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De Beer, Welma

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Honouring the Life Stage of the Crone:
Self-Revelatory Performance
as Rite of Passage

By
Welma de Beer

A research report submitted by Welma de Beer, student number 1296294, to Drama for Life, Wits School of Arts in partial fulfilment of the requirement of a Master of Arts in drama therapy degree by course work and research report.

Supervised by Warren Nebe and Hazel Barnes

March 2016

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master in Arts in Dramatic Art to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.

Abstract

This study gave expression to my initiatory journey into the last life-cycle of my life, as archetypally represented by the Crone (Prétat, 1994:7–11). It is a personal journey that engages with a specific research question: In what ways can Drama Therapy facilitate the contemplation and initiation of the "Crone" as life stage through self-revelatory performance?

Two essential questions frame this study: How can Drama Therapy help us to create a process that contains the inherent destruction that forms part of transformation? If so, what would be the elements and methods that can help facilitate such a process? These questions will be investigated through a creative project, using the method of Performance as Research and the form of self-revelatory performance. The self-revelatory performance engaged with autobiographical moments from my own life and focussed on the theme of transformation. This research report seeks to extrapolate and evaluate the process for the purposes of defining the role and function of drama therapy as self-revelatory performance.

The work of Rene Emunah (2009) on the self-revelatory play as a tool for Drama Therapy serves as foundation for this research. Other writings which influenced the study were the work of Victor Turner (Schechner,1993) on liminality, Richard Schechner (1976) on ritual and performance, anthropology of performance and environmental space, Kabi Thulo (2009) on shamanism, Willmar Sauter (2000) on the Theatrical Event and Jacob Moreno's idea of the Encounter (Kristofferson, 2014). Key concepts that will be investigated are: Jung's concept of transformation and how it expresses itself through rites of passage, initiation and ritual, myth and storytelling, the crone archetype and self-revelatory theatre.

The study's research findings were derived from the processes of devising, performance and post-performance "insights" which form a part of this creative project. Essentially, this study suggests possible processes that can be used effectively in drama therapy to create a "rite of passage", "honouring" a new life stage that can "reprogram" or transform us. The study posits that transformation is contained and facilitated when we are able to self-reflect on our history, thoughts, beliefs and cultural coding. Self-revelatory playmaking can be a valuable tool in drama therapy which holds the potential to assist cathartic self-reflection in a safe space (Emunah, 1994:225). This study provides a qualitative description of the phenomena of self-revelatory

playmaking and performance and grapples with how it creates a “rite of passage” to facilitate the transitioning into the last phase of life.

Foreword

I would like to acknowledge and thank my two supervisors Warren Nebe and Hazel Barnes for assisting and accompanying me on this journey of transformation. Their expert advice, help, support and encouragement fertilised this dissertation and assisted its delivery into the world.

In my attempt to share my experiences through the storytelling, I want to thank all the people, family, friends that have touched my life to prompt the stories and ideas. I thank my beautiful friends that were part of creating my telling: Ronel who shared her soft touch, wisdom and creative bounty and Schoeman for his quirky mind and most soulful melody, Matthew and Carmel who stepped in and supported me, helping me when nothing else worked. And let us not forget… all the others who read and made suggestions, gave me words of encouragement and wisdom, took photographs, those who cajoled me into telling, acting and doing, held me when I was crying and cared for my lifeless body while I was journeying the underworld to find these stories and ideas. A special thanks to Matthew whose precision and expertise infused every page, paragraph and comma whilst editing.

Dedicated to my children and Antonie who made it possible and believed that I could do this. Thank you.

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Johannesburg
2016

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction: Aims and Rationale of the Study

> Modern health care has made it possible to prolong not only our lives, but also our vitality. Hence we who are now in our fifties and sixties may well be the first generation in history that is neither young nor old for about twenty or twenty-five years of our post-midlives (Prétat, 1994:7).

At 50 I was entering a new phase of my life. Childbearing and active motherhood seemed activities of the past and roles like the housewife, spouse, mother and teacher have lost their potency. In 2014 I left the family home and resigned from my teaching post of the last 8 years. Entering my "post-midlife" has been both exciting and distressing. I have become acutely aware of the transformation that will have to take place in order to enter this new life stage as I have left my home and career behind. Starting my studies at Wits at 51, doing my MA in Drama Therapy became the manifestation of the call to embrace a new life phase. If we are conscious enough not to ignore the call of what Jung called our vocation, we may recognize that our bodies are signalling a transition. Similarly, something was calling me to introversion, to transformation, and eventually to *metanoia* which is, according to Prétat (1994:7,76) a deep change of conscious attitude. This call appeared to have come from the archetypal image of the Crone. Investigating the Crone archetype became one of the investigations of this study.

> The Crone's title was related to the word *crown*, and she presented the power of the ancient tribal matriarch who made the moral and legal decisions of the subjects and descendants. As an embodiment of wisdom, she was supposed to have written the first tablets of the law and punished the first sinners (Walker, 1985:13,14).

Prétat (1994:80) notes how the Crone archetype has been denigrated and persecuted for centuries. The Wise Old Great Mother archetype carries the tribal projections of someone who knew the mysteries of life and death, like Physis, Matter, Mother or Eve who symbolically brought consciousness into matter/the material out of the Garden of Eden. This archetype of the powerful old feminine is mostly perceived in modern culture "as a parody, a figure of ridicule, a hag who fattens children up to eat them. Only the young are desirable, trustworthy, productive" (Prétat, 1994:45). The negative archetype of the Crone worries obsessively. They appear to live regressively stuck or "psychologically and physically constipated". This shadow side of the

archetype may shut down, withdraw and refuse relationship, feeding on the energy of her children and grandchildren, it annihilates, schemes, plots, symbolically "fattens and sweetens" our lives only to feed herself (Prétat, 1994:72,73). Older women constantly try to create the illusion that their aging stopped, that they are still objects of desire, thus giving exaggerated importance to their physical appearance.

On the positive side of this archetype we find the belief in "primitive" cultures that "when the menses ceased in older women it was because the "wise blood" had backed up to be held in the womb where it would create a new way of being…Few see the psychological meaning: wisdom birthing from an aging psyche, just as children are born from a younger womb" (Prétat, 1994:44). The Crone as archetypal representation of the power of the feminine is often depicted in myths as a shape changer, someone who knows how to live in liminal spaces, a goddess and keeper of the cauldron, wise woman, magician, overseer of changes (beginnings and endings), reading books and cooking brews in "search of wisdom and enlightenment" (Prétat, 1994:67). The Crone has the ability to carry the opposites of "birth-death, youth-age, beauty-ugliness, hope-despair", and as such she can be challenging. She is both the harbinger of illness and death, preparing us for transitions whilst also being the midwife to new births. "As an agent of change, she is the 'Earth-Shaker' who comes out of her cave and shakes her rain stick to alter the world" (Prétat, 1994:108). The Crone archetype is also associated with insight and self-reflection, facing the truth, childlike naturalness, acceptance of "the conditions of our existence" and surrendering yourself to the current of your thoughts. During our Croning years, according to Prétat, we experience a place where our defeats are experienced as victory (Prétat, 1994:24,38,42,45). As the Baba Yaga she holds and teaches the secrets of the Universe. Marion Woodman (1993:88) describes "Crones" from her life as people's who's "love was palpable. No advice. Simply being, saying almost nothing. I knew I was totally seen and totally understood. They could constellate my own inner healer because they could see me as I am".

There are few role models for aging, late life individuation is highly individual and a demanding task. "If we can endure, we may eventually emerge with a new vision of our future" (Prétat, 1994:54). The task of "re-imagining ourselves, journeying beyond our present limitations so that we may welcome the spark of a new consciousness as it slowly emerges from our deepest darkness" (Prétat, 1994:55) seemed to be one of the personal tasks that I set for this study. Drama would be my tool as this was my area of interest for the last 24 years; first as a form of self expression, later as a tool for development and finally using drama in an educational environment to bring about transformation, healing and awareness amongst adolescents. The deeper I immersed myself in this art form the more I became aware of its therapeutic possibilities. I knew it would be the next step in my journey and researching drama therapy would become my rite of

passage. I was not disappointed in believing that the answers would come through the body, the dreams and experiences facilitated by drama therapy.

So what is drama therapy? In his book *Drama as Therapy* Phil Jones (2007:3) refers to "dramatherapy" as a form of therapy that includes drama. He further describes (2007:10,11) drama therapy as:

- the use of created or scripted roles and characters, or playing oneself in a fictional reality, in order to explore life experiences;
- the use of materials such as objects, small toys and puppets to play out and work with problematic feelings, relationships or experiences;
- the use of the body in dramatic form through disguise, masking, mime or performance art to explore the self, image, relationship;
- the use of scripts, stories and myths to evoke and act out themes, personal issues or archetypal material with a view to the exploration of problems;
- the creation of dramatic rituals to work through areas of life experience;
- moving through different developmental stages in drama to assist in the development of new ways of relating to oneself and to others.

Reading about self-revelatory playmaking and performance caught my interest as it incorporates the use of symbolic objects, the body in dramatic form, stories from life and the creation of a dramatic ritual, in my case with the purpose of facilitating a new developmental stage and creating a rite of passage.

The term "self-revelatory theatre" implies a form of theatre that "reveals the Self". "Revelation" not only discloses and makes known, but when we look at dictionary definitions it is closely linked to the concept of the "apocalypse", which is a movement towards closure, a "grand or violent event" (Fowler & Fowler, 1979:962). Thus the name Self-Revelatory Theatre implies a grand or violent closing event that reveals and makes known through disclosure.

Rene Emunah (1994:224) has coined the term Self-Revelatory Theatre and writes how self-revelatory theatre differs from autobiographical theatre as it involves a high level of risk-taking.

We are prepared to take the risk since there is a possibility of finding closure and transformation. She states that personal narrative accounts, such as self-revelatory performances, propel us to wholeness. As we discover our life stories we experience fullness of being, power, dignity and some form of revelation. Emunah (1994:291) states that self-revelatory theatre is a new genre of theatre not just a kind of therapy and as such it has specific features.

In self-revelatory plays the clients endeavour to transform personal material into theatrical creations (Emunah, 1994:224), striving towards new territory and understanding, this implies or seeks movement or transition (Emunah, 1994:292). The content explored in self-revelatory theatre is real-life issues and demands a high level of risk taking. It is thus, "always on the emotional edge" (Emunah, 1994:224). Issues emerge from the drama therapy process and are depicted in a culminating scene. Self-revelatory theatre takes issues further, "exploring it in greater depth via the creative process and the product" (Emunah, 1994:224).

The aesthetic part of the self-revelatory performance is primary rather than secondary (Emunah, 1994:224). This creates a heightened sense of theatricality through the use of, creation of a formalised sacred space using theatre staging (Emunah, 1994:225). Self-revelatory performance includes differing forms, such as: monologues, puppets, masks, realistic scenes, dream sequences or metaphoric stories (Emunah, 1994:225). Staging should ideally be theatrical using the lighting and sound effects of the stage to create a sacred space. However, site-specific performances can happen where the place is symbolically linked to the issue or mood (Emunah, 1994:225,226).

The play making process of self-revelatory theatre is generally an evolutionary and organic one. Scenes can be developed during therapy sessions or worked on individually (Emunah, 1994:224,225). The process generally involves working on one's own rather than in a group (Emunah, 1994:224). The process of creating stimulates a crystallisation of the issues, "discovering and drawing from inner resources, giving form to feeling, communicating nuance and complexity" (Emunah, 1994:225). Thus, movement, transition or transformation is contained and facilitated by the process (Emunah, 1994:225) as therapeutic material is "experimented with, moulded, edited and refined" (Emunah, 1994:224). Emunah (1994:226) notes how warm up exercises on the day of the performance are helpful.

Apart from giving form to our often chaotic feelings and communicating the complexity of these, the therapeutic benefits of self-revelatory work is also the clarifying of our life stories (Emunah, 1994:225). Often, new self-disclosures are made which inevitably leads to "ritualistic purging" and cathartic moments (Emunah, 1994:225). Clients experience forgiveness and deeper levels of recognition and acceptance during the process and the performance of self-revelatory plays

(Emunah, 1994:225). Performing intensely personal scenes involves a great deal of risk-taking and courage and it is the encouragement and acceptance which is applauded by the witnesses.

There is, according to Emunah (1994:225), a movement or transformation that is riveting and compelling to witness. This movement or transformation is facilitated and experienced by the playmaker. This, in turn implies a transcendence or redemption that is acknowledged and applauded by the witnesses. Even though this transcendence may not have been experienced by the playmaker, the creation appears to bring the person closer to the actualisation (Emunah, 1994:225). It was this transcendent and transformational aspect of self-revelatory playmaking that intrigued me. Could the self-revelatory play become an initiatory tool to use in order to honour this new life stage?

Starting my studies at Wits I was cautiously entering another transitioning phase, yet I knew that trying to "ignore the call" would not be possible. These transitions are similar to Jung's ideas about human development. Jung did not specify in detail but indicated certain stages of human development:

- Early years: the libido is invested in survival activities, actualisation of instinctive drives;
- Late 30s early 40s:the libido for survival is re-directed towards cultural activities,
- Middle-aged person: becomes more introverted towards wisdom and sagacity as opposed to physical and mental vigour (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:136).

I have recognised two previous life transitions similar to the *coniunctio* (i.e. a process of integration between the conscious and unconscious aspects as described by C.G. Jung) in my own life: *Nigredo* at around my 30th year and *Albedo* at 42 (refer to p.31). It is clear that the questions we ask ourselves in the first half of our life are quite different from the ones we ask ourselves in the second half. According to Hollis (2003: 14) we initially ask "What is the world asking of me?" which prompts the development of ego strength and an operational sense of self. During the second half of life we ask: "What, now, does the soul seek of me?" Jung (1984:125) writes "for the aging person it is duty and a necessity to give serious attention to himself". We are obliged to go deeper and engage with the soul. Soul comes from the Greek word "psyche" and thus we have to become psychological beings and leave behind the values and idols of the first half of our lives (Hollis, 2003:15).

> When we acknowledge the power of our genetic and cultural coding, and the autonomous clusters of programmed and re-programming energy at work within us, the range of free choice seems limited indeed. Whatever freedom of choice is possible, we can only reach it when we have reflected on these autonomous histories within (Hollis, 2003:15).

Honouring a new life stage thus inevitably asks of us to "reprogram" ourselves and this is made more possible when we are able to self-reflect on our history, thoughts, beliefs and cultural coding. How do you accomplish this? My initial feeling was that self-revelatory theatre carries the possibility of self-reflection as well as the potential to "reprogram" and transform ourselves through creating a rite of passage.

> It is the twilight zone between past and future that is the precarious world of transformation within the chrysalis. Part of us is looking back, yearning for magic we have lost; part is glad to say goodbye to our chaotic past; part looks ahead with whatever courage we can muster; part is excited by the changed potential; part sits stone-still not daring to look either way. Individuals who consciously accept a life or death chrysalis, whether in analysis or in life's experience have a life or death paradox, a paradox which returns in a different form at each new spiral of growth (Woodman, 1985:14).

The year 2015 found me standing on the threshold of stepping into my Masters studies in Drama Therapy. This was indeed a time of great loss and transformation - I was setting off on a journey into the unknown. I knew I had to address the depression of my late life. Would I be able to find a new role that would help me embrace more of what I need to live in the world? Hollis (1996:71) notes that a depression is "a suppression of the life force" which happens anytime but frequently during the mid-life "when the psyche wishes enlargement or transition". Prétat (1994:18) describes this time as "late-life *metanoia*", or the time during late-life of profound change. She stresses the importance to "develop rituals to alleviate the confusion and despair we experience on leaving the safety of habitual ways" (Prétat, 1994:18). She continues to explain how we either consciously or unconsciously "enact ritual movements". These "ritual movements" seem to be offered by the Self. Prétat (1994:18) describes the Self as the "archetype of wholeness and regulating center of the psyche". She notes that rituals can possibly be attributed to a new "need to enact our relationship to the community" (Prétat, 1994:18). These ritual movements which are spurred by the Self not only address our need for relationship to a community but also provide a vehicle through which to concretise and symbolise a process of transformation.

Transformation seems to ask for a “death” or “leaving something behind” and it does not imply success and the outcome is unknown. Even though the thought of “death” and “separation” seemed daunting, I became aware of an inner need to create a rite of passage to honour the transformation of one life stage into another. Simultaneously I wanted to understand this process from a therapeutic perspective. The following questions arose: Does everyone naturally go through transformation? And if we do, does everyone have the same stages of transformation? Does it matter and influence a transformative experience if there is a witness? How does a defined, created and prepared “space” influence transformation in a therapeutic process? How do the actions that we take and the objects we use in the “space” influence the outcome?

After the xenophobic attacks in our country during 2015, I felt I needed to respond to the outer socio political challenges and the need for transformation facing our country. Knowing my limitations in the socio political arena, I felt moved to find the solution *within*. In other words, to endeavour going through a transformative experience as consciously as possible in order to understand it from a psychological and therapeutic perspective. The next question arrived: How do I engage in a self-revelatory process of transformation that can help me access a “bigger” part of my “self” in order to be more present when engaging with the outer world? Can one transform without “spilling blood” by creating one’s own transformative rite of passage through self-revelatory play making? Would understanding my own personal transformation from the “inside” help me to understand and assist transformative experiences and moments for others?

My personal quest became finding a place of true belonging, an inner “home” also called the Self. I believed that through consciously transitioning and reflecting on the transformational stages I would come into contact with the Self. This journey of transformation is reminiscent of Jung’s investigation into the psychological processes of transformation called the *coniunctio* (Edinger, 1994:17). The Dutch medical doctor, psychiatrist and author, Bernard Lievegoed (2008: 5,6) claimed that since the development of Freudian psychoanalysis, Western civilization has developed to a point where people need to assimilate experiences of life, deeply felt emotions, drives and archetypes in order to contain it. Lievegoed (2008:5) further states, “Many people seek a guide to their experiences of the confusing inner world”.

There appears to be a lack of a guide or “welcoming society” that could witness our transitional rites of passage in contemporary society. It is my opinion that an encounter between two or more people can facilitate healing, when the participants actively engage and witness in a safe and liminal space. Drama Therapy endeavours to create such an encounter between client and therapist and space, engaging a fourth partner (performance as rite of passage: medium). This medium provides a non-material and non-intellectual approach based on feeling and expression. Investigating the effectiveness of this form of drama therapy (i.e. self-revelatory performance) to

contain transitory processes became the research. Self-revelatory performance as a form of performance has an unambiguous aim of healing current issues or personal dilemmas (Emunah, 2015:72).

This brings me to my main research question: In what ways can Drama Therapy facilitate the contemplation and initiation of the "Crone" as life stage through self-revelatory play making and performance?

In order to enter a new life stage it is inevitable that changes and disintegration need to happen. According to Jungian analyst, Jane Prétat (1994:7), any new integration is unavoidably "preceded by disintegration. If things are to come together in a new way, they must first come apart".

This concept of disintegration led me to the some sub questions:

- In what ways, if possible, can drama therapy help us to create a process that *contains* the inherent destruction that forms part of transformation?

- If it is possible, what would be the elements and methods that can help facilitate such a process?

The process of devising my self-revelatory performance thus investigated the creation of a transformative rite of passage into a new life stage: i.e. post midlife. The process was revelatory in creating meaningful relationships (i.e. with the different parts of myself and the participants), facilitating interrelated activities such as organising the performance space, props and costumes to create aesthetic cohesion and creating a liminal space which supported a transition into a new life stage.

Chapter 2

2 Methodological and Conceptual Framework

The research method was Performance as Research, and it was framed by the theoretical underpinnings from various writings on ritual, initiation, rites of passage, performance, acting, and the methodology of self-revelatory performance. My conceptual frame is the psychoanalytic work of C.J. Jung that includes the transformational process known as the *coniunctio*, archetypes, symbolism, myth and story making (Hall & Lindzey, 1978).

2.1 The Methodology

In order to have a thorough understanding of any topic Dwight Conquergood (2002:315) advises Performance as Research as a method of "experience, relocation, copresence(sic), humility and vulnerability: *listening to and being touched by* (emphasis in original)" the experience and participants. At the same time this research method is an "ethnography of the ears and heart that reimagines (sic) participant-observation as coperformative (sic) witnessing". Performance as Research is the primary methodology I have used in this study as it holds the possibility of co-performative witnessing and through that witnessing integrating the subject and the object of research. This became a transgressive investigation between the different domains of knowledge analysis (self-revelatory performance and ritual) and action (the process and performance itself). It is therefore not only a theoretical study about "knowing that" and "knowing about" as Conquergood (2002:311) explains it, but it is anchored in practise. The "embodied experience" and "orality" of this project thus includes the "view from the body" as well as a "view from the psyche". The "subjugated knowledge" includes "naive knowledge at the bottom of the hierarchy" such as psychological or intuitive processes (Conquergood, 2002:311). This methodology served to include both the experience and the observation witnessed from the role of the researcher, the creator and the performer in a relational, collaborative and dialogical process that was both subjective and objective.

I tried to answer my research question through exploring the research object, namely the process of creating and performing a ritualised self-revelatory performance. Data collecting of the process included narrative and poetic writing, storytelling, engaging in informal social gatherings, creating

artworks (set and props), performing of the play, facilitating two ritual experiences and interpreting and analysing the embodied and experienced knowledge that revealed itself during the process and performance.

The artistic process (i.e. play making) of this self-revelatory performance investigated the nature of a personal late-life transformational journey and the role that self-revelatory theatre, as a tool of drama therapy, played in the process. This process facilitated the experiential and participatory engagement with the space, the materials (objects), performance (actions) and participants (Conquergood, 2002:318). It was done by identifying, preparing, co-creating a liminal, site-specific space and presenting of a semi-autobiographical performance that aimed to investigate stages of my own transformative journey and exposing "scenes that demands a high level of risk-taking" (Emunah, 1994:224). This risk-taking aspect of the performance was also experienced in the analysis and writing of the research report where I had to self-reflect on the process and my own complexes.

Performance as Research has the potential to become a methodology that becomes therapeutic within itself. Romanyshyn (2006:38) quotes C.G. Jung as saying that a researcher cannot afford to ignore his or her own complexes as they are an unavoidable limitation of psychological observation. He suggests using the concept of the "wounded researcher" as an approach to research that keeps the soul in mind. Romanyshyn (2006:42) explains that our complexes are revealed in our dreams, symptoms, feelings, fantasies, intuitions, reveries and visions which should be included along with reflections, thoughts and conscious ideas about the work. He states that we would "betray the complex character of our knowing" should we ignore them (Romanyshyn, 2006:43). A complex can be identified by the "grip" it has on the researcher and should therefore have a voice in the work. The shift between being "grasped" and "gripping" the work needs to happen during an investigation. During the process, I engaged in the creation of interior monologues and dialogues between different parts of myself and the topic. I found that these inner dialogues emerged spontaneously without order through dream intuitions that were journaled. This study revealed very specific complexes and I became, at times, unconsciously identified with them. Similar to Romanyshyn (2006:43) opinion, it became a struggle to produce a rigorous piece of research as subjectivity and bias is part of the process and ample reflexivity, supervision and critique was constantly needed. Journaling my dreams, visions, images, intuitions, stories and poetry during this particular time of transformation became a way of accessing and communicating with the unconscious which seemed to be essential for the transformative process, but it ran the risk of becoming subjective. However, the subjectivity of the reporting can be validated by the phenomenology of the process and I believe that the qualitative reporting on the effect of the phenomena might have enriched the research. Romanyshyn (2006:43) challenges

us to create a piece of work that "works through the researcher but is not *about* the researcher". Self-reflexivity and self-revelation was thus essential to this study.

Self-revelatory performance is different from autobiographical performance that does not specifically aim at healing and revolves around stories from the past. "Self-Revs integrate cultural, social, political, racial and gender contexts that inform or add perspective to the central issues, though the primary focus is on raising psychological awareness and teaching therapeutic change" (Emunah, 2015:73). The self-revelatory performance happens when "personal material" is worked into theatrical creations and a high value is placed on the aesthetics and theatricality of the performance facilitating a strong cathartic experience (Emunah, 2009: 224 - 226). During my research I focussed on creating a self-revelatory ritual that was cathartic, thus revelatory, as well as a rite of passage, transformative. I used a site-specific environment and made an effort to create a theatrical and aesthetically pleasing performance that contained the symbolism and structure of ritual as a rite of passage.

This process of scriptwriting, playmaking and performing were self-revealing and informed me about drama therapy as therapeutic tool for initiation. Seven agents or seven levels of investigation created a multiplicity of viewpoints during the two phases. These roles were: 1) Researcher, the 2) Researched subjects: Performer (actor), Director, Facilitator, Therapist and 3) Researched methodologist: Scriptwriter, Journalist of dreams, visions and intuitions. Negotiating these different levels of investigation needed sensitive and responsible handling. Writing about Applied theatre Sheila Preston feels that special care, dialogue, respect and sensitivity are needed when plays depict real lives of individuals especially when they are in any way marginalised and/or vulnerable. She states that "representations, however sensitively and carefully handled, will carry their own political significance and resonance in the broader socio-political sphere and will be constantly vulnerable to appropriation and redefinition" (Prentki and Preston, 2009:65). Similar to the sensitivity and respect needed in Applied theatre, careful framing and distancing techniques were needed during my self-revelatory playmaking process in order to prevent further wounding of the already-wounded.

In some ways the idea of self-revelatory performance implies a "wounded healer" participant as described by Romanyshyn (2006:38). Interestingly, my self-revelatory play itself revealed a number of interesting roles, symbols, wounds and emotions. It was however, the process and performance of the self-revelatory play that was most beneficial to my research. This process and performance was framed by the psychodynamic work of Carl Gustav Jung.

2.2 My Conceptual Framework: The Jungian Concept of Individuation

I grew up in a small Christian, Afrikaner community during the height of Apartheid and it seems as if I spent my whole adult life trying to integrate and heal the pain that this separated and dualistic worldview imposed on me. In short, I was seeking "wholeness"; a concept that Carl G Jung called individuation(Hall & Lindzey, 1978:116).

Jung studied religion, ancient symbols, mythology and rituals, customs and beliefs in search of "constant and often creative development, the search for wholeness and completion, and the yearning for re-birth" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:116). Individuation leads to a more "authentic self" through a process in which various conscious and unconscious parts of a person become integrated. Jung believed that this wholeness could only be found by facing or acknowledging the duality (separateness or brokenness) of our own shadow (unconscious) material and integrating it through transformative processes. Human beings can consciously engage in *realising their Self* (also called the psyche, central archetype or total personality) as it is the "mid-point of the personality, around which all the other systems are constellated" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978: 124). The archetype of the Self constellates when the human being reaches middle age and it is only the result of "a serious effort to change the centre of the personality from the conscious ego to one that is midway between consciousness and unconsciousness" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:124,125).

It is during our infant years and in our endeavour to access the material world that we learn to become more conscious; we learn to "will" and move, feel and emote, speak and think or in other words increase the ego. We develop a sense of self, or an "I" consciousness. The ego is the conscious mind comprising of "conscious perceptions, memories, thoughts, and feelings. The ego is responsible for the individual's sense of 'identity and continuity'". It becomes the ruling principle or the centre of consciousness that regulates and runs the different parts of our psyche (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:118). It is also during this conscious-making process that we are "wounded". We are confronted with the dualities of life and start to compare our-"self" with others. We quickly learn that we are not clever -, talented -, beautiful -, strong -, fill in the blank – enough. We are faced with our own inabilities and inadequacies in the material world and develop the belief that we are "not good enough" as we are. This "wounding" is essential as it challenges our narcissistic and solipsistic tendencies and at the same time it serves as a conscious-making tool which causes us to create an ego, also called the "first personality" (Farah, 2015: Master Class Lecture).

As a result of the painful experiences and our incompatibility to live up to the idealised ego, the wounded material is pushed into the personal unconscious where it becomes the "shadow". This shadow material is in turn projected onto the "other" or the opposite of yourself or the one different from yourself. This "other" then haunts our dream world as repressed material. The Personal Unconscious consists of experiences that "have been repressed, suppressed, forgotten, or ignored…experiences that have been too weak in the first place to make a conscious impression upon the person" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:118). Jung also described the collective unconscious, which is the manifestation of emotions and invasions shared groups of people. Then there are the archetypes "which have the character of humanity, and which in their language of imagery are the same throughout the world" (Lievegoed, 2008:86). Jung believed the Shadow archetype "consists of the animal instincts humans inherited in their evolution from lower forms of life" and these are therefore responsible for the concept of original sin. All the unpleasant and socially reprehensible thoughts, feelings and actions are thus hidden from ourselves (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:123).

Daryl Sharp (1991:123) notes that:

> …the shadow is in effect the whole unconscious. It is commonly personified in dreams by persons of the same sex as the dreamer. The shadow is composed for the most part of repressed desires and uncivilized impulses, morally inferior motives, childish fantasies and resentments, etc. – all those things about oneself one is not proud of. These unacknowledged personal characteristics are often experienced in others through the mechanism of projection.

In order to function in the material world we develop a "persona" or "mask" which we show and use to access or bridge into the material world. It is in "response to the demands of social convention and tradition as well as our own archetypal needs" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:122) and it is assigned by the society as the role that one is expected to play. It is our public personality that conceals our real nature in order to impress the "other" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:122). When the ego identifies with the persona we become more alienated from our genuine feelings. This can also be called over-acculturation. It is important that the individual become aware (conscious) of the part that he is playing in order to become an autonomous human being (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:122).

As adults we are continually confronted with this unconscious "shadow material" in our daily meeting with the "other". This unconscious repressed material becomes our complexes, as Jung would call it, which has as its core: affect. "A complex is an organised or constellation of feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and memories that exist in the personal unconscious" (Hall & Lindzey; 1978:118). A complex has the ability to "hook" or "grip" our emotions, for example if we have unconscious and painful memories, ideas, and feelings about our mother we can easily be irritated

by the “other” as a result of the unconscious association. The complex is thus activated and we react unconsciously, driven or ruled by the complex and not our conscious will. In this, we project it outward, claim innocence, scapegoat, and blame others for the shadows and pain that are lurking within us. Learning to “unhook” ourselves from these complexes takes time and is essentially a conscious making process called individuation.

However, we can also choose to stay unconscious of our “self” but that might result in the need to “numb” or suppress (de”press”) the pain and longing through addictive and neurotic, repetitive behaviour and compulsive drives from the unconscious (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:137). It is almost as if the unconscious wants to become aware of itself, as it nudges and drives us towards consciousness. “For if any part of the personality is neglected, the neglected and less well-developed system will act as centres of resistance that will try to capture energy from more fully developed systems. If too many resistances develop, the person will become neurotic” (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:137). Jung (1989: xviii) believed that the neurotic and psychotic processes could be better understood through the veritable “treasure-house of symbols” that alchemy affords, especially referring to the *Rosariumphilosophorum* pictures and texts that delineate the process of the *coniunctio*.

2.2.1 Coniunctio and the Path to Self-Realisation

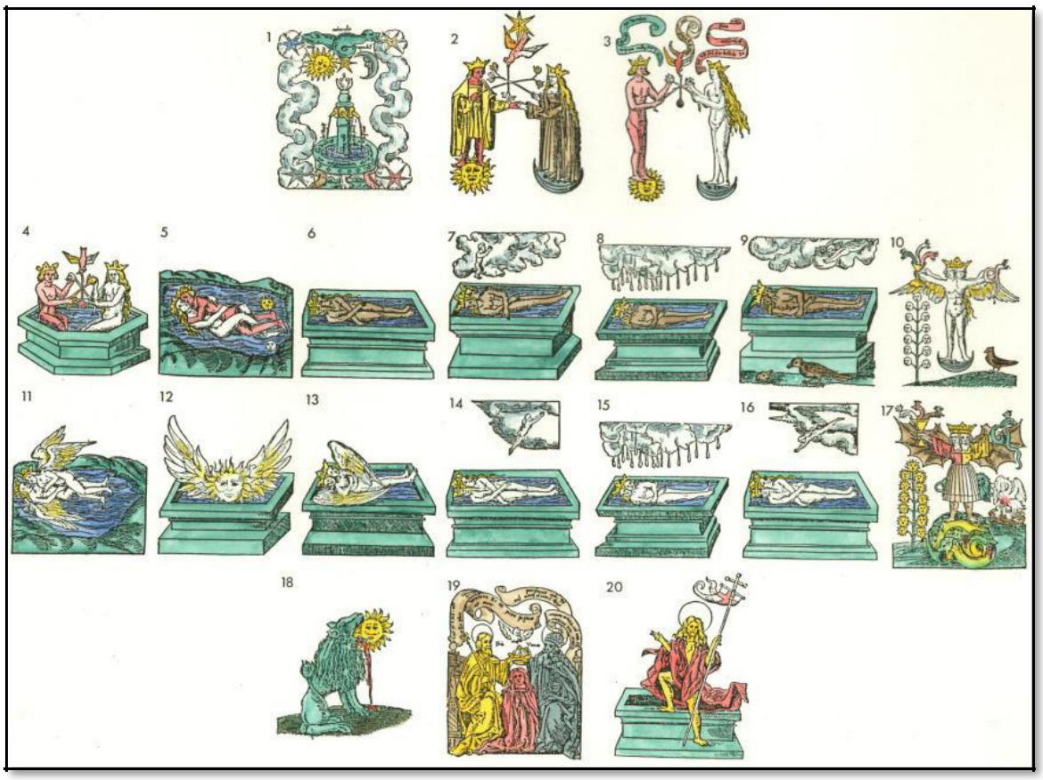
The path of self-realisation or individuation calls for transformation or what Jung likened to the alchemical processes of medieval times: the “*mysterium coniunctionis*”. The *coniunctio* refers to a medieval alchemical process that transformed lead into gold and provided a metaphor of a psychic union of the opposites according to Jung (Edinger, 1994:17).

Jung’s writings (1989) on the *Mysterium Coniunctionis* were influenced by the pictures from the *Rosarium philosophorum* texts. The *Rosarium* or “Rosary of the Philosophers” had nothing to do with a Catholic rosary and was first printed in 1550 in Frankfurt, as part of an alchemical compendium noting the sayings of philosophers (Mc Lean, 1995).

Adam McLean (1980), studied the shifting between the physical and soul alchemy in the *Rosarium philosophor*um texts and commented that “it sought to unite these two alchemical realms, the *Rosarium* set a style for alchemical literature of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in which the physical process became a mirror for soul development, and the inner content of soul experiences became projected upon outer processes in the laboratory or the natural world” (McLean, 1980).

Jung commented only on the first 11 of the 20 illustrations. Whether he had access to the complete book, is debated. He indicated that illustrations 5 and 11 are alternative versions of the same figure. It is a pity that Jung did not do much more psychological investigation into the second phase of the *coniunctio* process, as it could have revealed more about the late-life transformation process. “Indeed, if we read again Jung's analysis of the *Rosarium*, with a consciousness of the existence of the extended series of 20 illustrations, we will find a further level of integration of the masculine and feminine facets of the soul, which does not contradict Jung's thesis, but amplifies and extends it” (Mc Lean, 1980).

The 20 *Rosarium* pictures thus depict the process of the *coniunctio* or alchemical process of transformation.



The first ten pictures of the alchemical *coniunctio* as used by CG Jung are:

Picture 1: The Mandala Fountain, representing the *prima materia*

Picture 2: The Emergence of the Opposites

Picture 3: Stripped for Action

Picture 4: Descent into the Bath

Picture 5: Union, the manifestation of the Mystery

Picture 6: In the Tomb – (*Nigredo* or Putrification)

Picture 7: Separation of Soul and Body (Extraction of the Soul)

Picture 8: Gideon's Dew drips from the Cloud – (Ablution or Purification).

Picture 9: Reunion of Soul and Body (Impregnation of the Soul)

Picture 10: Resurrection of the United Eternal Body

Edward Edinger named these ten pictures in an attempt to "fix it" in his own consciousness and the pictures were taken by him from the *Rosarium philosophorum* (1550) (Edinger, 1994:33,36).

It is well recognised that the human being is essentially a bisexual animal consisting of masculine and feminine aspects. The unconscious masculinity in a woman is called the *Animus* whilst the unconscious femininity in a man is called the *Anima*. Jung (1989:29) takes this concept further suggesting that the Self is birthed when the masculine and feminine principles are integrated. Jung writes: "The two opposites cancel each other out, their impact resulting – in accordance with the laws of energetic – in the birth of a third thing and new thing". This transformative process includes: a "recognition" of the dualities, a "merging" of the dualities, a *death* and finally a "resurrection" of an integrated "whole" being. The *Coniunctio* pictures thus propose "seeing" reality and our unintegrated aspects, secondly, "expressing" our awareness (merging) and finally by "imagining" and rehearsing an alternative (death and resurrection or the third thing). Similarly, all three steps are integrally part of the ritual of theatre. Knapp (1980:1) writes, "The alchemist transmutes his metals. The dramatist projects his yearning and fantasies onto his play (his double) and, in so doing, alters their form and reality." Theatre and Drama Therapy engage with intimate communication by using speech, gesture and movement; learning and teaching empathy, sympathy and compassion. It is a healing moment when all participants involved sense a return to the mystery of life through seeing, expressing and imagining.

Edward F. Edinger (1994:17) explains that in order to realise the self, one has to see both sides and this is done by "scrutinising whatever you love and hate" because it is in this scrutiny that we

become aware of our illusions. In order to integrate the "opposite position/viewpoint" it is inevitable that the position/viewpoint that you best associate with needs to be released or "die" as metaphorically indicated in these pictures. A more balanced and whole "picture/viewpoint" then emerges that can hold the middle way. Similarly the self-revelatory play implies a moment of disclosure and revelation: a "recognition", followed by a "death" of "post performance depression" and the "resurrection" or the "integration of success" (Emunah, 1994:294).

The phases of the *coniunctio* are described by Daryl Sharp (2009:66,67) as 1) the *Nigredo*, (black phase) the integration of the repressed aspects that are unpleasant and melancholic, and 2) *Albedo* (white phase) the integration of complexes and their projection that we have been unable to previously integrate into our psyches followed by the 3) *Rubedo* (red phase) which is the integration when the ego realises it is powerless against the Self whose plans do not necessarily coincide with our ego desires. "This guiding principle is God by another name, though not outside but within" (Sharp, 2009:67,68). These 3 phases probably follow in accordance to Jung's concept of the life stages of human development as mentioned on page 12.

The *coniunctio* represents this "desire for wholeness" as expressed in dreams, myths, religion, architecture, art and symbols like the mandala (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:138). For the purpose of this study I have decided to use this framework of transformation, the *coniunctio*. I use it to describe my life stages and the play making process through the use of these symbolic images and descriptions of the 20 pictures. This description reflects some of the symbols and images emanating from my life, my subconscious and my play during this process. (A detailed description of the interpretation of the *Rosarium philosophorum* pictures in relation to my personal experiences can be found in Addendum A.)

2.2.2 Jung and Symbolisation

Symbolisation has two main functions: to satisfy an instinctive impulse that has been frustrated and to embody archetypal material. "Jung believes that the discovery of better symbols, that is, symbols that discharge more energy and reduce more tension, enables civilization to advance to higher and higher cultural levels" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:139). In other words: symbols carry the capacity to transform energy into higher forms or a larger life. In the self-revelatory play the possibility of embodying archetypal material is present and I believe that the embodying of the archetypal images satisfies an instinctive impulse. My need to embody and build a relationship with the Crone archetype was definitely an instinctual impulse that was both frightening and part of the "inner calling".

Using symbol and metaphor in storytelling during therapeutic encounters proved to be a valuable tool. According to Tuby (1996:34,35) all myths contain symbols. Symbol has at its root the Greek word *symbolon* which means "that which has been thrown." It was originally a mark referring to the missing piece of an object, which corresponds to the Jungian analogy of symbol as the third thing which transcends, heals and create wholeness (Tuby, 1996:34,35). The self-revelatory play holds the possibility to create wholeness not only because it uses symbols but also because of its symbolic significance and "revelatory" nature. When we know more, when we have seen and integrated more, there is greater movement towards wholeness.

Jung believed that symbols unlock the psychic content lying in the unconscious and as such regarded the emerging symbols inherent in story as very valuable. It is through symbols that we enter the world of the objective psyche, the world of myths and fairy tales and the world of *supra-personal* forces. Symbols are thus, paradoxically the instruments of healing and transformation (Tuby, 1996:35). Tuby notes how symbols become a bridge between the personal and the transpersonal, as it is cultivated by the imagination or what Jung coined active imagination which is like an awake dream. Great art and dramatic performances inherently carry symbols. Through self-revelatory drama we have the opportunity to become aware and conscious of these symbols. In drama therapy the participants improvise around a story using their imagination and create a language of symbols which sometimes touches on the ritualistic and archetypal (Tuby, 1996:36,37). These symbols in themselves spark and inspire other symbols simultaneously. However, Tuby (1996:35) also warns that symbols in myth and fairy tales can be a powerful and dangerous force that "can swamp or even destroy consciousness if the ego is not vigilantly protected and reinforced."The self-revelatory drama therapist must be aware of destructive power of symbols and be constantly protecting and reinforcing the ego of the client to counter balance the destructive possibilities (De Beer, 2015b:6,7).

It is clear that drama therapy operates through the symbolic. Here we need to consider this question: How can self-revelatory theatre transform, change and heal a society, group of individuals or an individual? And, can this process be informed by the *coniunctio* stages of transformation as described by Jung and symbolised during the medieval ages? In Addendum A, I have endeavoured to describe my experiences through this process in relation to the *coniunctio* stages of transformation.

2.2.3 Jung and Archetypes

The unconscious "speaks" or makes itself known to us through archetypes: a "universal thought form (idea) that contains a large element of emotion" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:120). Jung maintains

that archetypes are created when an experience is constantly repeated over many generations and this “image” or “prototype” is then deposited in the minds of human beings; “some of the ones that have been identified are archetypes of birth, rebirth, death, power, magic, unity, the hero, the child, God, the demon, the old wise man, the earth mother, and the animal” (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:122). Some archetypes have developed to such an extent that Jung described them as almost separate structures of the personality. Some of these systems or structures are the persona, the shadow and the *animus* and *anima* (Hall & Lindzey, 1978:122). Jungian analyst Anthony Stevens (1982:164) writes, “archetypal symbols of initiation arise spontaneously in dreams at critical periods in the life-cycle.” According to Stevens (1982:164) in order to transition to a new life stage, appropriate initiation symbols to that stage must be experienced and should society not be able to offer appropriate symbols through any communal or “institutional form then the Self is forced to provide them *faute de mieux”*. One of the interesting observations from my own self-revelatory play was to experience and see to what extent the archetypal symbols, like the colour red and the element of fire, were similar to that which Jung himself experienced during his late-life transformation, as described in his Red Book (Jung, 2009:190. In: Mandacarú Guerra, 2014:42). This made me wonder if many other people experience similar symbols appearing during this late-life transition. I was very aware of how the self-revelatory process provided the stimulus for archetypal symbols to be experienced and made conscious.

Chapter 3

3 The Self-Revelatory Experience

The self-revelatory play making and performance was done in an attempt to increase my own understanding of a life-change transition that involves enlargement of my own consciousness and intuition. As Coleridge indicated in his *Bibliographia Literaria*:

> They and they only can acquire the philosophic imagination, the sacred power of self-intuition, who within themselves can interpret and understand the symbol that the wings of the air-sylph are forming within the skin of the caterpillar, these only who feel in their own spirits the same instinct which impels the chrysalis of the horned-fly to leave room in its involucrum for antennae yet to come. They know and feel that the potential works in them, even as the actual works on them (2004:npn).

Understanding and unravelling the structure of this process of transformation and how it is facilitated by self-revelatory theatre intimately from the inside out became my intention. I decided to examine and reflect on this dual process through a role-theory lens, analysing the preparation, the performance and the post-performance experiences.

3.1 The Devising Process for "The Magic lies in the Weaving"

> Your story is enfolded within the world story, and the world story is wrapped around your private story... The more consciously we address the questions of our lives, the more we will experience our lives as meaningful (Hollis, 2003:16).

Typically of the process of self-revelatory theatre I aimed to transform personal material into a theatrical creation (Emunah, 1994:224). The content of my play reflected my life and invited the new life stage, symbolised through the archetype of the Crone, into my life. As self-revelatory performance uses different forms, I used two of my own metaphoric life stories, namely "What the Nothing tells" and "What the Something tells," an autobiographical narrative, poetry, music and song as well as an active imagination dream sequence (Emunah, 1994:225).

During the almost 3 month process of devising the play, I took on the roles of researcher, creator, writer, director, actor and facilitator in an endeavour to experience and become conscious of the process. Edward Edinger (1984:53) writes that "the process of becoming conscious requires both seeing and being seen, knowing and being known". Similarly performing a self-revelatory play requires one to both be seen and to see, to know and be known. This witnessing and being witnessed creates a risk for the performer. As a drama therapist I endeavoured to "create and hold" a safe space (or process) with enough "risk" involved in order to support my own transformation (Emunah, 1994:224).

As facilitator and drama therapist of this process I had to deal with the risks of self-exposure and ensuring respect and sensitivity to my own inner processes as well as the broader socio-political sphere. This was very difficult to negotiate. Coming from a white Afrikaner culture and talking about my experiences during Apartheid and the fall of Apartheid needed careful framing. Framing was accomplished through inviting guests and other distancing techniques such as the use of language (i.e. I translated my play into English as I found using my mother tongue very emotional), symbolism, metaphor and storytelling, which created a safe frame to disclose in. I had to deal with my own concerns about telling my "small" white-privileged story when there were such "big" and traumatic stories in South Africa (refer to Addendum A).

As the drama therapist I found that preparing the emotional and psychic container in myself and within the group of "players" became much more important than focussing on the rehearsal for a perfectly executed performance. Different from Emunah's description of the self-revelatory play as being primarily focussed on the aesthetic, I found my focus much more process orientated towards intra-psychic growth. This might be because my self–revelatory play was largely aimed at initiation and transitioning. According to Schechner (1973:175) there is some difference between rehearsal and preparation. Rehearsal is the period during which a group of actors come together before the performance of the play to "make unknown material (the play to be performed) so familiar to the actors that the audience can successfully believe that what they see is a way of living". Schechner (1973:175) continues to explain that among the Australian aborigines there is no need to rehearse or run workshops and there is strictly speaking no audience. He explains that one function of preparation is to "keep the contact with tradition, the past, the Ancestors, the Dream Time." Preparation includes decorations and make up, costumes and other sacred paraphernalia but these are regarded as the least important by the group. Schechner (1973:176) calls these performances: enactments. I experienced my self-revelatory performance more as a "preparation for an enactment or encounter" as described by Moreno (Kristoffersen, 2014) than a rehearsal for a performance. At the same time I became aware that the outer preparation for my self-revelatory play seemed to be less important than doing the inner preparation of containing and working through my own emotions and psychological material.

As creator and writer I used the stories, cut, pasted and edited it with personal accounts and poetry to try and create a cohesive whole. These scenes were workshopped and changed during rehearsals and interspersed with singing and music. This act of play writing became a symbol of the process of intra-psychic integration. The second and final title of my play ("The Magic lies in the Weaving") clearly reflected the process of transformation from "darkness" to "magic" as my working title was "Covering miles in the Dark." Whilst Emunah (1994:224,225) described self-revelatory theatre as being developed during therapy sessions or worked on individually rather than in a group, I worked individually (on my script) but also had rehearsals with the group of friends which assisted me. My therapeutic material, i.e. the two metaphoric stories that I wrote, was "experimented with, moulded, edited and refined" during this process (Emunah, 1994:224). As my script took shape I experienced the integration of these stories, characters and issues whilst managing to express the feelings and complexity of my life (Emunah, 1994:225). More details of the practical process of devising are discussed on p.59.

As an actor and client I had to gradually build tolerance and resilience for holding my own emotional turmoil. This was done by repeatedly telling the stories during the rehearsals giving myself more confidence to share them with an audience. I felt that the repeated exchanges during rehearsals gave me the opportunity to work with the issues and emotions until they were manageable. I also witnessed the degree of ease or dis-ease with my own creativity, expressiveness, spontaneity, playfulness and imagination during different stages of the rehearsal process. I became aware of developing my own sense of self, as I continued to look for ways to express, release, contain, master, transcend and transform my emotions. The process and performance not only helped me write the play "The Magic Lies in the Weaving" but I also wrote an ending for the second metaphorical narrative which I have been writing for the last eight years: "What the something tells". This created a great sense of completion and closure.

As the self-revelatory actor, the real-life issues of my life, i.e. finding my own worth and a "place of belonging" as well as dealing with feelings of "being disgusting" definitely positioned themselves on my "emotional edge" (Emunah, 1994:224). Expressing these issues to an audience in my garden (i.e. the home place) took this emotionally vulnerable stage one step further and increased the level of risk taking (Emunah, 1994:224).

On a personal level I became much more attuned to my intuitions, learning to listen to my dreams and inner voice. Through this process I believe I became closer to the archetypal Crone who has abilities associated with insight and self-reflection, and who is able to face the truth with acceptance and surrender. The personal journey is related in detail in Addendum A.

3.2 The Encounter of "The Magic Lies in the Weaving"

I told my life story "The Magic lies in the Weaving" on the 9th and the 10th of October 2015. This encounter was site-specific and happened at my home next to my vegetable garden where I always imagined building a stone cottage when I am old. About 50 invited guests attended this self-revelatory play; my friends, family and a small number of "unknown" but invited guests came to witness. The encounter had three aims: 1) the creation of a liminal space in which a rite of passage could occur, 2) the truthful telling of my life story to witnesses, and 3) the creation of an initiatory encounter between the participants, i.e. audience and players.

The staging of a self-revelatory performance is usually aesthetically heightened and pleasing (Emunah, 1994:224) and it is performed in a formalised sacred space using theatre staging (Emunah, 1994:225). As director and facilitator I constructed a "play space" that was a contained circular structure at the base of a tree, with the specific intention to create a sacred and symbolic site-specific space.

Personally and as an actor I experienced this encounter as a liminal rite of passage. Bettina Knapp (1980:1) investigated the correlation between alchemy and theatre. She defined alchemy as "a science, a psychology and a metaphysics"(1) and quotes Artaud explaining that a "mysterious identity of essence"(1) is shared between alchemy and theatre. Alchemy functions through symbols in real matter whereas theatre is not only a replica of real life but also of another archetypal and dangerous reality (Knapp, 1980:1). As the alchemist transmutes his metals, similarly the dramatist transmutes and alters form and reality when they project their fantasies onto the play. In all three of the domains theatre, psychology and metaphysics, the realm of the unknown and the numinous are encountered. Like the alchemists, who believed in the possibility of transformation and differentiation of the original unity of matter, Jungian Psychology also believes that purification can lead to a moment when "humankind could be elevated from dross to its spiritual essence" (Knapp, 1980:2). This "mysterious identity of essence" was experienced by both my audience and myself and remained mysterious. I was intrigued by how many people tried to explain their experience of the play, noting how deeply it affected them, yet no one could explain why.

As the director and writer I consciously used symbols that reminded me of transformative phases of my life. As I experienced two previous transitions, I consciously referenced the three alchemical phases in my play by weaving, first a black thread, then a white and lastly a red thread, into a five-pointed star, whilst moving from character to character in my story. This weaving movement was accompanied by chanting a song that I adapted from a Clarissa Pinkola Estes audio cassette: *The Red Shoes. On Torment and the Recovery of Soul Life*.

> Black for the sorrow and black for the crack…
> White for the seeing and white for the light…
> Red for the weaving and red for the thread…

This weaving imagery of the three coloured threads, the repeated "chanting/singing" and how I wove the thread around the space and asked the audience to "hold on to the thread" helped create ritual and *communitas*, i.e. the shared experience that transcends differences (refer to p. 44 - 48). The creation of ritual space through the self-revelatory performance working in a site-specific location proved quite valuable in creating a rite of passage for psychological transformation.

Self-Revelatory Performance is best followed by a simple ritual bringing the group together in celebration of its work and validation of the intensity and intimacy that have been experienced….The poetry, potency, and richness of this medium are often awesome, evoking a sense of the sacred and bringing the group to a kind of altered state of consciousness. It is best to sustain the magical power in the room rather to diffuse it via 'translation' into verbal language (Emunah, 1994:226).

This post performance "celebration" was done on both nights during an informal gathering, on the first night quite incidental as audience members did not want to leave. On the second night it was planned, as many of the audience were friends and family.

As the researcher and writer I included different forms such as storytelling, narrative, poetry, music, movement and singing and endeavoured to create a very specific mood that would best suit a honouring rite (Emunah, 1994:226). During random interviews afterwards some of the audience members commented on the fact they don't really know what happened, but that they felt it was something "profound" even "haunting".

Emunah describes how self-revelatory performances may include humour as a respite from the emotionality of the actors struggle. When the actor pulls him/herself back from the pain to laugh,

a certain poignancy and honouring enters the performance. As an actor, my own performance definitely needed humour to lighten the pain. The enactment of the dream sequence and the meeting with See and Saw, the Towergirl as well as Plu and To created some humorous moments in the telling. James

Hillman (1983:109) states: “The sense of imperfection may be one way into communal feeling: another surer one is the all-too-human bond of the sense of humor.“ My description of the performance reads: “I started by telling everyone that I would be giving my friends the cue to prompt me by saying ‘And so…’. I felt the need to be ‘brutally honest’ with my inabilities and imperfections and I somehow did not feel scared about being flawed or giving a ‘flawed performance’. The audience were kind, caring and accepting of us all” (Addendum A). This disclosure also created a humorous atmosphere.

Seeing that I, the actor, had to learn a significant amount of words four days before the performance as a result of one of the players being unable to perform, I knew that the performance would not be “perfect” and I believe that the acceptance from the audience, despite the imperfections, were very therapeutic and healing. This also created a more immediate, spontaneous and improvisational atmosphere. Emunah notes that improvisation is conducive to the self-revelatory performance as the structure holds the aesthetic organisation whilst the improvisational component heightens the theatrically suspense. “Improvisation helps the actor stay *in the present moment*” (1994:292) and being present is crucial for a self-revelatory performance.

I met and welcomed my audience very personally and relationally. My audience members were friends, family and some invited guests whom I met for the first time on the day. I interacted with my audience members not only as the facilitator, writer, director and actor but also as the drama therapist as I knew I had to contain the performance and set the stage for the initiation. During the performance the audience members witnessed some of my life transitions and I felt acknowledged and applauded not only for the story/play but also for this transition into Crone-hood at the end of the performance (Emunah, 1994:225). It was risky to have audience members there that I did not know but as they were invited by my friends, it created some safety. In theatre, actors shed their roles during the live applause. As there are no roles to be shed during the applause of self-revelatory theatre, as I have revealed my “selves” during the performance, I almost did not know how to handle the applause. Although Emunah talks about the applause having a “direct effect” on the performers I experienced that I almost did not need the applause; as if the experience itself was enough. However, I did feel touched by the audience’s response. According the Emunah the self-revelatory actors “are applauded not only for their creative achievement, but for the process they have been through in creating it, for their courage to reveal

themselves, and for who they are as people" (1994:298). The audience's responses filled me with a deep sense of acceptance, which was particularly potent as one of the themes of my life story was of "not belonging" and feeling alienated.

Although this study did not aim to include the responses of audience members it became interesting to note how many audience members felt touched by the experience and thanked me afterwards through writing messages and posting on Facebook. The group of "players" also met a few days after the performance for a de-briefing moment.

3.3 Post-Performance Reflections and Experiences

Emunah (1994:294)writes about the tendency of "players" to fall into post-performance depression as they struggle to integrate the acceptance and success that they received from the audience and the process. Even though I experienced great acceptance as a result of a number of validating comments from my audience members it was probably the feedback from my family that meant most to me. (See Addendum A) This was unfortunately not the case for my fellow "players".

During a debriefing session of the "players" after the performance A reported that he had noticed an attitude change towards his own need to be "visible" after the play. Both A and B became aware of their "visibility" or lack thereof. Ironically this was one of the issues I myself have been struggling with during creation of the play. Both A and B did not experience any validation from their families after the performance and were deeply saddened by this. We reflected about the difficulty of changing the interactions with our family members after years of set role-playing and how a self-revelatory play can assist in this change. They both wanted to write and perform their own self-revelatory play.

We talked about the need for real community expressed by our witnesses and the possibility of creating a space where people feel safe and can share in an open and authentic way. Realising the power of ritual and its ability to facilitate transformation, we decided to consciously create a space and a time for future "tellings".

I did not experience a great post-performance depression as the telling of my life stories really crystallized and clarified a number of issues, one of which was to need to be acknowledged as worthy by others (Emunah, 1994:225). However I had to deal with new self-disclosures, especially around the "disgusting" issue (see Addendum A and B) which persisted during the rehearsals and

culminated during the performance. As I am writing this thesis, three months later, I can report that the “purging” and “catharsis”, as Emunah calls it, are mostly integrated (Emunah, 1994:225). Continuous therapy after a self-revelatory play seemed to be needed in order to integrate issues that arose from the unconscious during the encounter. Emunah (1994:225) notes that clients experience forgiveness and deeper levels of acceptance. I experienced this during my meeting with my son (described in Addendum A) the evening after the performance. In our case the self-revelatory performance brought much more understanding and acceptance to our relationship. Similar to Emunah’s (1994:225) idea, I found that even though I have experienced some form of transcendence that may or may not be fully integrated, the creation of the play brought me closer to the actualisation, which in my case is acceptance of the Crone archetype in my life.

Chapter 4

4 Analysis of the Self-Revelatory Performance

When I started this research I expected to find the revelatory aspect of self-revelatory playmaking. I had a feeling that this drama therapy tool would be able to create an initiatory rite of passage, if wielded carefully. I was deeply touched and enlightened by my experiences of ritual as rite of passage and would like to share some of these with you.

4.1 Ritual vs. Theatre: The Function of Ritual

> Theatre is one of the many inheritors of that great multifaceted system of preindustrial ritual which embraces ideas and images of cosmos and chaos, interdigitates clowns and their foolery with gods and their solemnity, and uses all the sensory codes, to produce symphonies in more than music: the intertwining of dance, body languages of many kinds, song, chant, architectural forms (temples, amphitheatres), incense, burnt offerings, ritualized feasting and drinking, painting, body painting, body marking of many kinds, including circumcision and scarification, the application of lotions and drinking of potions, the enacting of mythic and heroic plots drawn from oral traditions. And so much more (Turner, 1990:12).

Ritual in terms of theatre and performance can be an encompassing activity, as seen from the above. Ritual can refer to daily practises that range from bedtime rituals, which can be very intimate or even secret to great public events like inaugurations, weddings, etc. People perform many different secular rituals daily. However, people still like to “equate ritual with religion” as it gives form to the sacred, opens pathways and moulds individuals into communal activities. These are the sacred rituals. However, many sacred rituals include secular ritual activities whilst the inverse is also true, and the mixing of the secular and the sacred is quite common (Schechner, 2013:52 – 53). Similar to Schechner’s belief that ritual can mix the sacred and the secular, I believe that theatre hold the same potential.

Both ritual and Applied Theatre intend to benefit individuals, communities and societies, and work “in educational, therapeutic and community settings” (Nicholson, 2005:2). Haviland (1978:342)

describes ritual as a way to celebrate important events whilst having the ability to help the individual to deal with crisis moments and making these moments less socially disruptive. Phil Jones (1993:273) argues that it is the ritual form and performance (enactment) of drama therapy that help us when we are dealing with stressful situations. Similar to Haviland's (1978:342) idea that ritual celebrates important events whilst helping us to deal with crisis moments and stressful situations, I found that my self-revelatory play created a form through which I could acknowledge the new phase that I am entering whilst expressing the difficulty and sadness about leaving some of my stories or narratives behind. I experienced that the creation and performance of my self-revelatory play supported this life change and transformative moment as it provided a non-religious (profane) but also a sacred container that included the support and symbols from a social group.

However, the question remains if this "play" or "encounter" could be regarded as "ritual"? Likewise, should theatre and ritual be regarded as one and the same thing? If so, is ritual still regarded as important in contemporary society and what do ritual practices and processes mean on a psychological, spiritual, and communal level?

Schechner (2006:80) argues that ritual and theatre are quite similar as the basic polarity should rather lie between efficacy and entertainment.

> The purpose is the most important factor determining whether a performance is ritual or not. If the performance's purpose is to effect change, then… the performance is ritual. But if the performance's purpose is mostly to give pleasure, to show off, to be beautiful, or to pass time, then the performance is an entertainment (Schechner, 2006:80).

Schechner (2006:80) continues to explain that these polarities, namely efficacy and entertainment are located on a continuum as "no performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment". Thulo (2009:46) expands on this idea by expressing that his research has led him to believe that a merger between the two forms, namely: ritual and theatre, creates a liminal centre that shifts between the inner and the outer aspects of efficacy and entertainment. The efficacy and entertainment value of this merger is probably a result of the synergy between the two forms (i.e. ritual and theatre).

Similar to Schechner's (2006:80) argument, my performance mirrored this synergy in that it carried both efficacy and aspects of entertainment. One audience member commented on being "mesmerized" and found it a "profoundly provocative narrative, as a group we were left in a state of collective wonder. I can honestly say that few times, if any, in my life, have I witnessed anything

quite so magical – metaphorically and literally….we witnessed an eternal moment" (S Farah, Facebook post). Whilst the efficacy and purpose of the performance was made very clear in my director's note: "The stories that you are about to witness are part of my Drama Therapy research; to see how drama can facilitate and support life changes…If there is anything that I have learnt from this process is that the voice of the Woodcutter should not be listened to…*all* stories are important…because its only after the telling of a story that we are able to let go of the story…and I need to let go…" Like Thulo (2009:46) I realised that this liminal centre was indeed created as a result of combining ritual and theatre, which created a relative shift between the inner and the outer aspects of efficacy and entertainment for the performers, audience and myself.

Turner (1982:75) agrees with this synergy between ritual and theatre and states that ritual "is, in its most typical cross-cultural expressions, a synchronization of many performance genres…" According to Turner (2001) the term ritual indicates aspects of prescribed formal behaviour that cannot be restricted to religious or magical situations. Ritual actions are "symbolic" in that they affirm something about the current situation, but they don't necessarily have the purpose to alter the status quo. Akin to Turners' (1982:75) ideas on ritual as a cross-cultural expression consisting of many performance genres, my performance was a synchronisation of many performance genres, such as poetry, singing, storytelling, drama and movement. I also set out to alter the state of affairs (efficacy) as expressed by Schechner (2006:80) in as much as I wanted to facilitate my own inner growth. The self-revelatory performance similarly affirms the current situation but it also holds the possibility to alter the status quo as a result of its' revelatory nature and the aesthetic tools that are in many instances symbolic.

Sue Jennings (1994:93) writes that "Traditional ritual which accompanies major life stages is performed less often in contemporary society; there is less attention paid to ritual of birth and death, naming, coming of age, marriage and so on." She continues to note what little attention is paid to ritual in contemporary society, that marks our passages through different life cycles, and how this corresponds with the decline in religious beliefs. According to Jennings (1994:94) we support such life stages individually but there is a lack of support and symbols from the social group. She explains how ritual, a "performed action with a common set of symbols" and ceremony are often the way through which we can celebrate the achievements or admit the difficulties of our lives. She continues noting that "(W)ithout the signposts of ritual and ceremony, is it surprising that many people become lost on the way?" (Jennings, 1994:107) It is therefore not unreasonable for drama therapists to attempt to create rituals and ceremonies to affect and heal clients.

Ritual was created in my self-revelatory play through ceremony and symbol. I greeted and walked with the audience to the space (site-specific) which was circular and contained. The common set

of symbols that was used was the singing and weaving of the thread (black, white and red) throughout the performance. Other symbols of the fire, the tree(tree of life), the walking sticks (ancestors), the music box (marionette-like-life), calculator (measure of worth), and the characters themselves which were similarly symbolic and archetypal. The repetitive nature of the singing, threading from character to character, their stories, movements, gestures and poetry expressed by each one, created a familiar sequence which enabled the audience to follow and become drawn into the different stories. The singing created a "call and response" from the audience when I invited them "to hold on to the red thread" in the beginning and to cut a piece of the thread at the end as a "reminder to tell their own stories as well".

Schechner (2013:82) notes that contemporary society tends to change rituals. Sometimes they are changed by shamans and priest to adjust to modern circumstances and technology, e.g. the subtle act of changing the lighting of a ritual, results in bringing rituals more in harmony with the modern world. However rituals "may also be invented – both by official culture and by individuals. In fact, one sleight of hand of official culture is to make relatively new rituals and the traditions they embody appear old and stable" which helps to support the status quo (Schechner, 2013:82). My performance endeavoured to create a personal and new ritual to honour my entrance into the new life phase. As Schechner (2013:83) indicated Individual artists have attempted to create performance rituals in an effort to overcome a sense of individual and social fragmentation and build community, similarly I was surprised at how easily the audience members "bought into" this new ritual and how it became possible to build community.

Self-revelatory performances have the potential to create new rituals through the story-making, storytelling and performance in order to overcome social fragmentation, build community and assist life transitions. It is using the aesthetic tools of performance differently and with symbolic intention that makes new rituals possible. I believe that the self-revelatory play can overcome individual and social fragmentation and build community through creating a carefully planned ritualised play with a healing intention. This is accomplished when a safe container is created in which initiation and transformation can happen.

4.2 Ritual and Performance: The Aesthetic Tools of Performance

It appears that the aesthetic tools of a theatre performance carry the potential to break the barriers between the ritual space and performance space, as well as the performers and the audience. The question arises: what is it exactly about the aesthetic tools of the theatre

performance that allows barriers to be broken? However, before we can investigate this question it would be useful to define “performance”.

According to Schechner (2013:28) to “perform” can mean “to do something up to a standard – to succeed, to excel.” However, when we use “perform” in the arts, it refers to putting on a play or a dance or a concert. Performing can also be understood as “being”, “doing”, “showing doing” or explaining “showing doing”; all of which imply significantly different aims. However, it is when we talk about the objectives or aims of performances we seem to distinguish the arts the most, compared to other activities. Schechner (2013:28,29) feels that performances aim to communicate stories, bend time, mark identities, as well as reshape and adorn the body. Performances can be either reflexive, change the status quo, restore behaviours or all of the above. Similar to Schechner’s (2013:28,29) ideas that performances like ritual, mark identities and bend time, the self-revelatory play that I “performed” definitely “bent time”. It facilitated a process of reflection and helped me remember and embody earlier images and stories from my life. It also “marked identity” in that I was able to find five different “identities” or characters through which to represent different aspects of myself and finally acknowledge that the status quo has indeed changed as I ended with the voice of the older woman: the Crone. I found that the performance not only bent time in this ritualised space but it became a powerful tool to create new meaning. It appears, according to Turner that performance can create or engage in a process of conscious making especially where it is used as a narrative tool to regenerate and create meaning as people try to formulate ”new positions” or “life stances” (Turner, 1986:33). Turner (1986:34) mentions how such performances or “social dramas” are “processually structured” to mirror the course and the successive phases of events. One of the ways in which we can break down time and space is through the structure of the performance.

Both performance and ritual have a similar structure, namely separation, sacred space and liminal time, and aggregation. The first phase of ritual, namely separation, marks a change from one space into another, usually seen as a change from a “known space” into an “unknown space”. Thus “entering the second phase: sacred space time or liminal time” (De Beer, 2015b:4,5). Entering liminal space and time as we experience in theatre and ritual, causes the participants to find themselves outside convention. As conventional everyday life aims to control and enforce the status quo, we must assume that finding ourselves outside convention in the liminal space and time of theatre and ritual would encourage participants to break barriers, rigid ideas, concepts and constructs.

Deane (1996:114,115) investigated the similarities between ritual and a Sesame Drama Therapy session. Reading his work I found that the

> second phase of ritual is the transition margin where there is a loss of identity and/or a moment of ambiguity and paradox. During this phase all knowledge is renounced or disintegrated into prima material in order to be reshaped or reformed by new experiences in order to assume a 'new role'. Sacred objects, relics and instruments are used during this phase and myths are often a vehicle for imparting knowledge and principles (De Beer, 2015b:5).

During a ritual's final stage called: Aggregation the "participants emerge with a sense of being changed". This is the moment where participants are welcomed back through a celebratory event sometimes with food and/or "processional ceremony to mark the altered state and acknowledge their new status" (De Beer, 2015b:5). The ritual structure of the event should "bring about a sense of the numinous and contain the psychic tension that is present during change, development and transition" as described by Deane (1996:118). As a result of this "break" or rupture of everyday time and space through the structure, space and story-time, the numinous or altered states can be experienced. This "break" provides the opportunity for healing.

Similar to any ritual, my story also contained structural segments of a beginning, middle and end that assisted in creating performance and ritual space. The first phase of ritual, namely "Separation" marks a change from one space into another: my event started near my house and I literally accompanied the group of witnesses to the prepared space thus physically taking them to another space. As we entered the second phase: sacred space time or liminal time also the "play" time, I consciously chose to tell it at twilight as it symbolised my own in-between-time (between life and death) as well as supported the idea of liminality. During this second phase there was a sense of disintegration into *prima materia* as we all "fell into the story" as one of my audience members commented. The witnesses of my play were placed outside normal time and social structures and were therefore more able to enter into a process of disintegration as they reached catharsis with my characters and their stories. However, the second phase of ritual namely "disintegration" mostly happened for the players during the rehearsal process. I found that a self-revelatory play does not necessarily hold the greatest possibility of disintegration during the performance for the "player". The roles are mostly part of the performer and its value and gift lie specifically in the fact that the teller is authentic and vulnerable to his/her own telling. The actor therefore does not disintegrate into the characters but mostly engages in integrating the different characters. Similar to Turner's concept, quoted in Deane (1996: 114,115) of making sacred objects during this phase, my team of friends and I were creating symbolic objects during rehearsals, like the pentagon star-shape that I wove inside the circle of sand, and the staffs representing my ancestors. These symbolic objects were also used during the performance.

Deane (1996:116,117) noticed that in both ritual and drama therapy there is a "movement from disorder to order experienced through play in the liminal period (that) may have its equivalent in the different forms of play occurring at different stages in our own society". In the chaos that results when we break "known" patterns, ideologies, constructs and concepts that we enter our own vulnerability. According to Bréne Brown (2012:9) wholehearted living includes "vulnerability" as the key to living a more authentic and related life. The self-revelatory performance, according to Emunah (1994:224), involves a high level of exposure as we seek closure. It can hold the possibility of healing and transformation through revealing new knowledge that inevitably breaks the old patterns and simultaneously creates chaos and vulnerability. Alike to Deane's (1996:116,117) notion of a "movement from disorder to order" my play structure included three parallel stories which four of the five characters represented; the Crone/Old Woman delivered a kind of a Greek chorus "reflection" on the action. These three parallel stories may appear disorderly initially but as the story developed it integrated into one telling, ending with one voice.

This movement from disorder to order lead to the final stage in ritual namely: "Aggregation". Here participants emerge and end with a ceremony to mark the altered state (De Beer, 2015b:5). Although my performance had its own ending, the encounter itself ended when everyone walked back, almost in a processional ceremony to my house. On the first night I did not realise that people would like to celebrate but as people lingered I invited them first to tea and coffee and later even made food. The second night there was a large celebration with food and I found that people wanted to stay and socialise. The ritual structure of the event and telling did contain and create a sense of the numinous as it contained the psychic tension mostly present during transformation (Deane, 1996: 118).

The careful use and consideration of "theatrical staging" or even site-specific locations for ritual and self-revelatory performances are essential as it also holds the possibility for breaking down barriers between participants. Site-specific spaces should facilitate healing and not re-traumatise or create too much exposure for the clients and participants. I believe that revolutionising theatre space can create a healing possibility whilst creating enough risk to support transformation. Emunah (1994:225,226) indicated that the stage space could be site-specific, as long as it carries a heightened theatricality and the site is symbolically linked. The stage space of "The Magic Lies in the Weaving" was site-specific with the intention of symbolising the "new place or home". The site was the place in my garden where I have always imagined I will live when I am old. This space was explored and created into a stage space during the process of playmaking. It ended up being a circle of sand beneath an old tree, surrounded by a circle of tree stumps forming the outer circle that contained the audience who sat in a semi-circular structure around the ring of sand (stage/play area). The semi circular structure and circular "sand pit" in which my play took place created a playful yet ritualistic and contained atmosphere.

Theatre and the theatre space are still seen as sacrosanct and valuable and as such can definitely support a ritual or rite of passage if used with care. Similarly transformation can be diminished if the space reinforces previous oppressions. Site-specific space, like using a home environment, gives us another tool to get to know each other and more importantly the performer. Similar to how our memories counteract the dominant narratives, we can counteract the dominant culture in a space and create a space where we can view the "other" not as a stranger but have a "real" meeting or encounter. In other words, this symbolic and created space gave me the opportunity to "encounter" this new part of myself. I believe that using my own living space in which to "play" created a unified transformative process.

Another aesthetic tool that assists in breaking down barriers between participants is the use of symbolic objects, costumes, décor and the use of lights and sound. The décor was the natural tree and surroundings of the space in my garden. My costume was a loose fitting black dress with a bone necklace in the shape of the infinity symbol. Sounds were the natural sounds that were surrounding us as well as a song that was composed for me by a friend and played live on a cello during the Crone's poetic lines. Other sounds included the use of the music box when the Hazy Glow moved her marionette-like sequences and sounds made by my friends on drums and the cello to support the actions of the stories. I realised afterwards the great gift of having my "own song" performed during my telling, as the symbolic value of this did not escape me (refer to Addendum B). All these aesthetic tools carried symbolic meaning and influenced the atmosphere and outcome of my ritual performance (Turner, 1990:12). There were no theatre lights; only the setting of the sun in the distance, symbolic of the life stage that I am entering.

Whilst these aesthetic tools helped create symbolic meaning and a ritualistic atmosphere, I was very aware of how our "play" and "playing" influenced our own healing and transformation.

4.3 Ritual as a Theatrical Event of Playing: A Path to Healing, Initiation and Transformation

Defining my self-revelatory play strictly as a ritualised performance can be questioned. I considered the idea that this play might also have been an "event" that used theatrical tools with the objectives to inform and instruct, to address, to cleanse and heal, to unify, to raise awareness and to reveal something new.

Lev Aladgem (2014:24) differentiates between the "Theatrical Event" and the "theatrical event". According to him the Theatrical Event originated as an American theatre ideology, and mostly

refers to theatre that is concerned with performance for entertainment. According to him the theatrical event as a concept was conceptualised by Willmar Sauter in 1997, it is European in origin and emerged from German philosophy. This type of event is characteristically labelled as

"alternative theatre" and most recently labelled as "performance art". Schechner (1982:19) further developed this concept and he states that it forms the centre of theatrical activity. For Schechner (1969:146) the theatrical event is not a literary construct but mostly a non-literal, sensorial and playful experience, a "complex social interweave" happening in the here and now. It is this possibility of playfulness in a self- revelatory play therapy that provides the opportunity to access the subconscious but also engages the participants in a "complex social interweave" which is deeply enriching.

> Playing like ritual, is at the heart of performance. In fact, performance may be defined as ritualized behavior conditioned/permeated by play (Schechner, 2013:89).

The question arises in what way are ritual and performance connected to "play"? Schechner (2013:91) cites Don Handelman saying that play and ritual are shadow images of each other as both transmit complementary and different kinds of messages to the social order in an attempt to find a resolution to the domain of ordinary reality. Where ritual can be seen as more serious, even more "real", play is more loose, permissive and forgiving. Play can be rule-bound or free and it is this very quality that makes it hard to define but equally rich in its healing possibility. During the rehearsal period I was constantly reminded of children playing in the sand somewhere in the garden, which is literally where and how my storytelling was taking place: somewhere in the garden in a circle of sand. The community that formed during the rehearsal process jokingly started calling themselves: The "tribe". Looking back I realise the incredible opportunity "play making" and storytelling provides for the "outsider" to find him/herself in a social group. It is in this encounter between people in a safe space where we actively engage and try to hear and see each other that healing and transformation happens. True hearing and seeing is possible only in a space where there is safety from judgement and expectations. The self-revelatory playmaking endeavoured to create such a meeting and space, engaging in a third partner (theatre as medium) that provided a non-material and non-intellectual approach that is based on feeling and expression.

Lev-Aladgem (2014:23) states: "Over the years I have come to perceive *playing* (his emphasis) as a fundamental and underlying potential energy and mood; a constant multi-faceted process that is embodied through countless forms of symbolic articulations." Willmar Sauter (2007:18) writes that "Theatrical activities are a kind of playing, which many languages also reflect: we play in

theatre, we play a role, and what is performed is called a play". During the rehearsals it occurred to me that my self-revelatory performance was part of a "playing culture" in which many other playful activities, performative or not, had a place. Similarly my self-revelatory play became "a kind of playing" with the fundamental and underlying potential energy to facilitate change.

Schechner (2013:89,90) notes how play has moved from being "stigmatised" and seen as socially unacceptable by Industrial Victorian Britain to being associated with creative thought and actions in the twentieth century. "Play is intrinsically part of performing because it embodies the 'as if,' the make believe." According to Schechner (2013:92) play is mostly associated with pleasure, fun, voluntary, ephemeral and a leisure activity. As I have noted before, our "playing in the garden" during rehearsals became one of the most treasured experiences of this process. I believe that it not only inspired creative thought but also brought about great healing for all the participants including myself. Similarly the performance/telling of the "play" created another opportunity for healing. Here the creative endeavour was witnessed and accepted by another social group. Some audience members reported that conscious-making and healing happened just through witnessing our "play". In some sense they "came out into the garden" and engaged in "play" with the group of performers themselves, taking on their very specific role as witnesses.

Similar to Schechner's (2013:92,93) ideas on play, the qualities of my play were that it was free and exploratory, with some rules or conventions that we adhered to, to give structure to the performance. Furthermore, our play was creative and world-making, in as much as we created the story and "made the world of the characters" that the audience witnessed and accessed. As the story had a mythological and metaphorical feel to it I cannot deny that the "play" included a measure of "illusion" which according to Schechner (2013:92,93) is a part of playing. The self-revelatory play was perhaps not physically dangerous to engage in but it was definitely emotionally risky for both the teller (myself) and the witnesses. I saw some of the audience being emotionally affected and crying during the performance. This created a definite measure of risk, which is part of playing and should be ethically taken into consideration when inviting and preparing your client and audience.

Like Schechner's (2013:91) ideas, my self-revelatory "play" also endeavoured to find a resolution to the domain of ordinary reality in that the two metaphoric stories I told tried to convey and make sense of my real life/ordinary reality. Schechner (2013:92) also associates play with pleasure, fun, voluntary, ephemeral and a leisure activity; despite the emotionally difficult moments that we experienced during the play making we did experience some fun and pleasure. It was after all a leisure activity, especially since the group of friends were helping me during the playmaking and performance. I believe that we came to see this process more like "playing" because we as "players" all did it in our spare time during weekends, voluntarily and with the

knowledge that there would not be any financial gain from the activity. We all agreed that we would like to benefit psychologically and socially from creating this "play".

Important ways to approach "play," according to Schechner (2013:93) are: structure, process, experience, function, evolutionary, species and individual development of play, ideology, frame. I would like to use these aspects to analyse the "playing" that took place in my self-revelatory process.

4.3.1 Structure

> A coherent sequence of play acts forms a game (Schechner, 2013:93).

Although I have discussed the structure of my inner process according to ritual and alchemical transformational stages (Addendum A) I would like to indicate that our "playing" took place every. Saturday or Sunday from approximately 10:00 – till about 5:00 for 7 weeks and included one week of intense rehearsal time when we were all available to work/play. The structure of these sessions, were that we always started with a considerable period of "checking in" with each other. We would each have a chance to tell the others where we are emotionally and what has happened or changed in our lives since our last meeting. This Check In included telling each other what we would need for ourselves, and what we would need to do for the play and the rehearsal of that day. After the rehearsal, during which we would have various breaks to discuss issues, emotions and philosophical and social dilemmas brought on by the contents of the play, we would mostly close the session with a de-briefing or closing. Interestingly enough we always started our sessions by lighting a candle and bringing something that represented our current mood or feeling of the day to place around the candle. This little ceremony started spontaneously and really brought us all a sense of unity, joy and focus to the sessions. The closure was less structured, more inconsistent and varied according to the needs of the participants. The informal, spontaneous structure that developed as our process developed was mostly related to our emotional needs and life events and similarly formed a coherent sequence that became the "game that we were playing".

4.3.2 Process

Schechner (2013:93) investigated the process and strategies of "playing" and its effect on the outcome of the play. My self-revelatory play was written and adapted by myself after every rehearsal. Part of our checking in would be for me to give each participant a new text – there were

11 versions! The play was constantly “updated” as new dream information, emotional issues and affect was generated during the previous rehearsal and my life, as well as a result of technical difficulties and new ideas generated during rehearsals. I was surprised at how easily the participants adapted to these changes.

4.3.3 Experience

It became apparent that the experience was deeply personal but it was also shared with my fellow “players” and the witnesses”. All of whom reported touched by the experience created by the space as much as the content of the encounters.

The group of players constantly noted the calming effect of the natural surroundings in which we rehearsed. Similar to my own feeling the players also enjoyed the idea of “playing in the garden”. It also appeared that the players were touched and changed by the contents and the experience, i.e. the process of creating and the performance. During rehearsals we discussed when emotions were triggered by the story. Although we did not change any parts of the play to accommodate or alleviate our complexes we did have to process these issues as a group.

The witnesses of the play found the location of the play space deeply moving. They commented on the “ancient tree” and the “natural light” of twilight as the play was ending and described it as a “most spectacular setting”. I believe it was the ambience of nature, the truthfulness and realness of the surroundings that created the idea of a “spectacular” setting. It is extremely difficult to determine if it was a good or bad play, nobody except for my daughter who felt it was “professional”, gave me any feedback on the performative aspect. However, trying to determine if my self-revelatory play was good or bad or “professional enough” seemed unneeded. The success of the self-revelatory play would probably be measured in the affect and psychological change it elicited in the witnesses and players. Witnesses reported to be “deeply moved,” “emotionally gripped” and “inspired” by the performance. One of the “players” commented that the play space became “transpersonal” during the last performance.

4.3.4 Function

The purpose of this “play” was clearly stated as having a healing intent. From the onset I believe this intention had a great effect on the learning, growth, development, transformation that happened for myself and the “players”. No one had any financial gain in fact everyone contributed to the play by driving to every rehearsal on their own cost. Our purpose was not to make money but to find ways to heal and change ourselves and through that, change our community.

4.3.5 Evolutionary, Species, and Individual Development of Play

There were various relationship issues arising from the development of my self-revelatory play. My self-revelatory play investigated the idea of where I fit into society and more specifically given the influence of my Christian, Afrikaner heritage, as my Tree Story stressed the importance of choosing and finding a home where there is enough water, soil and companionship. Although, one witness described the play as a mythical story which explored the core and central issues of all humanity, as all humanity struggle to find acceptance, their own worth and a home place, I believe this story amply reflected my "white privileged" life as well. I believe that through the playmaking process and performance I had the opportunity to develop my own individual skills and relationships to my community and the world in which I lived.

4.3.6 Ideology

Although there were no specific political agenda or ideology involved in our playing there were specific social and personal values that we adhered to. Kindness, care, support and complete freedom were values that we constantly talked about and consciously fostered during rehearsals. As there was no one in the group with different values there were little difficulties arising from the group. If "players" were unable to make rehearsal times, came late or even left a week before the performance we were surprisingly open to allow "players" to do whatever they felt they needed to do without judgement or criticism. Adherence to these values although very informally applied created a frame and space for healing.

4.3.7 Frame

Open and fearless discussion of rehearsal and performance times, personal needs and sharing of emotional difficulties helped create a frame. These discussions were held during the check in and closure of each session. We also formed a Whatsapp group and kept an open channel of communication with regard to psychological well-being and logistical arrangements. Framing the performance itself was done personally through my invitation and the director's note.

The aspects of play, such as the structure, process, experience, function, evolutionary, species and individual development of play, ideology created a frame of safety which in turn enhanced the encounter and *communitas* of the performance.

4.4 Performance as an Encounter: The Role of *Communitas*

Performance can also be seen as an encounter. An encounter is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as: “Meet as adversary; meet, esp. by chance or unexpectedly, meeting in combat or by chance” (Fowler & Fowler, 1976:341). This definition really underpins the confrontational role of performance for both the performer and the audience as both are changed through the meeting. As such, encounter and performance signifies a meeting between two or more people that are significant and creates change.

Thus, a clear distinction needs to be drawn between drama/theatre that is concerned with performance in front of an audience (i.e. theatre), and drama as an integral part of education, development or healing. Drama can be referred to as a text or an art form that is performed in front of an audience for the purpose of entertaining and educating, or to stimulate awareness and create consciousness. However, Jacob Moreno advocated during the early 1900’s a “performance” or “drama” that has various developmental, therapeutic and social outcomes for its participants and audience (Kristoffersen, 2014).

Kristoffersen (2014) explains the idea of an encounter as coined by Jacob Moreno saying, “the encounter is a condition for life...the condition for a sane society.” Kristoffersen compares the definition of the word encounter by Moreno and Knausgārd noting that in both instances they refer to a “human encounter that is ‘a never-ending practise’”. Moreno explicitly referred to an “encounter” that is a face to face, or eye to eye meeting between two people with the aim to shape a new society, liberate people from old conventions by providing a space (i.e. “The House of Encounter”). These encounters have the aim of giving people the opportunity to experience and express themselves through song, dance, dramatisations, play and humour. “Moreno in 1909 developed experiences and ideas on how to unite people through aesthetic activity and nonviolent actions with the help of spiritual power” (Kristoffersen, 2014). These living encounters where Moreno developed meeting rituals focussing on the importance of the meeting, were limited in time, and helped Moreno to formulate ideas around active listening, empathy, eye contact, spontaneity and play, all of which finally lead him to formulate children’s theatre, Theatre of Spontaneity, axiodrama, and sociodrama as forms that use theatre as therapeutic tool (Kristoffersen, 2014). Moreno’s encounters were thus aimed to change society through building and binding relationships between people.

Somè (1998:141 – 143), a West African herbalist and academic, describes ritual as an “ancient way of binding community together in close relationship with Spirit”. He explains how ritual carries the most efficient way of stimulating safe healing and becomes a tool to maintain the “delicate balance between body and soul” as it offers the community or the individual the opportunity to

express and create a response to Spirit whilst experiencing the presence of the community including the ancestors (Somè, 1998:141 – 143). It is interesting that Victor Turner also observed how the experience is shared by the community. Turner (1982:44) used the term *communitas*, referring to the shared experience between a group of people that transcends differences such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, language, social status or religious denominations. Turner (1982:47 – 49) also refers to 3 types of *communitas*, namely: Spontaneous *communitas*, ideological *communitas* and normative *communitas*. Spontaneous *communitas* refers to a "direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities" that has something "magical" to it, whilst ideological *communitas* "is a set of theoretical concepts which attempts to describe the interactions of spontaneous *communitas*". Normative *communitas* is a "perduring social system" which aims to "foster and maintain relationships or spontaneous *communitas* on more or less permanent basis". Self-revelatory plays probably involve spontaneous *communitas* as it is direct, immediate and confrontational.

Willmar Sauter (1994:22, 23) calls the *communitas* between performer and spectator: "theatrical playing", "an actual encounter" or "a mutual encounter" during which a simultaneous engagement of performer and spectator is required; a communicative process on which all aspects of the theatrical event concentrates on. "The communicative encounter between performer and spectator can be described as an interaction which occurs on several levels." There is some exhibiting of personality, artistic skills and the creation of a symbolic figure which "reach the spectator through the levels of sensory, artistic and symbolic communication". The spectator in turn reacts emotionally, intuitively, intellectually, and through cognitive processes. "The spectator's attention towards the performer as a person…proves to be decisive for the building up of a successful communicative relationship". The spectator's appreciation of the actor's skills becomes a source of inspiration for the actor and on a symbolic level they create a fictional figure together" (Sauter, 1994:23). This self-revelatory play provides the opportunity for both performer and spectator to heal, thus a communicative encounter. I became very aware of the effect my story had on the witnesses and inversely, the witnesses had on me, as their emotional reactions to my story were visible to me in the performance space.

Creating a space where a magical, spontaneous immediate and total confrontation with your audience can take place is thus essential. Thulo (2009:43) explains how his "décor set" created *communitas* between the actor and the audience. Through placing the audience deliberately on stage he contained the space to create both intimacy and immediacy as theatre and ritual are "meaningless without the presence and participation of people" (Thulo, 2009:44). The space influences the *communitas* between the "players" and the audience, and *communitas* is essential when creating a ritual performance as a rite of passage.

In many ways a self-revelatory play can be seen as spontaneous *communitas* or encounter which has a performative aspect to it that facilitates healing and has something "magical" to it. Emunah (1994:293) quotes Jean-Louis Barrault noting the importance of the immediacy and intimacy of performance as an "intrinsically poetic moment" and "an act of love". "In the darkened, communal, sacred theatrical space, the audience can cry together for the pain of the people on stage, for their own pain, for the human condition" (Emunah, 1994:293).

However, it is important that the audience members are sufficiently prepared for what they are about to witness. A friend wrote on Facebook: "to be frank I was dreading witnessing the performance…I knew, knowing Welma as I do, that it would be a raw and brutal personal account, not designed to spare anyone's sensitivities. In this expectation I was not disappointed. Indeed it was brutally honest and at moments soul rendering". A female witness reported that even though she anticipated seeing the "wreckage of the car crash", she consciously decided to come and support me. She reported feeling surprisingly inspired by the truthfulness, openness and vulnerability, to such an extent she wondered about how it would be to always live in a state of openness and truth. She told me that she believed that this story touched on the core human issue of worth and that that might have been the reason why she and the rest of the audience, in her opinion, felt moved and inspired. The friend on Facebook wrote: "Simultaneously the tears it evoked in the witnesses, including my own, were not only in sympathy of the actor's pain, but also of moments of sublime beauty and truth." When people have the courage to open themselves, and make ourselves vulnerable to face the "car wreckage" of ourselves or of someone else's life we open ourselves to a "magical" possibility of healing both ourselves and the people that we are interacting with. The friend on Facebook wrote: "And as darkness fell signalling the conclusion of this profoundly provocative narrative, as a group we were left in a state of collective wonder. I can honestly say that few times, if any, in my life, have I witnessed anything quite so magical – metaphorically and literally." My interpretation of the "wonder" and "magical" quality is the presence of true *communitas* in an encounter where people come together with less ego intentions but in empathy and support for the other. Such an encounter is open to the confrontation of the "other" or their story, as all the participants enter with the intent of healing. It is in this alchemical moment of true "Emergence of the Opposites" (picture 2) and "Stripped for Action" (picture 3) that transformation and healing happens as we show our vulnerability or "nakedness" to each other.

When preparing for a performance or a telling for therapeutic benefits it thus becomes very important to ask: Who is the audience? To what extent will it be a public performance? Will it give enough diversity? And are they sufficiently "prepared" for the event?

My audience were intimately contained in a circular space creating safety, risk and immediacy in an endeavour to create *communitas*. A member of the audience reported how she felt touched by how everyone was holding the red thread and how it became a symbol of how we are all part of this core story of life, together. This connectedness is not only important for the audience but also for the "actor". Emunah (1994, 293,294) writes: "For the actors, the sense of kinship and shared emotionality with the audience brings about a sense of connectedness with the outside world."

Audiences carry collective memory and it can assist the performer of a self-revelatory play immensely if they understand and share a similar process or culture or story. A collective remembering is almost taking place. In the self-revelatory play that I created the audience became almost like a camera, as they provided the image of myself. After this "image" was created it was shared as a community before they left. In many instances the existing structures (i.e. traditional theatre spaces) have endeavoured to empower the actors and audience mostly by removing or distancing them from each other. This distancing was done spatially but also through the acting and theatrical convention. However, in a self-revelatory play, like my own, the aim was to include the audience in the telling and thus make them part of the "ritual". I consciously built in aspects that facilitated audience participation, for example by spatially moving with them from location to location, singing and weaving the thread around them and finally inviting them to participate themselves by sharing their memories in whatever way feels comfortable with them. One of my audience members messaged me the following morning: "I am deeply moved by your weaving, emerging and profound telling and I cannot help but reflect on myself". Emunah (1994:294) comments on this *communitas* that is established between the audience and actors: "The combination of the feelings of connectedness, accomplishment, and acceptance, in conjunction with the ensuing rush of love for one's fellow actors and director with whom one has shared the entire journey, is awesome." This accurately reflects the deep connection I felt with my fellow "players" and the audience.

My audience was mostly homogeneous, even though differences of gender, culture, language, social status, religious denomination and even race existed. The question arises: Would it be possible to create *communitas* with a completely heterogeneous audience, who do not share any common characteristics and carry vastly different collective memories?

4.5 Ritual Performance as a Rite of Passage

> The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another…For every one of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined (Von Gennep,1960 [1908] The Rites of Passage,3 quoted in: Schechner, 2013:59).

Drama Therapy contains the possibility to create the liminal space wherein myth, ritual and initiation as a rite of passage can occur. In Turner's book *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, he described a rite of passage as a particular kind of ritual that would "…celebrate the movement of a member of a society from one state or condition to another… Rites of passage comprise a large and important category of rituals, but not all rituals are rites of passage" (Drexel University:npn).

La Shure (2005) cited Van Gennep who described rites of passage such as coming-of-age rituals, as having a three-part structure: 1. separation, 2. liminal period, 3. re-assimilation (also referred to as 1) separation, 2) sacred space and liminal time, and 3) aggregation as previously noted). According to Von Gennep, as quoted by La Shure (2005), the person undergoing the ritual or rite of passage is called the initiate. He or she is firstly stripped of the social position that they held before the onset of the ritual, thereafter they are introduced into a transitory liminal period, and they finally receive a new status and are re-assimilated back into society. This three part structure of the rite of passage is inherent in the process of the *coniunctio*, which I will describe in the following sections as it too contains a separation, merging/death/liminal period and a final re-immergence/resurrection. The story making and storytelling process somehow facilitates this rite of passage and initiatory process.

Campbell notices this call to initiation and transformation as expressed in myth:

> The call to adventure signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual centre of gravity from within the pale of this society to a zone unknown. This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delights (Campbell, 1993:58).

It is interesting to note that this final life stage is liminal in its own sense, as it is the stage between life and death. In fact, Prétat (1994:17) calls this stage "late-liminal" as it describes the threshold between the old way of being and the new. She states: "Our society has few rites of passage for the threshold times of age. While we've retained some of our rites of adolescence and youth, such as Bar Mitzvah ,Bat Mitzvah and marriage ceremonies, we seem somewhat embarrassed about late-life rituals."

During this story making and storytelling process I realised the creation of a ritualised, performative encounter or rite of passage would include creating a liminal process in a liminal time/space frame. Both "liminal" and "liminality" are derived from the Latin word *limen* which means "threshold" (La Shure, 2005).C. La Shure (2005) describes individuals who enter ritual and liminal space through Victor Turner's (1967:98) definition of "liminal individuals" as people who "*have* nothing: no status, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship, position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows". The group of liminal individuals does therefore not adhere to a typical social hierarchy but forms a communal group in which all are equal. From the individuals who enter liminal spaces, unlimited new possibilities with regard to social structure emerge. "While in the liminal state… they are in between the social structure, temporarily fallen through the cracks, so to speak, and it is in these cracks, in the interstices of social structure, that they are most aware of themselves" (La Shure, 2005). La Shure (2005) continues by quoting Victor Turner as saying liminality is a phase in social life in which the human being produces their "highest pitch of self-consciousness".

In the same way, audience members attending any performance also enter liminality. This occurs because the audience enters an in between space where there is no social hierarchy. It is in this liminal and transitional space where previous concepts and structures are "broken" and something new emerges. This was also evident in my self-revelatory play. Everyone became a homogenous group with no social structure, no hierarchy and quite aware of themselves in the space. Here I refer to some of the feedback that was posted on Facebook: "as a group we were left in a state of collective wonder…".

Facilitating an initiation ritual demands careful preparation of the space to create a liminal or transformative moment. Liminal space is a space between two spaces, "a realm of pure possibility and structural invisibility" (La Shure, 2005). Liminal space is illusory but real, temporal and in-between space where anything is possible. An interesting observation from Schechner (2013:67) is that liminal space or time is usually conceptually "reinforced'; it is therefore "enlarged" or even "emphasised" in time and space yet it is temporal. It might be this very quality of "reinforced" or "enlarged" liminality in Drama therapy that makes it an effective tool for transformation. When the inner space (therapists and client's psychic space) and the outer space (play space) are not

sufficiently prepared we tend to fall into archetypal and old patterns of behaviour, we are more likely to project and create transference and we are less aware of psychological dynamics, thus hampering transformation and awareness. “Outwardly,” space is prepared through the choice and placement of decor, props and objects, costumes, sound and lights. “Inwardly”, the space is created through intention (wishes), and actions such as meditation, reflexive and creative writing, painting, dream analysis and active imagination. There is however, a paradox involved in the therapeutic, transformational space. Whilst it endeavours to be a safe, held and protected space it is this very fact that ensures that the participants will venture out of the norm, transgress, take risks and expose themselves. Liminal spaces can only be created if there is an acceptance, or “buy in” and receptivity from all participants around the “playfulness” of the interaction, thus the risks and safety involved. Society thus plays a large role during rites of passage in liminal spaces.

Thulo (2009:42) describes the importance of framing both the ritual and the theatrical event for the audience. Framing can be done through creating a “preparatory ground” for the audience like ritual washing of hands, taking off shoes and the washing of feet, etc. Framing according to Thulo (2009:43) establishes engagement and notes that participation however, cannot be guaranteed or controlled in terms of the audience’s interpretation, which ultimately affects their engagement and the degree of transformation. Framing for my self-revelatory performance was created through my director’s note and the selection of invited audience members. We also personally welcomed the audience before the play and took them down to the “play space” in a ritualised walk. Like the caterpillar spinning or creating a pupa, I believe that framing is essential for both the witnesses and the “players” to create a safe enough space to act and transform in.

4.6 Acting and Shamanism

> One of the most important tasks for older people is to allow their bone, sinew and cells the freedom to express that pain as well as the anger, grief that the body stores”
> (Prétat, 1994: 85).

Acting, as a profession, appears to have its beginnings in ancient wisdom cultures. We cannot say for certain but we assume that the Greeks laid the foundations of Western theatre by using drama or performance not only for entertainment, but also as a religious ritual in honour of the Greek god Dionysus (Nicoll, 1959:26). This religious ritual was associated with loss of mental clarity in moments of collective emotion. It is this feature that is shared with shamanism (Wiles, 2000), when the shaman allows other worldly spirits to possess them. “These people have the ability to

transform themselves in public performances from their normal personality into somebody or something else: a god or animal, ancient ancestor or representation of a spirit" (Bates, 1987:3)

Actors often ponder their reasons for acting, as their work can at times be viewed as superficial. The pull towards acting can partially be attributed to the transformative potential that lies in acting. "Transformation into a 'character' may result in significant changes outside *and* inside, whether on stage, film, or in daily life. Transformation is a path to personal knowledge" (Bates, 1987:100). Schechner (1973:174) states that the "professional actor is a person who is skilled in this kind of magic deception; or invocation of belief". He explains that a shaman is a man or a woman who stands for someone or something else, in the sense that a shaman introjects the projections, fantasies and dreams of the witness and often believes the projection him/herself completely (Schechner, 1973:191,192). Schechner (1973:191) notes how this is similar to the performer who "trains himself to accept trance and possession; and to find the ways into and out of states of consciousness and doingness". In self-revelatory plays the projections, fantasies and dreams are indeed introjected but it is mostly the projections and fantasies of the actor (playmaker) him/herself. The depth of the penetration, integration and understanding of the actors own trauma could lead to core issues of human life being exposed. This could in turn be introjected by the witnesses as we share common difficulties and emotions.

Schechner (1973:192) explains how the performer has the advantage that he or she has access to self-conscious behaviour, a privileged value in modern society that differs from the shaman. Whereas the shaman is "called", the performer endeavours to be present consecutively in two different "states of being". The performer in other words chooses to let it happen to him/her after a process of play making that is entirely conscious, and then allows him/herself to "fall into the spell of the performance" or the unconscious.

It appears that, both shamanism and drama serve society by uncovering hidden feelings which mostly lead to a catharsis, leaving the spectator calm. This is also true of the self-revelatory play. Similar to the role of the shaman in society: becoming the mediator between the spiritual and physical world on earth and healing through a trance-like ritual process (Morris, 2006:16) it becomes the task of the self-revelatory artist to mediate and heal through play making and performing.

Sue Jennings (1994:99) notes how some British anthropologists are inclined to use the term "spirit possession" and "spirit mediumship" when describing how a shaman undertakes a spiritual journey to the "heavens" or the "netherworld" during a healing process. Jennings further explains how the shamanic model corresponds to drama therapy as both emphasise two realities: Everyday reality and dramatic reality. She continues to say that it is "the dramatherapist's role in assisting

the passage or 'transit' from one to the other and back again" (Jennings, 1994:99). It appears to be important that the therapist assist in the journey by remaining in everyday reality and not become the shamanic voyager, which is essentially the role of the client. "I do not see myself as a modern shaman, although I can see that there are similarities between drama therapy and shamanic traditions. I see myself as a theatre artist with clinical training, who applies a 'theatre of healing model' with people with needs" (Jennings, 1994:100).

An interesting factor of drama therapy and applied theatre is the way in which they deal with emotional expression. Whilst Applied theatre practitioners or facilitators such as Boal (1992:224) argued that catharsis destroys reflective and interpretive action and will inhibit active change, they therefore try to avoid emotional catharsis. Drama therapists however, engage in emotional expression, but endeavour to contain the emotion through "distancing". Distancing is created through using fiction and many other techniques (Landy & Montgomery, 2012:175). In my own self-revelatory play I struggled with emotions to such an extent that I could not remember many of the words. Distancing seemed important if I wanted to survive this telling. My play was already in metaphor or story form and thus already had some distance. I was also aware that too much distance, delays the healing process, as Prétat (1994:87) aptly puts: "Imaginally reworking what the body has stored of trauma and triumph in a long series of life events is a most important step towards achieving integrity". After I translated the play into English I found that the acting became lighter and I started remembering the words.

Interestingly the actor in a self-revelatory play is very conscious of playing him/herself and is thus calling on "more of him/herself" to be present in front of the witnesses. Different to both the professional actor and the shaman, the self-revelatory actor is neither in trance nor is there a need to exist in two different states of being. Self-revelatory acting requires great presence and immediacy with as much of your "self" or "selves" as you can muster. I was very aware of healing myself during trance-like rehearsal processes, almost like "cleaning" the stories by re-telling them so often. I remember one of my older friends and a shaman, who attended some rehearsals, noted that we have entered "trance space" as we lost track of time completely. I am not so sure about the performance being experienced as trans-like by either the witnesses or the actors, but I was consciously endeavouring to mediate the world of the unconscious (dramatic reality) and the conscious (everyday reality) during the play making and performance process. "I suggest that some degree of trance is always present, whether a slight degree of absorption or engagement, or an altered state of consciousness or some point in between these two extremes" (Jennings, 1994:99)" (De Beer, 2015b:9,10). I experienced a mystical trance-like "journeying" and I believe it was this "journey" that made it possible to heal parts of my wounded self that felt alienated and without a home place. The Old Woman in my play became the transient shape changer that could live without a home as she has found her home as an inner space of belonging.

In my self-revelatory play one of the most interesting characters and certainly the most mysterious is the Old Woman who relates archetypally to the Crone and presents herself as a shape changer. According to the story she is the one who is dying when the Towergirl starts to tell her the story. She is also the Old Woman who lived in the cave and saves the Tree Woman when she is running from the fire. My Old Woman definitely presented with an authority of an "ancient tribal matriarch" and became the embodiment of wisdom as she holds and teaches the secrets of the Universe through the administering of her potion. The characters of Plu and To, which Tree Woman meets in a dream after she receives a potion from the Old Woman are the keepers of the secrets and mysteries of life and death. In my play the Old Woman supports and helps life. Similar to the Crone archetype that is associated with insight, self-reflection and facing the truth, my Old Woman recited poetry, similar to the function of the Greek Chorus who comments, advises and criticises. In this way she contained and expressed her wisdom. She also knew how to live in liminal spaces like the cave. She is the keeper of the cauldron and brews potions to assist the ones in need (Prétat, 1994:108). In some way it is this Old Woman who became the archetypal model for my aging and who brought me "a new vision of our future" (Prétat, 1994: 54).

As an actor I created and embodied these archetypal characters, used symbolic objects like the staff, moved my body in dramatic form, created a dramatic ritual and told stories from my life with the purpose of facilitating a new developmental stage.

4.7 Story-Making, Story-Telling and Myth: The Symbols we Create

> We need voices that speak to the soul, perhaps even more than those that speak to the intellect. One of the beauties of myths, stories and dreams is that they resonate in the unconscious complexes that influence our conscious attitudes (Prétat, 1994: 56).

Story-making, storytelling and myth are essential to the therapeutic process especially viewed from the perspective of Jungian symbolism (Pearson, 1996:3). Tuby (1996:34, 35) explains how Jung, Campbell, Hougham (2009:2) all consider symbols in stories to be the expressions of the unconscious. Originally, symbols referred to a "mark" or the "missing piece" of an object which corresponds to the Jungian analogy that a symbol is the third thing which transcends, heals and create wholeness (Tuby, 1996:34,35). "Our current psychological understanding is that symbols, myth, story-making and story-telling relates to our 'totality' as it becomes the meaning maker of our awakening unconscious" (De Beer, 2015b:6).

Edward Edinger (1973:130) explains how symbol “can lead us to the missing parts of the whole man”. He states that symbols connect us to our totality as it repairs the “split” that causes us to feel alienated from life. Symbols carry the possibility to connect us to the “source of our being and our meaning”. The symbols and characters we use to tell our personal myth not only affect us, the players, but it also affects the witnesses of our story. I also felt urged to try to find the “truth” of my personal narrative for myself as much as my witnesses. I intuitively chose the symbol of the tree in my Tree Woman story, it was only during this study that I found out that Jung wrote (1983:274) that the “tree appears frequently in the medieval texts and in general represents the growth of the arcane substance and its transformation into the philosophical gold”. It became more and more evident during the process of this study that when I investigated the symbols and images that appeared in my dreams, intuitions and stories, greater understanding and wholeness was created.

Hougham (2009:2) believes that the unconscious finds expression through the symbols in myth, stories and art forms. Certain myths have themes that promote resilience and which are deeply embedded in cultural practices, identity and attachment (Bruner, 1990:12). The self-revelatory play that uses mythic qualities and are embedded in cultural and ritual practise, should similarly have the ability to promote resilience. Watts (1996:27) explains that the significance of “stories lies in the fact that they are both ‘outside’, in external reality, and ‘inside’ us.” Myth in the drama therapy space is presented as an “as if reality” but it also represents a real situation (De Beer, 2015b:7). My Tree Woman story similarly carried this quality of being both outside and inside myself. Similar to Campbell (1972:13) I also believe myth and dreams assist us to recognize the greater, deeper and wiser inner self. As we get to know the “inner” self we are able to better manage our “outer” lives (De Beer, 2015b:7). For the self-revelatory play this is of particular value as the “stories” are based on true life experiences from the past that we still carry within ourselves.

Watts (1996:27) writes that myth cannot be regarded as an “untruth” as it “epitomises the eternal truths of human kind”. It is this “eternal truthful” quality that makes myth a powerful tool in any therapeutic autobiographical storytelling. It is very difficult for me to understand to what extent my story reflected “eternal truths of human kind’, as expressed in some feedback from my witnesses. However, I do believe that self-revelatory playmaking carry the possibility to penetrate core issues or “eternal truths of human kind” especially when working with story, myth and symbol. “When working with a myth, it is understood that all its component parts represent a single person’s psyche. The way a person responds to the figures, archetypes and symbols in the myth helps the therapist to understand the emotional needs of the client and to explore ways of resolving emotional conflict” (Gall, 1996:216,217). Similarly the five characters in my self-revelatory play were clear representations of aspects of myself, e.g. ego (Towergirl), persona

(Hazy Glow), soul aspect (Tree Woman), the Self (the Crone), and the Voice (Narrator). These characters were thus all archetypal representations of different part of my psyche. In some ways myth becomes the story of the archetypal aspects of the human psyche and how it connects to the collective consciousness. Mythic archetypal images and characters stimulate our imagination and help us to find context and connection in our healing process, as it bridges the internal with the external.

Story-making plays a pivotal role in the therapeutic process and Emunah (1994:252) writes that the "discovery of our life stories, and the communication of these stories via performance – in which personal, social, or cultural truths are revealed – propel us toward wholeness". It is a striving towards wholeness that propels the late-life transformation. Rene Emunah (1994:251) describes the effects of self-revelatory performance, saying that when real people tell real stories that have usually been kept hidden from the public it brings a potency to the performance. Similar to the self-revelatory performance, narrative storytelling is used by storytellers "to create and find their own personal meaning in life and both tell stories to find solutions to problems by looking at the past, the present and how to improve possible future encounters" (De Beer, 2015b:8). "Storytelling (emphasis in original) is the oldest form of human communication. Humans are a species of storymakers and storytellers." As soon as a child learns to use language we start to tell stories and as such it is the "most enduring expression of human culture. Regardless of our culture or its age and origins, human beings share storytelling abilities" (Jenkins, 2013). The self-revelatory play is an unconscious creation and manifestation of the story that we have lived, with the purpose to increase our consciousness about the narrative. Since the beginning of time stories have been shared to hold memories, to reflect, to connect, organise meaning, create understanding, hold emotions, heal, entertain, teach and share (De Beer, 2015b:8). It is only now that we understand that it relates to our totality as meaning maker of our awakening unconscious.

Daniel Gutmann, psychologist and anthropologist, wrote that aging persons have the ability to give form through connecting to our own inner priorities and realities and to mediate the essence of life to the future generation. According to Gutmann, older people in tribal cultures are the guardians of the laws and mysteries and pass these on through songs and stories, thus, providing context to the life of the tribe. "By making the sacred real, the aged make the secular ways palatable and dignified" (Gutmann, 1981:493-494). Although I only had a few younger witnesses it would be interesting to investigate to what extent these stories were palatable and accessible to the younger generation.

The use of symbol, myth and story in formal play-making: dance, drama, speech, acting, music, prop making and décor building as well as the social and group interaction, makes it a fitting challenge for personal development, transformation and the creation of an initiatory ritual.

4.8 Ritual and Transformation

The Oxford Dictionary (Sykes;1976:1232) defines transforming as a: "…change of form esp. of insects; change from solid to liquid or from liquid to gaseous state or vice versa…". In her book, *The Pregnant Virgin. A Process of Psychological Transformation*, Marion Woodman uses the image of the caterpillar-chrysalis-butterfly metamorphosis to explain transformation. She writes about this mid-life transformation: "If we accept the paradox (i.e. birth and death), we are not torn to pieces by what seems to be intolerable contradiction. Birth is the death of the life we have known; death is the birth of the life we have yet to live. We need to hold the tensions and allow our circuit to give way to a larger circumference" (1985:14). Transformation thus seeks a change of form, and change of identity. According to Schechner (2002), theatre's purpose is to change identity and it therefore has the inherent tool to facilitate transformation. Characterisation is perhaps the most creative element as we work towards total transformation of the personality into the character thus implying a "death" of the former.

> Self-revelatory performance is theatrically and therapeutically powerful when there is a sense of movement and transition, of striving towards new territory or understanding, and when experience is viewed from a wide angle as well as a telephoto lens, from multifarious perspectives and realms of consciousness. The actors must examine himself both from the inside out and the outside in (Emunah, 1994:292).

Similarly, Schechner (2013:72) explains how ritual, which is liminal in nature, can permanently change and transform the participants. He continues explaining that a liminiod ritual where people are briefly changed as they are transported by for example acting out a role or falling into a trance, can also be experienced. "Transformation performances bring together two kinds of performers – those who are being transformed and those who manage the transformations. Rites of passage such as initiations are transformation performances" (Schechner, 2013:73).

Emunah (1994:225) writes that there is an immediacy of transformation which happens during a self-revelatory performance which is riveting and compelling. Although I agree that the performance leads to compelling immediacy and transformation I also found the process of play making to be hugely transformative. One of the characteristics of the Crone archetype is the development of intuitive powers. This process facilitated an increase of my intuitive abilities as I started listening to my inner voice and dreams. I am reminded of my little poem that was "given" to me during the night:

> As we navigate our path through life
> we are sometimes called by a voice called: MORE!...
> Pay the dark one the price of blood and tears and laughter,
> because living MORE of yourself ,
> more of me is worth MORE than this little moment of suffering.
> Pay the price and move on!

Like the little poem, my process of storytelling created transformation as I dipped into all the different parts of myself, finding or transforming into an integrated role/character at the end, namely the Old Woman. Transformation occurred during the playmaking and performance process whilst I was simultaneously writing my personal myth "What the something tells". The morning after the performance, my story "What the Something tells" culminated with the arrival of new life, i.e. the star child. The synchronistic and symbolic significance of this moment surprised even me, as I realised that I have been "preparing" for this star child since the beginning of January 2015 when I drew the image of a seed figure floating in the cosmos (Addendum A). The workings of the subconscious are truly astounding!

Answering the question: if I consciously feel that I have transformed and shifted? This remains to be lived. I believe that unconscious impulses that want to be lived in the conscious world need to be symbolised and expressed before it can really start to manifest itself in the material world. I believe that the self-revelatory play can facilitate and create a process and safe frame through which to explore these unconscious impulses. The Crone archetype carries the possibility of new life and as I have learnt from my story "What the something tells" the birth of the new life (i.e. also the Self). (Refer to Addendum A).

> He is the light that illuminates every darkness.
> He is the eternal day.
> He is the silver light of the moon.
> He is the flickering stars
> He is the shooting star that flashes and falls and lapses.

He is the stream of shooting stars that returns every year.
He is the returning sun and moon.
He is the trailing star that brings wars and noble wine.

Pilemon's description of Phanes / Eros. (Mandacarú Guerra, 2011:8)

Chapter 5

5 Concluding Remarks

> The most outstanding symbolism pertaining to the creation of consciousness is found in alchemy. Although the texts are confused and obscure the basic idea of alchemy is quite simple. The alchemist must find the right material to start with, the prima material. He must then subject it to the proper series of transformative operations in the alchemical vessel and the result will be the production of the mysterious and powerful entity called the Philosophers' Stone. We now know through Jung's profound researches that the alchemical procedure symbolizes the individuation process and that the Philosophers' Stone represents the realization of the Self, i.e. consciousness of wholeness (Edinger, 1984:19).

My personal myth started writing itself, 20 years ago. Finding a new way of being in the world, finding a new me and a "new home" at 50 and writing the second part of my personal myth through a self-revelatory presentation of my "personal myth" assisted me to cross the threshold and find my "new way". The ritualised telling facilitated my initiation into my own "crone-ing" years and even though the transformation is by no means completed it definitely assisted in grounding the process. Drama Therapy not only facilitated the contemplation of the "Crone" as life stage through self-revelatory performance but the process of scriptwriting, playmaking and performance created a more conscious engagement with the topic. Not only was my own process (personal reality) of transformation made conscious but it also gave me insight into the process of transformation, the self-revelatory aspect of the dramatic process as tool for drama therapy and initiation, and the possibility of creating our own rites of passage. I believe that Drama Therapy helped create a process that contained the inherent destruction that forms part of any transformative process.

The self-revelatory process of playmaking facilitated a transformational process that helped me access a "bigger" part of my "self" incorporating the archetype of the Crone. The embodied experience of the Crone archetype helped me to be more conscious of myself and the changes of my life, thus it helped me be more present when engaging with the outer world. Answering the question if one can transform without "spilling blood" by creating one's own transformative rite of passage through self-revelatory play making, I want to answer that it definitely helped. Acting out

changes in the inner world through an embodied process definitely substitutes for the acting out of life changes in the outer world. I believe that people need to embody and "manifest" or "materialise" new ideas, roles and changes for transformation to occur. Role-playing of psychological characters substitutes the real with the non-real, indeed contains the process and guards against "spilling blood" in the outer world.

Everyone naturally has to go through some form of transformation as we live in the world. We have to move from being the child to becoming the mother, to the becoming the elder. These transformations are inevitable. This study has convinced me that drama therapy, with specific reference to the self-revelatory play, can support and facilitate a series of the transformative operations and processes. The stages of transformation according to my experience are varied and definitely not linear in the way that the alchemical pictures depict. However, it has become clear that there are beliefs, stories and ideologies that we have to reflect on, work through and investigate during these transformative processes and stages that are similar, yet distinctly individual, for everyone. These are mysterious and powerful movements of the psyche and I was surprised to witness the similarity in the archetypal symbols between my process and those described by Jung in his Red Book and other Jungian analysts such as Pretat, Hollis and Edinger. I do believe that I have a better understanding of my own experiences and the stages essential to transformation after engaging in this process of self-revelatory playmaking and telling. The self-revelatory play carries the potential of making conscious the unconscious stages of transformation.

Even though I have endeavoured to explain the proceedings according to the 20 *coniunctio* pictures (Addendum A), it is important to know that transformation does not happen in a linear structure, phases overlap and psychological processes regress. It also became clear that the last three pictures are deeply spiritual and mysterious in nature and not a three-step programme that could be followed in order to birth the Self/Christ. It would indeed be *hubris* to believe that self-revelatory play making could birth a Christ-like consciousness. Even though I described my process according to the twenty symbolic pictures as many of my own archetypal symbols coincided synchronistically with the *Rosarium* pictures it is by no means an indication of my personal development. Although I do not want to detract from a process that was private, personal and numinous for me, I am not so naïve as to think that this process is now finished. Like everything in life it takes time for any transformation to integrate and manifest itself in the material world. However, this process has helped create more consciousness as it brought images, dreams and intuitions from my own subconscious to light. The integration will probably find its own time and way into my life. I have no doubt that this creative process of symbolisation, embodied telling and being witnessed have had an immense effect on assisting me to make this crossing into my late life phase.

This play devising process revealed transformational stages and facilitated the crossing of a threshold, culminating in two ritualised performances as well as inspired dreams, intuitions and images. I believe that drama therapy, in as much as it facilitates a ritual container with cultural support through the witnessing of the process, is ideally suited in the modern day context to assist humanity in the 21th century. It incorporates the body, feeling, thinking, relationship and the possibility for the numinous. The self-revelatory process and performance greatly enhanced and enlarged my life.

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Addendum A

7 Addendum A:
Description of my Personal Experience During this Study

On the 9th and the 10th of October 2015 I told my life story "The Magic lies in the Weaving" at my home next to my vegetable garden where I always wanted to build a stone cottage to live in when I am old. Over the 2 nights about 50 invited guests attended this self-revelatory play; many of my friends, family and some "friends-and-family-of-friends" who were helping me with this telling, came to witness. It became one of the most significant moments of my life probably as a result of the imagery and "magic" that presented themselves during the weaving of the story, the psychic effort it took in telling it and the holding and care that I received from the witnesses.

Creating interior monologues or psychological dialogues with oneself and the topic, that are not necessarily in a specific order but arise spontaneously are suggested as a way of doing research. In other words, to be in service to those incomplete stories of the Soul that calls us in difficult times (Romanyshyn, 2006:43). Journaling dreams, visions, images, stories and poetry during times of transformation becomes a way of accessing and communicating with the unconscious and identifying the "voice from the future'. In the following section I analyse the images from the Rosariumphilosophorum texts in relation to my creative and reflexive writing during the research process. These writings rise directly from the experience of my transformatory process and describe it. They were inspired by dreams, visions, stories and poetry, and particularly by the images from the Rosariumphilosophorum texts.

Emerging from the "Mandala Fountain"

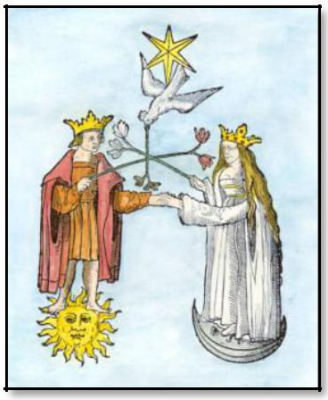


> This picture represents both the prima material and the ultima material. It's really outside the sequence. It belongs just as much to the end as at the beginning; it is the alpha and omega, representing both ends of the process. This is called the Mercurial Fountain, the fountain of the psyche prior to the birth of the ego...in later life, in the process of individuation, the ego is obliged to relate to what this picture represents and live it out consciously (Edinger, 1994:41,42).

The Mandala Fountain symbolises the contained unconscious out of which consciousness rises. My life started as one huge ocean of undifferentiated and integrated unconscious experiences that seemed to overwhelm me. My country was burdened by Apartheid, in turmoil and change, my family ethos was one of lack and struggle, I later married and gave birth to a stillborn baby symbolic of my non-existent inner life. Since these very unconscious years, two stories and many little poems emerged bringing with them some possibility of getting to know myself, creating consciousness by integrating shadow parts of myself. My Towergirl story started:

"My life began with a fear that flooded my body and my heart. Inside the castle, the stories of my parents with their "lovely" children played themselves out. She, my Hazy Glow, jumped and played and wove and embroidered. She swam and talked and read and walked. She laughed and twirled, and swirled and curled…but I was up in the tower room too scared to come down and people looked at her and saw her fuzzy glow and thought it was true ..."

Recognising the Other: Emergence of Opposites

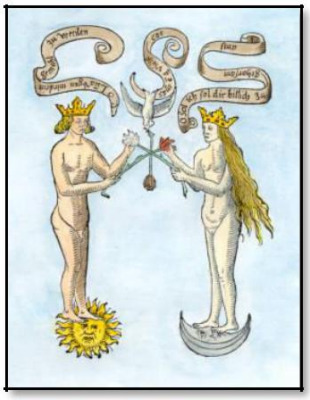


> In the first picture we had a representation of the original unity, and now that unity has been split into two. The king and the queen face each other. There's a confrontation… The creative act of seperatio means consciousness has been born …" (Edinger, 1994:44).

When I reached the age of 30 and I went into therapy; I could ignore the dualities of my life no more. During the next 5 years I faced many of my "opposites" and went through a transformation process that mirrored the first 10 stages of the coniunctio. The country has just gone through "liberation" but I felt un-liberated, I realised that I needed to find liberation within. It was time to start recognising all the shadow material that I was so desperately running away from. Years later I wrote the Towergirl story about this time where I became acutely aware of a split between my inner world (Towergirl) and my outer world (Hazy Glow):

> "A large white wedding was arranged. Kings and Queens from far and near came, everyone mmmm-ed and aah-ed and waved and patted each other but no one saw that I (i.e. Towergirl) did not get into the carriage with the Hazy Glow when they left…"

Stripping for Action

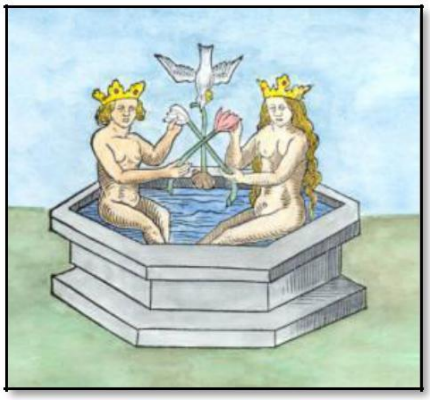


> We have the same crowned figures standing on the sun and the moon and now their clothing is removed. No longer are they holding left hands which signifies(sic) an unconscious connection. Instead, they are connected by the two flowers they mutually hold…Let's consider what Picture 3 might mean in terms of the three modes of experience. First, within an individual, it would indicate that the opposites have been constellated and consciously engaged and that there's been a commitment to a particular enterprise…an unconscious urge becomes a conscious decision; the left-handed unconscious connection has ceased. As a process going on within a relationship, it would suggest that the two participants have shed their personas and are now approaching each other with what Jung calls the 'naked truth' (Edinger, 1994: 51,52).

The stripping of illusion and projections happened in therapy, I grew more and more vulnerable as I witnessed my own shadow aspects and complexes. Through my Tree Story I tried to find my own worth:

> "Myboom suddenly started to look at the other trees. The more she watched and listened to the rest of the trees in the town, the more she thought about her own soil, water, bark and leaves. These were trying times. She believed that the "right size" would make her feel better. She believed that she would be happier if she was "normal'. But there was always bigger, prettier, taller, thicker, thinner or greener trees in her area that seemed more normal. A great question soaked her wooden body? "What am I worth?'"

Descent into the Bath



> The encounter has gone a step further and the two figures are now united not only by the flowers they hold but also by the medium of the water. They have begun a state of mutual *solutio*…*Solutio* is an image of a descent into the unconscious that has the effect of dissolving the solid, ordered structure of the ego (Edinger, 1994:54).

I slowly immersed myself deeper into the unconscious and archetypal aspects of my own psyche trying to find meaning in the world that I lived in. In my Tree Story I wrote:

> "That night she continued her old conversations with the Gods of Death on the breath of the wind. Every night the gods of death would come with the question, "So what are you really worth? We can teach you to fly…" Will I be worth more if I could fly? She wondered…"

Union Manifestation of the Mystery

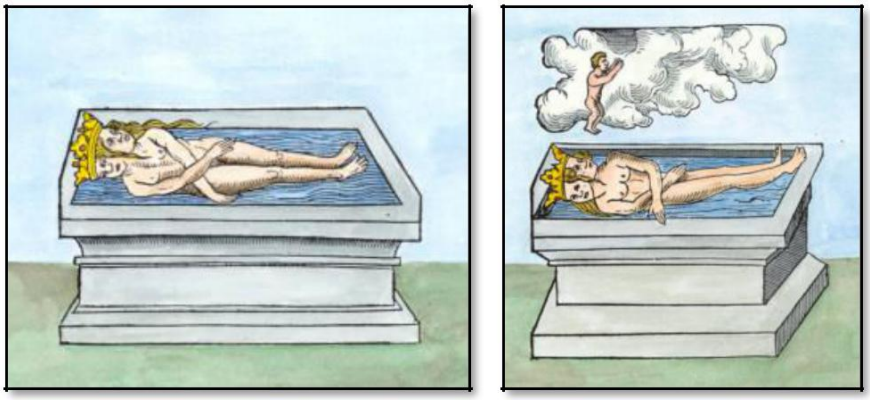


> The two figures have submerged completely into the basin of the fountain and are under the water, therefore not visible at all. But a little window has been cut through the wall of the basin so we can peek in and see what going on under the surface…It's a violation of the sacred mystery to be given a glimpse into the depths…So this pictures the consummation of the first half of the process. It reminds me of the Eleusinian mysteries…That secret was kept so well that we can't be certain of what the initiated experienced. But we have reason to believe that the high point of the greater Eleusinian mysteries the priest and priestess descended into the depths and celebrated a sacred *heiros gamos*, a union, following which a child was born… (Edinger, 1994:62).

It was in these moments when I was able to own and acknowledge my own shadow material that the death occurred. I knew, I had to take responsibility for my actions and non-actions in the inner and outer world. My old self had died; something had fundamentally changed.

> "One night, the Wise One passed by… he knew it was time! He took one of the largest and most beautiful fruit from her branches and mixed it with blood and bile and poured it around her trunk."

In the Tomb and Separation of Soul and Body

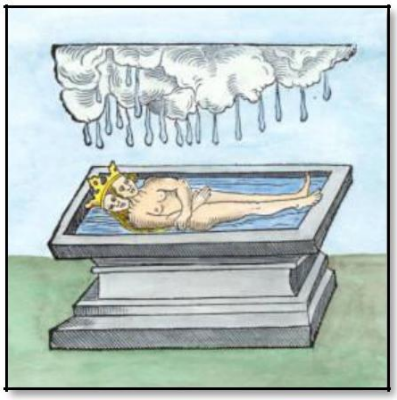


There is a mortuary slab with a united dead body on it…I would remind you that this follows the picture I consider to be the revelation of the mystery. From that way of looking at it, this shows the effect of witnessing what happened in Picture 5. It literally strikes one dead…So it's an insight that can literally kill…In terms of typical alchemical symbolism, this is an image of the *motificatio* (Edinger, 1994:68). This is the age-old representation of the soul separating from the body at the moment of death…It was very much associated with breath, of course, because breathing in and out is evidence that the soul still occupies the body; when breathing stops, then the soul has left the body (Edinger, 1994:74).

Not long after I sat looking at the sea in Port Alfred and considered committing suicide. My life overwhelmed me, I found no liberation, freedom or joy, I was struggling to survive in the huge wave of a tsunami (an actual dream image from that period).

"It was the time of speaking to the Gods of Death ... Their sour breaths whirled and swirled around her head ...For many days and nights, Myboom listened to the Gods of Death chattering on the breath of the wind, without learning the lesson ..."

Gideon's Dew drips from the Clouds



> The new feature is that dew starts dripping from the cloud…these alchemical texts are the same as dream documents and there we have one that's doing the same thing; it doesn't just say dew dripped from the cloud, it says Gideon's dew dripped from the cloud… (Edinger, 1994:68).

My life overwhelmed me, I found no liberation, freedom or joy and did not seem to be able to create it in any way. Behind me there was a café – without thinking I walked into it and bought an A5 booklet and a pencil. I walked back to my car. It was a cold windy day and sat looking at the wild white waves. The Tree story started, within an hour, during a meditative process that I now can only call "downloading" or what CG Jung probably would have called Active Imagination, there was a story that summed up the first 30 years of my life – The first Chapter was called "Vlieg Boompie, vlieg!" "Fly little tree Fly!" I was amazed at how the story told itself and how distilled and precise the images, symbolism and story were. Something in me changed – I realised that this story was possibly the closest, most authentic and truthful descriptive account of my life that I could possibly tell even though it was about a "tree'. Suddenly I wanted to find out more…I turned my car around and went home. The story literally saved my life.

> "That night the Gods of Death came to collect Myboom, but she just turned her head and said "Who wants to fly if you can live? If you feel the sun shining on your branches, if you can listen to the boy and laugh with your fruit, the tree children! Who wants to fly if you can live? I was flying all along... when I feel the wind slipping through my branches and my leaves swirling on his breath and I talk to the young man, without him listening, and I laugh with the tree children even when there is nothing to laugh about ... then ... then I am flying higher than the ducks with their hellish voices. I have been flying all along, I just never knew it! ""

Reunion of Soul and Body



> This is a picture of the second stage of the *coniunctio*…The *unio mentalis* is now reuniting with the body from which it had been separated…And the return of the separated soul to the purified body is a coronation; the body is being invested with an emblem of its supreme worth and value by the return of the soul. That event is exactly the same, symbolically, as the ascension and coronation of Mary who represents earth and materiality and body (Edinger, 1994:88,92)

In the many years that followed I wrote the subsequent chapters that concerned itself with the question: What am I worth? It tells the journey of facing the shadow aspects of the "Woodcutter" and the "Gods of Death" in our attempt to find out my own worth, if I am worth enough and if I am good enough.

> "One night, they advised her to ask the woodcutter what she was worth. The woodcutter was a practical man who knew everything about wood, trees and people. He also had a calculator!
>
> "Mr. Woodcutter!" She shouted but he did not even look.
>
> "Mr Woodcutter SIR!"
>
> Woodcutter was somewhat surprised to hear a voice from a tree, but then he was also a man who worked a lot with trees. He knows trees and more importantly he understood their language!
>
> "Woodcutter, what am I worth to you?"

The Resurrection of the United Eternal



> The united body, combining king and queen, is now alive and erect, standing on the moon, above the earth…it's a picture of the third stage of the *coniunctio*… You remember that the third stage was the union of the united body-soul-spirit entity, the purified and united body-soul-spirit with the *unus mundus*….It the representation of Christ rising out of his tomb as a symbol of the *filius philosophorum*….the creation of a psychic substance that has a temporal or eternal dimension to it, a kind of incorruptibility (Edinger, 1994:94,96,97).

My mother's death which became a culmination of the work I had done on my mother complex and in my Tree Woman story my little tree in my story went through a huge transformation, being struck by thunder, becoming a Tree Woman and witnessing the death of Maboom (Mother tree) and finally falling into a deep sleep where she meets Towergirl:

> "Time to go, but I'm afraid," said Tower Girl as she started coming down the stairs.
>
> "Time to go," said the two together when they met in the middle, taking each other's hands.
>
> This was during the second meeting when I met Tree woman in the middle and she touched my hand… it was then that the Hazy Glow attached herself to me...

Persona movement: embracing and integrating

> And together, hand in hand they walked out of the door passed Wip and Wop and out of the dream….

After years and years of internal work I finally felt worthy. Similarly Tree Woman finally finds out that she is worth enough, she walks out of a dream with the fearful Towergirl who has been sitting there waiting and fearing life for the last 3765 years.

> Tree Woman stared into the middle of the mirror's face. And slowly, so slowly she started to laugh "... Of course! ...I have the answer. I know the answer! I AM worth it! "
>
> And from there it was downhill. Down, down, down the valley, hand-to-hand, laughing and spinning and rolling and running to the house. And there ... laughing and spinning and rolling and tickling crawling cajoling with the Tree Children till late into the night. So much so, that man came out of his house with the starry roof to see and hear the teasing and pleasing.

This huge realisation and life change happened between 35 – 40; it occurred in conjunction with "rooting" my soul life in more fertile surroundings. This became the end of the First Book called: "What the Nothing Tells".

At 40 I had thus, finally found a sense of inner belonging that was not rooted in any external happenings and I decided to start engaging in a more focussed way with my outer world reality again.

> "The story also goes that one blue day, Treewoman dug up her roots, put them in a black plastic bag and walked to the overhang under the mountain. It tells how she rooted herself among the great grandmother and the great grandfather trees, close to where the water trickled down over a stone ridge into a deep green pool…and that she put her feet into the root tips, and it is said that her branch-arms grew up into the sky. Want 'n boom is 'n boom is 'n boom! 'n Boom kan nie 'n mens wees nie!"

The tree character became the symbol of my "Soul Life" that was now rooted and at the core of my psyche. The Towergirl was probably a symbol of my ego, which united itself with the Hazy Glow or persona. "Towergirl" was out of the tower and busy engaging in life. At 42 I decided to teach at the Waldorf School as an attempt to enter the outer world with more consciousness and integrate some of my own masculine aspects by finding my way in the world.

The Fermentation



> Thus it is in illustration 11, we see again the Conjunction - the Coitus of the two soul facets. This is called the Fermentation distinguishing it from the conjunction of the White phase. This time the female forces are active, and in their intercourse it is the woman who lies on top of the man. The figures are also winged, indicating the degree of spiritual development that has occurred during the first cycle of transformation (McLean, 1980).

For many years I was almost at a loss with my story – there was nowhere else to go – the tree was rooted, happy and alive. It was only around my 46th year when I decided to walk the Santiago de Compostela – an ancient pilgrimage route in Spain - that a new question arose: “What is love?” It was clear that I had to find out – how to live in love and with love in the outer world. It was also clear that love here was not the romantic and sexual love that is commonly referred to when talking of love but something that is the life force behind all things, a universal love. Sometime after the Camino I realised that the Towergirl character was available to be explored and I started “downloading” almost unrelated pieces of story as little episodes of living continued to teach me about this love. Her story only became coherent one day when I wrote the beginning of the new story and my self-revelatory play. ”The old woman was dying. The young girl sat with her and held her hand, she was good with waiting. And little by little Towergirl started telling the old woman her story…”

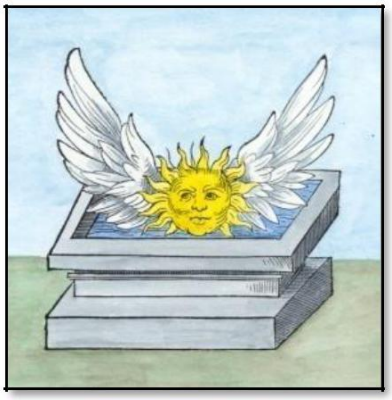
> “Tree woman was glad to see me and the two of us sat quietly together for a long time before we finally started talking.
>
> "The biggest and the most beautiful lesson for people is the lesson of love ..." she began.
>
> "What is love?" I asked.

"Love is something you find in the quiet stillness of your heart, and that is the lesson you must learn ..." came the reply.

"Who will teach it to me?"

"At the end of the overhang is a nursery, go work there and start learning some of the lessons of love ... "”

The Illumination



> The male solar forces of the soul enter now into the darkness of the unconscious realm within, as we see in the following illustration, number 12, the Illumination, in which a winged solar disc descends into the vessel of transformation that contains the living mercury, the ever mobile flowing energies of the unconscious. As the text indicates, "Here Sol dies again and is drowned with the Mercury of the Philosophers (McLean, 1980)

For the eight years of teaching I learnt about agape love. However, during the last 5 years of my life I became tired of the old roles and felt urged to change the way that I engaged and responded to the world. I decided to resign from the Waldorf School and subsequently wrote a large section of the Towergirls' story around her work at the "Nursery with the little trees" and finding her way to the circus. Something new wanted to be integrated or born.

The Fusion



In illustration 13, the two facets of the soul have again fused into the hermaphrodite which is resting within the dark grave like realm of the unconscious. The hermaphrodite is winged, and thus still bears the spiritual development from the previous cycle of transmutations, however, this too must be cast off if the solar transmutation is to take place (McLean, 1980).

Almost from the onset I choose this study to be a self initiatory rite of passage into the next phase of my life which I now recognise as the Rubedo. I noticed a great need to change. My dreams were about travelling in foreign countries and when I read what Jungian psychologist like Jane Prétat, Edward Edinger, Marion Woodman and Maria Mandacarú Guerra had to say about transformation and entering the “Crone years” of life I was stunned by the similarities.

On the 24 of February 2015 during a Supervision class I drew a small baby body curled up in a foetus position surrounded by layers of colours. During the feedback I described it as a “seed figure” that has not been grounded yet but is floating somewhere in the cosmos. I became part of an art installation at Afrika Burn where I symbolically carried my “seed figure” from the “outer cosmos to earth” to earth, thus grounding my new life.

Creating beautiful artistic interpretations of the planets and the sun involved hours of work during which we shared stories from our lives. We erected this art installation during the Afrika Burn festival which was from 27 April to 3 May 2015 in the great Karoo.

Amidst desolate nothingness a tented town rises up every year like a surreal Mad Max movie set. Afrika Burn is a festival where about 10 000 come people together between two spaces, namely Calvinia and Ceres, a temporary town called Tankwa Town.

Synchronistic and symbolic experiences like the “butterfly” temple, “winds of change” that partly destroyed our campsite and the Sun artwork and a white sacred marriage ceremony, abounded at Afrika Burn. The evening before the walk I “lost” my mother’s ring when I was making of the wish ball/seed. I collapsed into melancholic self-criticism about my ability to leave any kind of “worthwhile legacy” to my daughter. After making peace with myself I found the ring and prepared for the “pilgrimage” the next day.

On the second last day of our stay at the festival we walked from the outer reaches of our planetary installation (Pluto), approximately 16 km away, towards “earth” - carrying the wishes that were collected before and formed into a “wish ball/seed’. My wish being for: more presence in my own life and on earth. On Friday we witnessed the burning of our beautifully created Sun artwork as well as two other great structures. This was the first time that I experienced the purifying and transformative power of fire. On Saturday morning at 4 o’clock I awoke with my internal voice saying: “A brand new voice sounds across the desert sand. Good morning. A new day is dawning.” I grabbed my journal “lying in the darkness writing words from the hollows of my mind, in soft round curls onto my tummy.” By 6 o’clock I walked my usual, and this time, last meditative walk around the “town” and realised that something new has really been formed, some transformation and integration of dualities has indeed happened!

> “The tent zirts open,
> She pushes out,
> opens her wings, and flies off,
> her wings stiff with the confining.”
> I was ready to return.

The Turning Point: The Fixation

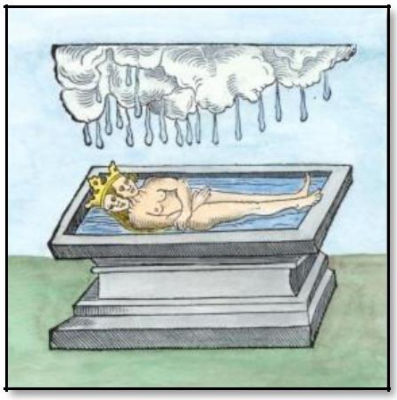


> This we see in the following illustration 14, the turning point of this cycle, where the now wingless hermaphrodite also gives up the female side of its forces, which soars up into the spiritual world, leaving the male aspect bound to the husk of the hermaphrodite body. This is the Fixation of these forces in the unconscious realm (McLean, 1980).

My experiences at Africa Burn were metaphorically depicted in my Towergirl story. Towergirl experienced a turning point when she was welcomed by the group of trapeze artists after taking part in a fire burning ceremony.

> Then their eyes turned to me ... “I have nothing,” I think ... and then suddenly I became aware of my hands, they were taking off my clothes, shoes and dress and finally the ring I got from my mother when I was hiding in the tower room ... all the tongues of fire licking and laughing ... and I started laughing ... a soft warm laughter from my inner belly... the group of trapeze artiste came closer and threw a big white cloak over my bare shoulders...
>
> "Welcome!" they said.

The Multiplication



> Then, as with the previous cycle, a dew descends from the spiritual realm above upon the corpse-like hermaphrodite, in the Multiplication of illustration 15, and the male solar forces of the soul are purified and washed by this gentle rain of the spirit (McLean, 1980).

In the beginning of August I had the disembodied voice dream that told me that "Wisdom is Love in Action"! I knew it was time to start writing my play. This coincided with a dream "download" of a poem:

> "My nights I spend
> Walking through wild places.
> Last night it rained
> Flowers in my hand."

This little poem became an almost prophetic indication of the intuitions, knowledge and wisdom that my dream world would bring during this process. I was indeed "blessed" by the unconscious "rain from above".

I started working on my play combining the 2 stories "What the nothing tells" (the Tree Woman story) and "What the something tells," (the first part of the Towergirl story). In some ways these two stories were quite opposite in themselves. To these stories I added my "poetry" as being spoken by the Old Woman, and the narrator or objective voice who told the factual objective story of key moments of my life and how the social political situation affected and influenced it.

There were 5 characters namely: Welma (also the Narrator), Old Woman (poetry), Towergirl (First person), The Hazy Glow (movement only) and Treewoman/Myboom (third person narrative). The

story mostly revolved around the Tree Woman story and during the second half of the story became more integrated and started overlapping as the characters met each other. The working title of the play was “Covering miles in the dark” taken from a Pinkola Estes poem which tells:

> As we live in the torso we find the heart
> and at the bottom of the foot we find the answer
> written by the miles that we covered in the dark (*Estes*, *1990*)

After two weeks of cutting and pasting I read it to my daughter and D (an actor & musician friend who kindly helped me with the play) testing and stripping my writing again and again. I was struggling to give voice to Welma, the objective storyteller of the play! My journal read: “I seem to struggle finding her words more than any other…” This continued to be my struggle and I changed the text 11 times, mostly writing and adding dialogue for her in order to fill out her story. This continued till three days before the first telling.

Likewise, my first rehearsal with D and B (my friend from Afrika Burn) was a “dreaming” or unconscious session. The concept of weaving a pentagon star-shape between the 5 characters formed, and we also toyed with the idea of carrying a bag full of sand which would “run out” and mark the same shape on the ground. We also dreamed about musical accompaniment during the Old Woman’s poetry speaking and D composed a song for me and animated pictures projected on a screen on the back that never manifested. B felt strongly that the play should have some form of a redemptive “Aha!” moment at the end, whilst I felt that the old woman should die a small and sad death like all the unsung mothers and wives of the world!

I felt emotional about the story of the grandmother’s racial outburst and the effect it had on my life as well as the “disgust” I experienced from the young wizard in my story, during this rehearsal. These experiences wove themselves into my Towergirl story when she met Gorilla woman and the two moments remained difficult throughout the rehearsal period. The following day I cried and felt incredibly vulnerable, reliving the issues of worthlessness and not belonging. I experienced a great sense of having not been *present* and I wrote in my journal: “I never featured in my own life…” Shame, guilt and remorse filled my dream world and I woke up at 2 o’clock to write this:

> To bed, to bed.
> This call and response
> owl hoot to infinite
> laments in the corridors of my mind.
> To bed, to bed…

It was clear that I was in the process of integrating some difficult and hurtful incidents from my past. The next rehearsal confronted me with relationships and how I made myself smaller because I carried guilt about my community, my family and cultural group. I also believed that making myself smaller would make me more accepted in the world. The character of the Hazy Glow (i.e. similar to the persona) became quite a prominent entity during this phase of the rehearsal process. As I struggled to give form to her, her voiceless-ness, mask-like puppet life became increasingly difficult to face. Eventually we decided on the music of an old fashioned jewellery box to accompany her movements. I reflected on my life and wrote in my journal: how I had retreated from what was happening in the country, my larger family but also from being a mother and a wife. How I had lived my live making myself smaller to fit in and how I had hoped that through fitting in I would be able to feel "worthy". I wrote in my journal:

> Fragile and broken open
> Tonight in my bed.
> Fragile and splayed open:
> White Jik hands
> Washing the bloodstains.
> Fragile and broken open.

From the middle of August to September my diary is scattered with words like: I do not want to live anymore, talking with the Gods of Death, cannot talk with anyone, outsider, alone, tired, sleep.

> This is a representation of the age-old image of the soul separating from the body at the moment of death. Psychologically it corresponds, in smaller ways, to what happens when any sizable identification or projection breaks down. A piece of the psyche separates from the concrete, corporeal container…There's a psychological death when the projection that has been carried for us drops off. A piece of on-going life we were used to has disappeared, and we are in effect dead until that missing part of our psyche is recovered (Edinger, 1994:76).

Similar to the Gideon myth in the Bible where Gideon was given the dangerous task by God to break down an altar and built a new altar, I woke up one morning with this dialogue and task:

> "As we navigate our path through life we are sometimes called by a voice called: MORE!
> More? What is more?
> More of yourself to come love on this earth.
> More of the presence of the One in the sky to live itself on the Earth.

> More of the life that we dared to dream…
> But the price? The price ?
> Pay the dark one the price of blood and tears and laughter, because living MORE of yourself ,
> more of me is worth MORE than this little moment of suffering.
> Pay the price and move on!"

And two days later another task:

> "We get trapped in dark stories – even though it is important to know and tell our stories - similarly it is important to know when it is time to let go of our stories."

Similar to Gideon in the Bible, who proceeded to do what he was told, I realised that even though there was something "more" that wanted to emerge it was important to "pay the price and move on'. I had to find a date and a time limit to the process as the difficulty of re-visiting old wounds was taking its toll. After discussion and negotiations I found a date but could not get hold of a theatre space. One morning I woke up and knew it would have to be in the piece of the garden where I always envisaged myself as an old woman, living: next to the vegetable garden. It would be a site-specific installation. We began physically clearing the space.

The rehearsals slogged on; heavy and sad and so dark that I could not imagine anyone sitting through them. I invited some friends to come and look. My Australian friend E came to watch one Sunday, he could not pick up anything about the Afrikaans story from the non-verbal information. As a joke we decided to redo the telling, translated into English for him. We were amazed at the difference. The lightness and playfulness that entered into the telling was astounding. The next week I started the translation. It was clearly an indication of creating more distance and meeting my witnesses half way.

About a week later I woke up with the words: "The magic lies in the weaving…" These disembodied voice dreams and instructions became the treasure of this journey and I changed my working title to "The Magic lies in the Weaving". I found the song from Pinkola Estes' CD on the "Red Shoes" where she talks about weaving and I created my own lyrics to suit my story. I now decided to weave of the Black, White and Red string in a pentagon star shape on a sand circle, signifying the alchemical journey of transformation and "wove" that into my play. I was already weaving a pentagon star-shape as I moved between telling the different stories of the characters.

A week before my birthday in September I had another “download”:

> “These stories explode like the fire that burst through my body I will take care of what to do with my hour still left”

And two days later…

> “Let us *play* with the lacy pop up sense of self.”

And the next night…

> “These days more and more the careful consideration and “truth” of the message is lost in the speed and artificial connection of the encounter”

I now knew that the “careful consideration” of my stories must incorporate some “playful elements” and that this meeting must endeavour to be an “encounter”. I found an article on Moreno (Kristoffersen, 2014) and felt hugely inspired by his work on the encounter in Vienna between the first and the second world war, while the world was “waiting for change…”

Even though there was more distance and lightness I still continued to struggle through the rehearsals. My emotions were over-whelming and trying to remember the English words seemed difficult. Three days after my birthday I suddenly felt the “clouds” lifting and my mind cleared.

The Reunion of Soul and Body



> The female soul element is free now to return from her journey to the higher spiritual realm of the soul, and rejoin and revivify the hermaphrodite figure in the lower soul, as is pictured in illustration 16 (McLean, 1980).

Almost as if I had now reached some distance from the telling. My dialogue started to take shape and I now only struggled with the fragmented beginnings of each characters telling, once “inside” the little stories I was fine.

> There was a long silence before Tree-woman answered.
>
> "It sounds to me you have learned valuable lessons from the man. Love is knowing that there is not always someone to catch you, you sometimes fly through the air in a fall, walk the net, climb the ladder and count the rhythm of the swing again and again... love is to continue to trust again and again and again that there will be hands to catch you... "
>
> "I do not think I like the lesson ... it makes me feel small and out of control ..." she said slowly.
>
> "Haha ... but you are small and without control ..." laughs the Tree Woman.
>
> "I know ... but it's not so nice to be reminded of that too often..."
>
> "Are you still afraid of falling?" asks Tree Woman.

"No, actually I think I can now enjoy the silence of falling through the air, bouncing and bouncing and bouncing on the net, the big-step-walking on the net, climbing up and counting the swings…it is a bit like a dance ...?”

"Then you have learnt great lessons of love ..." said Tree Woman.

"How so?" I asked.

"Life and love cannot be controlled, the biggest blessing is when we learn how to fall gracefully and without drama, learn to get up, walk, count and keep on believing ..."

The Second Resurrection



> Then the round of this second cycle of transformation is complete and the hermaphrodite arises in illustration 17, displaying the perfection of the Red Stone. On the left of the hermaphrodite we see the Sun Tree, while on the right, the Pelican in its piety gesture, nourishing its young on the blood from its own breast, is a symbol of the Red Tincture. Behind, is a Lion, another solar symbol, and the hermaphrodite stands upon a mound below which is a triple-headed serpent, each head of which is mutually feeding upon the others. This symbolizes that the Spirit, Soul and Body are becoming united and penetrate each other, though this being still polarized in the form of the serpent (the head and tail polarity), indicates that final harmonization of these realms is yet to be achieved (McLean, 1980).

That night I "heard":

> "One day between here and there, then and now, a little tree fell into the earth and felt the wonder of a contained safe space in which to express herself."

I was stunned by the similarities of this "new beginning" that was so similar to the beginning of my tree story where there was "little soil and water, and where the wind howled and wailed around them." It was a significant change of symbols and I knew it was time to start expressing more of myself. On that same night I wrote:

> "My nights I spent
> Fighting the heat
> That bursts through my body
> Burning, burning, burning…"

That same morning the numbers: 1, 3, 9 appeared in my mind as I woke up. I decided to use the idea of 1+3+9=13 staffs, each representing my female ancestors place along the route, to weave the way towards the storytelling circle.

The Devouring Green Lion: Sacrifice



> The sun here represents all that the alchemist has so diligently won for his consciousness, through working this process of inner development. The Green Lion is the devouring, dissolving aspect of the unconsciousness. The alchemist must be prepared to make this sacrifice of his conscious achievements to the dark well of his unconscious being, if he is to further the process of integration, for only in this way can he fully encompass this realm and unite the three streams that pour from the fountain into the vessel of the lower soul (McLean, 1980).

A week before the performance I attended a performance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission play "The Story that I am about to tell you" at the Soweto Theatre. I was shattered.

Not only where these stories re traumatising and a reminder of my obsession with the stories 20 years ago but I also started asking myself: what was the relevance of my little story in view of these huge, potent and very traumatic stories? During the Question and Answer session the facilitator very frankly indicated that he believed that white people are not part of this discussion as they are unconcerned and too busy living their lives. According to him white people simply did not care enough. I was extremely upset and I wanted to share that white people are too scared, too shamed, too ridden with guilt to even try to take part. I felt unable to continue, my inner critic was so active that I could not see myself sharing any of my story with anyone. After some serious processing, I finally realised that if I was not able to believe myself worthy to tell my story, how can I expect my clients to have the courage to do so? This led me to write in my programme note:

"The stories that you are about to witness are part of my Drama Therapy research; to see how drama can facilitate and support life changes. However, it is not without severe doubt that I bring them to you…the voice of the Woodcutter tells me very quickly that this story is too small, too insignificant, too "white privileged", too fairytale-ish to tell to others. "It is just not worth it…!" If

there is anything that I have learnt from this process is that the voice of the Woodcutter should not be listened to…all stories are important…because its only after the telling of a story that we are able to let go of the story…and I need to let go…"

> When her suffering is greatest, World Weary Woman finds she must give voice so that her pain does not turn back upon her in further destruction. There is a healing power in creative expression (Barker, 2001:11)

Five days before the performance I arrived tired at home after work and received the message that D could not be at the performance. Similar to losing my ring at Africa Burn, I felt deeply challenged. There might be no legacy, no telling? During the next hour I tried to phone everyone that I knew, trying to find someone that could help, take over. I could not get hold of anyone. Differently, this time there was a strange calm and as I finally surrendered to the idea that I would have to do it all alone. I sat down in my front door, irrationally opened the door and the gate and waited. I waited and my friends from Afrika Burn drove in. We quietly went down to the circle, wove the red thread around the storytelling circle and opened the acting space in our now almost instinctive way by walking and drumming around the circle, coming in and speaking our wishes for this process. By 11 o'clock that night we had run through the play and A had wordlessly agreed to help. My friend C (the other friend from Afrika Burn) phoned to say that she would be there the next day to help as well. I learnt most of the words that I could take on and during 3 more rehearsals the 2 new "actors" rehearsed their lines. All was well…?!

I learnt to communicate and describe my process for the audience in an attempt to create a safer space for myself. I explained my research area, the pentagon star and the ancestor staffs, I explained that these stories cannot really capture the full truth but are as close to a truth that is mine as possible and then thanked all the people that made it possible.

My Programme note included these paragraphs:

> "When I started this process of writing and play making my working title was "Covering Miles in the Dark". After many weeks of cutting and pasting, weaving and sewing, sculpting and dreaming and telling and talking there is a story called "The Magic lies in the Weaving…" - words that were given to me in a dream. I suppose the difference in the mood of these two titles tells its own story – a journey of discovery, a journey of integration, and journey of love; woven like the pentagon star-shape orbit that Venus journeys around the earth.

> In a quest for what is *truthful* I will have to admit that all the stories here are about my life…In a quest for that which is *real* I will have to admit that all the stories here were given to me in my dreams…I am still contemplating the place where these stories originate from. All I can possibly admit to is that I am blessed so profoundly by them ….
>
> I ask you to join us in the area of the garden where I imagine my stone cottage to be built one day. The day when I can stand, in full acceptance, as the Crone…. I honour all our ancestors represented by the walking sticks here today and I honour *you* my witnesses of this process…Can you be tempted ….to tell your *own* story?"

On 9 and 10 October I told all my stories woven into the play "The Magic lies in the Weaving". (See Addendum B for the full play.)

On Friday the 9th of October 2015 I spent the whole day preparing the outer space and the inner space for the telling. People would arrive at my house. I would show my house, myself and share my version of the story that I have lived. I knew it was daunting but I somehow felt at peace with this…

The Second Sacrifice and Blessing



> A similar inner task must be undertaken with regard to the upper soul realm, and this is portrayed in the penultimate illustration, where we see the being of the alchemist receiving a crown from the upper three streams of the Father aspect (body), the Son-Christ (soul) and the Holy Spirit. The alchemist must again make an ego sacrifice this time in respect to his upper soul. He must be prepared here to receive the blessing of this spirit that pours into his upper soul and recognize that the source lies outside his being. If he were at this stage to identify his self with this stream of spirit, he would be overwhelmed with egoism. The alchemist thus experienced through the sacrificial gestures towards his lower and upper soul (figures 18 and 19), the true spiritual ego that resides within his being, and which receives its essential foundation from the uniting of the Body, Soul and Spirit facets in both the upper and lower soul realms (McLean, 1980).

On the day of the first telling I made breakfast for my brother and my son, and whilst eating I told my brother the story of my mother's death as I tell it in the play – we were both there while she died. We both cried and I realised that the little sleep and deep conversation the previous night with my brother had made me very open and vulnerable. I however, did not fight the vulnerability but accepted it and trusted that it was part of the plan. I was reminded during the next two days of the work of Bréne Brown on vulnerability and the gifts of imperfection. She notes that it is important on this journey to let go of our worries about what people think, our perfectionism, our numbing and powerlessness, self doubt, control and cultivating laughter, song and dance (Brown, 2012:9,10).

However, I also knew I had to create safety. The first thing would be to print and prepare the programme note that endeavoured to frame the performance. Preparing the space where the witnesses will arrive took the whole morning. It was only towards midday that I was ready to go to the storytelling space to prepare it. By now B and C had arrived. They both created the most beautiful ancestor walking sticks and we walked toward the storytelling circle with my son, who

had arrived the previous night, weaving the red string and planting the ancestor sticks, preparing the way. We walked around the circle 9 times, weaving the red string around the space to contain the energy and prepared the props and chairs. Finally all felt well and I left to go and have a shower and get into "costume". A arrived and we all got into "costume" – we were all going to wear black. I wore a loose fitting black apron with the bone infinity sign around my neck and no shoes. I had some red string around my wrist from previous rehearsal performances.

People arrived and I was feeling well. There was a heightened sense of anticipation. I met everyone at the door, ushered them into the garden around my house to wait till everyone had arrived. We had to wait till 5.20 for everyone to arrive, Friday afternoon traffic was problematic. As the last people arrived we walked them down to the storytelling circle following the red thread. After everyone was seated and with the sun setting I started the song and asked my witnesses to "hold on to the thread for it all to go well" in some way this contained us all and my audience became part of the story. My own experience of the telling was one of real connection. I remember that as a result of the intimacy of the space I was able to look at the audience members and really connect with them in a way that was not possible in "real" theatre. I remember feeling quite emotionally touched twice during the telling and forgetting my starting lines, this was also as a result of the immediacy and connection with the audience. My friends prompted me and the story continued. I did not feel less because my telling was flawed and not perfect. I felt held, seen, heard and supported by the audience who looked tremendously touched during the telling. The telling ended in almost darkness with the song and asking witnesses to "take a piece of this string to remember this well, a reminder to tell their own stories as well". We walked of and people started clapping. When we returned I was hugged and embraced by almost everyone there, we made our way back to the top garden and many people lingered and talked. I started to make coffee and tea and still later made some food for the remaining people. A comment that I cherish is: "You created your own initiation/rite of passage". They commented that it was "soul rendering and brutally honest" and confessed being moved to tears.

SF wrote on Facebook the next day:

> "A performance piece, weaving together elements of symbolisation, metaphor, active imagination, psycho-drama and personal narrative…The performance was held at dusk in the most spectacular setting, outdoors at the base of an ancient tree… And as darkness fell signalling the conclusion of this profoundly provocative narrative, as a group we were left in a state of collective wonder…"

Later that evening my daughter surprised me by arriving. I was overwhelmed and felt deeply blessed.

The second day was quite different. I got up, started cleaning and attended (with my family) a bikram yoga class. During the last posture I burst into tears. B had told me of a friend who was greatly moved by the story of "being disgusting" as told by the Towergirl the previous night. This idea somehow catapulted me into an emotion which I could barely contain. By 12 o'clock I was ready to start my preparations for the afternoon telling by cleaning, washing, re-setting the storytelling circle. It was during this re-setting that I ended with my daughter in the story circle, lighting a candle and me telling her that this marks the end of this story, that it would be her task now to tell the stories for our family. This story became my legacy to her. As a number of my family and close friends were attending we had organised some food afterwards. As people arrived around 4 o'clock I suddenly felt myself frozen. Luckily A helped me by doing an Emotional Freedom Technique session on the feeling around the "disgust" that seemed to overwhelm me. By five o'clock everyone had arrived and we walked down to the story circle. Both my children were sitting in the front row next to the two examiners. Again I felt great ease to connect with the audience and tell the story. I started by telling everyone that I would be giving my friends the cue to prompt me by saying "And so…". I felt the need to be "honest" about my inabilities and imperfections and I somehow did not feel scared about being flawed or giving a "flawed performance". The audience were kind, caring and accepting of us all. I cried during 2 parts of the telling: the feeling of alienation and homelessness after liberation and the story of the stillborn baby. I did not break down during the telling of the "disgusting" part. People commented mostly on the "courage" and "vulnerability", they found it "deeply moving and incredibly poignant". They commented on the "profoundness" of the telling, telling me that it caused many of them to "reflect" on their own lives, choices and experiences. After my meeting and almost de-briefing with the examiners I engaged with many of my friends and family sharing some food and drinks in the garden. It was clear that my family felt touched and saddened by my story. Some responded that it was a story about integration. My daughter congratulated me and afterwards told me that it was good enough to stand on its own as a production.

I woke up the next morning and decided to stop writing my story, I felt tired of my story and decided to write about the friends that are in my life. I wrote about B, A and C and was quite surprised when the 4 of us (Towergirl, Woman in White with the cage full of butterflies, the Bearded man with the honeyed voice and the Fiery woman with a box full of bright ideas) set off on a wagon following the shooting star and finally found the star baby on a green hill. I now had a sense that my story was done, complete.

Prétat (1994:70) quotes Florida Scott-Maxwell who in 1953 wrote the following on ageing: "If to be tempered in the fires of insight is the task of age, perhaps… childlike naturalness is its reward".

Transmutation: The Mystery of the Upper Trinity



> So, with the final illustration, the alchemist is seen having achieved a kind of resurrection which is paralleled with that of Christ. In the Green Lion stage he descended deep into the dark inner mysteries of his soul, as Christ descended into Hell, but has returned with renewed energies in a resurrection body bearing the mystery of the upper trinity. This is the true transmutation. Those who have gone through this experience are fundamentally changed, having undergone a self initiation that parallels the inner experiences that were gained through initiation into the ancient Mysteries of Greece, Egypt or Britain (McLean, 1980).

Sunday afternoon I went down to the story circle – I took all the extra play scripts, made a fire and symbolically burnt them. I needed to let go of the story in order for a new story to start. I unwound the star-shaped red thread of the circle and drew an inward spiral on the sand of the circle. I drummed and closed the circle by walking 9 times clockwise. I left the 13 walking sticks and the red thread that bound them.

Sunday evening I had a conversation with my son. It was an very honest and open conversation which I contribute to the fact that he was in some ways “forced” to watch and really see the story from my perspective. The similarities and struggles that we share regarding our tendency towards depression, our struggle with feeling alienated from society and issues with worthlessness were openly discussed. I was deeply touched and grateful.

I got into bed and started reading a new Jungian Inner City Book The Love Drama of CJ Jung by M.H. Mandacarú Guerra. I read the ode to Plades (Eros) and was shocked to read the similarities in the imagery between my star-child and the god of Love as described by Philemon. My question if Love is not just a good story, which I asked in my story during the year, was answered.

> “Gallop, gallop, gallop, the horses hooves plop like drops of dew on the earth's belly ... we bounce and splash around in the wagon under the stars. We only came to a halt when the star touched the earth’s round edge near a grassy field, now glistening with dew. We walked closer, slowly closer, closer to the bright circle of starlight ... and heard a giggle. Closer and closer we made our way until we, overwhelmed with feelings of fascination saw - in the brilliant star light, a beautiful rose pink baby punch fighting the air of the earth - fists and legs flaying towards the sky. I slowly walked closer and picked up the new bundle of starlight, the white woman-with-the-cage-of-Butterflies handed me a soft blanket to wrap him in and slowly so slowly, enveloped by an exquisite awe the four of us walked back to the wagon and the horses with this new sweet shining child.

That is how I learnt that love is not just a story... love is human ... blood, skin and bones ...”

Addendum B

8 Addendum B: The Script

The Magic lies in the Weaving: Covering Miles in the Dark

"At the bottom of the foot we find the answer written by the miles that we covered in the dark" by *Pinkola Estes* 1990.

Characters

Welma/narrator = 1

Old woman: = 2 – singing chanting

Towergirl = 3

Persona = 4 - Movement

Tree woman = 5

The Story

(The stage is empty – five lamps are placed at the ends in a circle creating the image of a five pointed star. At each point a different character will tell her story. The narrator will accompany the audience to the venue carrying a red woollen ball, after getting each one seated she will start singing the song weaving the audience and actors into a red circle and finally "weaving" a black star pattern by attaching the wool around the tent pins on the circumference of the circle. Weaving the black wool when singing about the black thread and similarly later white wool when singing about the white thread).

Good day dear friends I'm the keeper of RED
Red for the weaving and red for the thread
I come to you now this story to tell

Hold on to the thread to make it all well
Dirre down down down down Dirre down x2
the loom is strung by hand x2

Good day dear friends I'm the keeper of RED
Red for the weaving and red for the thread
I come to you now this story to tell
The red on the loom is your life as well
Dirre down down down down dirre down
the loom is strung by hand x2

Good day dear friends I'm the keeper of Black
Black for the sleeping and black for the crack
I come to you now this story to tell
We come through the blackness to this life as well
Dirre down down down down dirre down
the loom is strung by hand x2

Welma:

The old woman was busy dying. For days and days the young girl sat with her and held her hand. She was good at waiting. And little by little, the young woman began telling her story. The old woman wanted to know if it was a true story. The young woman laughed and said that it is as true as all stories are true. The old woman coughed and said, "Then tell me your "true" story my child..."

The young woman took a long breath and began her story:

Towergirl:

Ek kon nog altyd net een ding op 'n slag doen... My life began with a fear that flooded into my body and my heart. Inside the castle, the stories of my parents with their "lovely" children played themselves out. She, my Hazy Glow, jumped and played and wove and embroidered. She swam and talked and read and walked. She laughed and twirled, and swirled and curled…..but I was up in the tower room too scared to come down and people looked at her and saw her fuzzy glow and thought it was true...

Persona Movement Piece: laughing and posing

Welma:

I was born on the 18th of September 1964. My mother was a 23 year old school teacher and my father a 24 year old chartered accountant. I was a honeymoon baby and a girl - none of which filled my parents or grandparents with joy

Tree woman:

Eendag tussen hier en daar, toe en nou… a seed germinated in the soil between two lovely big trees, Maboom Paboom. The two trees were upset that a little tree came to grow between them. "We are already growing on the highest part of the mountain. Here, where there is the most wind and least fertile soil and water. How are we going to deal with another tree? "

"Fortunately, it is true that the highest trees always get the most wind, so it will be easier for us to learn to fly,"

“You should first make friends with the ducks. They will teach you to fly, and flying is the greatest thing in life! "

The little tree had already ingested the story of flying like the ducks during germination...

Old woman:

Shall we dance again

This bitter dance

That lay bare the deep kernel of life?

No, go away

Oh, come back

Oh life, death, life

Tower Girl:

Die jare het omgedop, die een in die ander een in - knights and princes came to the castle – when they saw my Hazy Glow they would somehow feel me, the fearful one, hiding in the tower, and then they would leave….

One day a young magician arrived at the castle. He swooshed his purple scarf around his neck and walked in with great attention. When he saw the Hazy Glow, he not only felt me, the fearful one, but he also saw me with his inner eye in the corner of the tower room. He decided to make it his task to unite the "Hazy Glow" and me, the "fearful one".

A large white wedding was arranged. Kings and Queens from far and near came, everyone mmmm-ed and aah-ed and waved and patted each other but no one saw that I did not get into the carriage with the Hazy Glow when they left…

Persona Movement Piece: getting into the carriage and looking back!

Welma:

I grew up in a small Afrikaner Christian community during the height of Apartheid … One of my very first memories was questioning my grandmother really uncaring action and her sharp and angry response that: "Jy sal nog eendag 'n…."– I remember never feeling quite separate of this community afterwards and it is strange to realise how difficult it was to leave "home" at 18…

Tree Woman:

Die tyd het agteruit vorentoe gestap, the young tree now had parasites that kept her pale and small. Now and then the ducks came to sleep in her branches, but the young tree was too shy and to busy learning the lesson of survival to ask them the lessons of flying.

Not long after, the Wise One sent a boy to the highest point of the mountain to fetch the little tree. Maboom and the young tree were torn. They could not understand it at all. How could anyone separate them? But with great patience and confidence the boy uprooted the small, pale Myboom and put her in a big black plastic bag and carried her to his garden. The garden was in the town, and the town in the valley, and the valley below the mountain ... The boy sat with her for days and days and talked and talked ... he was also lonely...

Old Woman:

I sing to the feather of hope

I sing to the beauty of love lost and found

I sing to the death of the breath of my child

I sing to the bones of my child.

Towergirl:

I sat in the corner of the highest room of the tower for many years. My arms curled around my legs, my head on my knees, sitting waiting and struggling with the fear that seeped into my heart and my body.

Persona: Movement Piece: Baby movements

Welma:

“How could I be “mother” if my role has been the one of “daughter”, until that moment?” In 1990 I gave birth to “death” - a still born baby girl…

Tree Woman:

In this town...in this new garden the ducks also came to sleep in her branches ... sometimes she was shocked to hear they hellish voices…but when they flew….ah…when they flew she forgot completely about those devilish sounds ...

One night, the Wise One passed by… he knew it was time! He took one of the largest and most beautiful fruit from her branches and mixed it with blood and bile and poured it around her trunk.

It was the time of speaking to the Gods of Death ... Their sour breaths whirled and swirled around her head ...For many days and nights, Myboom listened to the Gods of Death chattering on the breath of the wind, without learning the lesson...

Old Woman:

Dark is no comforter

But a dog with vicous teeth

That hounds and wails the early hours till morn

Dark is no comforter

Dark is no comforter

Towergirl:

The young wizard was a successful magician. People from far and wide came to him and he would take a little bit of this and a bit of that and would mix and brew it all together to give them the most beautiful dreams and visions - but every night when the people left, he'd take out his strongest medicine to try to unity me with the Hazy Glow. Maybe because of this or maybe because of that, but the fact is that his potions did not work and we continued living separately for many years.

Persona Movement Piece: Running - look back at hand

Welma:

I tried to ignore the darkness by immersing myself in activity: babies, breast feeding and homemaking, working to help save a country. I experienced growing dis-ease which was mirrored in the country…I was running... A few weeks before liberation I was standing in a hall in Mangaung singing Nkosi Sikilela Cultural worker comrades when I suddenly realised that I will never fit… My skin will never be black…the country was "liberated" and… I felt just as homeless and worthless in this new South Africa…

Tree Woman:

Onder in die vallei, in the young man's garden Myboom suddenly started to look at the other trees. The more she watched and listened to the rest of the trees in the town, the more she thought about her own soil, water, bark and leaves. These were trying times. She believed that the "right size" would make her feel better. She believed that she would be happier if she was "normal". But there was always bigger, prettier, taller, thicker, thinner or greener trees in her area that seemed more normal. A great question soaked her wooden body? "What am I worth?"

That evening, she sent messages on the breath of the wind to Maboom and Paboom, "Please tell me, what am I worth?"

Immediately the answer came, "More than gold, silver or sunlight. You are our sun, our water, our soil! "

Myboom was distraught. How can she be sunlight, soil and water? It was just too much. She was a tree. And so it happened that she started feeling worth less.

The next day she asked the young man: "What am I worth to you?" The young man could not understand her.

The next day, she looked around her and saw her two young trees, the Tree Children. "How do you ask such young trees if you are worthwhile? Their job is growing and drinking and eating and laughing and rustling and playing. “No, it would be wrong to ask them."

There was no one else to ask.

That night she continued her old conversations with the Gods of Death on the breath of the wind. Every night the gods of death would come with the question, "So what are you really worth? We can teach you to fly…" Will I be worth more if I could fly? She wondered….

Old Woman:

The ocean of fate
moves in smooth
cool blue waves
that toss and turn and test
our lacy sense of self

Towergirl:

The magician had grown tired of his project with the Hazy Glow and before she could blink, she learnt to walk softly down the corridors, to turn her body sideways as he passed her because the sight of her little shimmer disgusted him….

Persona Movement piece: making space

Welma:

I packed my kombi one day and said good bye to my children. The plan was that I would never see them again. My “outer world” did not bring me any freedom- I had started my “descent into the underworld” of my psyche...

Tree Woman:

One morning Myboom awoke. She decided to go with the Gods of Death. She would fly! That day passed slowly. She looked and saw ... she saw the young man ... she saw the two young tree children and she knew...

That night the Gods of Death came to collect Myboom, but she just turned her head and said:

"Who wants to fly if you can live? If you feel the sun shining on your branches, if you can listen to the boy and laugh with your fruit, the tree children! Who wants to fly if you can live? I was flying all along... when I feel the wind slipping through my branches and my leaves swirling on his breath and I talk to the young man, without him listening, and I laugh with the tree children even when there is nothing to laugh about... then... then I am flying higher than the ducks with their hellish voices. I have been flying all along, I just never knew it! "

The Wise One passed by and smiled and knew that Myboom had finally learnt the lesson flying!

Old Woman:

To get the wonder of a still day
Go out and lay in the softness of the sun
And sing
For those who love now
Linger longer….
(Weaving White wool)
Good day dear friends I‘m the keeper of White
White for the seeing and White for the light
I come to you now this story to tell
The White on the loom is repentance as well
Dirre down down down down
the loom is strung by hand x2

Towergirl:

Somewhere during the years of stuckness, I slowly lifted my head and saw the sun shining through the window. Little by little, step by step, I walked to the window at the top of the tower.

Persona movement piece: unravelling at the back

Welma:

I started writing my fairy tale and after finishing this first part about flying I decided to return home and for the next two years I was lost in the silence of long days …. I realised that I needed to find out what I am worth…Like to many in this country I had to start to face this fear…

Tree Woman:

Sy het verlore geraak in die warboel van mense, dinge, sterre en gebeure …The Gods of Death became her best friends. One night, they advised her to ask the woodcutter what she was worth. The woodcutter was a practical man who knew everything about wood, trees and people. He also had a calculator!

"Mr. Woodcutter!" She shouted but he did not even look.

"Mr Woodcutter SIR!"

Woodcutter was somewhat surprised to hear a voice from a tree, but then he was also a man who worked a lot with trees. He knows trees and more importantly he understood their language!

"Woodcutter, what am I worth to you?"

Woodcutter circled Myboom, once to the right, scratched his head and then circled her once to the left. He whipped out his calculator and said...

"Young Tree, is it like this ... the right and left thick branches are… his calculator flashes in the sunlight. “Your trunk….mmmmm. What if ...tree, you are worth 30 pieces of silver. What do you say, I can start chopping tomorrow? "

The tree was overjoyed. Thirty pieces of silver! Isn’t that wonderful? Finally she was worth something to someone.

"Certainly! Absolutely! See you tomorrow! "

That night there was a huge storm. The young man hid in his house with the glass roof and looked in amazement at all the flashing and lightening. Phrases flashed through Myboom's memory: "You are our sun, water, …more than gold,,,,30 pieces of silver….If only I could vanish..." she wished…..Wind, lightning and thunder crashed around her until a huge bolt of lightning struck her trunk and split her body to its highest root top. She was torn in two!

The following day the woodcutter fetched her burnt branches and trunk body. She was now worth much less. She hid in her roots and pondered about life deep under the ground.

Nights and days dragged on, sometimes shorter, sometimes longer but always relentless…so much so that she hardly realized how much rain fell from the sky. The earth was wet and soggy. And, somewhere between there and here, then and now, rain and sun, Myboom began to feel a funny itch, something like a ticklish tingle, a prickly prickle from the bottom of her roots - a long green "thing" strained upwards – she was astounded. "What can it be? Where does it come from? "

The green "thing" grew and grew, almost as if it cannot be stopped.

"What's going on?" asked Myboom voice the young man when he ran down the pathway to his work.

"What's going on?" she asked the birds in her young tree's branches

"What's going on?" she asked the Wise One.

"You are changing …"

"Hallo? Tell me something I do not know! "

"Yes, you are changing into a woman"

It was sometime after her female body was completely formed that the Wise One encouraged her to unroot her feet. Carefully, one by one, she pulled her feet out ... and fell over. It was only later, much later that she learned to stand on her own two feet.

In the evenings she curled her new green body around the trunks of the young Tree Children and every day she hid in their branches and listened and learnt.

En dit was aand en dit was more die blinkste dag!

Old Woman:

Gently, gently, face the shadow that lives within.

Confess softly, lightly to the dark body

That often resists change

For life burns the worn heart

If forced too soon…

But above all –

Do not pass any chance for deep growth,

Towergirl:

It was during this time that I met the Tree Woman as I was staring through the tower window….

Persona Movement piece: unravelling pinching pulling front…

Welma:

Things were falling apart. I retreated from the development work…I was ridden with feelings of guilt and shame about my cultural heritage…I believed that the white man had had our chance and that it was time to step back gracefully…to retreat….I entered psycho analysis – if I could not find a place of belonging in my motherland I would find it in my inner world. Shortly after I entered therapy my mothers' cancer flared up again and she made her own decent into death. I was navigating through my mother complex…

Tree Woman:

Die asem van die wind het die nuus gebring, … unexpectedly, on clear day when the earth was waiting for rain ...

"Maboom was dying."

Tree Woman sat quietly for a long while after she received the news - she had to make her way back. The road was more difficult than the time when the boy carried her in the black bag. Nevertheless, she had to go back to Maboom and Paboom on the highest peak of the mountain. But this time was different ...

First Tree Woman talked and later Maboom spoke and the wind cried and tore at the two large trees. And as the days passed, the talk became less and the two big trees branches cracked and swayed tiredly, back and forth, back and forth, in the dry wind and the blazing sun. Eventually Maboom's branches almost leafless snapped.

"Is that still YOU Maboom?" asked Tree Woman

Maboom could not answer she had been speaking all-night-long with the Gods of Death. She no longer understood Tree Woman's language. But their hearts understood ...

Maboom looked deep into Tree Woman's eyes. Their eyes told each other all the things that needed to be said, for this last moment, had to keep forever.

It was only when Maboom's last leaf wriggled itself loose that Tree Woman saw how many ducks were sitting in Maboom branches. And, was it her imagination, or did she really see Maboom's white warmth flying away on the breath of the wind with the ducks, when that last leaf fell to the ground. Maboom had found her own way of flying!

Old Woman:

Between eternity and serene presence
We wave and melt away
And create illusion again

Towergirl:

My first encounter with Tree Woman did not lead to anything. She was lost, I was confused and she walked back into the forest...

Persona movement piece: feeling her body

Welma:

It was some years after my mother's death that I started my upward journey…

Tree Woman:

Tree Woman believed she saw the Wise One's breath set fire to the two trees. The fire splashed and fell onto the grassy veld around the highest peak of the mountain. Tree woman was running from the dripping tongues of fire.

"Help! Help me! Oh, somebody help me?!". An Old woman came through a crack in the mountain and grabbed her firmly with her strong arms and pulled her back into the cleft of the mountain's body.

"Higgh, hhiggh" Her eyes burned from the soot and her skin felt tender from the blaze. Maybe it was the hot sweet drink that the Old Woman gave her to drink, maybe it was just the exhaustion of the whole affair, but she fell into a deep sleep.

And she dreamt ...X2

She was walking in a forest. Suddenly she saw two little people on a seesaw.

Wop: "Hello, who are you?

TW: I do not know? I do not have a name really. Some call me Myboom, other tree woman, still others just Boom. But who are you? "

Wip: "I am Wip, and this is a Wop."

Wop:"Are you a man or a woman?"

TW: "I do not know, maybe both... I know I have had tree children, perhaps it makes me a woman. What are you? "

Wop: "I'm a man and he is a woman's"

Wip: "Ah ah, I am a man and he is a woman!"

TW: "Oh I see".

Wip: "What?"

Wop: “What?”

TW: "What, what? Oh no….I mean… I understand!"

Wop: "What do you understand?"

TW: Oh, I mean, I see…I mean, I understand! "

Wip: "What do you understand?

Wop: "Tell us, what do you understand?"

Wip: "We've never been able to understand anything,".

TW: "Oh I see ,,,"

Wip and Wop: (almost hysterical) "What? What? "

TW: "I'm sorry, I really do not understand anything, and I see nothing… really .... Perhaps this is only a dream ...? "

She walked away confused…. She suddenly heard a voice…

"What are you doing?" She looked up and saw a girl staring from a tower window.

"I do not know what I'm doing here, what are you doing?" answered Tree Woman.

"I'm waiting!" called Tower Girl.

"You’re waiting?" asked Tree Woman.

"Yes it is very important to wait, I’ve been waiting for 3765 years. That's what I do. It's very important ... "

"Really?and you never get tired?"

"Tired…of what?"

"Tired of waiting?"

"I do not know anything about tired. I only know about waiting."

"What are you waiting for?”

"I do not know, I was hoping you would be able to tell me".

"Maybe you are waiting for me?"

"Maybe ... but how will we know?"

"We will not know. Has there ever been anyone else? "

"No one. You are the first. "

"How will we get you out of here?"

"Why would you want to?" She answered with a question.

"Well if it's okay with you, then I'll maybe see you later…"

The forest was dense. So it happened that she imagined herself seeing a little white butterfly fluttering ahead of her. She laughed, and without thinking ran behind the white “flutter” like a game. Her tripped over a root and fell. She heard giggling up in a tree. She looked up she saw **TW**o tiny sprite-like beings with big round eyes peeking out through the branches.

PLU: “You were expected"

TO: "Slightly later than we anticipated"

PLU: "We are PLU .."

TO: " and TO"

TW: Not only is PLU and TO absolutely identical, but they sound the same. It's as if they are speaking with one voice.

TW: “Sorry ... I ... I do not understand?”

PLU: "Simple ..."

TO: "It's simple ..."

PLU: "We are stargazers .."

TO: "We know stars …"

PLU: "We know their names ..."

TO: "We know their forms ..."

PLO:“Their orbits…”

TO: "Their positions ..."

PLU: "They visions ..."

TW: "Can you help me? "

PLU: "Maybe ..."

TO: "If it is not..."

PLU: "Too late ..."

TO: "What do you want”

PLU:" to know...?”

TW: "Why I am here?"

PLU: "Oh that's easy ..."

TO: "Because you are not in .."

PLU: " another place."

TW: "No, that's not what I meant. I want to know what am I supposed to do here? "

TO: "Even easier .."

PLU: "You have to …"

TO: "Walk in the wood..."

PLU: "And find out… "

TO: "what you have to do here…."

TW: "No, you do not understand! What is the purpose of my life?"

PLU: "Oh now ask you .."

TO: "The question…

PLU: “With no answer ...".

TO: "For the one who finds the answer…"

PLU: "Never lives to tell the tale ..."

TW: "How can I go back to the man in his house, and the tree children in the garden without an answer?”

PLU: "As soon…"

TO: "As possible ..."

PLU: "Where are you running to Tree Woman?"

"To the garden as soon as possible," she called back, with her arms and legs flaying in all directions. She ran and ran and ran and ran, and only stopped when she saw the girl in the Tower.

"You're back,"

"Yes it's time."

"I know ...but I'm scared…"

"I know, but everything will be all right. How do we get you out of here? "

"Through the back door."

"This place has a back door?"

"Always had ..."

"Why did not you use it?"

"I was always too afraid ..."

"Time to go," said Tree Woman, as she opened the back door and started up the stairs.

"Time to go, but I'm afraid," said Tower Girl as she started coming down the stairs.

"Time to go," said the two together when they met in the middle, taking each other's hands.

Towergirl:

This was during the second meeting when I met Tree woman in the middle and she touched my hand… it was then that the Hazy Glow attached herself to me...

Persona movement: embracing and integrating

And together, hand in hand they walked out of the door passed Wip and Wop and out of the dream….

"Thank you and goodbye Old Woman." Tree Woman bowed low in front of the Old Woman to show her gratitude for the balm, the drink and the dream ... "

"I'm scared" said Tower Girl.

"I know, but it's time ..."

They walked and walked and walked into the black night with only the torch given to them by the old woman to light their way.

Finally, the two ended up at a gate leading into the valley at the foot of the mountain. At the entrance there was a gatekeeper...

"Could we pass through?"

"Oh, yes. As long as you know how the labyrinth works…?"

"The WHAT?"

"The labyrinth of What am I worth.”

"What is your worth?"

"There is no way that I can go through there ..."

"Never mind, never mind, we will make a plan ....it is quite useful to have a tree background, especially when you have a labyrinth-forest to walk through."

It didn’t take long before she remembered the gentle langauge of the giant trees. Quietly the Two of them made their way through the labyrinth, directed by the quiet conversations of the trees. Step by step, to the middle. There on a large, square stone table they saw something shiny.

"A mirror? Here? "

A mirror? Here! "

Tree Woman stared into the middle of the mirror's face. And slowly, so slowly she started to laugh "... Of course! ...I have the answer. I know the answer! I AM worth it! "

And from there it was downhill. Down, down, down the valley, hand-to-hand, laughing and spinning and rolling and running to the house. And there ... laughing and spinning and rolling and tickling crawling cajoling with the Tree Children till late into the night. So much so, that man came out of his house with the starry roof to see and hear the teasing and pleasing.

And it was night and it was day, the most wholly of days.

(weaving the red wool)

Good day dear friends I'm the keeper of RED
Red for the weaving and red for the thread
I come to the end of this story we tell
The red on the loom is our life as well
Dirre down down down down dirre down
the loom is spun by hand x2

Old woman:

This story that I've lived… tells that the young man became an old man and is still living in his house with the glass roof and starry sky. It tells how the tree Children learnt to use their own feet …Tower Woman is learning some lesson of love, juggling her time between circus trapeze artistry and nursing young trees in black bags at a nursery. It is told that she met some amazing people like the ringmaster, the mermaid, the clown, the juggler, the knife-thrower and his fearless wife and the canon ball girl…and let us not forget the woman in white with her cage filled with butterflies and the young man with the honeyed voice ….all of whom fill her life with joy and amazement…

The story also goes that one blue day, Tree Woman dug up her roots, put them in a black plastic bag and walked to the overhang under the mountain. It tells how she rooted herself among the great grandmother and the great grandfather trees, close to where the water trickled down over a stone ridge into a deep green pool…and that she put her feet into the root tips, and it is said that her branch-arms grew up into the sky. Want 'n boom is 'n boom is 'n boom! 'n Boom kan nie 'n mens wees nie!

Thank you dear friends the story is told
Time to let go and let new life unfold
Take a piece of this string to remember this well
A reminder to tell your of your weaving as well
Dirre down down down down
the loom is strung by hand x2

All

Good night dear friends we‘re the keepers of RED
Red for the weaving and red for the thread
consider with care this encounter we pray
The timing is fair now to be on our way
Dirre down down down down
dirre down the loom is strung by hand x2