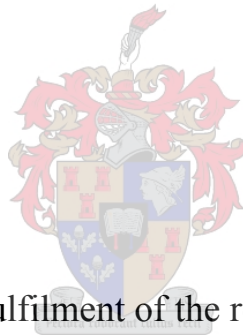


“...we must not hold our fears...”

**A Case Study exploring the use of Group Dramatherapy as a
Therapeutic Intervention with Children and Adolescents
Living in Poverty.**

by

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (Drama) at the University of Stellenbosch.

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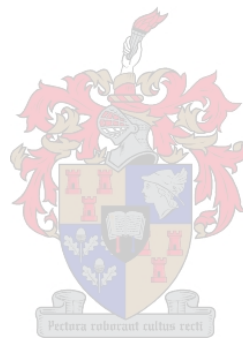
December 2006

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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Signature

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Date



ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the potential of group dramatherapy as an effective therapeutic intervention with children who are experiencing psychological difficulties related to their situations of poverty. It has been found that living in poverty causes children to grow up in an environment that is damaging to their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development. The emotional issues that such children could experience and that are focused on in this study, are those of a negative self-concept and low self-esteem. The psychological difficulties and the different life stages that children or adolescents might be experiencing could contribute to difficulties in the verbal expression of thoughts and feelings. As a result the potential of a non-verbal therapeutic medium such as dramatherapy was explored with this client group. The use of dramatherapy to treat these emotional problems is first explored theoretically and then practically through the use of a case study.

The case study takes the form of a participatory research study and this involved a dramatherapy intervention with a group of six participants at a school in Cape Town. The dramatherapy group was led by myself and two other Masters students from the University of Stellenbosch under the supervision of our lecturer, Heather Schiff, who is a trained dramatherapist as well as a clinical psychologist. During the dramatherapy sessions, drama structures were utilised with the aim that they might bring about a stronger sense of self for the group's participants.

Through the case study one can determine that the dramatherapy sessions did seem to bring about changes in some of the group participants, with regards to the perception and presentation of the self and increased self awareness and self-esteem. At the end of the dramatherapy sessions the group participants seemed to have a more realistic perception of themselves and also seemed to have developed with regards to self expression. It is also hoped that by expressing themselves through different dramatic techniques, the group members were also able to develop a fuller understanding of who they are.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis vors die potensiaal na van groeps dramaterapie as 'n effektiewe terapeutiese ingryping met kinders wat sielkundige probleme ondervind, wat direk gekoppel kan word aan omstandighede as gevolg van armoede. Daar is bevind dat dit 'n negatiewe invloed op 'n kind se fisiese, psigiese, emosionele en geestelike ontwikkeling het, indien die kind in 'n omgewing van armoede grootword. Die emosionele probleme wat sulke kinders kan ervaar en waarop gefokus word in die studie, is 'n negatiewe selfbegrip en lae selfrespek. Die sielkundige struikelblokke en die verskillende stadiums van ontwikkeling wat kinders en adolossente dalk mag ervaar, kan lei tot probleme met die verbale uitdrukking van gevoelens en denke. As gevolg hiervan is die potensiaal van 'n nie-verbale terapeutiese medium, soos dramaterapie, in die studie nagevors. Die gebruik van dramaterapie om emosionele probleme wat geassosieer word met armoede te behandel, is eers in 'n teoretiese en dan in 'n praktiese wyse ondersoek deur middel van 'n gevallestudie.

Die gevallestudie is 'n deelnemende navorsings studie in die vorm van 'n dramaterapeutiese ingryping met ses skoliere van 'n Kaapstad se skool. Die dramaterapie groep was deur myself sowel as twee ander Meestersstudente van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch gelei. Die sessies was oorsien deur ons studieleier, Heather Schiff, 'n opgeleide dramaterapeut, sowel as 'n kliniese sielkundige. Ons het teater strukture gebruik gedurende die dramaterapie sessies met die doel dat die tipe metodes dalk sal help om 'n sterker bewustheid van self onder die groepslede te ontwikkel.

Deur middel van die gevallestudie, kon daar vasgestel word dat dit blyk of die dramaterapie sessies sekere veranderinge teweeggebring het onder sommige van die groepslede, met betrekking tot hul persepsie en vertoning van self, sowel as 'n verhoogde selfbewustheid en selfrespek. Teen die einde van die dramaterapie sessies het dit geblyk dat die groepslede 'n meer realistiese persepsie van hulself ontwikkel het, asook 'n beter ontwikkelde wyse van selfuitdrukking. Deur hulself met verskillende dramategnieke uit te druk, word daar gehoop dat dit die groepslede beter bevoeg het om 'n dieper kennis te ontwikkel van hulself.

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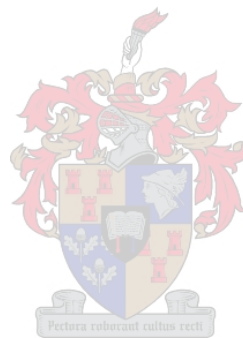
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Poverty is an immense problem that is found throughout South Africa. In 2000, the Taylor Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System ran a survey and found that 45% of the South African population lives in poverty. (in Guthrie. 2003: 16) It has also been recorded that 75% of South African children under the age of eighteen years live in conditions of poverty. (Martin. 2003: 37)

What one easily overlooks is that besides a lack of monetary income, poverty is also characterised by other elements such as a deficiency in “opportunities, (a) lack of access to assets and credit as well as social exclusion.” (Guthrie. 2003. 16) Research has also found that poverty is associated with disease, a lower life expectancy, stigmatisation as well as psychological distress. (Barbarin & Richter. 2001: 174) In this thesis the psychological problems that children may experience as a result of living in conditions of poverty, are investigated.

During the course of my studies in drama, I have become interested in the healing power that seems to be inherent to the medium of drama. This led me to focus my post-graduate studies on dramatherapy. As a result, this thesis focuses on an exploration of the potential of group dramatherapy as an effective therapeutic intervention with children who are experiencing psychological difficulties related to their situations of poverty. More specifically, the aim of this exploration was to focus on the emotional issues relating to a negative self-concept and a low self-esteem. This is approached in a theoretical manner by looking at the emotional effects that poverty can have on children, and exploring ways in which dramatherapy could be used to treat these effects. A case study is used to consider some of the practicalities of this approach.

The case study is a participatory research study of a dramatherapy intervention with a group of six participants at a school in Cape Town. This research was undertaken with the written consent of the school principal and the consent of the therapist involved in the group. This case study was conducted by myself and two other students from the University of Stellenbosch under the supervision of our lecturer, Heather Schiff, who is a trained dramatherapist as well as a clinical psychologist. The case study has

several inter-related aims. Firstly there was an attempt to focus on what was expressed by the group members in the dramatherapy sessions, and to see how this can relate to the self as well as to the home environments of the participants. The case study also provided an opportunity to gain insight into the way in which a dramatherapy process can unfold. Related to this, the case study also allows me to describe the practical application of dramatherapy processes and some techniques that are used in dramatherapy.

Although some psychological theories and interpretations are incorporated in this thesis, it primarily remains a drama orientated study.

The structure of this report is as follows: **Chapter 2** begins with an examination of poverty in South Africa and an exploration of the effects that poverty can have on children and adolescents. This is followed by a look at how poverty is being combated in South Africa. The main psychological problems that are to be addressed through the use of dramatherapy in this study are then identified and examined. This is followed by an explanation of what dramatherapy is, and a consideration of its effectiveness when used with children and adolescents as well as a discussion of the use of group therapy with children and adolescents. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the application of dramatherapy to treat the emotional effects of poverty in children and adolescents.

Chapter 3 sets the context of the case study by providing relevant information about the school that the dramatherapy group participants attend, as well as relevant information about the dramatherapy group and the dramatherapy methods employed in the sessions.

Chapter 4 consists of a description and an analysis of the case study. In this chapter dramatherapy session material is described. This serves as the basis for exploring the potential of dramatherapy as a therapeutic intervention with children experiencing psychological difficulties related to situations of poverty.

Chapter 5 offers a conclusion to the report.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Poverty in South Africa

Poverty is generally defined as being “characterised by the inability of individuals, households or entire communities, to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.” (Swartz. 2001: 8) Besides a lack of monetary income, poverty also includes other elements such as a deficiency in “opportunities, (a) lack of access to assets and credit as well as social exclusion.” (Guthrie. 2003. 16) Poverty also gives rise to what is known as the cyclic dynamics of poverty. This is because poverty, as well as the effects of poverty, filters through into every aspect of human life and adversely influences it. Suffering these adverse influences then leads to greater poverty, which consequently places poverty in a framework of overlapping problems. (Jordaan & Jordaan. 1998: 767) The “violence of poverty” is that it forces people to live marginalized lives.

Within South Africa, the apartheid policies that the government ruled under from 1948 till 1994, created unequal access to employment as well as education and health services. It also removed assets such as land and livestock from the African¹ majority and any opportunities to develop these assets were denied. This has resulted in the country experiencing poverty that is still characterised by a racial dimension. If one takes an absolute poverty line of \$1 per day, 24% of the South African population fall below this standard. Of that number, as many as 44% are Africans while only 2.1% are white. (Barbarin & Richter. 2001: 44) Women are also more likely to live in poverty than men. In the executive summary of the report, “Poverty and Inequality in South Africa” by Julian May, it is stated that “the poverty rate among female-headed households is 60%, compared with 31% for male-headed households.” (1998: 3) The reports also states that although in per capita terms South Africa is seen as an upper-middle-income country, most South African households’ still experience outright poverty or are vulnerable to being poor. Many homes still have a lack of access to clean water, energy, health care and education. (1998: 1) While many people are

¹ The term African is used to designate the indigenous population which predates European colonization. The term black will be used to indicate the three non-white racial groups in South Africa, formerly designated as African, Coloured and Indian.

forced to lead marginalized lives characterised by deprivation, there are still many in the country that are able to experience the best of what modern society has to offer. The contrast of first world and third world in South Africa has created a social condition of inequality. (Barbarin & Richter. 2001:18)

The Human Sciences Research Council undertook a study in collaboration with Andrew Whiteford, a South African economist, in which they found that the proportion of people in South Africa that are living in poverty has not changed significantly between 1996 and 2001. What has happened though, is that those living in poverty have sunk deeper into it, and the gap between rich and poor has simply become wider. (HSRC. 2004: [online]) As poverty is seen as being characterised by not only a lack of income, it is measured in different ways and as a result can be viewed from different perspectives. An absolute poverty measurement is calculated on the minimum income that is required for basic needs and survival. A poverty line is thus created according to a certain monetary amount, and those earning below this poverty line are seen as living in poverty. In 2000, the Taylor Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System ran a survey based on a poverty line of US\$2 per day. They found that 45% of the South African population were said to live in poverty. (Guthrie. 2003: 16) A more multi-dimensional measure of poverty is the Human Development Index. (HDI) This index was developed by the United Nations Development programme and it takes three factors into account namely life expectancy, educational attainment and standard of living. The HDI can then be used to rank nations on a scale so that they can be compared with one another. In 2000, South Africa's HDI was measured at 0.695, ranking the country at 107 out of 173 nations. (Guthrie. 2003: 17-18) Two other indicators that are used to measure the well being of children in any country are the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and the Under-Five Mortality rate. (U5MR) In 2000 the IMR for South Africa was 55 per 1000 live births (Guthrie. 2003: 19) while the U5MR in 2001 was 71 deaths per 1000 live births. This statistic placed South Africa 66th highest in terms of its U5MR in the world. (Biersteker. 2003: 10) Regarding childhood poverty, an absolute poverty line of R490 per month has been set. This is estimated as the amount needed to meet a child's basic needs. According to this poverty line, 14, 3 million or 75% of South African children under the age of eighteen years live in poverty. Furthermore, it is estimated that a child lives in extreme poverty if they live off less than R245 per

month. Of the 14, 3 million children living in poverty, 11 million are said to live in extreme poverty. (Martin. 2003: 37)

2.2. The effects of poverty on children

Research has found that poverty is associated with disease, a lower life expectancy, stigmatisation as well as psychological distress. (Barbarin & Richter. 2001: 174) These associations indicate that poverty is a risk factor for many adults as well as children within South Africa.

The nature of the community in which children live often determines what the impact of poverty will be on a child. This is because the way of life in a neighbourhood can either both protect and help children, or it can add to their deficiencies and vulnerabilities. However many of the home environments of poverty-stricken children in South Africa are found within informal settlements, which often expose these children to harsh conditions. (Richter. 1994: 36) If one looks at statistics of poverty and disadvantage in South Africa, many children can be seen as being at risk for “less than optimal psychological development.” (Dawes & Donald. 1994: 1) As it has been acknowledged that “growing up in poverty is the single most powerful and multi-faceted negative influence on psychological development.” (Dawes & Donald. 1994: 3) Poverty causes children to grow up in an environment that is damaging to their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development. (Bellamy 2005: 16)

It has however been found that poverty by itself is not always overwhelming as “some people can find within themselves and their community other resources that protect individual growth despite financial stresses.” (Berger. 2001:13) Unfortunately poverty is rarely found ‘by itself’, and is instead often closely linked to other social injustices.

2.2.1. Social problems linked to poverty

Life in the high stress environments created by poverty, exposes children to social and health risks. These are violence, child abuse and disease. During the apartheid years and especially between 1980 and 1994, violence in South Africa was characterised as being politically motivated. There has been a decline in political violence within the

country, but this has been replaced with economically motivated ethnic conflict as well as criminal violence in the form of murders, hijackings, robberies, etc. It is the poor, and particularly those who live in townships that are the most affected by crime and violence. (Barbarin & Richter. 2001: 66. 86) Poverty and high unemployment rates also increase the risk of violence against women,

...as they are often trapped in abusive relationships due to dependence on partners for food, shelter and money. Areas inhabited by the poor are less likely to have infrastructure such as street lighting and telephones, public transport and decent roads that facilitates crime prevention.

(May. 1998a: 25)

People who are struggling economically are also unlikely to be able to purchase private security of some kind. The result is that children grow up in an environment that is characterised by intimidation, fear and danger and this can harmfully affect the health and development of children. (Barbarin & Richter. 2001: 66)

Children in poor households are also vulnerable to conditions of abuse. Female children in particular face a high risk of sexual abuse. (May. 1998b: 117) There is no reliable way of calculating the level of child sexual abuse in South Africa, but all the signs suggest that it is a pervasive and increasing problem. In an article about child rape which was published in “The Pretoria News” in 2005, Captain Percy Morokane states that of the approximately 52 000 rape cases that are reported every year, in 40% of these cases (approximately 20 000 cases) the victims are under the age of 18 years. (Panoussian. 2005: 4) An organisation called Rape Crisis believes though that the figure for the total of all rapes that occur in South Africa each year is closer to one million. (Panoussian. 2005: 4)

Child sexual abuse is seen as being “interwoven with the pressures and deprivations of poverty and (it) forms part of the ‘culture of violence’ that has taken root in South Africa.” (Lofell. 2002: 11) It has been reported that child abuse and neglect occurs more often among parents who are economically deprived, as they are more vulnerable to the emotional stresses that are associated with poverty. (Richter. 1994: 38) Pelton has categorically stated that “... after years of study and research, there is no single fact about child abuse and neglect that has been better documented and established than their strong relationship to poverty and low income.” (Pelton **in**

Townsend & Dawes. 2004: 75) There are clearly factors related to poverty that can promote child sexual abuse. Family life within townships or economically deprived areas is often fragmented due to parents or a parent leaving the home in search of employment. There is then a lack of bonding with the parents or parent who has left the home, and this can predispose the parent to child abuse. There are also often either poor childcare facilities or simply a lack of supervision and monitoring while mothers are away at work or looking for employment. Overcrowded household conditions are also common among families living in poverty or in townships. (Magwaza. 1997: 165). Although living in crowded conditions is not necessarily negative regarding the healthy development of children, when it is associated with other problems such as alcohol abuse the risk for child sexual abuse does increase. Overcrowding within the home also "... limits the possibility of separation between sexualised adults or teenagers and children. Additionally, in these situations, co-sleeping is often necessary and may provide additional opportunities for sexual abuse." (Townsend & Dawes. 2004: 71) In the study "Experience and Perceptions of Poverty in South Africa", (May. 1998b) it was found that stepparents were often mentioned by children as being a source of threat or abuse. A particular association was also made between stepfathers and the sexual abuse of girls. (May. 1998b: 117)

Another risk which children are exposed to is HIV and AIDS. AIDS has a strong relationship to poverty, as those living in poverty seem to be the most infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. A factor contributing to this is that economically struggling parents often need to leave the home in search of employment in a nearby town or city. If one parent leaves and finds himself/herself in an unknown environment, sex can be used as a short-lived escape from this environment. The parent may contract the disease and then bring it with him into his/her family home. Sex can also be a commodity to sell for women who are in need of money for essentials. The stress that is related to poverty can also lead people to substance abuse, which in turn has a negative impact on safe sexual behaviour. HIV and AIDS also promotes poverty. This is as it leads to job and income loss, costly ill health and finally death which all contribute to hardship in the family. (Evian. 1993: 635-636) The loss of income and the support and care of parents or caregivers who are sick or dying, all create responsibilities for a child. These factors can then add to a child's vulnerability towards abuse, exploitation and neglect. (Dhabicharan & Van Niekerk.

2003:8) In a country where child sexual abuse as well as HIV infection is high, the victims of the assault are also at a high risk of being infected by HIV. (Keke. 2002:16)

Another risk that children living in conditions of poverty are exposed to is malnutrition. Malnutrition occurs when children receive an insufficient intake of calories, proteins, vitamins and minerals and it usually occurs within the context of poverty. For those individuals whose lives it does not claim, malnutrition has the potential to cause lasting damage to the development of the victims. (Duncan.1997: 194-195) In 1994, a national survey was taken on the nutrition of primary school children. This study found that one in every four children in South Africa was underweight, and that 1.5 million children were stunted due to long-term nutritional inadequacy. (Mvulane. 2003:13)

2.2.2. Psychological consequences of poverty

Living in poverty often places children in environments characterised by stressful conditions. Parents are often distracted and stressed by economic problems or by problems that might arise out of these, such as marital strife. This then leads a parent to be less responsive to a child's needs. The effect of this could arise in disruptions in the attachment system. As an infant, a child develops an attachment with his or her primary caregiver, which is usually the mother. Attachments are also developed in relation to people who are consistent in the child's life, but the relationship with the primary caregiver plays the most critical role. Children develop an "internal working model of relationships" based on the quality and nature of their early attachment to the primary caregiver. (Maldonado-Durán & Helmig. 2005: [online]) This "internal working model of relationships" serves as a guide for the child's future relationships and, depending on the nature of the attachment, they can be either negative or positive. A positive working model can lead a child to believe that people are trustworthy and can be confided in, whereas a negative working model will lead a child to see other people as untrustworthy and uncaring. (Maldonado-Durán & Helmig. 2005: [online]) It has been found that the difference between a secure and an insecure attachment "...provides insight into the ability of some people to overcome life's obstacles while others seem unable to do so." (Ziegler. 1998: [online])

It has also been documented that “poverty, unemployment and economic loss cause depression in parents.” (Richter. 1994: 42) This then also decreases their emotional availability and responsiveness to children. This is as prolonged stress reduces an individual’s self-confidence, and the lowering of ones self-esteem makes it difficult to recognise and acknowledge the situation and needs of others. Stress can also lead to fearfulness, anger, frustration and impulsive decision-making. This distress then leads to deeper stress. (Gama. 1990: 53)

From an early age, children who live in situations of poverty experience deprivation and a lack of safety and security. This is due to the breakdown of the family structure that often accompanies poverty. Children then become stressed themselves. If they express their feelings and are rebuffed by an adult who perhaps says that everything is ‘fine’, a child might then begin to internalise his/her emotions. The child could then begin to display symptoms of “... anxiety, fearfulness, tension, being withdrawn, sad and depressed or even distrusting of adults.” (Gama. 1990: 56) Children can also become hypersensitive as well as hyperactive and display conduct disorders such as aggression. (Gama. 1990: 56)

When parents are consumed by basic struggles for survival, it may be extremely difficult for ‘good enough parenting’ to occur. The term the “good enough mother” is one which psychologist D.W. Winnicott used to refer to adequate early care of an infant. (Winnicott in Winnicott et al. 1986: 119) Through the repetition of the satisfaction of the instinctual needs of the infant, the good-enough mother allows a child’s potential to develop. The good-enough mother understands and responds to a child’s spontaneous gesture while the not good-enough mother does not understand or react to the expressions of the child. The child is instead required to comply with the mother’s needs, and not the mother to the child’s needs. (Fonda. 1995: [online]) If not good-enough mothering takes place, as could easily occur in situations of poverty due to the stress that poverty could place on a mother, a child can create a ‘false self’ as opposed to a ‘true self’. The compliance of the infant to the mother’s needs is an expression of the false self. (Fonda. 1995: [online]) The false self is unconsciously developed as a defence mechanism to protect the true self against exploitation. When a child experiences depression, this can be denied through unconscious processes. The

false self will then display the opposite symptoms to that of the depression such as happiness instead of sadness. (Winnicott **in** Winnicott et al. 1986: 33)

The social risks that were discussed in the previous section all have emotional consequences which can negatively affect the child. Child abuse for example has many emotional problems that are associated with it. One that is of particular importance is that if the abuse of a child is not recognised, this child can then incorporate the experience into his or her personality. This can then lead to the child repeating the abuse gestures with younger children or with the next generation of children. This repetition can be done either through physical molestation of children or by underestimating abuse. When abuse is underestimated molestation can be seen as a normal experience, one that is unfortunate but not damaging to a child. The repetition of abuse can also be evident in that a parent can pretend not to see the abuse of his or her own children. (Miller **in** Dhabicharan. 2003: 23)

Malnutrition, which is essentially diagnosed in children through physical measurement, also has psychological consequences. Although stunted growth is not negative for a child's physical health, it could have negative implications on the child's psychological development, such as the development of self-esteem. (Duncan. 1997: 198) A malnourished child's immune system is also usually relatively underdeveloped, causing the child to be vulnerable to illness. When a child grows up in poverty, it is usually exposed to unhealthy conditions that promote the spread of illness. (Duncan. 1997: 198) A child who is often sick and consequently misses a lot of school, will not do as well as other children scholastically. This can also result in self-esteem problems.

Malnutrition affects the cognition of a child, as well as the child's emotional, motivational and social functions. The effects of malnutrition on children are visible through changes in social behaviours, and through changes in stress tolerance and coping. Attention, social responsiveness and emotional adjustment of the child is also considerably affected. (Griesel & Richter. 78-79) The short-term effects of malnutrition on children's social behaviour as well as emotional and motivational development include, "apathy, poor judgement, withdrawal, disorientation, a reduction in activity level, and poor attention spans." (Duncan. 1997: 200) The long-

term effects are more difficult to determine, as it is difficult to distinguish between the effects of prolonged exposure to poverty and disease and to malnutrition. Three effects have however been distinguished. These are “aggression, the release of latent behaviour abnormalities ... and a general orientation to mistrust of the world and others.” (Duncan. 1997: 201) These qualities of malnourished children, combined with the stressful effects of poverty, create circumstances in which normal mothering becomes difficult. This dysfunctional interaction between children and their mothers can lead to mothers that are less responsive, less sensitive to their children’s needs and less emotionally involved with their children than mothers in better circumstances. (Griesel & Richter. 1994: 81-82)

It is also argued that malnutrition and the conditions that malnourished children are subjected to, can resemble punishment to these children. They then assume that they did something wrong to warrant this treatment. However, as they can’t identify what it was that they did wrong they become confused, “and frequently experience pervasive feelings of worthlessness, resentment and anger.” (Duncan. 1997: 201)

When children are exposed to the social risks discussed earlier as a result of their poor living conditions, they eventually grow into adulthood within an atmosphere characterised by threat. This leads them to develop a general suspiciousness and an unwillingness to trust. Such a strategy would allow a child to cope during its everyday life, but it can also deprive children of valuable healing and growth opportunities in their relationships with others. (Higson-Smith & Killian. 2000: 203)

Children who grow up in poverty also have the tendency to either internalise or externalise their problems. They often live lives that are characterised by depression, anxiety and loneliness as well as social problems such as aggression. It has also been found that these children have a lower self-esteem than children whose parents do not have economic problems, and that the self-concept of children living in poverty is often affected by these conditions. (Huston. 1999: 395) Poverty, as well as the risks associated with it, disempowers children and leaves them vulnerable to many emotional problems.

2.3. Psychological difficulties that will be addressed through dramatherapy in the study

As discussed, there are a number of psychological difficulties connected to living in poverty. The main psychological difficulties that I will be focusing on are those of a negative self-concept and self-esteem. Feelings of worthlessness, resentment and anger may be experienced by the child and the experience of these emotions can result in aggression. This will also be noted in the study. I will also look at whether the disempowerment that a child living in poverty may experience, can be addressed through dramatherapy. By disempowerment I refer to the notion that children who live in situations of poverty often feel that they have no control over their own lives or the situation that they find themselves in.

In order to examine these psychological difficulties, I would first like to give a definition of the terms self-concept and self-esteem. The self-concept is the combined image of “what we think we are, what we think we can achieve, what we think others think of us and what we would like to be.” (Burns. 1979: introduction) It is the concept of the person that you think you are. It begins developing when one is still an infant through a process of interaction with persons as well as objects within the environment. (Burns. 1979: 148) The self-concept is a subtly changing dynamic process which continues developing throughout one’s life. (Burns. 1979: 66) Self-esteem is a component of the self-concept that has to do with the evaluation that the individual makes and maintains regarding itself. This evaluation expresses approval or disapproval regarding the individual. “...self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds.” (Coopersmith in Burns. 1979: 55) Brisset believes that the two basic psychological processes that create the self-esteem of an individual are those of self-evaluation and self-worth. (in Burns. 1979: 55) Self-worth has to do with a person being aware of themselves and being able to feel that they are effective or important. It involves being able to view the self as the master of your own actions and experiencing a sense of competence, as you do not have to depend on external support. (Burns. 1979: 56) By increasing a child’s self-esteem, the self-worth of the child will be affected and pervasive feelings of worthlessness would probably become less.

It has been found that a child's self-concept is similar to the view that they believe their parents have of them, and that a child's level of self-esteem is also associated with the parents' level of regard for them. (Burns. 1979: 210) A positive self-concept is associated with positive self-evaluation, self-respect, self-esteem and self-acceptance. A negative self-concept is "synonymous with negative self evaluation, self hatred, inferiority and a lack of feelings of personal worthiness and self acceptance." (Burns. 1979: 57)

The psychoanalyst Carl Jung views the concept of the self in a different manner. He said that two of the structures that form the self are the persona and the shadow. The persona can be seen as the role that one characteristically plays when relating to others, and it is the part of the self that accomplishes adaptation to society. There is a tendency for desirable traits to be built into the persona, while qualities which are perceived as undesirable or unacceptable are repressed or hidden from view. These qualities form the shadow. The shadow is unconscious, yet it is an active part of the self. The shadow does at times impinge on awareness, and when this occurs the self experiences feelings of guilt as well as fear that the repressed qualities will be discovered or exposed by others. Only by examining the contents of the shadow, and freeing "... the psychic energy tied up in..." it, (Stevens. 1990: 46) can a better balance be brought about within the personality. By doing this, a better adaptation to society can occur. (Stevens. 1990: 40-46) In a context of poverty where parents are unable or unwilling to allow their children to express the so called 'negative' feelings or parts of themselves, there is a danger that these parts of the child can become split off and denied. The child can also project these negative emotions onto other people in the environment such as other children or teachers, and this can contribute to the child experiencing feelings of aggression which can lead to violence. Furthermore, if the negative feelings or shadow aspects of the self are denied, the child can begin to identify completely with their persona. This can result in the child sacrificing the rest of the personality, and it "...imposes a harmful degree of constraint on the realization of one's unutilized potential." (Stevens. 1990: 42)

2.4. Combating poverty in South Africa

When a country has statistics of poverty such as that of South Africa, poverty cannot be ignored and much needs to be done to combat it. The South African government devotes considerable resources to social development such as education, health and basic services which include water, sanitation and electricity. It also has special poverty alleviation funds and runs poverty alleviation projects. (Pieterse & Van Donk. 2002: 4) An example of a project for poverty alleviation is the public works programme in which poor people are trained to do public work. Poverty is alleviated in two ways, firstly by providing paid employment and secondly by creating skills that will enable people to find employment after the public works' projects have been completed. (With our own hands. 2002: [online]) The Child Support Grant (CSG) is the largest poverty alleviation measure that government has implemented and which is targeted at children. This is primarily a cash grant system of R160 per month for children under the age of nine who qualify in terms of a means test. In 2003, the President announced that this grant would be extended to children under the age of fourteen years over a three-year period. Thus by 2005, thirteen year old children should also be able to access this grant. However by May 2003, just over 2.3 million children were receiving the Child Support Grant. Many more qualified for this grant but were excluded due to a lack of knowledge regarding the Child Support Grant. Others were also excluded as a result of the means test, and because of poor service delivery. (Martin. 2003: 37-39)

The South African National NGO Coalition, (SANGOCO), was created in 1995 to coordinate NGO input in serving the people of South Africa. It is SANGOCO's aim to support the government regarding ending poverty through "...meeting basic needs, restructuring the economy, democratising the state and strengthening civil society." (South African National NGO Coalition: [online]) There are many NGO's and businesses that strive to help end poverty through projects that they run, through creating employment opportunities and through education. There is also an institution, the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town, which runs a specific child poverty programme. This programme aims to mitigate and address the impact of high levels of poverty on children in South Africa. It does so by monitoring the government's poverty alleviation programmes as well as social security for children,

and through “conducting research and engaging in advocacy that informs appropriate legislative, policy and programme development and implementation. (Children’s Institute. 2004: 11)

During my research I noticed that many of the projects that have been implemented in South Africa to be used with children who live in poverty, often focus on the social problems that are linked to poverty. These are projects that, for example, teach the child how to protect oneself from violence or disease and who one can turn to when a problem arises. There are also many community development or urban renewal projects that generally focus on improving the quality of life in the focused area. When looking purely at poverty, many programmes are focused on the physical aspects of poverty such as feeding the hungry child. In the report, “Towards Equity in Health for the People of the Western Cape” by the African National Congress, it is stated that the Government’s Primary School Nutrition Programme feeds approximately five million school children in 14 001 primary schools. (African National Congress-Western Cape. 1999: [online]) A non-profit organisation that has been feeding underprivileged primary school children in the Western Cape for 46 years, is the Peninsula School Feeding Association. (PSFA) This organisation has been targeting the poorest schools since 1958, and providing the children in these schools with a nutritional snack in an effort to fulfil their motto that, “You can’t teach a hungry child.” They currently distribute to 507 schools and feed 107253 children every day. The organisation has also created community development projects such as organic community gardens and community kitchens in an effort to uplift the broader family environment of the child. (Peninsula School Feeding Association. [online])

Throughout my research I was unable to find information about any projects which seek to directly address the emotional effects of poverty with children. These may be indirectly addressed through projects that help children to deal with the effects of social problems related to poverty or through community development projects. “Often the physical needs (of a child) are most obvious, whereas the emotional, social and spiritual needs are often unintentionally neglected. (Jewitt. 2004: 16) It is probably also seen as more imperative to first address the physical needs of a child, and only after this has been done to address the emotional needs.

One-on-one therapy with a psychologist could be used within the school system to help children and adolescents who experience emotional needs related to poverty. This could however become quite costly. Group therapy might be considered a better therapy medium as more children or adolescents could receive an intervention during the same space of time. What interests me in this study, is the extent to which group dramatherapy may offer an effective therapeutic intervention with children who have emotional needs or are experiencing psychological difficulties related to their situation of poverty. More specifically, my aim was to help facilitate an exploration of the emotional issues relating to a negative self-concept and low self-esteem which may result from living in situations of extreme poverty. As the psychological difficulties and the life stage that children or adolescents might be experiencing could contribute to difficulties in the verbal expression of thoughts and feelings, a non-verbal intervention could be more useful. Dramatherapy could therefore play an important role as the use of a creative medium could help to lead clients safely into the arena of feelings and emotions. (Mond, 1995: 109)

2.5. What is dramatherapy?

It is quite difficult to give a single complete definition of dramatherapy, as there are different schools of dramatherapy and each school seems to focus on different aspects of the complex processes that this creative therapy involves. The definition which seems to be the most frequently used though, is that of David Read Johnson which says that:

Drama therapy² can be defined as the intentional use of creative drama towards the psychotherapeutic goals of symptom relief, emotional and physical integration, and personal growth. Drama therapy, like the other creative arts therapies (art, music and dance), is the application of a creative medium to psychotherapy. Specifically, drama therapy refers to those activities in which there is an established, therapeutic understanding between the client and therapist and where the therapeutic goals are primary, and not

² The phrase 'drama therapy' is used in the U.S.A. as opposed to 'dramatherapy' (one word), which is more commonly used in the U.K. The term 'drama therapy' will be used in this study only when directly quoting an author who uses this term.

incidental to the ongoing activity.

(Johnson. 1982: 83)

The British Association of Dramatherapists has the following definition of dramatherapy on their website:

Dramatherapy has as its main focus the intentional use of healing aspects of drama and theatre as the therapeutic process. It is a method of working and playing that uses action methods to facilitate creativity, imagination, learning, insight and growth.

(2004: [online])

The National Association for Dramatherapy also emphasises the intentional use of drama/theatre processes but says that the aim of dramatherapy is "... to achieve the therapeutic goal of symptom relief, emotional and physical integration and personal growth." (in Katz. 2000: [online]) In 1954 Peter Slade used the term "dramatherapy" to "... describe dramatic activity in education..." that can bring about the therapeutic goals of "confidence, hope, feeling of security, discovery of sympathy and concentration". (in Katz. 2000: [online]) These definitions emphasise the intentional use of drama and theatre processes as a means to achieve different therapeutic goals that are related to the self. Brenda Meldrum defines dramatherapy as:

... healing through drama allowing the client, with the use of dramatic structures, to receive insights and explore emotions in a special place in real and imaginary time, within a social encounter.

(1994: 19)

This definition will be the most useful for this study.

According to Dorothy Langley, one of the inherent differences between dramatherapy and different psychotherapies is that while the process in psychotherapies is language based, dramatherapy is able to treat clients who are unable or unwilling to speak. This is as drama consists of speech as well as mime, sound, gesture and body language. (in Meldrum. 1994: 18) Drama structures are used to enhance a client's creativity and expressive ability resulting in non-verbal and symbolic expression of emotion. Verbal emotional disclosure may also be encouraged by the dramatherapist, but this can also be done through the drama itself and not necessarily directly. (Meldrum. 1994: 16)

Dramatherapy can be used preventatively to maintain health, or it can be used curatively in work with disorder and problems. (Jennings & Minde. 1993: 17) The changes that can take place within clients that are taking part in a dramatherapy group, may be in awareness or in action. Through awareness the client may begin to view her relationship to herself, to others and to her environment differently.³ When change takes the form of action, the client may begin to act differently towards the self, others and the community. (Landy. 1994: 45) Dramatherapy can be used to treat groups and individuals, children as well as adults within many different settings such as hospitals, prisons, schools and outpatient clinics. (Johnson. 1982: 84) The different client populations that a dramatherapist can work with include the "... emotionally disturbed, developmentally disabled, physically disabled, hearing impaired and blind, elderly, abused, substance abusers, homeless mentally ill, incarcerated, and those experiencing posttraumatic stress disorder." (Landy. 1994: 53) Clients who do not suffer from specific disabilities, can be treated to explore a particular problem or can be guided to re-examine their lives.

One of the reasons why clients are treated through drama is "... because through their play and past dramatizations they have created a dysfunctional image of themselves in the world." (Landy. 1994: 48) Through dramatherapy, clients are able to re-create this image so that it can be "... reviewed, recognized, and integrated, allowing a more functional identity to emerge." (Landy. 1994: 48) The techniques that a dramatherapist can make use of in order for a client to re-create this image of themselves, vary depending on the client group and the issues involved. Some of these techniques can entail movement or vocal work, improvisation and role-play, mime, rituals, the use of scripted plays or myths. Props, costumes, material, masks, puppets and clay are a few of the tools that a dramatherapist can make use of. (McFarlane. 2005: 1)

In dramatherapy, "... the dramatic mode is provided as vehicle for the symbolic expression of repressed feelings." (Schiff. 2002: 26) Any problems that a client may need to deal with is brought into awareness through the use of drama in the session work. By doing this, a safe space is provided for what could be a difficult experience.

³ To avoid confusion the client as well as the dramatherapist will be referred to in the female form during this study. This does not however mean that dramatherapists or their clients are only female.

Through warm-up games and acting exercises the client is able to develop their body and voice. This allows for a greater range of expression and when used within the drama, themes that were intolerable before are able to be experienced and communicated. (Jennings & Minde. 1993: 20) “The theatrical distancing enables this to happen in a contained way; as in the theatre, no-one is totally involved.” (Jennings & Minde. 1993: 20)

Improvisation and role-play are often used by dramatherapists as a method to encourage the self-expression of individuals. In improvisational work, the role that one chooses to play or the image that one chooses to create is often closely connected to the real self. This is “... as there is no script to give it any other content.” (Johnson. 1982: 84) Through the use of role-play, aspects of the self can also emerge as the client consciously or unconsciously projects her experiences into the role or enactment that is taking place. The client will normally not experience a situation such as this as completely exposing the self, as the revealing takes place under the concealment of role and acting. This dramatic distance that is created, is what gives so much power to dramatherapy and which is paradoxically why clients often feel that it is a ‘safe’ form of therapy. (Johnson. 1982: 85)

Another important aspect of dramatherapy is the use of symbol and metaphor. One way in which a symbol can function, “... is as a form which represents something else.” (Jones. 1996: 221) A symbol could also represent a concept, or it could have many potential meanings. A metaphor involves bringing two different objects together as a result of their “metaphoric connection”, a particular contact that they have in common. (Jones. 1996: 221-223.) Bettelheim said that children like to hear stories as through the “fairytale internal processes are externalised and become comprehensible.” (in Jones. 1996: 225) In dramatherapy, through the structure of theatre plays, rituals and myths, a client is able to engage with symbols and dramatic metaphor. By exploring these on a verbal as well as a physical level, they are able to link their inner and outer world experiences and “... to come face-to-face with the unfaceable.” (Jennings & Minde. 1993: 27) The physical embodiment of the character and scenario which involves the clients’ senses and thoughts “... allows both an inner expansion of experience and an outer clarification of perception.” (Jennings in Jennings. 1992: 5) “Participants can make use of the symbols (characters, content) in

the story to process personal material without having to expose themselves directly.” (Schiff. 2002: 27)

2.5.1. The use of dramatherapy with children and adolescents

It is widely believed that the play of children has an important role in their cognitive, emotional and social development. (Oren. 1995: 41) This play develops very early in life and progresses through three stages, that of embodiment (body play), projection (projective play) and role (dramatic play). (Jennings. 1995: 97) The passage through these stages contributes to the emergence of a child’s character, as through play children reorganise their experiences. They learn to differentiate between the self and what is outside the body, and through this they begin to develop a sense of self as well as a view of the world. (Oren. 1995: 41)

Through dramatic play children begin to test reality and they create a space in which they can experiment with life and explore choices. (Jennings. 1995: 98) Young children also use play to increase their role repertoire. However children who have been emotionally deprived may also have been deprived of the opportunity to play and may have received little encouragement to experiment with roles. (Bannister. 1995: 172) Dramatherapy can give such a child an opportunity to play as well as to practise new roles. Play occurs in dramatherapy for both adults and children on a practical as well as a conceptual level. Practically, a dramatherapy session incorporates forms of playing such as games during the warm up and maybe play activities during the session. On a conceptual level, dramatherapy involves “... clients in a playful relationship with themselves, other group members and reality.” (Jones. 1996: 175)

As a child grows and matures she reaches adolescence and becomes caught in the transition from childhood to adulthood. During this period the adolescent often experiences insecurities and problems regarding identity and the self. (Jennings. 1995: 99) The adolescent may also struggle with the need to communicate and express their internal world. Emunah states that this is difficult for the adolescent as they are not yet able to reflect with perspective and distance on their thoughts and emotions and as a result struggle to articulate verbally what they think and feel. (1990: 102) A creative

medium such as drama can be effectively used in providing a means to express the internal chaos that the adolescent might be experiencing. Furthermore, adolescence is also a period during which heightened creativity is experienced. (Emunah. 1995: 153) Drama can be used by the adolescent to test possible life choices and to experiment with different roles before doing so in reality.

In an adolescent dramatherapy group the members of the group will often fear that too much self-disclosure will happen too fast. (Bannister. 1995: 183) Work with such a group could begin by incorporating stories and images rather than personal material so that the group members can begin their exploration of self through the use of symbol and metaphor. There is also a frequent shift in adolescent dramatherapy between concealing pain through the adoption of a "...tough, impenetrable persona" to eventually revealing the vulnerable self that is underneath this. (Emunah. 1995: 162) Through dramatherapy, drama can be used as a vehicle to help adolescents during this life stage.

From this it is clear that adolescents and children often need attention in areas other than their academic work. It is also often adolescents who come from underprivileged areas that are in need of the most help. School years can therefore be a critical time for both children and adolescents to receive preventative attention so that they can mature into healthy adults. Feldman and Sussman Jones feel that this attention could be provided by dramatherapists within the school setting. (2000: 343) Landy also writes that dramatherapy researchers often conclude that the techniques used in dramatherapy are powerful diagnostic and treatment tools. It is also stated that these tools should be used "...more frequently as part of a team approach..." in settings such as schools. (1984: 96)

2.6. The use of group therapy with children and adolescents

It has been found that group therapy with children and adolescents can be a very effective therapeutic intervention. A small therapy group can have a resemblance to the natural peer group of a child or adolescent, making group therapy more attractive to them than individual therapy. In an individual therapy setting, the difference between the status of the adult therapist and the child can become too obvious. The

group setting more closely imitates the real world of a child or adolescent which naturally consists of different groups. (Dwivedi. 1993: 10) It is through the experience of interacting with those in your environment that one develops a sense of self. (Hargreaves in Dwivedi. 1993: 3) Through the group therapy experience one is able to explore this sense of self through interactions with members of the group, the members of a “small temporary society” that has been created. (Jacobson in Dwivedi . 1993: 38) Because the therapy takes place within this small society, the leap between one’s therapy life and one’s life outside within the larger society is smaller. This makes the integration of change in all aspects of one’s life slightly easier. (Chesner 1995: 128-129)

“Effective group work can enhance social skills, self-esteem and reality testing.” (Dwivedi. 1993: 9) Group therapy has also been found to be effective in improving problems of disruptive behaviour, increasing social acceptance and in enhancing the self-concept. (Dwivedi & Mymin. 1993: 47) The group experience can also “... reduce the sense of isolation, normalise responses and mobilise mutual support and acknowledgement of each other’s needs and experiences.” (Dwivedi. 1993: 9)

Group work with children and adolescents has a tendency towards action, incorporating non-verbal modes of communication and expression. This occurs as the conceptual and linguistic abilities of children are still in the process of evolving. (Dwivedi. 1993: 8) Because dramatherapy makes use of non-verbal modes of expression, its use within the group therapy structure with children and adolescents can be very effective.

2.7. The application of dramatherapy to treat the emotional effects of poverty in children and adolescents

Children who live in situations of poverty can often experience the feeling that they have a lack of control over their own life. This can lead them to harbour much resentment and anger towards those around them. They might try to cope with these feelings of resentment and anger by acting-out and rebelling or by resorting to aggression. Emunah states that when an adolescent’s “... sense of personal power and control” is blocked, the rebellious behaviour of the adolescent can become harmful.

(1985: 72) “When even the rebelliousness is experienced as fruitless, then hopelessness, despair and self-destructive behaviour often result.” (Emunah. 1985: 72)

Through the behaviour of acting out or aggressively lashing out, the individual does not learn about the self or learn mastery over the self and her experiences. As the language of acting out and aggression is basically action, this drive towards active aggression could be channelled through dramatherapy so that the individual can learn to make better use of her feelings. The child or adolescent can translate the acting out into acting, and express themselves in their own language within the safe contained structure of dramatherapy. (Emunah. 1995: 154-155) Physical aggression can also be contained within dramatherapy, but only after firm boundaries regarding safety are created. Participants in the group may then be allowed to work together and create a ritualised ‘dance’ using ‘weapons’ for example such as sticks. Through the enactment of this, feelings of resentment and anger may be released within the safe ritualised setting of the group. The aggressive energy can also be channelled into creative energy through the creation of the ‘dance’.

A child or adolescent who experiences anger but who represses the emotion instead of expressing it, is doing harm to the self. “We must recognize that it (anger) can harm almost any part of our body or influence our emotions and eventually our minds if a sufficient amount is accumulated.” (Madow. 1972: 71.) By not expressing anger, the anger or aggressive feelings that the child may be experiencing are kept inside and become directed towards the self. This can result in depression (Berkowitz. 1993: 64 & Madow. 1972: 87) or somatic complaints such as headaches or gastrointestinal disorders. (Madow. 1972: 73-75) If one takes it to the furthest extreme, the anger that has caused depression can result in suicide. “Suicide among children and adolescents in South Africa is on the increase and children as young as 10 years old have committed suicide.” (Pauw. 2005: [online]) According to Professor Lourens Schlebusch, 9% of deaths in young South African people, especially black youth, are due to suicide. Black youths are at a particular risk of suicide due to educational and socio-economical demands that are placed on them, as well as high unemployment rates and their expectations that are often not met. (Schlebusch in Pauw. 2005: [online])

Through acting and dramatic play a wide range of emotions can be expressed while at the same time the individual is distanced from these emotions. Instead of total immersion in an emotion such as anger, the actor is aware of herself and there is a level of disengagement that prevents the actor from becoming engulfed in the action. “Strong feeling is not suppressed but mastered.” (Emunah. 1995: 154) Through channelling the aggression and rage, an opportunity is given for the underlying conflicts and emotions to surface so that they can be examined, explored and dealt with in a constructive manner. The distance provided by the art form of drama allows a sense of internal control to develop within the client. The expression of emotion also becomes associated with creativity rather than aggression and children as well as adolescents “...learn that they can be actors rather than reactors.” (Emunah. 1995: 155-158)

Emotionally disturbed adolescents will frequently display a high level of resistance to treatment. (Emunah 1985: 71) This is particularly true for adolescents who have been challenged by difficult and traumatic life experiences, as is the case of children who have grown up in an environment characterised by poverty. (Feldman & Sussman Jones. 2000: 336) Emunah describes resistance as “the organized attempt at opposing the processes of becoming aware of the emergence of unconscious forces.” (in Feldman & Sussman Jones. 2000: 336) It has been found though that group dramatherapy can be effective in working through resistance. In a more traditional setting a therapist might respond to resistance by using positive and negative reinforcement, setting limits and imposing their authority. The dramatherapist can however work with resistance by allowing the client to act as she feels, by creating a permissive setting in which all attitudes and emotions can be expressed within the controlled setting of the group. By working with the resistance, the client’s attempt to resist is almost co-operative and through this she can now begin to focus on other areas or problems. By working with resistance rather than against it, the dramatherapist also loses the stigma of being an authority figure as no one is forced into doing things. (Emunah. 1985: 73-74)

A child or adolescent can also make use of resistance as a defence mechanism when anxieties regarding the live performances, which are naturally linked to drama, come

into play. This is especially true concerning a child who has a low self-esteem. By making use of exercises especially in the beginning of the session where the emphasis is not on performance, the potential for a child to become caught up in this self-consciousness can be avoided. (Emunah. 1985: 74) An example of such an exercise is one that takes on the format of a dramatic guessing game. In an exercise such as this, the focus will be shifted from the acting and on to the act of guessing what the other members of the group are enacting.

A child who feels that within her everyday existence she does not have choice, will also experience that she has no control over her life. By incorporating the element of choice into work with clients, the dramatherapist is able to address the issue of empowering the child. (McFarlane. 2005: 18) Through dramatic play the client can be enabled to experience a degree of control over their situation by working with specific scenes which deal with control in their environment, (Emunah. 1985: 74) or by making use of myths and plays which deal with control and mastering the self. Clients can then be given a choice as to which role they would like to play and be given freedom in their enactment of the myth. They can even choose not to participate and to rather watch the enactment. By doing so they still take on a role even if they are unaware of this, the role of the audience in the play. As a result of the dramatic distancing that is present during the enactment, self-observation is also almost unavoidable. This degree of awareness that is present in the child or adolescent allows her to feel more in control in the situation and to be able to take on responsibility for their actions. (Emunah. 1990: 104)

The client can also be given the opportunity to replay events from their own lives in dramatherapy. “By replaying events which hold emotional tension within a safely structured framework the child can also regain some of the control which he has lost in real life.” (McFarlane. 2005: 15) Through giving a child choice and control within her own life, the self-esteem and self-confidence of the child rises. (McFarlane. 2005: 18)

Bernie Warren sees the essence of drama as being the communication of our imagination. This communication occurs through our actions and it “... affects our inter-actions with others, whether this be on stage or in our daily lives.” (Warren.

1993: 112) As mentioned before, it is through our interactions with others and our environment that the self-concept develops. It can therefore be argued that if dramatherapy affects and maybe changes our interactions with others, then a change in self-concept could occur.

An adolescent or child who suffers from low self-esteem can experience anxiety regarding the element of performance which is used in dramatherapy. When the ridicule and failure that the child might anticipate does not occur, growth in self-confidence could occur. Furthermore, as the child develops confidence in the therapist and the group that her creative work will not be criticised and that the work will be kept confidential, the child will begin to feel secure enough to invest a part of herself into the creative work. This can result in an extended growth of confidence and a growth in self-esteem. (Warren. 1993: 7) When improvisational drama is used in a session, the client creates the performance as well as performs it with her own body. As a result, ownership is nearly unavoidable. “The self is the material of the creation, and the self is being applauded. The impact on self-image is extraordinarily powerful.” (Emunah & Johnson. In Cossa. 1992: 54)

Dramatic enactment can also offer the child or adolescent an opportunity for emotional release and catharsis. As this occurs within a contained environment there is a sense of mastery over emotion for the individual, a feeling of internal control that is developed. (Emunah. 1995: 156) By allowing a child to experience this, the self-worth of the child can be addressed. The client also develops a sense of mastery and self-esteem through the creation of a creative work or product, as this work reflects achievement back to the self. This element of dramatherapy is especially significant to adolescents “... who did not receive secure, empathic parental care in their early years, particularly in infancy when their need for admiration was not responded to and ‘mirrored’” (Emunah. 1990: 104) In the research on the psychological effects of poverty on children, the lack of parental care resulting from the difficult circumstances were discussed. One can therefore assume that adolescents who have grown up in an environment characterised by poverty could find much value in the dramatherapist’s regard for their artistic product, as well as the self that it reflects back to them and that this in turn could help to increase self-worth.

Individuals often internalise the projection or image that other people, especially parents, have of them. Through the internalisation, this projection is incorporated into ourselves. Through role-play, the client can explore different roles such as daughter, sister, friend; and re-evaluate the roles that they feel they are restricted in. By doing this, the client is able to put aside the elements that do not belong to the self, perhaps the projected image of significant others, and is able to gradually re-shape or re-interpret their self-image. (Jennings & Minde. 1993: 128) By playing different roles the client is also able to increase her role repertoire. Through doing this the client can begin to examine the different aspects of their being and this can lead to an increasing sense of connectedness with others. (Emunah. 1994: 12)

Adolescents also often experience a discrepancy between how they perceive themselves and how they believe others perceive them. This self-perception can be explored through various dramatherapy techniques. An example of such a technique is mask making. The use of sculpturing, by 'moulding' other group members who allow their bodies to become like soft clay, into certain images or the creation of self-sculptures through objects found in the room can also be used to explore the self. When the exploration of self-perceptions takes place within a group setting, the adolescent can receive immediate feedback from other group members. They may perhaps respond to the sculpture or mask by saying something like "I know that part of you..." or "I've never seen that side of you before..." (Emunah. 1995: 161) "The experience of having others see and accept the many parts of oneself cannot be overestimated; it stands among the most significant aspects of psychotherapy." (Emunah. 1995: 161)

The experience of empathy is seen by Emunah as even more important than the experience of acceptance discussed above. (Emunah. 1995: 161-162) The emotions that are communicated through live performances in dramatherapy heighten the experience of empathy, as those who are watching are able to easily find aspects in the performance with which they identify or that move them. As the outer impenetrable wall of the individual is being broken down and she begins to reveal her true self, the empathy which is communicated by the therapist and by group members "... facilitates the development of self-acceptance and esteem, and contributes to the overall therapeutic process of mastering internal turmoil via external, creative

expression.” (Emunah. 1995: 163) In an environment that is characterised by empathy, dramatherapy clients are able to “... unearth, express, and tolerate denied pain and repressed roles.” (Emunah. 1995: 164) The empathy and support from the group which creates this environment, is communicated through both the verbal and non-verbal responses of the group members during discussions as well as through their role-playing. (Emunah. 1995: 165)

Through role-play and character work within the dramatherapy setting, personal material of a client can be dealt with in various ways. This can then lead a client to developing a greater awareness of her self, and her relationship to family and friends as well as to her history. (Warren. 1993: 113) Feelings that are not easily expressed can be communicated both to group members as well as to the self through the art form of drama. By using drama to externalise the internal experience, issues and feelings can be identified as well as made clear to the client and the inner experience can be better understood and incorporated into the whole. The fullness of this experience is furthermore witnessed and comprehended by others in the group. (Emunah. 1995: 158)

As has been discussed, there is a transformative and very powerful process involved in dramatherapy. Jones explains this as follows:

The process of being involved in making drama, the potential creative satisfaction of enactment, can be transformative. In part this is due to a transformation of identity – the artist in the client is fore-grounded within drama therapy. The creation of dramatic products, the involvement in dramatic process, can bring together a combination of thinking, feeling and creativity.

(In Novy. 2003: 206)

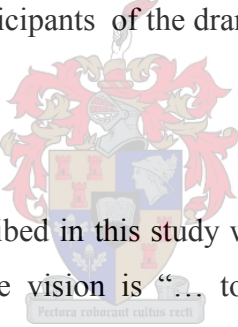
This then leads to further transformative potential in the way an individual sees herself as well as the manner in which she responds to herself and her environment.

CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH SETTING

Case studies are often utilised as instruments for qualitative research and are considered as particularly appropriate when used in a study that attempts to provide evidence in support of an existing theory. In such an instance, a case study involves "... an intensive study of an individual or group within a particular context" (Schiff. 2002: 31) and this provides a basis for generalisation to the theoretical propositions. (Schiff. 2002: 31-32)

The purpose of the case study used in this thesis is not to test whether dramatherapy used as a therapeutic intervention with children living in poverty 'works' or not. It is rather used as a means to illustrate how the dramatherapy process can unfold, and also how the self can be revealed through the medium of drama when applied therapeutically. There is also an attempt to explore the extent to which a sense of self has developed in some of the participants of the dramatherapy group.

3.1. The School Situation



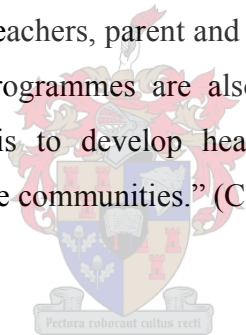
The dramatherapy sessions described in this study were conducted at a rather special school in Cape Town where the vision is "... to break the cycle of poverty by equipping children with tools to build a life of dignity, success and self-sufficiency." (To safeguard the anonymity of the participating children, all sources of information regarding the school will be kept confidential.) The pupils who attend the school come from impoverished communities within a ten-kilometre radius of the school. In these communities "...families are caught in cycles of poverty, violence, neglect, HIV/Aids and other diseases, unemployment, substance abuse, gangsterism, illiteracy and other social ills." (Confidential source.) The basic needs of the children for safety, regular meals, hygiene and parental love and care are often not met at home. As a result of this, the school does not simply focus on teaching and cognitive growth, but takes on a more holistic approach. For most children the school is their primary source of nutrition. The school follows a balanced eating plan and provides their learners with breakfast, lunch and snacks each day. The school also employs an onsite physician to treat illness and injuries, to ensure that the learners are immunised according to World Health Organisation inoculation standards and to provide regular

medical check-ups. As the social problems that the learners experience at home can impact negatively on their education, a social worker is also employed by the school to help alleviate these problems.

The criteria used for the selection of learners to attend the school include age appropriateness, the geographical area of the child's parents and academic readiness. A poverty level is also taken into account. The total household income needs to be below R1500 per month for a child to be considered for the school. Other aspects are how fixed a child's home is as this affects attendance, and whether there is a reasonable semblance of family life. The parents or caregiver must also give an indication that they have a desire for their child to rise above his/her circumstances.

If a child is accepted into the school, their daily transport to and from school, school uniforms, books and stationary, school fees as well as meals are all provided free of charge. Regular home visits by teachers, parent and community outreach programmes as well as parent mentoring programmes are also provided by the school. "The ultimate aim (of the school) is to develop healthy citizens, functional homes, empowered individuals and stable communities." (Confidential source.)

3.2. The Dramatherapy Group



The dramatherapy group analysed in this study commenced on the 4th of May 2005 and the last session took place on the 26th of October 2005. A total of twenty-three sessions were conducted throughout the year. Permission for this study was obtained in writing from the headmaster of the school. When a child is enrolled in the school, the parent(s) or legal guardian of the child gives consent that the child may receive intervention aimed at improving his/her physical and mental well being. Consent is given when the parent signs a 'permission to treat' form. (See appendix A) This consent had been given for each of the group participant's.

The group members were selected in the following manner. The school social worker first identified a number of girls who she had assessed and whom she felt would be suitable for a dramatherapy group. The social worker then provided information regarding these girls and their histories for Heather Schiff, a trained dramatherapist

and clinical psychologist. Ms Schiff then met with the social worker to discuss which of the girls she felt, according to the information provided, would be most suited to a group dramatherapy process. An important consideration was the combination of the girls in the group and how these girls would participate in a group setting. For example, girls with very disruptive or anti-social behaviour traits were not selected for the group. The girls that had been selected through this process were then informed by the social worker about the dramatherapy group, and were given an option to participate. The group consisted of six female participants who all attend the school described above. Five of the participants were in grade 8 and one was in grade 7. Their ages range between twelve and thirteen. All six of the participants come from impoverished communities and experience emotional difficulties. In accordance with ethical guidelines, all of the participant's names were changed when writing-up the study and care has been taken to conceal identifying details in order to respect confidentiality.

Brief biographical reports of the participants, compiled from my own observations, the school's social worker's report on each participant as well as feedback from the teachers, are as follows:

Nomaphela is a grade 8 learner who has a strong personality and is described as a committed student. She was raped by her stepfather in March and December of 2004. She revealed this after the second rape. Her mother was very supportive of Nomaphela and reported the stepfather to the police. He was also asked to leave their home immediately. Nomaphela likes to take on the role of leader and to be the centre of attention. A teacher remarked that Nomaphela wants the attention on her all the time, whether this is negative or positive attention. She can also be manipulative at times.

Rashida, a grade 8 learner, was considered for the group after she expressed her feelings of guilt and responsibility towards her mother who suffered from lupus disease. This is as she overheard her mother tell another person that the disease struck while she was pregnant with Rashida. To compensate, Rashida took on the role of prominent caregiver in the home. A week before the dramatherapy sessions commenced, Rashida's mother passed away. As a result Rashida missed a lot of

school and also missed ten of the twenty dramatherapy sessions that are discussed in the case study. She still takes on the role of the main caregiver in the home. Some of the teachers feel that Rashida is struggling to deal with the death of her mother, while others feel that she manipulates situations.

Lana is a grade 8 learner with a sensitive character who is emotionally very insecure. This insecurity is related to inconsistencies around her mother who is a single parent. There is often conflict between her mother and extended family members. When this occurs Lana's mother will leave the home for a few days at a time without communicating to Lana that she is leaving or where she is going. During these times Lana becomes very insecure and is affected by anything that she perceives as negative. It is also reported that her mother has a drinking problem. The school views Lana as a talented singer and dancer and as a committed student who shows great potential.

Julia is a grade 8 learner who was involved in a number of code-of-conduct violations at the school. In the six months before the group began there was a rapid decrease in incidents and Julia began to show that she wanted to improve her behaviour and rather focus on her academic programme. Her mother operates a tuck shop from home and provides strong support for Julia. A school interviewer however commented that the mother can be overly critical at times.

Bonokuhle is a grade 7 learner. Her father passed away in 2001 and she now lives with her mother. There are approximately seven other people also living in their home but this number is not consistent. The basics are not always available in their home. Her mother has an active social life and there have been problems with supervision. Bonokuhle was raped twice by two different perpetrators and has been struggling to come to terms with the incidents. She has however shown signs of being protective towards the perpetrators. After our 13th session she reported to the school's social worker that she had been raped again by one of the same perpetrators as before. Bonokuhle went through a stage of being absent often and was not present for six dramatherapy sessions.

Tasneem is a grade 8 learner whose parents separated three years ago. She and her younger sibling do not see their father regularly. Tasneem takes on a lot of responsibility in the home and often has to act as the communicator between her parents. As a result she has become emotionally drained. When she and her younger sibling were enrolled in the school, it was made quite clear to the teachers that the mother sees Tasneem as weaker than her sibling, academically speaking too. It also seemed that both siblings were aware of this perception. However in reality Tasneem seems to be a very intelligent, sensitive and thoughtful young girl.

3.3. The Dramatherapy Sessions

The dramatherapy sessions were held once a week, at the same time each week and in the same venue, the school library. During school holidays the sessions were cancelled. Heather Schiff supervised and took part in the sessions. Myself and two other Masters students from the University of Stellenbosch planned and took turns in leading the sessions. After the ninth session one of these students left the group because of personal reasons.

Our general aim for the dramatherapy group was to create a contained space for self expression, in the absence of other safe spaces in the lives of the participants. We hoped that the participants would be able to find stability in the structure that we created and that through this they would be able to gain insight into their feelings. All of the group participants were struggling with emotional problems and had received no, or very little, intervention to try and deal with these. It was our aim that through dramatherapy the participants would be able to make use of the space to come to terms with their pasts and begin to integrate past negative experiences. By doing this they would perhaps be able to find strength in the positive aspects of themselves, and this could lead to an increase in self-esteem.

Specific aims were created for each session based on what had occurred in the previous session and on what we felt needed to be brought into the space in an attempt to work towards our general aim. By creating a session specific aim, we were able to decide on what to plan for each session in an attempt to reach these aims.

The dramatherapy model employed in the sessions was a combination of two theoretical approaches. The first of these approaches was the “Integrative Five Phase” approach which was developed by Renee Emunah and is based on humanistic and developmental principles. (Johnson. 2000: 10) In this model the dramatherapy progresses along five phases. The first phase is dramatic play. Dramatic play is the main component of general play and it has a basis in impersonation, identification and projection. (Emunah. 1994: 4) During this first phase a creative, playful environment is established and there is an attempt to create a sense of freedom. Spontaneity and interaction is also encouraged in the group. (Emunah. 1994: 6) In the second phase scene work or developed enactments predominate. This stage allows for a fuller expression of the self through the embodiment of roles and scenes, while at the same time one is being released from ownership as the self is expressed via these roles and scenes. The third phase is characterised by role-play. In this phase actual interactions and situations can be replayed and rehearsed. Through enacting dramatic scenes greater self-awareness and insight into roles can occur and participants can become aware of their responses to others, their patterns and their habitual scripts. (Emunah. 1994: 13-14)

Phase four of this model makes use of psychodrama and in phase five there is an emphasis on dramatic ritual. “Rituals serve as a container for the powerful and often untranslatable feelings, images, and unconscious associations that emerge during the therapeutic process.” (Emunah. 1994: 22) Although we made use of dramatic ritual throughout the dramatherapy process, we did not incorporate the last two phases of this model in our work with the dramatherapy group.

The second model that we incorporated was the Sesame Method. “Dance movement and mime, which rely on gesture, non-verbal sound and touch, form the basic language of Sesame session work...” (Pearson 1996: 8) The Sesame Method makes use of the art forms of both movement and drama as the language or means of communication between the therapist and her clients. There is an aim to allow clients to become comfortable with more symbolic forms of expression, and in doing so to create a link between the conscious and unconscious sides of oneself which can then lead to a more integrated state. Personal material is not approached on a literal level, but rather through its symbolic equivalent. (Dekker 1996: 40) This approach also

places emphasis on the use of myth enactment as part of the therapy process. (Watts. 1996: 28) The use of symbolism became an important part of our dramatherapy sessions as we found that there was a resistance by participants in the group to deal in more direct means with their problems. As a result, the fourth phase of the process with the group could be seen as being characterised largely by symbolic play. During the last phase of the sessions there was a focus on the termination of the dramatherapy process and the emotions that may be evoked within the group by this.

In order to create a feeling of safety, a verbal contract was created during an initial meeting between the group facilitators and the group's participants. This contract was first discussed by everyone present. It was then decided that, regarding the contract, all matters discussed in the group would be kept confidential by everyone involved in the group. The facilitators would only approach the school social worker if information divulged in the group led to concern regarding a group participant. The final point was that all input in the sessions from the group members would be accepted in a non-judgmental manner.

To further promote a feeling of safety and containment, a session structure was decided on and then used each week. Each session began with the same opening ritual. The group would stand in a circle and each participant was given the opportunity to say "I am ... (their name) and I'm feeling...". This was then followed by a movement to reflect how they were feeling. The whole group would then copy this movement and reflect it back to the participant. This ritual was followed by a warm-up. Usually the exercises chosen for this phase would have a sense of playfulness to it, but it would also relate to what we were planning for the main part of the session. The exercises chosen for this phase would often incorporate ideas to be used in the main part of the session. The main part of the session would be the exercise which was focused towards the session specific aim. This was followed by the ending of the session. To end the session a space was provided for the participants to communicate verbally to us their feelings as to what we had done in the session. This was then usually followed by the 'magic box', an imaginary box that was created for the participants to place anything that they wanted to into it. An ending ritual was created together and we did this ritual to end each session.

Feedback to the school regarding the dramatherapy process was provided by means of a general feedback session with some of the school teachers. This feedback focused on what dramatherapy is and some basic frameworks of dramatherapy that we had been using. We did not discuss any specifics of the group as we were concerned about maintaining confidentiality, especially among the teachers who knew the students. However, throughout the duration of the group we stayed in close contact with the social worker, and alerted her if one of the group participants had experienced a difficult session or if we were concerned about a group member.

The data used in the case study has been drawn from descriptive notes that were compiled immediately after each session within a supervisory space, as well as from weekly therapy reports which were compiled after each session. These therapy reports were compiled individually and they incorporated detailed information as to what occurred during the sessions. For the purposes of this case study only selected material will be utilised from these reports.



CHAPTER 4: CASE ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The case analysis looks at four different phases of the project. Each phase is characterised by the main dramatherapy method used in the exercises chosen for the different stages of the process. These phases are not mutually exclusive and there is a constant interplay and cross-referencing between the four different methods that were employed.

The case analysis will focus on what the group members expressed in the sessions, and how this can relate to the self as well as to their home environments. The roles that the participants chose within enactments are also noted, as these could link to the roles that they habitually play in life. The sessions are also written up chronologically to provide an insight into the way in which a dramatherapy process unfolds. The interpretations of what the group members brought to the sessions and that are presented in this case study, were jointly made by the university students and Heather Schiff, in an attempt to make sense of what was happening in the group. These interpretations were not always reflected back to the group.

During the course of the analysis the group participants are at times referred to as ‘the girls’ and myself and the other university students as ‘students’. When the terms ‘us’ or ‘we’ is used, this refers to Heather Schiff as well as myself and the other two students.

The use of italics in this chapter indicates the description of what occurred in a session. This information was drawn from descriptive notes and weekly therapy reports. The normal lettering is used to discuss what occurred in a session as well as any theories or interpretations that could be related to this.

4.2. Phase 1: Dramatic Play

There had been an initial meeting two weeks before the first dramatherapy session between us and the participants in which we explained what we were going to be doing during the sessions. Bonokuhle had been unable to make this first meeting.

***Session 1:** Our aim for this session was to get to know each other better and to begin to introduce the use of drama for healing and self-expression through the use of dramatic play. Rashida was absent for the first session as her mother had passed away the previous week. The rest of the group arrived looking quite nervous. The two other students and myself, who were to be leading the group, were also feeling very apprehensive.*

Although I had an understanding of the dramatherapy process as a result of being a participant in a dramatherapy group the previous year during the course work aspect of my structured Masters, I was unsure as to how this process would need to be adjusted to relate to a younger age group. I was also feeling very uncertain as to how I would relate to these younger girls who come from very different backgrounds to me. The apprehension that I experienced also stemmed from my uncertainties regarding what to say or do during the sessions and I was feeling very anxious that I would do something wrong. The apprehension that the other two students and I were experiencing could also be a reflection of what the group participants were feeling. If the overwhelming emotion amongst the girls was of anxiousness, then we might have responded to this by experiencing these emotions ourselves.

Bonokuhle was welcomed into the group and the other group members were asked if they could tell her anything about our initial meeting. Nomaphela began to tell Bonokuhle about the games that we had played the week before. We introduced a game that later became our feeling ritual. At this stage it was still a verbal exercise that we used to see how the members of the group were feeling. The participants would stand in a circle and then take turns to say "I feel..." and the whole group would then repeat what they feel. Both Lana and Julia mentioned physical pains as what they were feeling. This was followed by drama and theatre games which were focused on getting to know each other better.

Physical pains, feeling ill or being very tired was often mentioned by group members during the first few sessions, most notably by Tasneem. She often complained of headaches and backache. This led us to think that perhaps she was experiencing psychosomatic pains due to unexpressed emotions, especially anger. This idea was later also expressed by some of her teachers during a feedback session. The tiredness that was also often expressed by the participants could be related to sleep deprivation, especially during the cold winter months as the sleeping situations within the girls homes are perhaps not ideal. We do know that Bonokuhle for example often stays awake at night waiting for her mother to come home from an evening out, as they are unable to lock the front door until her mother returns. There was also a lot of absenteeism due to illness and this could be related to personal hygiene in the home as well as perhaps the crowding found within the home. Julia was absent from the third session and when enquiries were made as to what was wrong, it turned out that her whole family was suffering from flu.

During the main part of this session we divided the group into two subgroups. We did an exercise that involves imagining oneself in a setting, such as watching a movie. One group non-verbally enacts being in this setting while the other group tries to guess where they are. Both groups were initially given two settings to enact and they were allowed to create the third setting. Tasneem suggested to her group that they enact waiting to use the toilet in a public restroom while the person who is on the toilet is taking her time and reading. It seemed that Nomaphela was quite adamant that she wanted to play the person on the toilet. The rest of the group chose to play the people waiting for her. Julia suggested the enactment for her group's scene. This enactment was of someone drowning in the sea. A sunbather alerts a rescuer who saves the drowning person while all along someone is standing on the beach and laughing at them. Julia chose to play the drowning person and Bonokuhle chose to play the rescuer.

This exercise was chosen as it is playful, non-threatening as well as interactive, making it ideal for an early session. It promotes humour and creativity and also increases non-verbal expressiveness while developing the concentration that is necessary for dramatic enactment. The focus of the group in such an exercise is on the

act of guessing what scene is being depicted rather than on the actual acting. This shift in emphasis can result in anxieties regarding performance being avoided. The first enactment that the group suggested incorporates the act of urinating. This could be seen as being an unconscious referral to a release, perhaps an emotional release of some kind. Being in a bathroom is also a private matter and this might be a reflection of the group not wanting us to delve into their private lives or their emotional selves. In the second enactment, the drowning person can be interpreted as someone who is struggling, who is crying out for help and who needs to be rescued. Furthermore, the onlooker in the enactment is amused by the desperate struggle as opposed to rushing for help. This could be seen as the unconscious expectation that the girls may have of the dramatherapy group. They might be expecting that their pain will be ridiculed in the group as opposed to being healed or responded to.

During the discussion near the end of the session Lana explained that she was feeling better now that the session was nearly finished. She said that she had been feeling lonely during her earlier classes and that us being there and playing with them, and showing the group that we care had made her feel better. During the planning for this session we had created a little rhyme that we wanted to use for the ending ritual. We decided to let the group decide on the movements that would be done with this ritual. When asked to do this, Nomaphela spoke first each time and made all the suggestions for movements. The rhyme was as follows:

*This is our space
Where we can feel safe
To play and to share
Our fears and our dreams.*

During this session Nomaphela came across as a very confident girl. Her need to be a leader, to be the centre of attention and to be in control was also evident. She took on the leader role when she began to tell Bonokuhle about what we had done and discussed in the initial meeting. She chose to be the centre of attention when she opted to play the role of the girl on the toilet and she showed her need for control when she decided on what all the movements would be for our ending ritual. Lana's need for love and care was also noted during this session. Although her friends and teachers at school probably do care for her, she seemed to experience the dramatherapy

facilitators coming to the school and spending time with the group as special care for them. And only after receiving this ‘special’ care, was her loneliness lifted. During this session Julia came across as quite self-confident and she seemed to enjoy the session immensely.

Session 2: *Everyone was present for this session. The aim of the session was similar to the first session, except that we wanted to incorporate more exercises which focus on the themes of working together and the building of trust. We used these techniques for the warm-up and the main part of the session. A mirroring exercise was introduced after this. This exercise involves two people facing each other with one in the role of ‘leader’ and the other in the role of ‘mirror image’. The mirror image attempts to follow the leader’s movements as closely as possible. The participants are later given the opportunity to change roles. Lana and Tasneem were partnered together and they moved together in a peaceful, rhythmic manner. Bonokuhle and Julia worked together and they both made use of very ‘human’ movements such as sitting, jumping and bending. As a result the mirror image was delayed and the movements were not flowing. Nomaphela and Rashida were partnered together. Rashida seemed to find it very difficult to be the leader, and it looked at times as if she could not think of what movements she should do. As a result, Nomaphela took the lead most of the time. She did this though in a very fast manner which resulted in Rashida being a delayed reflection. Nomaphela also seemed to be very aware of us watching everyone mirror each other and at times seemed to be moving for our approval.*

Mirroring exercises can be used with dramatherapy clients to clarify what they might be experiencing and in order to provide a form of validation and acceptance. It also allows a client to gain an awareness of her movements through seeing it reflected by the mirror image. (Bernstein **in** Schiff. 2002: 50) Mirroring is also able to communicate a sense of ‘being seen’ to the client. (Schiff. 2002: 50) Nomaphela’s mirroring style reflected her need for control and her willingness to take on the role of leader. Perhaps her leading was done in such a fast manner, as she was worried that her partner would not be able to attune to her and empathise with her. This fear in children may be traced back to parents who have been unavailable or unable to mirror them in their infancy and early childhood. Nomaphela may have then purposefully

moved fast so that Rashida could not attune to her and through doing this, perhaps unconsciously Nomaphela would be protecting herself from any potential disappointment through not being mirrored adequately. Julia's movement style seemed to be related to her tomboyish nature, whereas Bonokuhle seemed to have quite a constrictive style, as she did not seem to be moving from the centre of her body. This is the area in the body, where ones sense of feelings and emotions are contained. Lana and Tasneem's mirroring style seemed to reflect that they were close friends outside of the dramatherapy group, as well as their love of dance.

After the mirroring, Julia prompted Lana to tell us about a game that she had discussed with the group before the session and that some of them wanted to play. Lana explained that we all had to stand in a circle. We then had to imagine that she was holding a baby in her arms. She would kiss the baby, tell us where she had kissed the baby and then pass the baby to the next person. The next person then kisses the baby somewhere else and passes it along. When the baby reaches Lana again, she will drop the baby on the floor and then we will all have to kiss the person next to us where we had originally kissed the baby. After making sure that all the girls wanted to play the game, Heather agreed that the group could do so, but the second part of the game was not to be played. The baby was not allowed to be dropped. When this stage was reached, the girls were asked to suggest a safe space in the room where we could leave the baby. Nobody could think of a space. Eventually Julia seemed to get quite anxious so she grabbed the baby from Lana and roughly placed it in a bottom corner of one of the bookshelves in the room. She then commented that the baby would still not be very well looked after there. This game was followed by a short discussion of what had happened. During this time both Rashida and Bonokuhle avoided looking at the group and did not say anything. Heather asked the group whether they could imagine the baby representing the soft, small and vulnerable "baby" part of themselves and whether there might be fears of that part being dropped or hurt in some way within the group. Both Nomaphela and Julia could identify with this. Julia said that the soft part is the part of ourselves that can be hurt and needs love and Nomaphela said that it is the part that parents are meant to look after.

Lana's creation and suggestion of the baby game may be related to the inconsistencies that she experiences regarding her mother, who often leaves the home without letting

Lana know where she is going or for how long. She is the baby who gets left without any support. Perhaps the game also reflects that unless Lana begins to deal with her mixed emotions regarding her mother, she may begin to search for a sexualised form of love from other people. This could then potentially place her in a vulnerable situation regarding men and physical relationships, as seen by the kissing in the game. The game can also be seen as the group unconsciously questioning us as to whether we, the ‘parents’ of the group, would be strong enough to look after the girls and support them as well as protect their vulnerable parts. Rashida and Bonokuhle seemed to be very uncomfortable during the discussion after the game, but it was more as if what was being said was too difficult for them to hear, rather than that they didn’t understand it.

We decided to re-create the movements for the ending ritual so that other participants would be given an opportunity to give input into the ritual. It was however Nomaphela who suggested all the movements again. We then decided to give each participant a piece of the rhyme and they could then create a movement for this. In such a manner we finally created the movements for the ritual that included everybody’s input. We then ended the session by practising the ritual.

By re-creating the movements for the ritual we hoped that everyone in the group would be able to give input. Our idea was that they would not feel that this was a silly ritual that we made them do, but rather a ritual that was created together and that indicated the end of the session and of our time together.

4.3. Phase 2: Developed Enactments

Session 4 *The aim for this session was to introduce the girls to myth work as well as to ‘sculpting’, so that we could begin to use this technique in our sessions.*

Sculpting is a technique that is often used in dramatherapy. Depending on the requirements for the specific exercise, usually one person will take on the role of sculptor and will mould her partner or group into a specific image. The person being moulded relaxes her body so that it is like clay. This projective technique can provide dramatherapy clients with an opportunity to express how they feel as emphasis is

placed on "...externalising internal issues, conflicts and ideas." (Dokter. 1996: 188) Although sculpting normally takes on the form of a static object, more often than not we encouraged the group to give movement to their sculptures. This eventually developed to a stage where the 'sculptures' were both talking and moving.

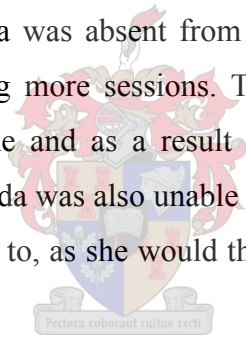
The main event for this session was the enactment of a myth called "Maheo", a North American Indian myth. This myth is a creation myth that was specifically chosen in order to symbolise the group coming into existence, as well as the creation of something extraordinary from something which is seemingly small and insignificant. In this myth Maheo is a great spirit who creates water, light, air and the creatures of the water. The creatures ask Maheo to create land for them. He agrees to do this but says that one of them will have to find a piece of land for him deep down in the ocean. All the creatures that attempt to do this, fail. Eventually a small coot is able to find a piece of mud. Maheo takes this mud and moulds it until it becomes such a large amount of earth that he needs to rest it on something to create the land. None of the creatures are strong enough to hold the mud except for grandmother turtle. And so the earth is created on grandmother turtle's back.

The version of "Maheo" which we used in this session is found in "Storymaking in Education and Therapy". (Gersie & King. 1990: 54-55) Heather explained to me during supervision that from a psychological perspective, this myth represents the self or consciousness being born out of the deep oceans of the unconscious. This process of becoming conscious of oneself is one of the main aims of any therapeutic process. Through the enactment of this myth, we were communicating our hope that this would occur through the healing use of drama.

After listening to the story, the girls were given a choice as to which roles they would like to play in the enactment of the myth. Nomaphela immediately asked to play Maheo, Julia wanted to be the coot, Lana was the birds, Tasneem was the fish and Rashida opted to play grandmother turtle. I was to be the narrator of the story while the other two students created sound effects for the enactment and Heather joined in the enactment. In order to prepare for the enactment, we had included an exercise in the warm-up phase in which all the participants moved around the space and when an animal type was called out, they had to take on the movements and sounds of this

animal. This exercise seemed to help as the creation of animals in the enactment came more naturally to them, as these had already been 'rehearsed'. Most of the group became quite involved in the enactment and took on smaller roles such as birds, while still playing their roles when needed. This created a very lively atmosphere. During a group discussion after the enactment, Julia proudly told us that she had been voted as the student of the day the previous day. Nomaphela began to laugh while Julia told us this and when questioned about her reaction, Nomaphela said that Julia had been naughty for the past five months and now she surprises everyone by winning the award.

By choosing the role of Maheo, Nomaphela was clearly choosing to take on the role of the leader again. Rashida's choice of role could also be a reflection of her role in life. It is grandmother turtle on whose back the land is supported and in reality it is Rashida who takes on a supportive role in her home life, even after her mother's death. After this session Rashida was absent from the next three sessions and later went through a stage of missing more sessions. This was because her family was experiencing difficulties at home and as a result Rashida had to take on a lot of responsibility in the home. Rashida was also unable to attend school on the days when her younger sibling did not want to, as she would then have to stay at home and look after her sibling.



Julia's choice of role also seems to reflect what we know about her. In the myth, none of the other creatures believe that the coot will be able to find mud, but this little bird is able to prove them wrong. Julia similarly decided that she wanted to become a better student, and although others might have doubted her, she seems to have proven them wrong by becoming student of the day.

After this, one of the students and I explained to the girls that there are certain things that can be achieved within the group during the course of the dramatherapy sessions. We provided the example of us maybe caring for one another. The girls were then asked to take turns sculpting the whole group into an image of what they wanted to create within the group. Nomaphela created an image to show that she wanted respect and love from the group. Both Julia and Tasneem created images to show that they wanted 'connectedness'. Tasneem explained this by saying that if someone is

hurt, we should all feel it. Rashida was unable to think of something. Lana wanted to create an image of a cross to symbolise her love of God. Heather explained to her that as we did not all believe in the same religion and religious symbols within the group, this would not be an appropriate image to create. Although Lana said that she understood this, she became very upset and started to cry. She was unable to say what had upset her, but we assumed that it was related to her not being able to make her sculpture. We ended the session with our ending ritual.

This incident with Lana may illustrate how deep her disturbance is regarding her mother. It also showed us how unstable her sense of self-confidence was at the time. She might have interpreted not being able to create the sculpture as us, “the mothers” in the group, rejecting her and her ideas.

Session 5: Lana entered the room looking very withdrawn and nervous. Heather spoke to Lana within the group and told her that she felt that she had been wrong in not letting Lana create the sculpture that she had wanted to make in the previous session. To repair this, Lana could create the sculpture now. Lana seemed to open up as she did this, and she spent the rest of the session in a more positive and receptive mood. The aim for the rest of the session was to continue exploring sculpting and through doing this we wanted to see what feelings, images or thoughts the girls might be holding within themselves. This could be done through the use of dramatic distancing which is provided through the technique of sculpting. For the first sculpting exercise, we stood in two rows facing each other. Each person from the one row moves to the person opposite them and can sculpt them into any position. Tasneem sculpted her partner into an image of something that was either hanging or falling. It seemed that it was not clear to her what the image was of at first. Eventually she said that it was a monkey hanging from a tree. Nomaphela sculpted her partner into a model. Bonokuhle sculpted one of the students into a position where she was hanging down on one side. When asked what it was of, Bonokuhle simply said that this person had a pain in her back. The student who was in this position then verbalised how she felt. She said that it was an unnatural position, it was very painful and that she felt as if she was being dragged down.

Bonokuhle never revealed much of herself during the course of the dramatherapy sessions. There is a feeling of her maybe not wanting to know herself and preferring to keep aspects of herself hidden. She projected a low self-confidence as she often refrained from taking part in the exercises that we did. Often simply the thought of doing an exercise seemed to terrify her. This sculpture that she created was the one that I remember the most vividly as it was such a strong image. Perhaps the sculpture could be seen as an embodiment of the internal chaos that she might have been experiencing at the time. Nomaphela's sculpture seemed to fit the image of someone who likes to have the attention focused on her, as a model usually does.

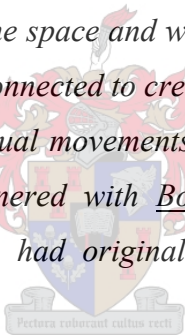
For the main part of the session the girls were asked to partner up and to then sculpt themselves into a relationship. Tasneem created an image that she explained as being two lovers walking and holding hands. She said that people who are in a relationship are supposed to show love, but that this does not always happen. Lana was partnered with one of the students and she created an image of the two of them hugging. The student was then told to say "I love you daughter" and Lana replied, "I love you too mom". Lana explained that the two people were a mother and a daughter.

After this session we discussed how Tasneem's first sculpture could have been interpreted as an image of someone who is 'just hanging in', someone who is experiencing difficult times. At this stage we were unaware of how Tasneem was feeling emotionally as the image she presented to us was of someone who is happy and doing well. Her contributions to the sessions were always focused on beautiful and pretty things and she did not reveal any dark, sad or angry parts of herself. It seemed that to a certain extent she was showing us her 'false self', as opposed to her 'true self'. Her comment about the second sculpture that people don't always show love to each other, could have been her first acknowledgement that things are not always as wonderful as what she makes them out to be or would like them to be.

Lana's sculpture seemed to indicate that a repair had taken place when she had been allowed to create the image that she had wanted to make the week before. All is now fixed between her mother and herself. By placing the student in the role of the mother, there is an indication that she views us as parents or caregivers. She could also be transferring the role of her mother on to us. Transference occurs when someone enacts

or projects their unconscious emotional experiences and attitudes related to an earlier relationship on to another object. (Cooper. 1990: 513 & Sterba. 1948: 3) In this instance, Lana might be transferring her difficult emotions which are connected to her mother on to us, and in this way experiencing us as her mother. If she is transferring the role of her mother on to us, then this could be why her attitude towards us and the dramatherapy sessions is not always stable. She sometimes comes across as confident while at other times she portrays an anxious, insecure young girl. This could be because unconsciously she expects us to be like her mother and to leave her unexpectedly.

Session 7: *The aim for this session was to try and engage with the unconscious parts of the girls by exploring symbols. We also wanted to explore the idea of going on a journey, which can be seen symbolically as the therapeutic process and through doing this, to see what the girls maybe expect to find through the process. As a warm-up, the girls were asked to move around the space and while doing this, to create three short movement phrases that they then connected to create one movement phrase. They then partnered up and did their individual movements with their partners together at the same time. Nomaphela was partnered with Bonokuhle and we noticed how she changed her movements that she had originally created, so that they would fit Bonokuhle's better.*



This could perhaps be an indication that Nomaphela does not have a very strong sense of self. She might create a facade of confidence to hide that she is not sure of what she wants, or to conceal her doubts as to whether what she gives is good enough.

We played another game in which we all sat in a circle and a scarf was placed in the middle of the circle. Anyone could then pick up the scarf and try to change the scarf into something else such as perhaps a dog on a lead. Some powerful symbols were created during this exercise. Nomaphela made a hangman's noose, a snake's tongue and breasts out of the scarf. Julia used the scarf to whip someone and to tie someone up. Bonokuhle created an aids ribbon out of the scarf. For the main part of the session we divided the group into two. A story was told which half of the group enacted while the other half of the group played different roles such as doors, trees, rain etc. The story was then told again and the roles of the groups reversed. The story

is of a girl sitting at home. Something happens which causes the girl to leave the home. This girl journeys through a forest and becomes very scared and cold. She accidentally comes across a key. She begins to search in the forest and finds a trap door underground which she opens. Inside this space she then finds a box and within this box there is something. Each girl decides for herself what it is that is found in the box. All the participants took on the role of this girl and had to find their own reason for leaving the home and also had to find something inside the box, underneath the trap door. Julia left the home because a snake came inside, Nomaphela left because a tiger came in and Tasneem left because the electricity went out. This is what was found under the trap door:

Julia: She found a huge gatsby that was filled with lots of meaty things such as Vienna's, steak, kidneys and polony. She said that she was very hungry and had always wanted such a gatsby. She explained that she ate so much of it that it filled her stomach and her heart, but that after eating it she had to go defecate behind a bush.

Nomaphela: She found a beautiful diamond necklace that her mother had left for her.

Tasneem: said that her name was 'Alice' and she found an actual box in the room. This she opened up and showed us what was literally inside it. She gave meaning to some of the things like a pair of scissors that became a symbol for good and evil. She also pulled out an imaginary dress and she found joy in the box.

Lana: found a pair of blue leather sandals that her grandmother had left for her as she had been walking barefoot through the forest.

Bonokuhle: found a pair of shiny white, flat heeled boots. She said that her mother had bought the boots and kept them for Bonokuhle, but she died before she could give them to her.

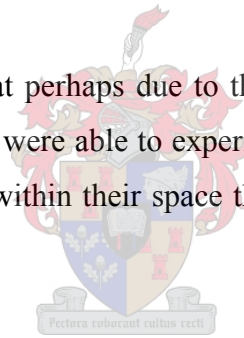
During the course of the sessions, Julia often brought up the subject of food and eating and this became quite a strong theme for her. She would comment on being hungry or ask to keep the imaginary food that we had created in the sessions. In a later session Nomaphela turned to Julia and said "it's always about food for you!" Perhaps this focus on food is an indication that Julia needs emotional nourishment. By telling us about the defecation behind the bush, she might be indicating that she sometimes can't hold on to good things and that she does not feel worthy of receiving 'good stuff'. There might also be a physical lack of food in Julia's home or perhaps at some stage of Julia's life there had been a struggle to provide enough food in the home.

Tasneem leaving the home in the enactment because the electricity went off could also relate to her situation at home. Perhaps there are times when they are not able to afford electricity. The electricity that switches off may also symbolically depict the darkness that suddenly and unexpectedly descended on Tasneem's family when her father left the home. This certainly appears to be the beginning of a very dark phase in Tasneem's life.

As a result of Bonokuhle not being able to receive the boots from her mother in the story, a question was raised as to whether she was able to receive nice things in life or whether there was always a negative element attached to this?

During the enactment of the story, two male teachers entered the room without knocking or excusing themselves. We, the students and Heather, were quite shocked by this intrusion. However the girls did not react at all to this interruption.

This incident indicated to us that perhaps due to the conditions of their home lives, there was no space that the girls were able to experience as sacred and safe. They are so used to intrusions occurring within their space that they did not even react to this one.



After the enactment of the story we did a de-rolling exercise. Julia took all the 'bad stuff' that she had taken off herself, and placed it in her hat. She then took the bad stuff out of the hat and placed it in one of the student's bag. She later fetched it from the bag, shaped it into an imaginary ball and threw it out the window. When it was time to place things in the magic box, Julia remembered the baby that I had created out of the scarf in the warm-up game and she placed this imaginary baby in the box.

Julia taking the bad stuff and placing it in the bag could be seen as her unconsciously deciding to give all her 'bad stuff' to us, so that we could hold it for her until such a stage that she is ready to do so herself. By remembering the image of the baby and placing it in the box, perhaps she is also trusting us enough now to give us the baby or vulnerable parts of herself. She might also be indicating that she is now more able to acknowledge and deal with these parts of herself, as opposed to casting them aside

such as in the second session when she roughly placed the ‘baby’ on a book shelf in the room.

Session 8: *Our aim for this session was to learn more about the lives of the participants and to see how much they would share about their lives. For the main part of the session, we had many different types of postcards with different images on them and placed these in the middle of the room. The girls were then asked to choose postcards which remind them of their lives, of things that have occurred in their lives or simply postcards which appeal to them for some reason. They could then arrange these postcards in a specific or meaningful manner and we would then take turns to look at what each person had created. This is what was made:*

Julia showed us her postcards first. They were shaped in the first two letters of her name, “which is special”. Her cards depicted her religion, her mother and an incident when she was in such a deep sleep that her mother had to throw water on her to wake her up. There was also a card to depict her colourful life, which she said was “mostly yellow”. She also chose a card to illustrate her enjoyment of music. She said that she plays the piano when she is sad, like when people tease her about her hands. At the end of the session we all stood and did an exercise in which you shake off emotion. Julia said that she was shaking off “bad thoughts” and when asked what these thoughts were she replied that they were thoughts like “you are ugly”. She also placed some very negative emotions in the magic box such as anger at those who tease her and also sadness.

The use of symbolism in the form of the postcards seemed to help Julia express both what she liked about herself, as well as what made her sad in life, in a non-threatening manner. After questioning the social worker we found out that Julia suffers from ‘winter fingers’. This seems to cause her fingers to swell up and the skin on her fingers become cracked and red in colour. This is what some of the children tease Julia about. The doctor has told the school that he cannot prescribe medicine to fix the problem. It seemed though that at the end of the session Julia had made use of the space that we had created to express her emotions, and also to leave her negative emotions behind. By telling us about the anger that she experiences perhaps she won’t feel the need to express it in another way such as through physical acts and aggression. The story that Julia chose to tell us, about the deep sleep that she was in

and her mother having to throw water on her to wake her up, might also have a symbolic representation. In fairy tales, sleep is often used to symbolically represent an unconscious state. Perhaps Julia was telling us that she had been “woken up” out of her unconsciousness and is now more aware of herself as well as her feelings, both negative and positive.

Tasneem chose postcards which seemed to reflect what she wanted the world to be like and what she enjoyed in life. In a way they came across as being a bit superficial as everything that she described was too wonderful. She had a card with “special lady” printed on it which she said described her mother. The card that she was the most drawn to was of a man meditating and surrounded by candles. She also said that she felt the need to be alone lately.

Nomaphela did not want to be the first to tell us about her postcards, and seemed to be quite anxious about showing us her cards. Her first card was of a group of women talking, which she said her mom likes to do. The next card had “protect yourself” printed on it with an image of a woman in a crouching position, her arms covering her head in a protective manner. There was also one with an image of a phone that said “on the line”. She said that at one stage she had been very sad so she decided to put her feelings on the line and phoned a social worker who helped her to feel happy again. She became quite sad and started to cry while telling us about her postcards.

We interpreted Nomaphela’s postcards as being about her need for help from others after her stepfather had raped her. Through the distancing provided by the postcards, Nomaphela was able to describe a time in her life when she was very sad without having to explain what the situation was. She also did not have to provide us with a detailed verbal explanation for us to understand what the postcards were depicting.

Lana’s first card said, “Peace on earth begins at home”. When questioned about this she told us that she had peace at home. She also chose an image of Nelson Mandela, describing him as her hero, and read a quote about beauty in South Africa. She showed us a picture of a father holding a child and said that when you have nothing in life, you can still have this. It seemed as if she was referring to the love and caring between the father and child. She said that she had this in life. She also had a card of

a woman working with tea leaves. She said that this card was about the little things in life that people do. She wasn't very clear as to what this was and started to become quite confused at this stage.

Lana seems to be protecting herself against having to deal with any painful emotions regarding her mother by telling us that all is well at home and by depicting a different image of her home life than what we had been told by the social worker. Perhaps Lana became confused while discussing the last postcard because her mother does not do the little things in life and so she is not sure what they really are.

Bonokuhle chose some postcards at first which all seemed to look quite dark. She then threw these back onto the pile of postcards. After this, she began to give postcards to others in the group but would not take one for herself. When asked to choose just one postcard, she was unable to do so. As we moved around the room to look at the postcards that the others had chosen and to hear what they wanted to say about them, she showed no interest and instead spoke to Nomaphela. The group was then asked if there were any postcards that they would choose for Bonokuhle. Julia chose one that said, "relax" on it and said that Bonokuhle "should go on holiday". Bonokuhle did not agree with these cards. In the discussion following this, Bonokuhle lay on her stomach with her back towards us and her face averted from us. Throughout the session she seemed to be very angry at us for suggesting that she does this exercise.

Perhaps Bonokuhle was unable to choose postcards for herself, as by doing so she would have had to acknowledge the emotions that she was feeling inside. This might have been too difficult for her to do at this stage.

4.4. Phase 3: Role Play

Session 10: Everyone was present for this session, which was the first after a two-week school holiday. As a result our aim was to welcome everyone back and to use the space to explore what the girls had done during the holidays. This was also the first session without one of the students, who had decided to leave the group for personal reasons. Lana initially arrived early for the session in a seemingly happy mood. We asked her to go and look for the other participants and then to return

fifteen minutes later. When she returned, both she and Tasneem were looking very subdued but they would not tell us why. The whole session was focused on enacting an experience from the holidays. Each group member was asked to tell us about an experience and was then asked to assign different roles to the other group members. We then created and acted together in these scenes.

Rashida told us about having hurt her finger when it got stuck in the car door, which we then enacted. She also asked to play the role of the pilot in Julia's enactment of a flight that she went on during the holidays.

Bonokuhle told us about a baby shower that she went to and how she had enjoyed it because she had felt accepted there. When questioned about this she said that sometimes people treat you badly. After her enactment she began to tell us of other things that she had done during the holiday.

Lana's story was of how one day her mom had bought her airtime for her phone as well as a teddy bear and her sister bought her a chocolate on that same day. She was so surprised that she couldn't stop hugging them and thanking them.

Tasneem told us about a wonderful day that she and her best friend had experienced with another family in Somerset-West. It was a long and creative enactment that involved much detail.

Nomaphela seemed to be quite bored during this session as one constantly had to bring her attention back to the enactment. This seemed to be because she had been cast in all the smaller roles. She mentioned that she disliked playing the tortoise in Tasneem's enactment the most. At the end of the session, Tasneem told us that she had not wanted to join the group today as she had seen her father on Sunday and this had made her very sad. She did not want to have these feelings evoked again in the group. The girls also told us that not having the one student here felt like a loss to them. Lana and Nomaphela said that it felt like the time when both their mothers had been hospitalised for a long time when they were younger. Rashida said it was like losing her mom again.

Perhaps Rashida's story about hurting her finger alluded to a deeper hurt that she had experienced during the holiday. One could think this as it had been her first school holiday without her mother. Her choice of role as the pilot in Julia's scene was interesting as the pilot is the person who is responsible and controls the whole plane.

Bonokuhle's story about the baby shower could be an unconscious communication about perhaps beginning to feel accepted within the group. Perhaps she was able to recognise that we wanted to get to know her better, and that this was not always the case outside the group where people are not always as interested in you. Perhaps it is as a result of everyone participating in Bonokuhle's enactment and playing roles which focused on making her feel welcomed and cared for as occurred at the baby shower, that Bonokuhle opened up and began to tell us more about her holiday. Similarly it seems that Tasneem was able to open up to us at the end of the session and tell us why she had not wanted to join the group today, as a result of the enactments. Perhaps the drama brought about a sense of being together and being interested in each other's lives, which allowed Tasneem to feel secure enough to share her difficult feelings with the group. It seemed that it was Tasneem's mood that had affected Lana at the beginning of the session. This could allude to the idea that Lana does not have a very secure sense of self as she seems to be easily influenced by the emotions of others surrounding her.

The profound feelings of loss regarding the student who had left the group that was expressed by the group members in this session, indicated to us that we had underestimated the attachment that the girls were experiencing towards us. This was something that we would need to remember when planning for the termination of the group.

Session 11: *We wanted to explore the idea of loss during this session, as the group participants were experiencing a sense of loss regarding one of the students who had left the group. We did a warm-up which involved improvising with sounds and movements around words that the girls feel when they lose something or someone. The words suggested by them were sad, lonely, miserable and happy. These words showed that they had an understanding about the complexities of loss. For the main part of the session, the girls partnered up and were asked to each create a sculpture centred around the theme of loss. Julia, Rashida, Nomaphela and Lana created sculptures of two people comforting each other. Tasneem's sculpture was of someone trying to stop a coffin from entering a grave and who is then comforted by another person. Bonokuhle created a very sad sculpture. It was of two people sitting next to one another but with an immense, clear distance between them. They were both crying*

and swaying gently. There was no connection between them and they had to comfort themselves. Bonokuhle explained that this was her sister and herself, but she was unable to tell us what had caused this sadness. Bonokuhle also played the role of the person trying to stop the coffin in Tasneem's sculpt. As soon as she had done this, she turned to us in tears and said that she had tried to stop the coffin from being lowered into the ground at her father's funeral.

During the discussion that followed the sculptures, Lana told us about an aunt who had passed away. She said that this aunt had bought her a pair of sandals the day before she passed away. As a result Lana was never sure if she should wear the shoes as they make her sad, yet they are a nice reminder of her aunt. She said that her mom does not understand this. Rashida spoke about how she had been unable to say goodbye to her mother before she passed away as her mom had been hospitalised at the time. Tasneem told us that the loss that she had experienced was that of her father leaving the family. She told us that she does not see him often. She was unable to give him an imaginary message within the group. She said that she hated him. After this she said that she loves him too. Julia seemed to be quite anxious throughout the session yet she did not resort to humour to try and relieve the atmosphere, as she would normally do. She tried to stay within the emotion of the session. The atmosphere during this session, and particularly at this stage of the session, was very intense. The nine of us were sitting close together in a small circle and the strong feelings of sadness, anger and loss that were emanating from the girls, left me with a heavy feeling on my heart. Yet at the same time I could not stop marvelling at how incredible it was, that we had reached a stage where we had been able to create a space in which these feelings were being expressed and shared. The girls were asked whether anyone had supported them when they experienced a loss, and all of them said that they had been supported by their families. As we were sitting we created a web of support by putting our hands in the middle of the circle, and then taking hands. During this time Bonokuhle turned her face away from us but we could see that this made her very emotional as she had tears in her eyes. At the end of the session we de-rolled. Tasneem shook off a lot of anger which she said was black. She then began to stamp on this anger. After doing so she shaped it into a Frisbee and threw it out the window.

The sculpture that Bonokuhle created during this session leads me to believe that perhaps she did not receive enough support after the loss that she and her sister had experienced. Maybe she agreed simply because everyone else said that their family had been there to support them. We also wondered whether there could be a connection between the death of Bonokuhle's father and the painful, destructive relationships with men in which she was becoming embroiled. During this session Bonokuhle seemed to reveal more of herself than was usual. The role that she played in Tasneem's sculpture obviously affected Bonokuhle, and this is why she was able to and wanted to tell us about her experience at her father's funeral. Although she opened up to the group, Bonokuhle obviously found this session to be very difficult as afterwards she went to the school's social worker and asked if she could leave the group as she said that being in the group was "too hard". She did the same before the following session too.

It seems as if Lana is still trying to protect her relationship with her mother when she told us that her mother supported her during her time of loss. By telling us about her feelings of love and hate for her father, Tasneem seems to be beginning to acknowledge the darker sides of herself and the inner confusion and ambivalence that she feels regarding her father, as opposed to seeing things purely in a positive way. The feeling that one can love and hate somebody at the same time leads to what Melanie Klein calls "the depressive position". (Klein. 1975: xiii) This occurs for the first time when one is still an infant and is first able to recognise the mother as a whole object or person. This leads the infant to realise that it experiences emotions of both love and hate towards the same object, the mother, and not different objects as it previously believed. (Klein. 1975: xiii) Tasneem also brought the emotion of hate into the group, which is often viewed in a negative light, as opposed to the love and joy that she normally focuses on.

Session 12: *During this session we wanted to continue our exploration of loss, but with a focus on what can follow loss such as renewal, new life and hope. We decided to do this through the use of a myth that the group could enact together. The myth that we chose is called "Yoni and her stepmother" and it was taken from a book called "Folk Tales from Korea". (In-Söb. 1952: 46-48) The myth is about Yoni, a young girl who lives with her father and cruel stepmother. On a cold winter day, when the land*

was covered with snow, the stepmother sent Yoni out to find fresh vegetables. Yoni searched but could not find any. She eventually came upon a large gate and beyond this gate was a little house. There lived a boy named Willow. After hearing Yoni's story, Willow went to fetch a basket of turnips for her. He told her that whenever she needed more she could come to him, all she had to do was to repeat a rhyme at the gate and then it would open for her. He also gave her a magic potion that brings life back to dead matter. Yoni's stepmother was so surprised to see that Yoni had returned with vegetables that she sent her out again the next day. When Yoni once again returned with vegetables, the stepmother decided to send her out for a third time but this time she would follow Yoni. This the stepmother did. On the fourth day the stepmother did not send Yoni out and instead went to Willow's home, called out the rhyme to open the gate, and rushed through and killed Willow. On the fifth day Yoni was sent out again to look for vegetables. When she came across the body of Willow she began to weep. She then remembered the vial of potion that she had been given and poured it on the bones of Willow. He came to life and told Yoni that he was actually a servant of the sky. He said that he had to return to the sky now but that he would like her to join him as his bride. So Yoni took his hand and they rode up a rainbow and into the sky.

Julia and Lana both chose to play the role of Yoni. This they did together. I narrated the story but there were times when the characters were also given a chance to speak. At one stage Julia could not remember the rhyme that she had to say to open the gate so she improvised and made one up. When asked at the end what her favourite part of the story was, she said that improvising her own rhyme was the best part. She also chose to keep the image of the turnips and placed them in the magic box. Lana chose the part where Yoni goes back to her stepmother with the basket of turnips as her favourite part. She said that this was because Yoni was doing the correct thing by showing her respect for adults. When questioned as to how she felt about going back to the home even though the situation with the stepmother was horrible, she said that it gave her "mixed up feelings". Nomaphela chose to play the role of the stepmother, which she seemed to enjoy doing. She said that her favourite part of the myth was when she sends Yoni out for the first time as she then has all the power and control. She however said that she did not want to keep any of the stepmother's characteristics. Bonokuhle seemed to be very unsure as to what role she wanted to

play at first. She eventually said that she would be the gate. During the enactment she had her back to us and spent a lot of time looking at the books in the shelves. She did not seem to want to be involved in the enactment. At the end of the session though, she said that her favourite part of the myth was where Yoni and Willow enter the sky. She said that she liked this part because it was about a new beginning and Yoni was now being loved by someone and she was able to leave her horrible past behind. Tasneem chose to play the role of Willow. Her favourite part of the myth was where Willow hands the basket of turnips to Yoni. This was because he was being generous and caring and he was helping others. After the myth, the girls were asked to create sculptures of 'renewal'. For this Tasneem sculpted Lana and Bonokuhle into two turnips and said that they were new vegetables that represent a new life.

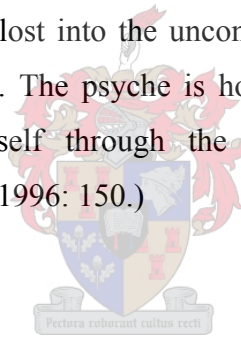
Both Tasneem and Lana chose smaller roles in session four, when we enacted the myth of "Maheo". The two of them both chose bigger roles in the enactment of "Yoni and her stepmother" and this seems to indicate that a growth in self-confidence has occurred for them. Many of the roles that the participants chose to play in this session seemed to be a reflection of the roles that they habitually play in life. Lana's favourite part of the story seems to be a reflection of her home life. She probably experiences the same mixed up feelings that she described during the session, when she returns home from school and is feeling unsure as to what the situation at home will be like.

Julia became very excited when telling us about her improvisation of the rhyme. It seemed as if her improvisation during the myth, and the acceptance of this improvisation within the group made her very happy. The words that she improvised are also very powerful words as they are the key to opening the gate.

Nomaphela's enjoyment of the powerful role that she played corresponds with the self that she presents in the sessions as well as the destructive 'bossy' part of herself that she has difficulty acknowledging as her own. Perhaps one could see this as the shadow part of Nomaphela. Bonokuhle's choice of role similarly seems to correspond with the self that she presents in the sessions. The opening and closing of the gate could be symbolic of how at times she is open towards us in the sessions, and at other times she closes off. The gate also protects the home from harm though, so perhaps she shuts herself off from us in an attempt to protect herself from the pain that the

opening up might cause. It could be a denial of the painful emotions that she would otherwise have to acknowledge. Bonokuhle's choice of her favourite part of the myth could be a communication of her desire to escape the reality that she faces in her daily life here on earth. She could also be communicating her difficulty in facing problems that arise in her life as well as a deep desire to be loved. The role of Willow also corresponds with the self that Tasneem brings to the group. Like Willow who is generous and gives, Tasneem is always introducing the ideas of caring and beauty into the sessions. Her sculpture of the two turnips which represent new life seemed to be quite important following the previous session with regards to the loss of her father and the emotions of love and hate that she feels towards him. Perhaps there is a realisation or acceptance of sorts taking place?

Tasneem's use of the turnips to symbolise new life illustrates how the Sesame method of dramatherapy sees the use of symbols as very powerful in the transformation of the self. Aspects of the self can be lost into the unconscious through the breakdown of healthy processes of the psyche. The psyche is however able to reassert these lost meanings or aspects of the self through the use of symbols, leading to a transformation of the self. (Syz. 1996: 150.)



4.5. Phase 4: Symbolic Play

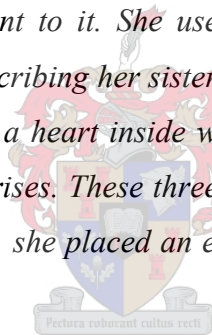
Session 13: *During this session we wanted to learn more about the participant's families and their feelings regarding their families. We brought a collection of small figurines, toys and objects to the session and decided to use them for our exploration. Each girl was asked to look at the objects and then to choose one that attracts them for some reason. This object would then be used to represent the self. Each person had a chance to then describe themselves "through" the object in the first person. For example "I am a dragon. I have strong claws and I blow fire." They could then choose objects to represent other people in their family and were asked to arrange these in a meaningful manner.*

Nomaphela chose a pin of the South African flag to represent herself. She chose a crystal to represent her mother, who she said is a healing presence. She used a pin of a cartoon to represent her younger brother and chose lips (a kiss) for her uncle who

she described as safe and secure. These four figures were placed close together. She then chose a tiger to represent her stepfather and placed this figure at a distance from the others. She said that he wanted to be powerful and have all the control.

In session 7, the session in which we enacted the forest scene, Nomaphela said that it was a tiger which came into the house and that this was why she left the home. In this session she again uses the image of a tiger but this time to represent her stepfather, the man who raped her. Perhaps in session 7 she was unconsciously thinking of him, the danger that entered their home with him, and this is why she had to leave. Maybe her stepfather's desire as she sees it, to have all the power and control, in some way links to her need of being in a position of control in order to deal with what happened to her?

Tasneem chose a snake to represent herself. She described the snake as being long and having a beautiful movement to it. She used a little rock with beads on it to represent her younger sister, describing her sister as sparkly but sometimes also junk. A box which opens up to reveal a heart inside was used to represent her mom, who she said was always full of surprises. These three figures were placed together. On a shelf, totally removed from them, she placed an empty bottle, which she said was her father.



Tasneem's choice of a snake to represent herself is interesting as a snake is also often seen as a symbol of danger or evil. It is an animal which often has negative connotations associated with it. Heather remarked that a snake is also seen as a powerful symbol of transformation because it continually sheds its skin to renew itself. If this is so, could there be a transformation taking place within Tasneem? Perhaps she is starting to acknowledge both the good and dark parts of herself and seeing how together they create her. Her choice of an empty bottle to represent her father could symbolise that she perhaps experiences him as emotionally empty towards her and her sibling. This was also the first time that Tasneem alluded to potential sibling rivalry that exists between her and her sister. She also allowed herself to say something negative about her sister, which is unusual for Tasneem but at the same time more healthy and real.

Bonokuhle used a red rose to represent herself. She said that a rose grows under the ground and that it makes peoples' homes look pretty. She placed a pink heart next to the rose and said that this was her mom who is very loving. In the same line but with space separating them from the first two figurines, was a cross and another heart. The cross represented her dad and the heart is her aunt. She said that they were very close. There was again a space and then a small pirate to represent her brother and a small heart for her sister. She said that if her father was still alive the structure would still remain the same.

The rose that Bonokuhle used to represent herself is an interesting choice. Perhaps the rose can be seen as a symbol of the necessary and important blooming of a young woman that occurs during adolescence. By making the comment that roses grow below ground, which is not true as roses grow above the ground, perhaps Bonokuhle is unconsciously saying that because of her life circumstances her potential for blooming is thwarted and remains underground.

Julia chose a small baby sucking its thumb to represent herself. She struggled to say "I am a baby" as she did not want to refer to herself as a baby. She told us that she could also not say, "I am innocent", in relation to the baby as she said that she was not. When questioned about this she said that she could distinguish between what is right and wrong, yet she sometimes still does things that are wrong such as swearing and getting angry. She used a small teddy bear to represent her mom and described this bear as soft and cuddly. She said that you could also punch it at times. She explained this statement by telling us that she sometimes gets very angry at her mom. The teddy bear held the baby, a robot and a butterfly. The robot was her brother who was interested in engineering and the butterfly was her younger brother who she said attracts people to him. Spaced further away from them was a ferocious looking dinosaur. This she said was her dad. She said that he can get very angry and that he sometimes bites the baby's head off, illustrating this by placing the baby's head in the mouth of the dinosaur. When asked why, she said that it is because she is not his biological child. She does not know who her biological father is but she would one day like to find out. She said that her father, the dinosaur, worked very hard and that they did not always see him often and that she loved him. A car and another colourful

object were used to represent her older brother and her grandmother. They were placed together as her brother had been raised by her grandmother.

Julia's choice of a baby to represent herself was quite interesting, as she often does not reveal the baby or vulnerable parts of herself in the group. The self that she normally projects is that of a self-assured girl who often acts as a tomboy. It seems that in this session she has made a shift from concealing her pain to revealing her vulnerable side. Her vulnerability was especially clear when she told the group about her father, as this seemed to make her very sad. Perhaps Julia is slowly learning to acknowledge the baby parts of herself and learning to care for them.

Lana seemed to be quite shy at the prospect of showing us her family. She chose a key to represent herself and said that it (and therefore she) could unlock her future. Next to the key was a ball that was covered in soft spikes. She told us that this was her mom, and that her mom was sometimes loving towards her and at other times not. She mentioned that her mom was inconsistent and that she could be mean at times. She also said that her mom sometimes leaves her alone at home for two days at a time. When this happens her aunt or uncle will sometimes come to stay with her. She however said that she does not trust her uncle anymore, as she believes it was him who stole her cell phone. A shell was used to represent her family which she described as being both prickly and nice. A cork was used to represent that her family likes to celebrate. A skeleton was used to represent her father. She said that the last time she saw him was two years ago and that she does not know if he is still alive or not. She said that before she met him he used to walk past her on the street, knowing that she was his daughter, yet he did not acknowledge her. During the discussion at the end of the session, Lana told us that the situation with her mom did not always leave her feeling "good inside".

This was the first time that Lana felt safe enough within the group to openly acknowledge the problems that she and her mother experience. This was probably quite difficult for her as the stories from the other group members all mentioned that their mothers were loving and caring. By using a cork to represent that her family likes to celebrate, Lana could also be alluding to the drinking problem that the social worker said her mother experiences.

During this session the group participants were all able to effectively explore their family dynamics through the use of symbolism. It seemed as if the act of choosing an object to represent someone, and then describing this person through the use of the object, made this exercise less difficult than if this was all done in a verbal manner. Through the use of an object to represent someone, not much needs to be said for us to understand how the participant perceives the family member. It was on the Monday following this session that Bonokuhle spoke to the social worker at the school and disclosed that she had been raped again.

***Session 14:** Bonokuhle, Lana and Tasneem arrived at this session looking very depressed. Bonokuhle told us that she was feeling ill, and at the end of the session Lana told us that she was tired and Tasneem said that her back was sore. During the warm-up phase Bonokuhle moved around with the group but she did not look like she wanted to be in the session. We decided to explore family relationships during this session and thought that this would be done best through the use of the myth, “Beauty and the Beast”. I first narrated the story to the group, and then we divided the group into two and asked each participant to sculpt their group into how Beauty felt about the situation in her real family, and to create a second sculpture of how she felt in the family that she and the beast had created together. There was a sense of great reluctance from the group to do this. Within her group, Julia cast Lana as Beauty, Tasneem as the father and herself in the role of the Beast. They then enacted a large part of the myth for us. At the end of the session Julia commented that she both liked and hated playing the Beast. She chose to play this role though because she felt that she needed to “get out of herself”. She also told us about the morals that can be learnt in the story such as that you must not steal, that there is hope for happiness and that there is beauty under ugliness. After watching this enactment, one of the students who was in the other group said that Nomaphela had changed her sculpture. Her original sculpt was of Beauty being treated badly by her sisters and being ordered around with Bonokuhle, a sister, saying, “wash the dishes!” She then added Bonokuhle’s sculpture to hers which was of Beauty and the prince arriving at her sisters’ home and these two are very jealous of Beauty and the prince’s good fortune. This change seemed to confuse Bonokuhle and also upset her slightly. When it was time to do Bonokuhle’s sculpt, Nomaphela pretended that she could not remember*

what to do. As we finished the session with our ending ritual, Bonokuhle told us that we had forgotten to do the 'magic box'. We then decided to quickly do it, yet Bonokuhle did not place anything inside it.

It seems that Julia was able to use this session to explore herself creatively through playing the role of Beast as well as directing a small enactment. She seemed to attune to the fact that the other two participants in her group were not likely to create sculptures today or to bring any ideas to the group. Perhaps this is why she did the enactment and found a way to involve them in the session in a non-threatening manner. Her choice of playing the role of the beast so that she could “get out of myself” seems to be a clear indication that Julia has started to experiment with different roles that can be played in life, and by doing so she can perhaps increase her role repertoire in her daily situation.

Nomaphela displayed quite a manipulative streak in this session when she used Bonokuhle’s sculpt as her own. Perhaps she did so because she was intimidated by what Julia had created and felt that maybe she should also have done an enactment of sorts. Bonokuhle surprised us by her request to do the magic box as she hardly ever places anything in the box, as happened today. Perhaps she finds comfort in the rituals that we do and also gains more from the sessions than we think. It was also her who asked in the previous session if I had remembered to bring copies of the myth “Yoni and her stepmother” for them to keep. This surprised me as at the time of enacting the myth, she did not seem to be interested in what we were doing. From this we learnt that even if someone seems to be on the periphery or appears to be disinterested in what we are doing, they might still be absorbing and gaining quite a lot from the session.

Session 15: *We had planned to do sculptures of the self for this session, but Rashida, Nomaphela and Bonokuhle were absent for this session. As the remaining three group members entered the room, they looked very unsure and were uncertain as to whether we would still have dramatherapy. Heather explained to the three members that since the beginning of the dramatherapy process they had not been given a choice as to whether they wanted to come to dramatherapy or not. She said that therefore today they would be allowed to make a choice as to whether they wanted to have a session*

or not. After discussing this amongst themselves, they decided to have a session. They were then told that they could each choose what warm-up they wanted to do and that they could lead it. Lana chose a game we had played before, Tasneem chose the feeling ritual and Julia created her own game for us to play. After doing this, Lana mentioned that she had written a story and that she had brought it with to read to us. She had written it in April of this year but had revised it on the 17th of August. The story was of a young girl whose mother died as a result of HIV, causing the girl to be very sad. One day this young girl is sitting under a tree singing and all those who walk by think that her singing is very beautiful. The young girl is surprised, as she did not know that she could sing. An old rich man hears her singing under the tree and decides that he will give her a recording contract. The girl then becomes very rich and takes the money home to her family. Lana told us that this story is about believing in yourself and knowing that the impossible can come true. We then decided to enact the story. Lana played the young girl, Julia played the rich man, Tasneem played a family member and the other student and I played a variety of roles with Heather narrating the story. During the enactment, Heather prompted Tasneem to join Lana as a friend of the main character and together they became “Superstars”. Julia seemed to enjoy playing the role of the rich and powerful man and she gave the character a sinister angle. As a result, when the man went to the home of the girls to inform their family that he was to take them with him, I, in the role of the father, was prompted by Heather to object to this as I did not know if he was trustworthy enough to take my daughters. Julia cleverly improvised and decided that the whole family could join the girls. At one stage during the enactment, while the rich man was giving the girls vocal training, Julia in the role of the man said that the girls must listen to him and do what he says “or otherwise suffer the consequences”. The enactment ended with the girls becoming famous and being interviewed on television. At the end of the enactment Julia was sitting in a chair and in role, told the girls that they had not thanked him yet and so the girls proceeded to bow for him.

The dramatherapy sessions at the school began in May so Lana had written this story before then. Her revision of the story was however on the 17th of August, exactly a week before this session and a week after we did the session about families. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that her revision of the story came after she opened up to the group about the family situation at home. Lana’s choice of including a mother in the

story who dies, can relate to the experience that Lana has regarding her own mother. When her mother leaves for a period of time, there is a loss of support and love in Lana's life and it can probably be perceived as a 'mini' death that occurs. Yet, Lana seems to be saying in her story that she can make a success of her life and of herself, even without her mother. In such a way she seems to be communicating that she has both the internal and external resources to achieve her goals. Through enacting the story and playing the role of the young girl, Lana was also able to experience what it would feel like to achieve these goals. We were very heartened by this story but, as Julia brought the character of the sinister agent to life, we were also aware of how vulnerable Lana still is.

The character that Julia created of the rich, powerful and sinister man could perhaps be reminiscent of the men that the girls might encounter in their daily lives. The girls from the areas in which they live might look up to men who project this image of having much power and wealth and who make promises to them, as these girls might see it as a way of getting out of the harsh situations in which they live. The character that Julia created also leads one to wonder as to what her treatment has been in terms of the father figure in her home? Is this how she experiences the role of a father? During the family session she depicted her stepfather as a dinosaur who sometimes bites the baby's (herself) head off, is he a man who likes power and demands much thanks?

Session 16: *The aim for this session was to find out how the girls perceive themselves as emotional beings. We decided to do this by bringing a mixture of different objects and building materials to the session, and asking the girls to then create a symbolic sculpture of themselves out of these objects.*

Julia covered her structure with cloths and a plastic bag. (See figure 1A) She said that this was to show how she sometimes covers herself and locks other people out "during dark, dark, dark times". At these times she feels unprotected as even people who she depends on, such as her family, are not there for her. She said that she could not tell us what these dark times are as it is too personal. When she removes the covers, the umbrella represents those who love and protect her such as her family and her best friend. (See figure 1B) The showerhead represents her playfulness and her

happiness. The pink cloth is her caring for others and the wrench is the part of herself that hurts others. (See figure 1C) She said that she does hurt others like one day someone from the group might ask if she is ok, and she will probably snap at this person and tell her to go away. The boot is to symbolise how she wants to follow in the footsteps of other people that are doing good. She gave an example of such a person as being her teacher, and said that a bad example would be someone like a drug dealer as she does not want to follow that path.



Figure 1

Nomaphela (See figure 2A) placed a tennis ball on a brick and inside a basket, and then covered this structure with a cloth. The tennis ball is herself, the brick is what she uses to protect herself and the basket covered with a cloth is to symbolise the difficult times in her life. (See figure 2B) During these times she says that she does not want to reach out to others or to speak to other people, she prefers to hide. The candles and the torch which are pointing towards this structure symbolise that these

difficult times occur in times of darkness, when the light is out of her life. The big flower is to symbolise her happiness during lighter times and the two bundles of cloth symbolise the many people that she can confide in and that care for her. (See figure 2C) She said that she cannot share everything from the darkness with these people though. Heather asked the group whether we ever see this sad side of Nomaphela and they all said no.

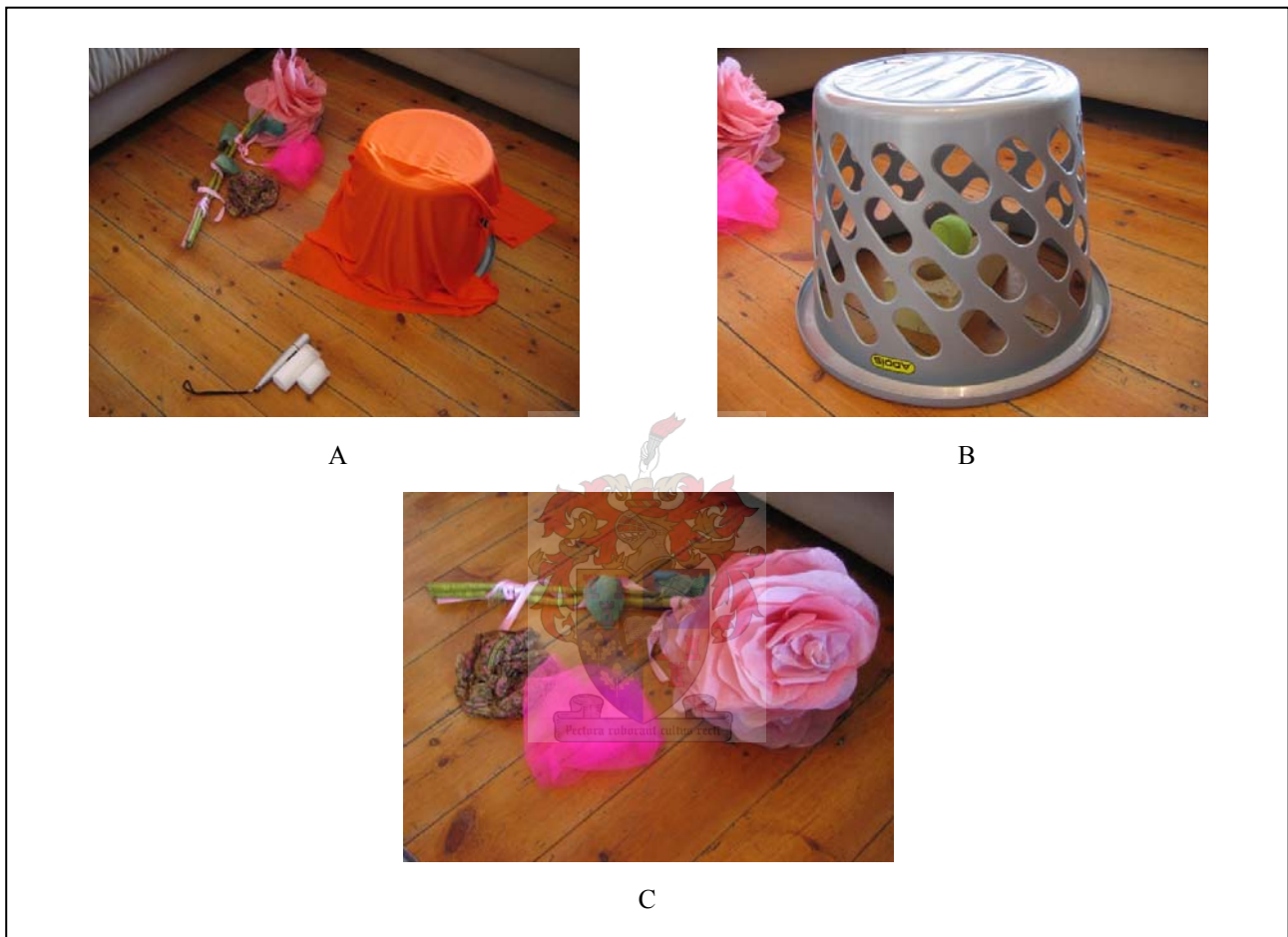


Figure 2

Tasneem (see figure 3A) used the tennis ball to represent her bright, happy self. She said that she is stuck with glue to certain people in her life that make her sad and confused. (See figure 3B) She said that her “head is turned around. Everything is upside down” in her mind because of them. She said that she will probably always be stuck to these people. The electric cord attached to the black box is to symbolise that she wants to hang herself or shock herself because of these feelings. (See figure 3C) During this discussion she said that her father is one of these people that leaves her feeling this way. She said that the red cloth is used to symbolise love. (See figure 3D)

They are the people at school who support and love her, such as the dramatherapy group. The candle is her mother and sister. They brighten her day and she enjoys being with them, she also said that they speak nicely about her to others. She said that she performs for them and after doing so she feels like a star. (Such as on the ball.) Heather asked Tasneem if she could tell us about a time when she had felt like she mentioned at the electrical wire stage. She replied that she felt “suicide sad” after session 4, the session in which Lana wanted to make a sculpture of a cross. She said that after this she went and cried by herself as she does not ask for help easily and prefers to cry alone. It was clearly very difficult for Tasneem to reveal the dark box part of herself but it seems that she is doing so more often now in the sessions than before.

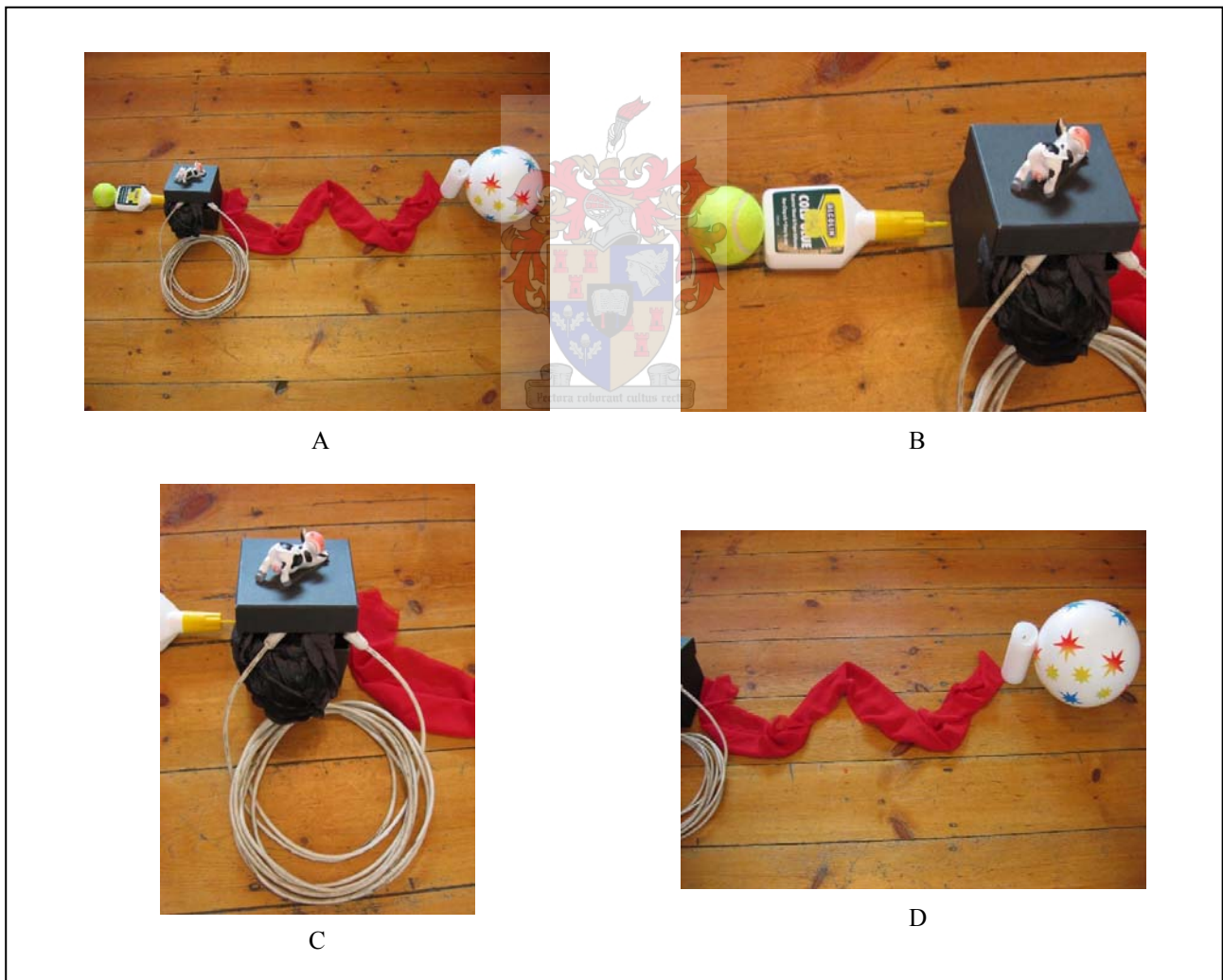


Figure 3

Rashida returned to the dramatherapy group today after being absent from the last four sessions. She struggled to create a sculpture so one of the students sat with her and tried to help her. She eventually created a sculpture consisting of a green umbrella with a red chilli pillow on top of it. (See figure 4) She was unable to discuss what her sculpture meant so the group looked at it and we reflected on what we saw. Heather said that the red chilli reminds her of anger and Rashida simply said “yes”. As a result of this admission, her strong sense of anger became apparent. The student also mentioned after the session that Rashida had told her that the other emotion she was experiencing was sadness, but that the anger was stronger. From this image it is clear that the anger that Rashida is experiencing is overwhelming and crushing all the other parts of the self.



Figure 4

Lana (See figure 5A) entered the room today in a very happy mood. In her sculpture she placed a small blue ball inside a brick. She said that this ball was her and that the brick is her protection. She said that she sometimes gets behind that wall and covers herself with the black cloth. (See figure 5B) She said that this is a part of herself that she does not like and she tries to deny having it. Figure 5C illustrates how exposed the little blue ball would be if the brick was removed. The white cloth is her brightness and she mentioned that she feels like a star when she sings on stage. The blue pillow was to symbolise that she feels today like the world is revolving around her as it will be her birthday tomorrow. The bag with the “power puff girls” cartoon on it was to represent that she knows that as a girl and a woman, she can have power. The candle

is to represent her reaching out to others and caring for others, and she wishes that she could help the people that she sees on the street in some way. Heather mentioned to Lana that maybe when others don't acknowledge the bright, white part of Lana she gets sad and becomes the black Lana. The group also agreed that Lana had allowed us to see her sadder side within the sessions. We all decided to sing happy birthday to Lana. As we ended the song she began to cry and said that she was actually sad, as she wouldn't see her father on her birthday. It seems that the extreme happiness that she seemed to project today was only a means to hide the sadness that she was feeling inside. However, the opportunity to express this sadness within the safety of the group seemed to assuage these emotions in some way.

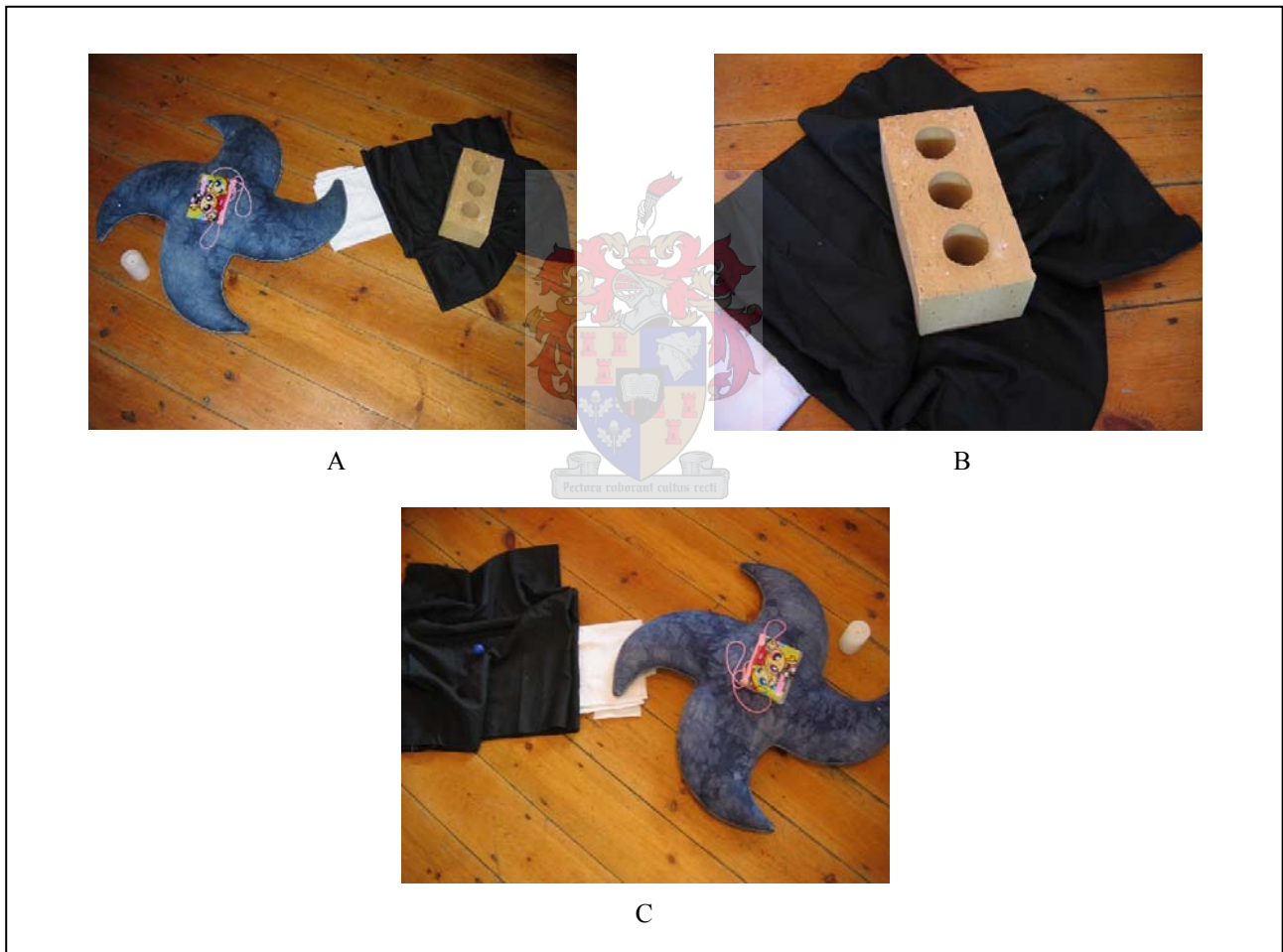


Figure 5

Heather told the group that during the session they were all able to see the dark or shadow sides of themselves. She said that it was something that everyone needed to acknowledge in order to become a truly whole person, and that it is all right to be

aware of and express our difficult feelings as well as our happy ones. Heather also told the group that it was clear that everyone had acknowledged painful issues in their lives within their sculptures.

During this session, the use of symbolic sculptures to explore the self seemed to work well as the group was able to reveal a lot about themselves without feeling overwhelmed by what they had shared. The sculptures were also very powerful and conveyed a lot of information about the girls.

Session 20: *The aim for session 18 was to see how the girls believed other people perceived them, and also to see how they viewed themselves on the inside. We decided to do this through allowing the group to create masks during session 18 and session 19. The one side of the mask was to be decorated to show how they think other people see them, and the other side of the mask was created to show us how they feel about themselves on the inside. We provided cardboard as well as pencils and other art materials that the girls could use to create the masks and told them that they could cut the mask out in any shape. They used two sessions to create these masks and in this session, session 20, we wanted to explore the masks dramatically. Rashida was absent from this session as well as the previous session.*



The use of masks in dramatherapy can be seen as a projective technique as the self is projected outward onto the mask which is created. As it is a projective object, masks make use of a certain level of distance from the subject, resulting in an object that can be created in an oblique manner. By not wearing the mask and using it as a separate entity in the therapy session, the distance from the subject can be maintained. However when a mask is worn it becomes part of one's face and this implies that the distancing is minimised. "The therapeutic masquerade aims to unmask the self through masking a part of the self that has been repressed or seen dimly by the client." (Landy. 1996: 64)

At the beginning of the session we reminded the girls that there would only be three more dramatherapy sessions after this one. We also told them that in the last session we would make sure to leave some time open for us to have a small party. Later Julia asked whether they could bring "edibles" to the party, which we said we would do.

We all sat down in the circle and then we placed the masks in the middle of the circle. The girls were told that they needed to choose one of the masks, as long as it was not their own. They were then to look at the mask and they could ask it questions regarding how it looked or why certain things were on the mask, which the owner of the mask then replied to while speaking as the mask.

This sense of distance (created by speaking as the mask) frees the creator of the mask to disclose more, under the protective guise of the mask-role, and enables the mask to come alive as a kind of independent character.

(Emunah. 1994: 215)

This is what we learnt about the masks and their owners:

Bonokuhle said that the colourful side of the mask was the way her mom saw her and the dark side represented the way she saw herself. On the colourful side she said that the heart is to show that her mom sees her as loving and caring. (See figure 6A) The colours were to show that she can be colourful at times and the white pipe cleaner was to represent her brightness. She said that the dark side represented her “badness” and that this was not the side that she brought to the dramatherapy group, as she does not want us to see her badness. (See figure 6B) The two stars on the bottom corners of the mask were to represent that she does not always reach for her goals and the feather on top was to represent that when she does reach for certain



Figure 6

goals she knows she is rewarded. She was not sure as to why she had cut the mask to have two points on either side of the head.

Bonokuhle’s openness during this session surprised me. She did not refuse to answer any questions and it seemed as if she was being asked the most questions within the group regarding her mask. The two points on the side of the mask have a sinister feel to them as they seem to look like devils horns. Perhaps this was unconsciously created to better illustrate her dark side or the ‘underground’ part of herself that is difficult to acknowledge.

Lana’s mask was also created with two very different sides. The side that is clearer and the least marked is the way in which she sees herself, especially when she is feeling confident. (See figure 7A) The more colourful side is how she believes others see her. (See figure 7B) The red and dark purple man on this side are to represent how some people see her as someone who is “two-faced and tells lies”, while at the same time other people see her as a caring person. The buttons under the eye with the elastic connecting them is to represent how she reaches out to others and how they in turn then reach out to other people. The green feather is to represent her darker side while the natural feather on the other side represent her soft side and also that her family supports her during difficult times.

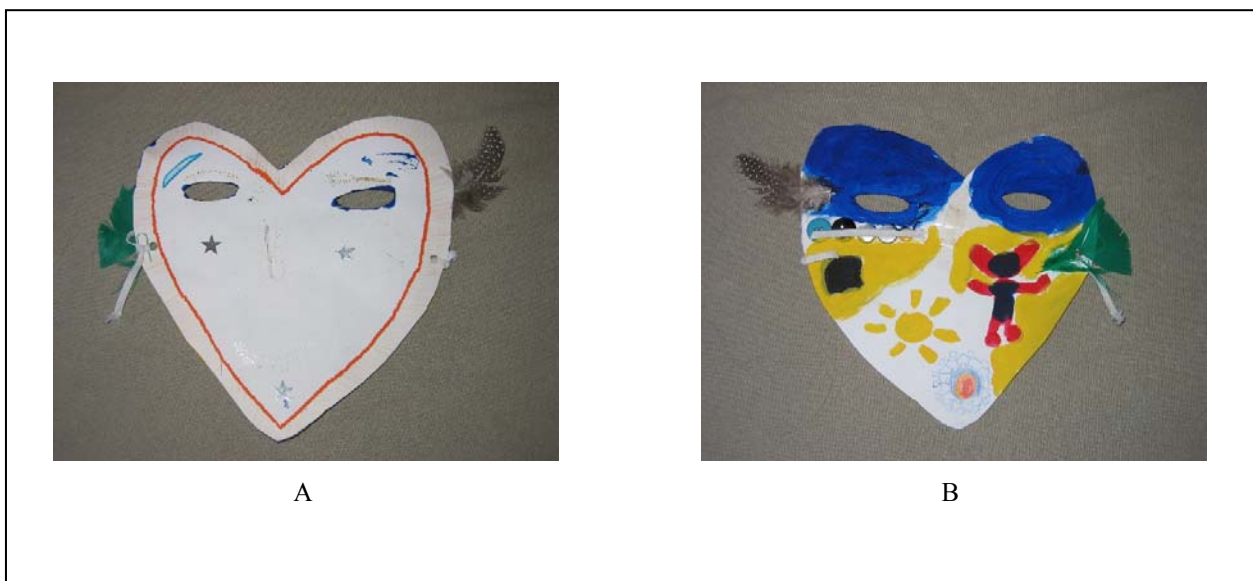


Figure 7

Julia: The lighter, more colourful side of the mask is how Julia sees herself. (See figure 8A) The orange feather on this side represents her mother and shows that she is connected to her mother. The darker side of the mask represents how others see Julia and how she also sees herself at times. (See figure 8B) The plastic spider on this side is to show how she believes other people think that she is “creepy and horrible”. The yellow pipe cleaner represents a life circle. She explained this by saying that if she does something good, she must keep on doing it. The little red man in the top corner of the mask symbolises how some people wish that she had never been born and how she sometimes feels this way too. She said that her grandmother wishes this, as Julia is not her biological granddaughter. Julia said that when she feels this way she listens to her mother who tells her that she was born to fulfil a purpose in life.



Figure 8

Tasneem created the lighter, more colourful side of her mask to represent how she believes people see her. (See figure 9A) She said that the mouth on this side was created to illustrate how she does not always have the words to say things and that she then has to really concentrate to get them out correctly. She said that throughout the mask the colours are blended to show that all the parts of her are integrated. The dark side is how Tasneem sees herself. (See figure 9B) The division between the black and gold side is used to represent both the good and bad parts of herself. The purple pipe cleaner is across both halves of the mask to show that these two sides of herself are still joined. In the bottom corner, the silver star within the red circle, which is

encircled by a black line, is to show that she is both loved and cared for, but sometimes by people she hates such as her father.



Figure 9

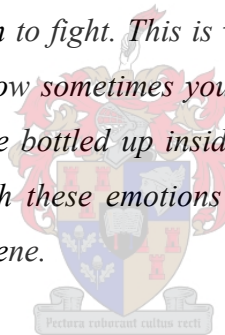
Nomaphela said that the side of her mask with the darker colours was to represent her darker side, while the other side represented her lighter side. On the dark side the blue and green stripes were to represent her sadness in between happy things and this is probably represented by the heart, star and flower. (See figure 10A) On the lighter side of the mask, *Nomaphela* said that the block around the one eye represents the part of herself that other people don't want to see. (See figure 10B) The gold is used on this side of the mask to represent her brightness.



Figure 10

The gold block is probably represented by Nomaphela on the other side of the mask too through the very dark purple that edges the mask. This gold block that represented the part of herself that other people don't want to see, is also likely to be the part of herself that she, Nomaphela, does not want to see. We were told by the social worker for example, that Nomaphela is constantly teased by her schoolmates due to her being overweight. Nomaphela never told us about this in the group and as a result never shared with us how this left her feeling. She was also not able to acknowledge the part that she plays in her difficult relationships at school.

After this exercise, the girls were divided into two groups and were asked to create a short scene while wearing one side of their masks. Nomaphela and Tasneem both wore their darker sides and created a scene in which Nomaphela begins to hassle Tasneem on the school grounds. Tasneem tells her to stop doing this but when Nomaphela continues, they begin to fight. This is where the scene ended. Nomaphela said that the scene was about how sometimes you come to school and you bring all the emotions from home that are bottled up inside you with you to school. Because you don't know what to do with these emotions you then end up taking it out on someone else as she did in the scene.



The above example was the first time that Nomaphela was able to see the part that her emotional life plays in her relationships and fighting with others at school.

The aims for the last three sessions will be focused on endings and the emotions that the group might experience regarding the end of the dramatherapy sessions. The last session will also incorporate each participant reflecting back on the journey that they have been on in the dramatherapy sessions. Heather will also have a follow-up session with all the participants next year at the school, to see if any of them are in need of more intervention in some form.

4.6. Discussion

If one looks at these last few sessions, there does seem to be quite a change in how some of the girls expressed themselves in the first sessions, to how they were able to express themselves eventually.

Bonokuhle, who did not always reveal much of herself, especially in the earlier sessions and who seemed the most reluctant to make use of the medium of drama, showed quite a bit of development in this last session. In session 8 she was unable to even choose one postcard that could represent something from her life and seemed to become angry at us for asking her to do so. In the last session of the case analysis, session 20, she was able to make use of symbolic thought and created her mask in one session, and was also able to verbally tell us about the mask that she had created. She also touched upon the fact that there are certain issues in her life, but it seemed that she was too ashamed to bring them to light within the group. In a sense she was left still holding her fears at the end of the group.

Tasneem also seems to have developed in the sense that she does not deny her anger or negative feelings anymore, and seems to understand that one can experience both hate and love at the same time and towards the same object. Her mask seemed to represent this through her blending the paints to show that all parts of the self are integrated, and through showing that both the good and bad parts of herself are connected. It is also interesting to note that after Tasneem began to express her true feelings in the group, she seemed to stop mentioning the physical pains that she had told us about before.

Both Lana and Julia were able to feel safe enough within the dramatherapy structure to reveal the difficulties that they experience at home, and the emotions that this causes within them. In the last session they were also able to tell us about some negative perceptions that they believe other people might have of them at times. Through Nomaphela's input in the discussions that took place in the session, it was clear that she too had experienced difficult times in her life. She however never told the group what these times were. Perhaps her choice of enactment in the last session could however be seen as her slowly beginning to acknowledge different parts of

herself. She might have made the connection between the emotions that she brings to school from home and how this affects relationships at school, without really realising it.

We never really became well acquainted with Rashida, as she was absent from so many sessions. However she was able to symbolically express the immense anger that she was experiencing in the 16th session. We also heard via the school social worker that Rashida had recently started a small ‘business’ which involves renting out an evening gown that she had designed and that her aunt then made. The money that she makes from this endeavour she places in the “Rashida Fund”, and if she needs to remove some money to buy bread, she tries to replace it in the fund as soon as possible. This small enterprise seems to show that Rashida has developed a greater confidence in herself and her abilities. The tragedy is that she will probably not be continuing with her education, due to increased pressure to look after others in her family.



CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

A large number of children in South Africa grow up in poverty-stricken environments that can have an adverse affect on their lives. It has been found that a child who lives in an environment characterised by poverty can experience a number of psychological difficulties. In this study the psychological difficulties that were focused on are problems related to the self-concept and self-esteem. Through the use of the case study there was an attempt to determine whether dramatherapy could be an effective therapeutic intervention with a group of young girls who live in situations of poverty. It is important to note that when dramatherapy is used to treat clients, it is not always possible to prove that there is a direct link between the progress that the client has possibly made and the dramatherapy treatment. However when the client is not undergoing any other therapeutic intervention, it may be that when improvement has occurred, drama can be seen as the catalyst. (Kersner. 1994: [online])

From my personal perspective, it seems as if at the end of the dramatherapy sessions the group participants have been able to sort out and separate their positive and negative feelings regarding people in their lives, their situations and themselves, and were able to bring these feelings more in line with how things are in reality. The dramatherapy sessions seemed to encourage the emergence and strengthening of a healthy sense of self, which may have been profoundly inhibited by the dire living circumstances of the girls' lives. Since the difficult feelings that the girls experienced for the most part remained unvoiced during the sessions, the manner in which the self was explored through the use of drama, movement, improvisation and symbolism, allowed for self-expression. Hopefully this has led the girls closer towards a fuller understanding of who they are.

I have also learnt much about dramatherapy and the processes involved in dramatherapy through the opportunity to help facilitate this group. One could easily assume that as dramatherapy is a psychotherapy, its most important aspect is its psychology basis. However it is the dramatic techniques that this psychotherapy employs that makes it different to other therapy forms, and that ultimately seemed to help the girls in this case study to express themselves and to reach the level of understanding that they did regarding their lives. The power and importance of drama

within this psychotherapy should not be underestimated. This has led me to believe that suitable dramatic training for a dramatherapist is very important. I found that of the different dramatic techniques that I was taught during my drama training, improvisation probably helped me the most during this case study. Improvisation of enactments, whether this be a short sketch or a dramatised version of a myth, was employed in almost every session. We, the facilitators, also needed to improvise when it seemed that what we had planned for a session would not be suitable. This could be because not enough group members had arrived for a session or because the general feeling that the group members were projecting was perhaps not suitable for what we had planned. We also used improvisation if we were busy with an exercise and a group member provided some input that we wanted to explore. At these times we would then allow the exercise to change so that we could explore this aspect, and see if we learnt anything new from it.

Another dramatic technique that I found important was movement. During my drama training I had learnt to physically embody different roles or characters and this was often used during the dramatherapy sessions. In a non-verbal therapy, the ability to realistically embody a character adds much meaning and colour to enactments. Another aspect of movement is being comfortable with using your body and finding enjoyment in different movements. In one session we asked the group participants to move around the space as birds. They all did this but in a self-conscious manner and with only small movements to indicate that they were birds. Only after seeing the other student and I flapping our arms, making bird like noises and trying to create the illusion of soaring through the sky, did their movements become a little larger and perhaps they became less self-conscious and began to enjoy the exercise more. The ability of the facilitator to immerse themselves in the drama, whether it is a short sketch or a developed enactment, also allows the group participants to experience the drama as more realistic. This can allow the participant to experience less distance between what is being explored dramatically and their daily experiences.

During the course of the case study, I also realised how important it was for us to gradually develop from dramatic play to symbolic play. Each phase that we progressed through was important and we learnt much about the group participants during these phases, but only if enough time was given for each participant to

progress to the following stage. In retrospect I feel that introducing the use of symbolism through the postcard exercise in session 8 was probably too soon. Although some group members were able to use symbolism effectively during this session, it was clear that other members such as Bonokuhle still struggled to do so. However by the time the symbolic play phase seemed to begin at session 13, the group members were all able to engage with this type of play.

The dramatherapy techniques and exercises that I thought were the most effective with this group, were myth work and dramatic enactments. The group participants seemed to enjoy these exercises and they also revealed much of themselves to us through the roles that they chose to play and the discussions that followed these exercises. Myth work does however seem to be my favourite dramatherapy technique, so I could be projecting my enjoyment of these sessions onto the girls. At the end of session 22, a session that is not discussed in the case study, four of the group participants anonymously filled in feedback forms for us regarding the dramatherapy sessions. Three of these four group members wrote that their moment of greatest learning about themselves during dramatherapy occurred during sessions 18 to 20, when we worked with masks. I feel that this was probably one of the most difficult exercises that we did, and that it is most likely because we gradually worked towards this stage that it was so effective. One of the participants wrote the following regarding the mask exercise: “It touched me strongly and through that exercise I have changed the way I think and speak.” This same respondent replied with the following to another question which asks whether she has learnt anything in dramatherapy that she can use in her daily life: “Yes, that we must not hold our fears to our(selves), but tell people who we trust about our sadness.”

The issue of believing in yourself and understanding that you have a certain amount of control over your future was touched on in small ways during group discussions in the sessions. The opportunity to exercise control regarding choices that you make in the sessions, also seems to be inherent to dramatherapy. An example of this is that a group participant can choose what role she wants to play, what story she wants to tell us and how much she wants to reveal to the group. It seems that some of the group participants in the case study did grow with regards to this aspect of the self. The following are two responses from two different group members regarding the question

in the feedback form that asks whether they have learnt anything in dramatherapy that they can use in their daily lives: “To be strong and take charge if you must.” “Yes, that even if people see me as bad and ugly I must just ignore them and stay confident as I am.” From these responses, perhaps one can draw the conclusion that a certain amount of empowerment did take place within the girls. Perhaps they understand that they have a certain amount of control over what course their lives may take.

In the feedback form a question was posed as to whether the group participants would recommend dramatherapy to other students at their school. All four of the participants that filled in the forms said that they would. Drawing from these various conclusions, my own perspective is that the dramatherapy group was an effective intervention with the girls. I feel that by the end of the dramatherapy sessions not all of the girls were at the same level of understanding themselves and their situation, yet I do think that each participant managed to gain some self-knowledge through being in the group.

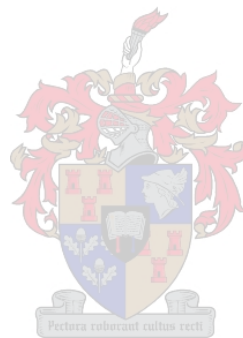
Poverty has however been pinpointed as a major factor which can limit the maintenance of treatment effects. (Petersen & Carolissen. 1999: 108) It is unrealistic to imagine that a one-off intervention with children from an underprivileged community will equip them enough to deal with the difficult events and situations that may still lie ahead in their lives. For this reason, the importance of the holistic school environment that the group participants attend and the role that this school played in the dramatherapy intervention, must be acknowledged. Perhaps as a result of the stability that the school provides, and the care that the members of staff show for each other as well as the pupils, the dramatherapy treatment effects can be maintained over a longer period of time.

Within South Africa there are no training institutes available at this stage where one can study to qualify as a dramatherapist. As a result it may seem that a study such as this one is fruitless, as there are not many dramatherapists in the country. However, research into the use of non-verbal therapeutic methods such as art therapies could be considered relevant when one considers that South Africa is a multi-lingual as well as multi-cultural society. (Schiff. 2002: 74) As a result, a non-verbal therapy such as dramatherapy could be used to bridge any gaps in communication or understanding that might occur in a strictly verbal therapy setting.

The quote below emphasises for me the effectiveness of dramatherapy to reach out to South African children who are leading lives within a challenging environment.

Dramatherapy heals the broken heart. And shows you the road to healing come(s) through anguish, hatred and feeling of hopelessness.

(Comment on feedback form.)



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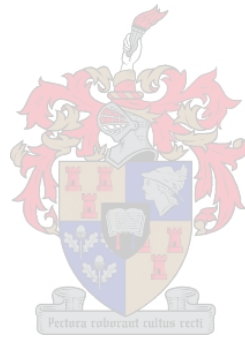
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Appendix A

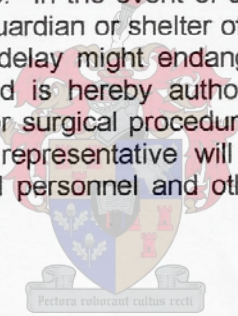




PERMISSION TO TREAT

Children are more likely to succeed educationally and actualise their potential when their basic needs are met. Among these basic needs is a sense of physical and mental well-being. Improvement of the physical and mental well-being of [redacted] children is critical to the success of our mission. [redacted] facilitates the procuring of preventative and remedial medical and dental care for its children, and provides counselling for mental health and other needs.

I (we) the undersigned parent, legal guardian or house parent of _____ do hereby authorize and consent to periodic physical and psychological evaluations, including but not limited to medical, dental, hearing and vision examinations and well-being assessments. I also authorize and consent to the administration of immunizations, medications and other treatments, which may be deemed appropriate. I understand that minor illnesses will be treated at the health centre, using the services of local laboratories, clinics and hospitals as appropriate. In the event of serious illness or injury, every effort will be made to notify the parent, guardian or shelter of the student. However, when such communication shall fail or when delay might endanger the life or limb of the student, treatment will not be withheld and is hereby authorised, including but not limited to hospitalisation and/or emergency or surgical procedures with anaesthesia. I understand that the [redacted] medical representative will share medical information, when necessary, with appropriate school personnel and others as may be appropriate in the interest of the learner.



List any restrictions: _____

This consent shall remain effective for as long as the aforementioned student attends [redacted]

Printed Name (parent / guardian / shelter)

Signature

Date

Signature of Witness

Date