirming of their identity, for others a place where they could socialise and belong, for others a space where they were able to reassess their lives and think about issues that they normally avoid. Many had their expectations fulfilled but others wanted more or felt they could not cope alone.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

For a group of people who have been marginalised by their HIV status, gender and economic standing it is not easy to talk about themselves or their predicament. Art production was a useful way in which these women could begin to explore their identity and trauma and assess their goals for the future. Initially they found it difficult to express themselves, but slowly as they began to trust the facilitator and the group, communication eased. In the last sessions the women perceived the group as a safe space for remembrance and making images, but verbal communication was still tentative.

The social value of the group was clearly evident with more and more women joining the group. The group provided an opportunity to be together with other unemployed women who were open about their HIV status. The shame and embarrassment of the socially stigmatised condition could be forgotten. In addition, all the women were mothers and the group was supportive of young mothers in that they were able to bring their infants and toddlers. Young unemployed mothers are often an isolated group; this was an opportunity to be with each other.

The theme of motherhood was explored extensively. All the women saw the role of a mother in a conventional way, a person in the family responsible for ensuring their families' survival. All but one of the women saw herself as an integral part of a family and valued that sense of belonging.

Although most of the women were in a relationship with a man, these men were not perceived as supportive of women. Women relied on other women for nurture. The imbalance in power between men and women was evident; this has resulted in a breakdown in satisfactory relationships with men. This is also expressed emotionally by the women's self doubt and feelings of worthlessness.

The women's HIV status and medical condition informs their consciousness and identity. They are aware of the transitoriness of their lives and understand what they can do to mitigate some of the medical effects of HIV such as wearing a condom, eating good food, taking their medication. No one spoke openly of their concerns about dying, but the desire to be old and fears about child abuse hinted at some of their worries. The women had a blunted emotional response and this was indicative of the depression often associated with compromised health and difficult life situations.

Lack of employment, material deprivation and material aspirations informed much of the artwork. They all aspire to a more financially secure life. Their poverty is a pressing concern which makes them feel trapped, disempowered and lacking in self worth.

As the group progressed, the artwork became less of a deliberate communication and more spontaneous and expressive of unconscious material. The boxes were the most embodied artworks and were layered with information and symbols. The clay work and the paintings done in session 8 were also much richer in symbolism than the earlier paintings. The symbols used were fundamentally concerned with identity, what was

inside what was out, what was valuable in their lives, what was peripheral to who they were. Khanyisile is the only participant who verbalised a shift in psychic energy, but all left feeling their concerns had been acknowledged, witnessed and seen. Their artwork and the photographs are a legacy of their lives and the group experience.

The art group was successful in that it achieved group cohesiveness where members were supportive of each other. The resonances within the imagery indicates that the participants felt they had similar problems, anxieties and fears and were not alone in struggling with life's challenges. The sharing of stories was cathartic for the group members and some of the topics shrouded in silence and secrecy where openly acknowledge and represented in the images, such as the silence concerning sex and HIV and AIDS. They also enjoyed the artwork and this banished some of their immediate preoccupations. The focus and effort they made in producing their work and the pride they displayed when presenting their images suggests that they found the work soothing and enjoyable.

In conclusion, the artwork facilitated communication between the participants as well as an inner dialogue within individuals. The group provided a safe place in which to create art and to contemplate life. The sense of belonging and purpose within the group was therapeutic as was the artwork which was richly imbued with symbolism and feeling.

Chapter 5: Conceptual Background for Practical Work

The art produced for the practical component of my masters submission is in the form of landscape painting. The landscape, for the most part, focuses on the graves in the "Mbabane Resting Park" in Sidwashini, Swaziland. Through the genre of landscape painting I explore the physical manifestation of AIDS deaths in the natural environment. The practical work was done during and after the research for my dissertation: "Images of Swazi women living with HIV". This dissertation is a case study of the artwork produced by a group of women in Swaziland and indirectly it addresses the social, psychological and cultural impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The paintings are a witness to my empirical experience of the pandemic.

"The land is a natural terrain with physical resources; landscape is a pictorial term signifying a way of looking at and rendering natural scenery" (Arnold 1996:39). Landscape, in effect, is the natural scene overlaid by culture. Landscapes can speak about the natural scenery and about the artist's perceptions of the world. Our perception of scenery is filtered by overlays of our values, emotions, thoughts and ideas about the physical environment. In other words, our identity and selective value systems are implicated in landscape art. Just as the women's drawings were examined to discover what they communicate about their lives so too my paintings allude to aspects of my identity and my living condition.

In this chapter the concepts of the 'unhomeliness /uncanny', the sublime and palimpsest, in relationship to paintings produced by Paul Nash, Caspar David Friederich, Paul Cezanne, William Kentridge, and Anselm Keifer will be examined in order to establish some conceptual framework for looking at my own work. This is an idiosyncratic collection of ideas and artists but I believe the following information has shaped my work.

'Unhomeliness/Uncanny'

In 1919, at the end of the Great War, Freud published an essay on the "The unhomely" (Das Unheimliche) or as translated into English "The uncanny". Freud juxtaposes the German word unhomely with homely, and he attempts to explain how the two meanings merge. He believes that the uncanny or mysterious events that surprise and disturb us are not unfamiliar, but familiar events or things that been displaced from consciousness by the act of repression. He believed the way to scare people was to introduce the unfamiliar into the familiar, for instance a thriller is scarier if the action takes place within someone's domestic environment. In 'Das Heimliche' he explains why people choose to be horrified and scared. Why for instance do people choose to watch Horror movies or ride roller-coasters? He accounts for this by drawing attention to the inevitable fact of life that we die. He believed that our unconscious desire as humans is to escape death, and that the terror of the 'uncanny' are the moments when our suppressed death awareness breaks through to our consciousness and that the awareness of death is relevant to being alive: "Life is impoverished, loses in interest, when the highest stake in the game of living, life itself, may not be risked" (Freud cited by Spivey, 2001:223).

Death as a subject therefore is fascinating to the living. Death has been and continues to be a subject of painting. One of the most powerful condemnations of our communal cruelty is Goya's painting of the suppression and subsequent mass executions of Spanish troops who rose up against French Napoleonic army: The third of May 1808[9].

Another artist commenting on war was Paul Nash. He was an official British War Artist during the First World War, and his gruelling experiences at the Front converted him from "an artist interested and curious" into "a messenger who will bring back word from the men who are fighting to those who want war to go on forever" (Nash cited by Haycock 2002:30). His position as official war artist meant that he was prohibited from showing any corpses in his artwork. He exploited the artistic device that Ruskin named the 'pathetic fallacy'[10] in his work. The pathetic fallacy was "the investment of inanimate scenery with human personality, sensibility" (Spivey 2001:219). We are Making a New World [11]is a painting composed from a battlefield sketch entitled 'Sunrise, Inverness Copse'. Although it is site specific to a copse in the Ypres Salient off Menin Road, it was universalised so that it has become some part of what Paul Nash described as, "a large grave"(Spivey 2001:219, Haycock 2002:30). In this painting, unlike the drawing on which it is based the cloud hanging over the trees is blood red, seeming to bleed over the trees. The trees are seen by Nash as personifications of the maimed, gassed and shattered bodies of the soldiers. The earth is pockmarked and wounded like the faces of young

[9]Francisco Goya, The Third of May 1808 (1814).Alternative title: Tres de Mayo. Oil on canvas, 260 x 345 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid. (Illustration: Beckett 1994, fig 293; data: Beckett 1994: 250-251.)
[10] Ruskin named this feature of Romanticism the pathetic fallacy in 1856.
[11]Paul Nash.We are Making a New World (1918). Oil on canvas, 71.1 x 91.4cm. Imperial War Museum, London.(Illustration: Haycock 2002, fig 22)

men, victims of war. Although devoid of people the painting is a powerful evocation of the waste and destruction of this war.

The Sublime:

The Neo-classicist movement had fixed notions, based on antiquity, about appropriate subject matter and beauty. Their emphasis was on unity in variety, proportion and harmony, while the Romantics were not that interested in what formulae should be used to produce landscape paintings, but the effect that subject had on the perceiver. At the beginning of the "Age of Reason", at the end of 18th and early 19th Centuries, the Romantic Movement in art was expressive of the dark, chaotic and wild aspects of nature and human emotion. The Romantics were interested in the way in which landscape could awaken feelings of awe and wonderment in the spectator.

The Sublime was a term first attributed to Longinus who wrote in the first or third century a treatise "On the Sublime". He believed that "the Sublime is an expression of grand and noble passions[…]that bring into play the emotional involvement of both the creator and the perceiver of the work of art"(Eco 2004:278). Longinus compares the effect of certain language to the effect that some natural phenomena may have on people: "a well-timed stroke of sublimity scatters every thing like a thunderbolt" (cited in Andrews 1999:133).

In the 18th century there was an increase in travel to more exotic destinations and a taste developed for curious, astounding and wild destinations. Artist Salvator Rosa (1615-73)

specialised in producing images that astonished collectors by their dramatic, wild and tumultuous scenery. The subjects that attracted him and other artists of the time were precipices, chasms, earthquakes, storms, torrents, wolves and bandits. Horace Walpole (1717-97) and Thomas Gray, when recounting their journey through the Alps wrote:

> I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining: not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief (Ibid: 130).

In the face of overwhelming natural environment, the philosopher, Immanuel Kant argued that the scenery was:

> all the more attractive for its fearfulness: and we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the forces of the soul above the height of vulgar common place, and we discover within us a power of resistance of quite another kind, which gives us courage to be able to measure ourselves against the seeming omnipotence of nature (cited in Eco 2004:295).

He believed that when man's experience of nature was disturbing and destabilising, it also needed to be reassuring. The oxymoron "delightful horror" describes this phenomenon. John Dennis used this phrase to describe his emotions as he crossed the Alps:

> we walk'd upon the very brink, in a literal sense, of Destruction; one Stumble, and both Life and Carcass had been at once destroyed. The sense of all this produc'd different motions in me, viz. ,a delightful Horror, a terrible Joy, and at the same time, that I was infinitely pleas'd, I trembled (Andrews 1999:134).

Kant concludes that this heightened sensation was not only good for the nerves but it served a moral purpose. The Sublime stimulated man's intellectual and moral capacities.[12]

Edmund Burke, a philosopher who wrote "A philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1756, 1759), made a significant contribution to the spread of the ideas about the Sublime. He reiterates the connection between the Sublime and power. He states categorically that he knows "of nothing sublime which is not some manifestation of power" (Andrews 1999:133).The ultimate expression of power is God or a deity manifesting himself in the landscape.

Other sources of the Sublime listed by Burke were, "obscurity, privation, vastness, infinity, difficulty, and magnificence" (Ibid: 134). These are sources which rob the spectator of ways of controlling and orientating themselves in the environment. Caspar David Friedrich's painting Monk by the Sea (1809)[13] calls up privation as an aspect of Sublime. An early review of this painting on the 13th of October 1810 states: "Since in its uniformity and boundlessness, it has no foreground but the frame, the viewer feels as if

[12] This was unlike beauty which he believed had the characteristics of "disinterested pleasure, universality without concept and regularity without law" (Eco 2004:294). The beauty of an object he believed was limited to the balance of these elements within the boundaries of a finite object. Whereas the Sublime object is limitless. He distinguishes between two types of sublime: the mathematical and dynamic kind. Both induce in the spectator the desire for something more. Mathematical sublime can be experienced when viewing the night sky pierced by stars. The endless sky helps the spectator think of infinity, one is impressed by the limits of one's senses and imagination. This negative pleasure helps us discover who we are and aspire to greater things. The dynamic sublime is sensed at the sight of a thunderstorm, which impresses us by its infinite power. This experience of power leaves us humiliated and uneasy. We compensate for this lack by enlarging "our moral greatness, against which the forces of nature are powerless (Eco 2004:294).

[13] Caspar David Friedrich, Monk by the Sea (1809).Oil on canvas, 110 x 170 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preufischer Koulturbesitz Nationalgalerie. (Illustration: Beckett 1994,fig 307: data: Spivey 1999:145, Becket 1994:264),

his eyelids had been cut off" (Vaughan 1980:93). The simplicity of sand, sea and sky gives the sense of unbounded space and this is enhanced by the impenetrable darkness. There are no motifs to guide the eye and orientate the viewer. This landscape's lighting and chiaroscuro are an inversion of the 'typical' landscape; it has a light foreground, dark middle distance and a lighter toned background rising to light. The end result is unsettling. Infra-red examinations of the painting in addition to existing accounts confirm that Friedrich eliminated the moon and two sailing boats from the composition. Therefore the landscape is devoid of props to reassure us. "It is a portrait of near-nothingness, its power residing in its accumulation of negatives, absences" (Andrews 1999:146).The monk is dwarfed by this empty landscape and this man's loneliness and sense of littleness in relationship to nature is something that we are invited to share.

Freidrich's paintings show the backs of people as they observe the Sublime in nature. In Wanderer above the Sea of Mist[14], the wanderer stands in a perilous position on the rocks above the receding mists. We are invited like the urbane wanderer to observe the spectacle and to share their feeling of being overawed by the scenery. Carl Gustav Carus, a friend and pupil of Freidrich, described the wanderer's experience of nature as follows: "It is like a silent devotion within you. You lose yourself in boundless space, your whole being experiences a silent cleansing and clarification, your I vanishes, you are nothing, God is everything" (Ibid: 143). The experience of powerlessness in the face of nature and God's presence in nature is again reiterated. The Romantics were fascinated by the gulf

[14] Caspar David Friedrich. *Wanderer above the Sea of Mist*(1818).Oil on canvas, 94.8 x 74,8cm.Kunstalle, Hamburg (Illustration Andrews 1999, fig 79; data Andrew 1999:143)

between man and the non-human world, they saw nature as having its own unalterable laws and they dramatize its otherness.

Part of its 'otherness' is our inability to express what we feel about the Sublime in words, it is ineffable .Like the wanderer in the quote above, we lose our sense of self and our power to articulate this experience is diminished. The Sublime in landscape art is not so much concerned with the objects that impress the viewer but the sensations experienced by the viewer. Jean-Francois Lyotard, when trying to theorise about twentieth century manifestations of the avant-guard art, applied Kant's notions of the Sublime. He was searching for words to express the indeterminacy of the new painterly language. In his search he referred to Longinus by saying that: "Longinus even goes so far as to propose inversions of reputedly natural and rational syntax as examples of sublime effect" (Ibid:148) and this inversion is echoed by Kant in what he describes as a 'negative pleasure'. The innovation and experimentation of the avant-garde meant that some long held defining elements in painting had to be inverted to give way for the new.

Paul Cezanne (1939-1906) searched for ways of expressing the "sensations that we bring with us at birth" (Ibid). He wanted to paint in a new way, not to conserve the "beautiful formulas of our illustrious predecessors", but "to study beautiful nature, let us try to free our minds from them, let us strive to express ourselves according to our personal temperaments" (cited in Andrews:148).

The Ground of the Chateau Noir[15] is a painting of one of Cezanne's select places. This is one of several paintings of the ruined house and the grounds of the Chateau Noir. In this painting the trees and foliage frame the darker middle ground like the columns and vaults of a cathedral. The forest interior has a multi-faceted jumble of foliage and rocks under the canopy. Cezanne was fascinated by the wild, overgrown landscape and the textured environment gave him scope for his experiment with differences in scale, weight and form. This painting has a muted tonal range which makes the painting look almost monochrome. The murky colouring contributes to the painting's sense of foreboding. Although some of the trees have outlines, distinct modelling and chiaroscuro have disappeared. Cezanne's desire to describe sensations has meant that his paintings deliberately have moved away from these conventions which help to delineate space and the result is a more abstract painting. The 'passage' painting technique, "the merging together of adjacent forms by giving a degree of autonomy to each brushstroke" (Thompson 2006:82), also contributes to the overall lack of clear definition. Kirk Varnedoe expresses Cezanne's movement to Abstraction as a 'generative moment' rather than as an expression of removal and reduction of what is concrete:

> When Cezanne and Seurat transformed their art and made it modern, it was not by reducing what they observed to an idealized schema, but by taking inert, system-bound modules – parallel, regularized units of paint in rectangles or dots – as the starting point from which to build a picture of nature…In these generative moments of modern art, meaning arose from, rather than being reduced to, the assertion of innovative languages of abstract form (1990:164).

In Cezanne's late oil paintings and watercolours we see familiar landscapes 'defamiliarised'. The Sublime paintings of the Romantic era also express this sense of

[15] Paul Cezanne, The Grounds of Chateau Noir (c.1900-06).Oil on canvas, 90.7 x 71.4 cm. The National Gallery, London (Illustration: Thompson 2006:83;data:Thompson 2006:82)

dislocation and destabilisation by their focus on the 'delightful horror' and multiple privations. Both forms of representation have a similar aesthetic disturbance. Lyotard believes that this destabilization allows the art connoisseur to expect:

> an intensification of his conceptual and emotional capacity, an ambivalent enjoyment. Intensity is associated with an ontological dislocation. The art-lover no longer bends itself to models, but tries to present the fact that there is an unpresentable (Andrews 1999:149).

Palimpsest:

Palimpsest is a word derived from the Greek, meaning 'scraped again'. It usually refers to writing material such as a stone tablet, vellum or parchment that has been written on, scraped off and used again (Wikipedia 2008 online). It can also refer to an object that has "diverse layers or aspects beneath the surface" (Merriam-Webster 2008 online). Palimpsest is a term used in many settings from astronomy, medicine, forensic science and architecture to history, geology and archaeology. With particular relevance to geology is a line from Jenny Hamilton's poem: "The land lies beneath, a palimpsest etched, erased and re-etched by wind and time." And Rosalind Krauss states:

> the palimpsest belongs neither to the world of the subject nor to that of the object. As an abstract form, it simply implies residue. The palimpsest is the emblematic form of the temporal and as such it is the abstraction of narrative, of History, of biography (Artlink Magazine 2001 online).

In a post-modern understanding of the world, all art consists of mediated images. We do not create art from direct experience of the world but texts, codes, symbols and conventions which precede us, determine what we think and paint. The same applies to writing. In a post-structural understanding of language all writing occurs within the

presence of other writings. The palimpsest is therefore a powerful metaphor for the way in which writing and rewriting always occurs within the presence of other writing. The palimpsest informs us that the author is not the sole source of the work and that meaning can always defer to the authority of another. The viewer or reader of the palimpsest approaches it in a different way to how they would approach a book. A book

> signifies authorative sanctioned knowledge, the palimpsest suggests, from the beginning, that the text is incomplete, destroyed, rewritten. Thus, it forces the reader to question the status of authority and truth and, perhaps, provides a space in which the reader/viewer can interject themselves into a text (Erikson 2008 online).

Palimpsest is associated with layers within our psyche. As mentioned before, consciousness is influenced by our unconscious. The "Mystic Pad" [16] is a symbol of the layers within the psyche and how they function. Derrida, quoting Freud, uses the "Mystic Pad" as a metaphor to describe how consciousness can be receptive to new information while at the same time conserving traces of former stimuli. Freud, as interpreted by Derrida, also suggests that there are movements from the unconscious to consciousness which periodically engage and disengage. These movements are not part of the "Mystic Pad" analogy as the analogy only works in one direction.

[16] This children's toy is a device which:

> […]consists of three layers-a dark waxy base card, a thin translucent layer of waxed paper in the middle and a transparent piece of celluloid on top. The marks made by a blunt instrument are made visible by the waxed paper and the waxed card being pressed into contact. When the paper has been lifted away and returned, the close contact does not resume and the surface appears blank once again… (Galpin 1998 online).

So, although the toy appears have been cleaned, it preserves traces permanently on the wax card. The wax card represents the unconscious. Just as the top layers of the "Mystic pad" are dependant on the wax layer for a legible mark, so too consciousness depends on the unconscious.

Galpin describes the "Mystic Pad" extensively as for him it is an analogy for the palimpsest. The palimpsest like the "Mystic Pad" conserves traces and is receptive to new writing. It also highlights the role that erasure plays in the layering process: "Texts and erasures are superimposed to bring about new texts or erasures. A new erasure creates text; a new text creates erasures" (Galpin 1998 online).

William Kentridge:

South African artist, William Kentridge makes use of multiple erasures as part of his animation technique. His films are produced from a few charcoal drawings that are repeatedly modified, by drawing new marks and/or erasing pre-existing ones. The drawings stand on an easel in a fixed relationship to a film camera. After a drawing is made, it is filmed and then altered, and this process continues until the narrative demands a new scene. Then a new drawing is produced. An eight minute film can be formed from twenty drawings. Each sheet of paper, that records a sequence within a film, therefore has the history of the sequence embedded within it.

The process of creation adds meaning to the work. Kentridge style of drawing is open and expressive. His drawings are equivalents for reality and he values the provisional and ambiguity in his mark making. His drawings are done quickly. He uses drawings to understand his material, as he describes it "to think aloud". His animations are created without scripts or story boards. Kentridge says that the animations emerge from an idea, impulse or key element from which they develop or structure themselves. The physical

process of drawing, releases ideas and evokes associations with the outside world which he then incorporates into his work. Kentridge illustrates this point by referring to an incident when he was drawing a coffee plunger during the making of the animation Mine (1991). He had drawn extensive footage of the mine and activities underground, but he was struggling to get his protagonist Soho Ekstein, the industrialist, out of bed. As he drew the coffee plunger on the tray, he discovered that the plunger could go through the tray, through the bed and become the mine shaft. (Cameron, Christov-Bakargiev, Coetzee 1999: 118)

In his animated films, such as Johannesburg – 2nd greatest city after Paris, Monument, Mine and more recently Tide Table, Kentridge struggles with socio-political issues as they impact on his life and the lives of South Africans. In the earlier animations, his narratives are concerned with the European presence in South Africa, various aspects of apartheid and his role within this conflict ridden society. His drawing style, primitive animation techniques and layering of images, his presentation of character and narrative, prohibit a uni-dimensional approach to his subject and a "final authorative account of events" (Godby 1992). He desires to create political art with the same irony and ambiguity one finds in the political world.

Kentridge says of his work:

> I have never tried to make illustrations of apartheid, but the drawings and films are certainly spawned by, and feed off, the brutalised society left in its wake. I am interested in a political art, that is to say, an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncomplicated gestures and uncertain endings. An art (and a Politics) in which optimism is kept in check and nihilism at bay (Godby 1999 online.

His animation style reflects and enhances the open-endness in which he grapples with his subject matter.

Leah Ollman writes, in an article from Art in America, that:

> Kentridge's drawings for projection chronicle, on a visceral level, his country's transitions. After decades under a cruelly rigid template, South Africa is now drawing itself, drafting, erasing and reformulating its structures of power, its social relations, its systems of rights, benefits and protections (1999 online).

In Tide Table, a 2003 work, Kentridge uses his fictional character, Soho Eckstein in an animated film to explore ideas about the AIDS epidemic in South Africa .His narrative is not seamless but rather a collage of signs, symbols, and metaphors. His work embraces disjuncture and he works with allegoric dualities such as capital versus labour, material versus spiritual and the personal versus the political. The beach, the dramatic setting for this animation, is both a site for spiritual regeneration, recreation and fond childhood memories as well as a site of desperation and death. The film begins with Soho Eckstein reading the financial pages of the newspaper on a deckchair near the beach. He falls asleep. We then see a young boy playing on the beach, tossing stones into the surf while a black woman supervises his play. A group of black Zionist's undergo a full emersion baptism and out of the surf emerge cattle, which after the army officers survey the beach from a hotel balcony, begin to decompose into skeletons. He juxtaposes images but at the same time he uses the process of metamorphosis to develop connections between desperate things. For Kentridge, this is the motive for using images rather than writing, because one does not have to explain why certain objects or parts of objects should be associated (cited in Godby 1999 online). In this animation, the deck chairs adopt human

characteristics and begin to dance before transforming into hospital beds for patients. The cattle become emaciated like AIDS patients and die.

The ebb and flow of images seem to avoid sentimentality but this animation is full of understated emotion. The music score, two African elegiac songs, reinforces the sombre and mournful mood of the film. Kentridge's characters, in this film, are overwhelmed by forces ineffable and greater than they are. In his writing about how to deal with the AIDS epidemic, Kentridge asks questions which he alludes to in his film:

> Both in terms of medicine – how do we stop so many people dying and how do we look after people who are ill – but, also, how do we deal with a bruised society left in the wake of the epidemic? If life becomes so dispensable, if people die with such little cause, so easily, what is the status one puts on the value of life, on long-term projects, on a sense of the future, on a sense of beneficent fate? All those things get thrown out of kilter (Kentridge 2001 online).

Kentridge's work is about layering, collage, disjuncture, shifts and erasures. His drawings embody change, change over time and in the South African context. "In the interface values are vulnerable, asserted all the more. For what humankind asserts and nature 'blots out'. Therein lies the crux of Kentridge's art, that of the palimpsest, the pentimento" (Williamson and Jamal 1996:50).

Anselm Kiefer:

Anselm Kiefer's paintings and sculptures are palimpsests, richly textured with associations. His use of the palimpsest expands and challenges notions of history, myth, time and space.

Anselm Kiefer was born in 1945 in the aftermath of the Second World War in Western Germany. He was concerned by the post-War generation who refused to acknowledge responsibility for their country's role historically and culturally in the war. After the War, German artists rejected anything that was associated with nationalism, nostalgia or academic discourse associated with Fascism and Nazism. By the 70s, a new generation of artists developed who were interested in exploring the theme of national identity. Kiefer was part of this new generation of artists that wanted to explore their German national identity and discuss taboos imposed by the recent past. Through his art he made a significant contribution to Germany's attempt to come to terms with their history, although it was not without controversy and censure.

Kiefer worked on a series of interrelated works, each work independent, "yet related by specific subjects and symbols which are repeated and joined together to form expanded fields of meaning" (Brun, Nestegaard, Ustevedt, [Sa]:98). He was particularly interested in the interface between history and mythology and borrowed extensively from Teutonic, Nordic, Greek, Egyptian, early Christian and Jewish mythology. His works grew out of the tradition of German Romanticism. From 1969 until 1980 Kiefer focused primarily on German history and tradition and his role as an artist. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, the themes changed and he explored the spiritual and intellectual traditions of the Jewish people who had been eliminated during the war in France. His works displayed a greater concern with the surface's physical qualities and visual complexity of the image.

Keifer's Parsifal cycle (1973) is a series of works based on a legend explored by Richard Wagner in his opera. The fact that the Nazis lauded and upheld the Germanic spirit in the mythological tone of Wagner's compositions made the use of this mythology provocative. The Parsifal story is a reworking of the story of the Holy Grail. The story becomes an allegory where the artist is compared to a warrior[17]. In Parsifal III[18], the room that doubles as an artist's studio and Parsifal's inner world becomes a site of conflict. This conflict is indicated by the sword which is driven into the floor and the names of the opera's characters as well as members of the Baader Meinhof terrorist group which are written within the wood grain. The ignorant opera characters that go in search of the spear are compared to the terrorists who are also in search of peace. This juxtaposition of the innocent and the terrorist, the artist and the warrior provokes the viewer. The panelled room with its folksy vernacular architecture is rendered "unhomely" and the Parsifal painting begs the question whether "the world [is] to be saved by violence or art? Are ignorance and innocence a sufficient bulwark against the evils of the world?" (Heartney 2001:18).

Anselm Kiefer stated in an interview: "To my mind, art is the only possibility of making a connection between disparate things, and thus creating meaning." (Fugmann 1998:93).As can be seen by the Parsifal paintings, Kiefer deliberately makes connections between disparate things, like the artist and the warrior, the characters in an opera and

[17] Parsifal, unaware of his society's traditions of hunting and war, is asked to recover a spear that will restore peace on earth. The series of paintings are sometimes referred to as the panelled room paintings because both wall and floors of the interiors are lined with wood. The imagery of rough hewn wood is closely associated with the Romantic notions of true Germanic spirit. For the mythical forest dwellers of old it was the site for conflict between good and evil (Thompson 2006:368).

[18] Kiefer Anselm, Parsifal III(1973). Oil and blood on paper on canvas, 300, 7 x 434,5cm. Tate,(Illustration and data: Heartney 2001:17),

terrorists, the architecture and tradition, and in this way he opens up a space for critical discourse. In the Parsifal paintings, he challenges taboos on cultural material that has been appropriated by the Nazis and he makes space for remembrance by bringing to the fore issues of the historical past.

In a later painting Bilderstreit[19] , he addresses a historical and cultural controversy that raged in the Byzantine Empire in the 8th and 9th centuries. The Church authorities of the time were questioning if it was possible to create an image of God, and whether you could or should worship these images. However, these philosophical and theoretical issues were not simply idle rhetoric, but unleashed violence and war. Kiefer uses this issue as a foil for addressing his central concern, that of the madness of war.

Bilderstreit is an image of "burnt earth". This is a recurrent theme within his work and it always refers to brutal destruction of war, whatever the causes. Andreas Huyssen talks about how his use of this leitmotiv highlights "the danger inherent in the loss of reflexive remembrance in an image-saturated culture". In the same article he concludes, "Kiefer's fires are the fires of history, and they light a vision that is indeed apocalyptic, but one that raises the hope of redemption only to foreclose it" (cited in Fugmann 1989:101).In the Bilderstreit painting the outlines of modern tanks are outlined in white as are the names of people involved in the Iconoclastic Controversy such as Theophilos, Photius, John of Damascus, as well as Doris and Charles Saatchi, collectors of contemporary art. Ironically these are drawn or written in white, the colour of Peace. In the centre of the

[19] Keifer Anselm, Bilderstreit Alternative title:Iconoclastic Controversy. (1979).Oil on canvas, 220 x 300cm. Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum (Suckale et al 1999:676),

painting is a murky outline of a palette, a symbol of art and the artist. The contrast between those Byzantine theologians and present day art collectors, images of art and war, highlights the way in which Kiefer constantly draws our attention to past and future, individual and collective issues and he does this by placing them side by side on the canvas. When interviewed he emphasised that: "I am consciously deploying space…Two axes of time correspond: the small, individual time and the gargantuan cosmic time. This can be defined as an osmotic relationship with the canvas functioning as a membrane" (cited in Fugmann 1989:100).

Keifer's paintings therefore are a blend of landscape and history, where the land is overlaid by the residue of human intervention and often our destructiveness. He does not attempt to portray realistic outward appearances, so in the Bilderstreit the space is flattened and colours are mostly grey mid-tones and black. What he shows is a metaphor or a cultural cue or icon to set in motion a response. This is enhanced by the monumental size of many of his paintings (Bilderstreit included) and colour used in his paintings. All these factors are designed to induce an atmosphere and emotional reaction in the spectator. This aspect of his work links to our previous discussion about the Sublime. David Cohen's comments about a recent installation of Kiefer's at the Gagosian Gallery also have relevance for this work:

> The Sublime is that which engenders deeply ambiguous emotion-fear, terror, the horror vacui. We are just too damned used, however, to the textures of angst and the tones of despair, learning all too easily to aestheticise them. Unless that is the point that Keifer is trading on an acutely post-war German frisson of guilty pleasure, of finding beauty where it should not be (2003 online)

Another aspect of Kiefers' art that is evident in both these paintings, and is exploited more in his artist books and installations, is his emphasis on objecthood. He textures his work, as David Cohen expresses it, both "literally as well as intellectually" (2003 online). In Parsifal, the wood is made of wallpaper with the edges painted black, the names are graffiti on the floorboards and blood is also used to texture the "wooden surface". In other artworks, sand, straw, sunflowers, steps, lead dresses and copper wire cover the surfaces of the canvasses. As Robert Hughes writes in Time magazine: "Kiefer carries a disregard for permanence of his materials to such an extreme that the lead will not stay in place and the straw on some canvases is already rotting," (1987 online).

Sometimes the works may be rotting but often Kiefer deliberately ages or layers his work so that it appears to be decayed. This is the case in Anselm Kiefer's book, The Heavenly Places: Merkabah, which is a larger than life collection of photographs painted with acrylic and ash, mounted on card stock, and bound together in a hand sewn book.

Anselm Kiefer describes his work as a kind of "inverted archaeology" (Erikson 2003 online).Where the object is not preserved, it involves covering up and becomes an anti-photograph. Decay also suggests loss and perhaps nostalgia. The subject of Kiefer's photographs is absence or the loss of coordinates. The book leads the viewer through a subterranean world of a basement in Buchen, Austria. The photos impress one with the vastness of space. The edges are covered by paint and wrinkles and the centres of the photos are a nebulous blur of floors, pillars and ceiling. To view these images one has to rely on memory, not of that space but of similar spaces that one has seen before.

Edward Erikson sums up how the palimpsest or an object like Kiefer's book:

subverts the notion of 'truth' and preservation, and returns to the reader the capacity for memory and myth. Myth speaks to a different nature than the discourse of truth. It is, from the beginning, a subjective, dynamic, "flawed" knowledge. Consequently, memory and myth is posited as a challenge to the truth (2007 online).

Chapter 6: Analysis of Practical Work

My exhibition of paintings: "Not the Whole Story" [20]

As stated, most of the paintings in this exhibition are site specific and refer directly to the 'Mbabane Resting Park' on Waterford Hill, Mbabane. A new graveyard was established in 2004 when an alternative burial site was sought for graves that were to be disrupted by the building of a new highway. The site was planned as the burial ground for a period of ten years; after four years it is almost full.

The Resting Park is within walking distance from my house at Waterford and as I pass it daily, I have witnessed first hand its rapid and accelerating expansion. Local culture and custom dictates that burials must take place on Saturdays before sunrise. In recent years burials also have taken place every Sunday morning, and now those of lower social status may also be buried during the week due to congestion. The Resting Park provides commentary on the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Swaziland. The euphemism of its government-given name (previous burial grounds have been called cemeteries) points to a degree of evasion and denial within official language as to the impact of the pandemic on Swazi society. At a physical level, the rapid filling of the Resting Park is visual testimony to the unplanned for and rapidly increasing death rate. In its lack of planning, the Resting Park begins to pervade the land, the persistent encroachment of graves on the hillside reflecting the profound impact that the pandemic has had and continues to have in this part of Swaziland. The encroachment of graves alters the land in a manner not dissimilar to the planned highway. The new highway has involved extensive earthmoving

[20] An exhibition at the Substation:14th to 24th August 2008

and excavation, where mountains have literally been relocated. At another level, and in a culture where the dead are buried, not cremated, the simple graves are evidence of the poverty and haste of those who have buried their loved ones. The graves are constructed from simple makeshift materials: rocks, cement, breeze blocks and sticks, unlike those in older established graveyards in Mbabane, where people have had the time and money to bury the dead and make more permanent memorials to their passing.

In my work, some of the paintings of the graveyard are overlaid by drawings. Many of these drawings, especially the body outlines, were appropriated from the artwork made for the written research. A painting seen through another text is a visual metaphor for the way our imagined construct of a place or person is informed by a complex web of associations, memory and knowledge. It is also mimetic of the way in which a mind can work, where different thoughts interweave, conflate, are overlaid and superimposed on each other in fragments and as organised wholes. The synthesis of images transforms and challenges the meanings of the original representations. The palimpsest is thus a visual device which asks the viewer to respond to the painting in an allegorical and symbolic way.

The earliest works, Barco and Sinking**,** are of two dug out canoes which I saw on a beach near Vilanculos in Mozambique. Barco is a depiction of wooden canoe standing on a mud flat (Figure 35). This painting prefigures some of the important themes in the later paintings. It hints at a human presence but does not represent it. It alludes to journeys and death. It is a painting of a boat, a vehicle, and it has a similar shape to a large boot, an

item of clothing essential for travel by foot. The dark reflective space in the centre of the canoe is coffin-like.

In Sinking**,** the body fragment and the boat synthesize (Figure 36). This painting is called 'sinking' because I wished to emphasise the vulnerability of travel in this 'unsophisticated' vehicle and the way the legs seem to descend into the boat. The disembodied legs falling into the wooden boat is an 'uncanny' image. The boat becomes a metaphor for the body, but the body is headless. In addition, the legs are not connected to a body. A headless body and dismembered legs are deeply disconcerting because as viewers we expect a body to be whole; fragments of the human body allude to the horror of death or the loss of dismemberment.

Fragments of the body and fragments of paper (the previous paintings are painted on irregular formats) arrest attention and cause us to gaze. As Gombrich states: "The incomplete image and the unexpected one set the mind a puzzle that makes us linger, and enjoy and remember the solution, where the prose of purely informational images would remain unnoticed or unremembered" (1996:58). The Forest (Figure 37) and Forest whirl (Figure 38) are paintings which also exploit this devise to provoke a response in the viewer.

The Forest, Forest whirl and Falling were painted as site specific works of one of the river courses on Waterford School campus. All three paintings depict pathways through the trees and a central empty space. This compositional pattern suggests a desire for

change, discovery, movement and perhaps even new understanding. “Travelling, Jung observes, is an image of aspiration, of an unsatisfied longing that never finds its goal, seek where it may” (Cirlot 1971: 164). The discovery of uncharted land and journeys denotes the Romantic tradition and the Sublime, as do images of untamed forests and infinite vistas. In The Forest (Figure 37), the tree ferns have a hairy, almost anthropomorphic quality; they appear to be akin to hair on a woman’s head. The valley is also a symbol for femininity and fecundity. The scale and the luminous colours of this painting are suggestive of the Sublime. In Falling (Figure 39), there is a linear texture on the forest floor which combines with the body of the falling figure; this combination is destabilising and alludes to movement and energy. The forest, with its ambiguous shapes and figures in the spaces between the trees, appears to be a menacing place. The spiral in Forest whirl speaks of an inner circular movement.

The four small paintings of rocks: Lovers (Figure 40), Majigalane (Figure 41), Obesity (Figure 42) and Mother and children (Figure 43) are different configurations of granite boulders .They are painted so that the texture of the rocks alludes to human skin and flesh. As I painted these rocks they became personifications for different human relationships and traits. Rocks are prominent natural features within the Swazi landscape but for humans they are also powerful metaphors, as Lucy Lippard writes in her book, “Overlay”:

> Invulnerable and irreducible, the stone became the image and symbol of being (Eliade 1962). Stones touch human beings because they suggest immortality, because they have so patently survived. Virtually every culture we know has attributed to pebbles and stones, rocks and boulders, magical powers of intense energy, luck, fertility and healing (1993:15).

Stones are the basic material of many of the graves that I painted. The graves in the "Mbabane Resting Park" are mostly body shaped heaps of sand, lined with rocks, gravel, cement or grass. The graves, just as the stones, suggest the human body but at the same time are markers for the loss of a life.

The three paintings which are central to the theme of the exhibited work are: Not the whole story (Figure 44), Bare Bones (Figure 45) and A cold night (Figure 46). They are life scale paintings of graves seen from above and body outlines have been superimposed onto the three dimensional paintings of the graves. These outlines were appropriated from the artwork produced during the body-mapping exercise, which were produced by the research group. The juxtaposition of artwork, associated with the living, on to the graves suggests a link between the lives of the women in the research group and the dead in the graves.

Not the whole story is an image of a grave where the rocks are covered by a layer of ochre cement. The plastic bags of funeral flowers and the bumpy cement are evocative of body form. The grave is sharply three dimensional; this is achieved by a chiaroscuro reminiscent of one of the Renaissance body of Christ images, for example Dead Christ by Andrea Mantega, 1480 (Suckale et al: 114). The body outline is reminiscent of the outline made by the police at the scene of a car accident or murder. The body outline appears to emerge upright from the grave. The posture of the outline is ambiguous as it suggests joy and celebration, or it could it could be posture suggesting submission and cowering. The

grave with the body outline work together to open up questions about the manner or circumstances of the person's death, as well us the unanswerable question about what happens after death. Hence the title of the exhibition: 'Not the whole story'.

Bare Bones was painted last, and depicts a grave covered by bright white rocks. The body outline partially drawn in the shadow appears to reach beyond the grave into the thin light moving over the grave. The bones and teeth are the last parts of the body to decay; they remain like the stones to preserve the memory of a person. Cirlot in his dictionary of symbols describes bones as "a symbol of life as seen in the character of a seed…" (1971:31). The biblical story of the dry bones dancing into life is a story that adds weight to the idea of bones having generative power. Like seeds, bones are buried and the old life is caste off in favour of a new one.

In the painting A Cold Night, the grave is covered by grey cement with Prussian blue shadows. The choice of this cold blue together with a limited tonal range from white to blue grey makes the surface of the grave appear to be an icy landscape. The feeling associated with this stark cold landscape is often melancholy. Two body outlines are intertwined alluding to sex and AIDS whether a side effect of love or expedient transactional sex is hinted at. The intertwined figures denote a relationship and their hands extending beyond the grave could allude to emotions associated with mourning.

The scale of these three paintings is human scale and mimetic of the size of the graves. The size and the content could suggest to the viewer a connection between the painting, one's own existence and how imminent death can and will be.

Sibebe (Figure 47) is a painting of two graves with the drawings of grassy nests superimposed on them.[21] These 'nests', which look like Swazi baskets used for chicken shelters, are images of containment, holding and home. The rocks with their sharp surfaces and stark colours are juxtaposed to the soft tactile surface of the nest drawings. Consequently the graves seem 'unhomely'.

Up Close (Figure 48), It's the thought that counts (Figure 49) and Waiting(Figure50) are details of graves painted on a larger scale than previous paintings. Their colour and light within suggest summer and morning, because they are bright, vibrant and the forms are sharply defined. Up close is a detail of a grave where half of the rocks are a translucent white and the other half are in deep earthy shadows of burnt sienna, alizarin crimson and viridian green. It's the thought that counts is a detail of the grave, with a white cross on the left side of the painting and an empty flower pot with grass growing between the rocks on the right side. Superimposed on the cross is a drawing of a flower; this drawing was appropriated from a person who chose the flower as a symbol to represent herself. In this painting I contrast images of life with those of decay and death. Waiting is painted in a fecund but garish green. The uneven grass conceals old graves and the grey rocks of the

[21]Sibebe is an image I have chosen for a personal loss. The painting of the two connecting graves, reminded me of my friends who were killed in Somaliland. Using their house as a base I constructed a sculptural installation of large nests made of the grass on Sibebe Rock, the second largest granite boulder in the world. A drawing of this installation is superimposed on the graves.

other graves commemorate those who are newly dead. One of the rocks protrudes above the others, it seems to be waiting, guarding and presiding over the others. The colours are suggestive of new growth and again there is a contrast between death and life. These three painting are 'sublime'; graves which are not traditionally associated with beauty have been transformed into objects which are beautiful and numinous with a transcendent light.

The next two paintings, Sidwashini Resting Park(Figure 51) and A new resident (Figure 52), are conventional renderings of landscape with sky and typical Renaissance perspective. Although the subject matter is not generally considered picturesque, the colours, the burnt sienna of the earth and the grey jumble of granite stones, are appealing as well as naturalistic depictions of the typical soil and rocks of the area. The configuration of the tombs mirrors the layout of the low density suburb in the surrounding area, again hinting at the connection between death and life.

Two graves (Figure 53) and The final journey (Figure 54) are more expressionist paintings of the graves. Two graves is an image of neighbouring graves which are set apart from the others in the grave yard, their placement suggesting intimacy. Mounds of earth, allude to passages and caves under the earth.

> The cave is the archetypal shelter for both the living and dead….The psychological image of cave is a double one, incorporating the threat of absorption and the fear of violation, as well as the hope for germination and growth. Caves were also places of protection and divination; long after people begun to build free-standing dwellings, they returned to caves for rituals of fertility and child birth (Lippard 1983:198).

The grave has much the same psychological impact as the cave. The grave is also a marker of a significant rite of passage that is the movement from life to death. For people of faith, Christians and African traditional believers, life continues after death. The rituals associated with burying the dead in the earth allude to fertility rituals where seeds give rise to life. In Swaziland, these beliefs are formative of people's consciousness and this is also one reason why they have given the name "Resting Park" to the graveyard, because they believe the human remains rest here but the spirit goes to heaven or joins the ancestors.

The final journey (Figure 55) is an image of six graves, with a drawing of a person walking between buildings superimposed on it. The geometric shapes of the graves echo the shapes within the houses of the overlay. The drawing was derived from one of the drawings done by the women in the research group, which describes the way in which they discovered they were HIV positive. AIDS does not have a cure and this drawing links the lives of the women with the inevitability of death.

The watercolours: Dug (Figure 56), Holes (Figure 57) and In parallel (Figure 58) depict the earthy pits into which the coffins descend. Unlike landscapes produced for interior decoration, which are often light and airy, these paintings are base, dark and muddy. The darkness, in Dug**,** becomes an entrance, a door, a portal to another form of life. The paper in these watercolours acts like the earth as an absorbent surface which draws in water leaving the sediment on the surface.

The many watercolour sketches are a visual record of the various graves and their relative positions in the proliferating cemetery. The scale and the number of paintings are indicative of an obsessiveness, which is found in those who collect. These paintings act as "memento mori" reminders of our mortality as well as a historic record of a particular time in Swaziland's history.

In contrast to the rocky jumble of most of the graves, the graves painted in Lonely sentinels (Figure 58), The end (Figure 59) and Lala kahle (Figure 60) are illustrations of the formal marble and stone tombstones found in another Mbabane cemetery. In Lala Kahle and The End the tombs become ghosts, spaces which describe loss, absence and the emptiness of mourning. The style of these paintings and most of the watercolour paintings, which is loose and suggestive of form rather than illustrative, could be described as 'abstract'.

Stones and rocks are the subject of many of these paintings and they are an expression of my life-long fascination with geology. They are a residue of a geological past that extends way beyond our human time frame. Professor Crump at the opening stated "our history is two percent biography and the rest geology". The graves in these painting are a recent phenomena connected to the suffering and death associated with the AIDS pandemic. However, as natural assemblages constructed by people, they are captivating, take on a myriad different forms and have a mystical quality. The mounds of rocks and the excavations next to them have been a powerful generative theme for my work. They speak about the connections and relationships between people and objects, they evoke

remembrance and allow us to forget, they mark the threshold between death and life, and they stand as reminders of a finite life but also recall spiritual matters, such as the Christian metaphor of the resurrection when the stone rolled away from the tomb. The land covered with freshly dug graves is a reminder of devastation wrought by the AIDS pandemic. Although it is the traditional form of burial, the proliferation of graves is surely a rebuke to our society's collective denial and blatant disregard for human life.

Painting these graves has been a "delightful horror", the forms, colour and shapes have delighted my senses but at the same time, I have been weighed down by the horror of human devastation and the loss it represents. The use of the palimpsest has been a way to reconcile my conscious and unconscious understanding of the land. My thoughts are often provisional and my grasp tenuous on what I perceive. The play between my perceptions and memory, emotion and my personal mythology finds expression in the visual metaphor of palimpsest.

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Illustrations



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

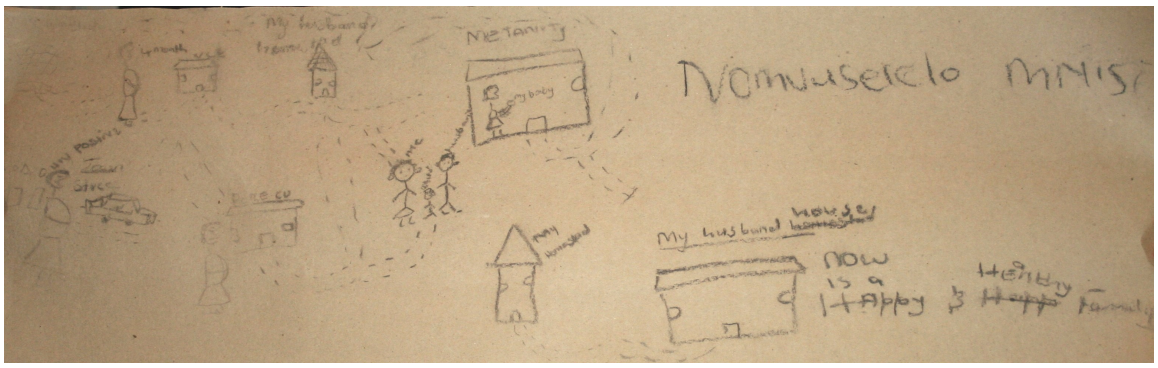


Figure 5



Figure 6

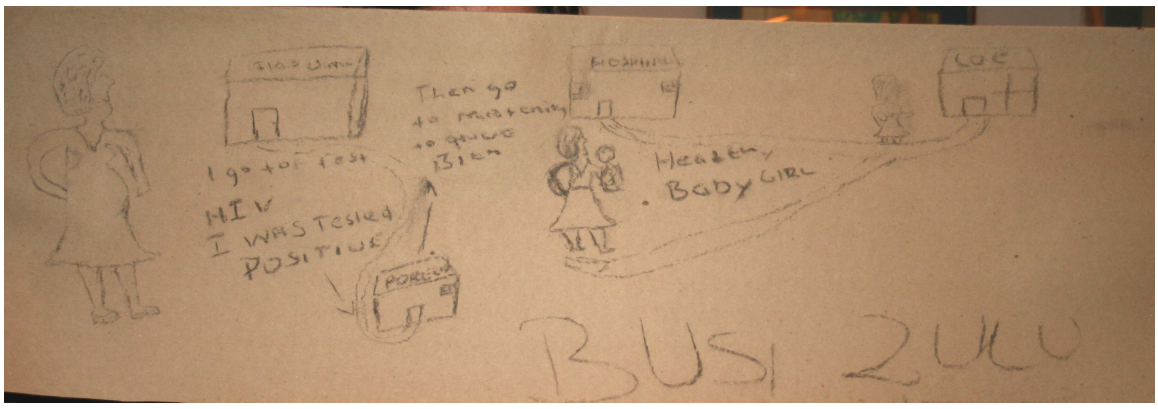


Figure 7

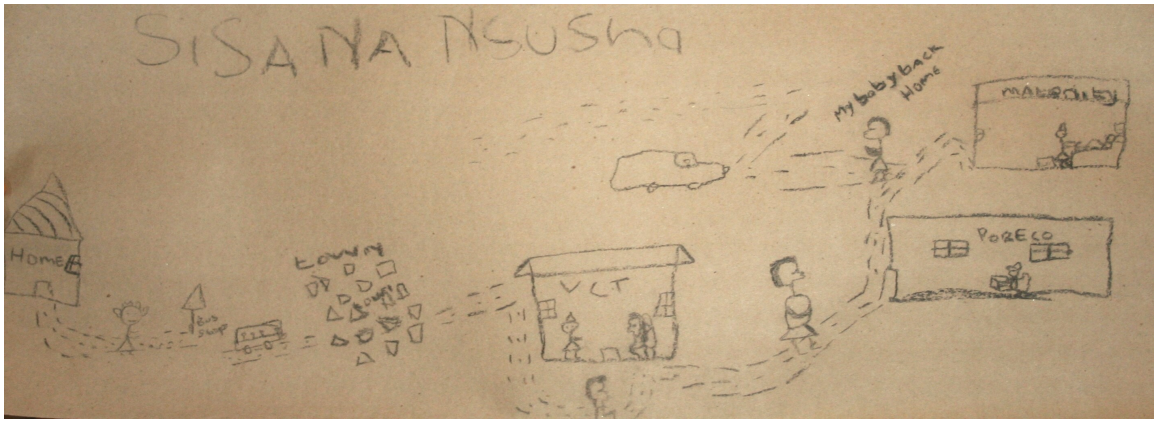


Figure 8



Figure 9