Transformation Through Visual Art: A Case Study in an African Village Living with HIV/AIDS

by

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B.A., University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 1982
M.Ed., Hindu University of America, 2007

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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University of Victoria

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**Abstract**

This research is an ethnographic case study that asks the questions “what is transformation?” and “how does art transform individuals and their communities?”

The narrative describes key moments in the researcher’s journey to South Africa in search of answers to these questions. Findings describe the village of Hamburg’s developing art practice, and include the artists’ own voices and views on this topic. Hamburg is a Xhosa village in South Africa that has faced many challenges due to the spread of HIV/AIDS. One response to the impact of HIV/AIDS on family and economic structures has been the development of an extensive community-based art practice, including large communal tapestry work.

To engage questions regarding how visual art transforms people, the researcher reviewed existing Western and Eastern literature on transformation, and compared this with the Southern ethnographic interviews conducted whilst living in the village of Hamburg, where she joined the women for two months as they made their art. The interviews, which were informed by feminist thinking and community based action research, are deeply moving, and form the data from which conclusions were drawn. It
was found that the gritty, embodied nature of this community’s experience with transformative art processes can perhaps stimulate more inquiry into transformative art practice within art education itself, that, to date, does not engage much with a deliberate practice for human transformation. Findings in this study can also broaden the existing, sometimes disembodied, academic understandings around transformation within educational, therapeutic and spiritual discourses, which, to date, include mostly linear, hierarchical models, as well as anecdotal descriptions from mostly White, male perspectives. As yet, there is not much inquiry outside of feminist discourse into women’s transformation, which tends to be more organic and community orientated.

The researcher’s findings suggest that literature on transformation through art is needed within art education, which should include female, Black African experiences. The researcher’s conclusions are applied to classroom and studio practice, where she challenges educators, researchers and practitioners within art education to take the link between art and transformation much more seriously, as a powerful technology for growth, empowerment and resilience. Findings can also be applied to other disciplines such as feminism, art therapy, education, psychology and spirituality.
# Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee ........................................................................................................... ii

Abstract .................................................................................................................................. iii

Table of Contents ................................................................................................................... v

List of Plates ........................................................................................................................... viii

Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................... x

Dedication ............................................................................................................................. xi

1. Overview and Question ....................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Introduction: *Ubuntu* and the researcher’s standpoint in this study ...................... 1
   1.2 The researcher’s interest in art and transformation .................................................. 8
   1.3 The researcher's questions ......................................................................................... 13
   1.4 How the researcher connected with participants for this study ............................. 14

2 Literature Review on Transformation ................................................................................ 21
   2.1 Understanding transformation as change .............................................................. 21
   2.2 Western understandings of transformation .............................................................. 25
   2.3 Eastern understandings of transformation ............................................................... 28
   2.4 Transformation in psychology and education discourses ...................................... 32

3 Literature Review on Transformation Through Art ......................................................... 44
   3.1 Introduction: What is art? ......................................................................................... 44
   3.2 How is art transformative of individuals? ............................................................... 46
   3.3 How is art transformative of groups? ....................................................................... 58
   3.4 How is art transformative of silence? ...................................................................... 63
3.5 Art and truth...........................................................................................................71

4 Methodology.............................................................................................................78
  4.1 Community-based research (CBR). .......................................................................78
  4.2 Qualitative methods: Interview-based, narrative autoethnography.................86
  4.3 Transnational feminist research........................................................................92

5 Findings.....................................................................................................................99
  5.1 The Eastern Cape: A context...............................................................................99
  5.2 The researcher’s experience..............................................................................111
  5.3 The Keiskamma Art Project...............................................................................114
  5.4 Silencing in South Africa..................................................................................123
  5.5 Hamburg’s experience of the HIV pandemic..................................................138
  5.6 Making art with the Hamburg artists...............................................................149
  5.7 Making art with the Hamburg embroiderers....................................................168
  5.8 Art in the community.......................................................................................173
  5.9 Returning to Canada.........................................................................................187

6 Conclusions and Comments....................................................................................193
  6.1 The artists’ conclusions....................................................................................193
  6.2 The art administrators’ conclusions.................................................................198
  6.3 The researcher’s conclusions............................................................................206
    6.3.1 Transformative art is non-heirarchical and non-linear .........................206
    6.3.2 Transformative art can be communal as well as personal ....................213
    6.3.3 Transformative art is voicing ....................................................................217
    6.3.4 Transformative art is empowerment through vulnerbality....................219
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3.5 Transformative curricula support ongoing creative acts</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.6 Gender safety in transformative spaces</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.7 Transformative art as community engagement and leadership</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.8 Transformative art as sustainable organization</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Implications of this case study for the essentialness Art Education</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Implications of this case study for other fields of theory</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References ........................................................................................................... 248

Appendix A ........................................................................................................... 276

Appendix B ........................................................................................................... 277
## List of Plates

1. Detail from *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, depicting the arrival in the Eastern Cape of the 1820 Settlers by boat. ................................................................. 99
2. Detail from the *Keiskamma Tapestry*. Settlers move overland in ox wagons ...... 100
3. Detail from the *Keiskamma Tapestry*. Traditional domestic life in Hamburg, depicting cattle, crops, homesteads, and women fetching water ......................... 102
4. Detail from the *Keiskamma Tapestry*. The Frontier Wars between the British redcoats and the Xhosa ................................................................. 104
5. Detail from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting a memorial service with grieving relatives .............................................................................. 111
6. The *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, 14 x 22 feet. The front panels depict orphans with grandmothers. The bottom panel depicts the many burials ....................... 112
7. *The Keiskamma Altarpiece*, middle panels. An idyllic Hamburg before HIV, including the Dune Runner, dancing his art in the sand ........................................ 113
8. *The Keiskamma Altarpiece*, third panels, depicting those who have survived and a vision of a new Hamburg ........................................................ 113
9. Example of collaged art work made in the art project workshop ...................... 119
10. Collaged artwork is interpreted through embroidered applique...................... 119
11. Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting the Health Center, an ambulance, and the Trust ................................................................. 149
12. An example of the collaged art, depicting life in the village ............................. 150
13. An example of the collaged art depicting life in the village ............................. 150
14. An embroidered example of the *Botanicals* art project ............................... 152
15. An embroidered example from the *Botanicals* art project ........................... 152
16. Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, a line of coffins and the HIV icon ...... 155
17. Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting the funerals .................... 155
18: Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting the sick and dying........156
19: Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, the orphans and vulnerable children.....156
20: The *Keiskamma Guernica*, depicting the anguish at the decimation of a village and the government’s refusal to act.................................157
21: Cushion art that represents the local wildlife........................................162
22: Cushion art that represents domestic farming........................................162
23: Cushion art that represents Dr. Carol Baker-Hofmeyr injecting a patient.........163
24: Cushions that represent local life showing various stitches.........................168
25: The store with its stock of crafts for sale; cow, angel, fish and bird symbols......169
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It is because of all of you that I could experience the South African concept of *Ubuntu* first hand: *I “am” because of you.*
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to all the administrators and educators of the Keiskamma Trust, particularly Dr. Carol Baker Hofmeyr, Eunice Mangwane, and Marialda Marais for their courage, creativity and resilience through such challenging times. I would also like to dedicate this to the people of Hamburg, in particular the artists and community leaders, and thank them for their generous hospitality, and for sharing their knowledge and experience so openly with me.

An example of the art made in Hamburg, during one of the Keiskamma Trust’s Art Projects.
Chapter 1: Overview and Question

1.1 Introduction: *Ubuntu* and the researcher’s standpoint on this study

It is December 2013, and I am back in South Africa, the country where I grew up, to conduct further research for my dissertation. For two years I have been exploring the questions “what is transformation?” and “how does one transform through art?”

It rains for ten full days. Gutters overflow and roofs begin to leak. Rivers burst their banks and flood the low-lying fields. However, in this country, monsoon-like rain is auspicious, especially at weddings and funerals. And, at this most poignant moment in South African history, people feel that the rain is very good indeed, as it is also the funeral of Nelson Mandela.

My trip coincides with the official mourning period for *Madiba*, as he is respectfully known by his clan name (Hunter-Gault, 2013). His picture is plastered across shop windows and is nailed to trees across the country so that the “father of the Nation” (Hunter-Gault, 2013) still smiles out over his people as they try to process their great loss. Overnight, large tents mushroom up at bus stops and market places. People come together to pay their last respects and to weep. Masses of love letters to the country’s first Black president are poked into chain-link fences where people gather. The South African people
also write down their thoughts into books provided by the government. The words

_Hamba Kahle Tata_ ("farewell," or "go carefully, Father") echo through the media.

I watch the state memorial on TV. Barak Obama addresses the crowd of 80,000, saying Mandela "helped draft a constitution that protects the freedom of every South African" (field notes, 2013). He adds that Mandela "learned the language and customs of his oppressor so that one day he might convey to them that their freedom depends on his” (field notes, 2013).

This last comment—that freedom is relational—hints at the Southern African concept of _Ubuntu_, a notion of relationship, which implies that the destiny of each South African is inextricably linked together. Roughly translated, _Ubuntu_ approaches the concept that we _are_ because of others. _Ubuntu_ is “the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity” (Gade, 2012). South Africans of all ethnicities are deeply intertwined, despite our history of strife. I am reminded of the sweet South African pastries, known as _koeksisters_. The braided strands of dough are dipped in honey and looped into each other, like the lemniscate symbol of infinity. So South Africans, despite our struggles, are deeply interconnected. Mandela (2013) suggested that _Ubuntu_ is a universal truth, a way of life that is intrinsically relational.

I loop back again myself, this time to see how things have changed in my homeland, and to do my research. I first left my country in 1986 to explore the world, and amongst other things, to volunteer for the banned anti-apartheid movement. Whilst in Scotland, I had worked towards raising Nelson Mandela’s profile in Europe while he was still an unknown prisoner in South Africa, in order to help build global pressure to have
Mr. Mandela released. The first democratic election was held in 1994, which had brought Mr. Mandela into the presidency.

Coincidentally, I am now back in the country as Mr. Mandela passes. I feel both privileged and sad to be here at this time. I have been away for 25 years, although I am often drawn back here to visit, sometimes for long periods of time. I question my relationship with this continent, as do many White South Africans. It is a problem of identity. We are not sure that we can ever call ourselves African, because we are White.

Five generations of my ancestors were born in South Africa, and the first 30 years of my life were lived here. Technically, this makes me a White African, although calling myself such may be considered to be both a political and genetic oxymoron. There are many White Africans who, due to our complex history stretching back 400 years, could claim this continent to be our home but do not feel entitled to do so. Like others, I am, in a way, rendered geographically homeless by an irreconcilable coincidence of birthplace, skin color and history. Although we carry passports from African nations, many of us feel nationless, due to our colonial heritage. We are neither European nor are we African. This paradox begs the question, if not in Africa or Europe, then where do we belong?

Although White Africans often continue to enjoy significant economic power wherever they land, due to the value they place on education and hard work, they are essentially Afro-European hybrids, who belong only partially to both cultures.

I mention this because as a White researcher in Africa, I need to be particularly aware of possible power abuses through neo-colonialist research practices. In 1899 Polish novelist Joseph Conrad wrote *The Heart of Darkness*, reflecting the colonialist notions of the time, that the continent was a place of myth or mystery, where indigenous people and
resources could be denigrated or exploited. Phillips (2003) says Conrad’s book sets up Africa as “the other world . . . the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization. . . . Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril” (p. 5). Chinua Achebe (1977) justifiably contested this novel’s high standing in the world of literature in the 1970s. He decried the problem of any artist attempting to deny Africa and Africans their full and complex humanity. Writers like Said (1994), however, have pointed out that although Heart of Darkness has invited a body of criticism of great complexity, we need to approach it in an historical context. Colonialist discourses are now well understood as time pieces with limited perspectives (Svensson, 2010).

As articulated by Achebe, Black Africans want to be seen and heard in their full humanity. Writers and artists need to represent African reality fully, as do researchers. Many Black African writers do this, such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Bessie Head, Buchi Emecheta, Mariama Ba. White Africans, too, would like to be seen in their full humanity, and authors such as Olive Scheiner, Dalene Matthee, Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee, Rian Malan, and too many others to note here, write extensively about our experiences in Africa. Nobody wishes to be a visible minority (this term is strictly Canadian, and is not used in Africa). But neither does anybody wish to be an “invisible minority,” my own term for any person whose experience is not seen or heard within a majority discourse. Being unseen and unheard is considered to be dehumanizing and disempowering according to the feminist standpoint on power (see Gilligan, 1982; Hesse-Biber, 2007,a,b,c; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007; Lorde, 2007; Olsen, 2003; Papart, 2010; Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010; Seu, 2010; Smith, 1974, 1987).
This thesis aims therefore to bring the minority discourse of a small group of African people, both White and Black, who make art while living in a community struggling with HIV/AIDS, into a much broader conversation about the transformational possibilities of art for individuals and communities, and further this conversation within art education itself. This story, which might otherwise remain silent or invisible, attempts to represent the full humanity of the participants involved. The participants’ stories, which comprise my data, reveal their own agendas, perspectives and identities. At the same time, this dissertation tells of my own journey within this community, while conducting these interviews. Finally, the research draws on this data for its conclusions, thereby bringing multiple voices into the discourse around transformation through art.

As a White researcher, I need to be sensitive to any neocolonial research practices. Parry (2004), Said (1994) and Svensson, (2010) suggest these might include unconscious power inequities that might arise, such as my ignorance of community traditions and structures, my being perceived as an outsider, or perhaps being more powerful or educated than some participants. I must avoid intervening in the internal affairs of another community. I must be sensitive to diverse standpoints and identities. I must avoid projecting my own views on another, or “lead” participants in any way with their answers. I must be very aware of the diversity of identities involved in the project.

Guided by feminist literature, which will be discussed in depth in the methodology section, I must start with an understanding of my own identity, or standpoint, as first described by Sandra Harding (1993, 2007 see also Alcoff & Potter, 1993; Hesse-Biber, 2007 a,b,c; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). From this literature, I
understand that all my perspectives are “situated knowledge.” As all writers are saturated in their own history, I must start my research by identifying my inherited perspectives.

As a White African, I have a complex identity. Africa is my place of origin where I received my primary conditioning. It is a place of bright sunlight and color, which formed me “visually.” With its diversity of people, its fecund life forms, its vivid fauna and flora, its bold stripes and spots, its loud bird and animal song, its musical rhythms, Africa gives me a deep love of variety, color, design, the visual arts, as well as dance, song and drumming. But I also have three other identities. Britain is the land of my genetic ancestry, my other cultural home, whose literary legacy gives me a love of words. I was born to English parents and was schooled Eurocentrically, with Beatrix Potter, Ted Hughes, E.E. Cummings and Kipling as my early reading, which formed me “verbally,” and later on, with Shakespeare, Milton, Hardy, and the Brontes shaping my adolescent imagination. However, Canada, specifically the West Coast, would later become my adopted home, chosen freely by me for its stand on peaceful inclusiveness, broad mindedness, tolerance of speech, and wide open, beautiful spaces. Canada would shape me “ecologically,” “politically” and “ethically.” India, however, will always be my spiritual home. As an adolescent in South Africa, growing up in Natal, the largest Indian community outside of India, I chose to breach apartheid lines and learn from a Hindu community about the wealth of wisdom and insight into the human mind that is embodied in the practice of yoga, a form of transformative, meditative practice originating some 5,000 years ago in India. So, my identity is not simple. On the outside, I look like a White woman, but on the inside, I am a composite of these four intersecting, cultural
perspectives—South Africa, Britain, Canada and India, each of which has partially informed my identity.

I am unable therefore to create ethnic hierarchies within myself by choosing a single national allegiance. Nor am I able to create ethnic hierarchies outside of myself with others in my environment. These four countries nourish me culturally and author my standpoint in their own various ways.

Because I need to locate my standpoint for this project, I reject the term “White African” as an incomplete term for myself. I am perhaps more accurately a third-culture kid, or TCK as they are called by educators (Lyttle, Barker & Cornwell, 2011; Moore & Barker, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). TCKs are known for their nomadic, multicultural lives, and they are now well documented as a group. Early multicultural exposures put TCKs in a good position to work transnationally, having been culturally sensitized in and to multiple heritages. They tend to be global citizens, and their allegiance is towards the planet as a whole, rather than to ethnicity.

Like the koeksister dipped in honey, the concept of a single country as ‘home’ tastes sweet to me, but is difficult to digest. As soon as I claim borders for myself, others must fall outside of them. I am therefore averse, not only to racism, but also to nationalism. I have consequently spent my life moving between places, trying to understand different cultures, their art, and their notions of transformation.

I am aligned with principles rather than borders. This dissertation then, could be seen as an attempt to explore those principals more deeply, to bring three things into relationship: transformation, art and, one community that is immersed in both. In this project I attempt to map one small example of an existing relationship between art and
transformation. This dissertation is written, not in the spirit of colonialism as outlined by Achebe in the 1970s, or as a “timepiece” outlined by Svensson (2010), but, rather, in the relational spirit of South Africa, or Ubuntu, meaning “I am because of them.” It is written in the need to understand transformation and art as relational concepts, between those who participate, and from which anybody might benefit.

1.2 The researcher’s interest in art and transformation

Art is a powerful medicine. I have personally experienced a ‘coming alive’ through its practice. As a young woman growing up in apartheid South Africa, I paid close attention to the politics of my time, which were deeply disturbing to me. During this period, I painted many pieces that, in retrospect, reflect the powerlessness that I and others felt, such as the image of a floating head trapped in a box. Another painting in particular expresses the anger that I could feel of those around me who were disenfranchised, as it depicts a mob of angry people pushing up against a white picket fence, perhaps my own defenses. I now understand that painting is a way for me to feel a measure of control in a situation that might otherwise be overwhelming. The arts are a way for me to find a voice about otherwise inexpressible feelings. As I gained more of a voice, I wrote and painted, and started performing in theatrical productions about the country’s inequalities.

Later, by leaving South Africa to follow my conscience, I necessarily had to learn to let go of friends, family, and culture, as well as the concept of ‘home’. The ensuing grief that followed manifested for me as clinical depression. Again, during this period, I turned to the arts, and like Jung with his Red Book (2009), I was able to work through
layers of unconsciousness into deeper levels of insight through image making. To some extent, my feelings were slowly transformed out of existential meaninglessness into a deeper meaningfulness through making art. I was able to move into a new resilience and a more adaptive thinking about concepts such as power, allegiance, belonging, and relationship. One painting in particular reflects this, a large mixed media of applied materials that depicts two women, one Black and one White, playing a game of chess with their children as pawns.

I worked with my own psyche in three ways: 1) I worked experientially with the arts and with other transformative practices such as meditation, specifically yoga; 2) I studied the literature on different transformative practices; and 3) I observed and spoke with others who had also experienced transformative practices.

I practiced a variety of art forms, such as visual art, theatre, dance, drumming, and writing, and I noticed that these practices use their own forms of ‘language.’ South Africa was, during apartheid, prone to banning language on certain topics, and imprisoning or killing activists (more in Chapters 3 and 4), and so it was often safer to use symbolic language, or metaphor, than direct speech. The arts were trainings in these forms, and I began to understand how people live and communicate through metaphor (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

As I shared myself through the arts, I discovered the support of a community, including a group of activists, artists, performers, and writers. Slowly, through increased dialogue and committed practice, I became more embodied, and self-aware. I noticed that the arts began to transform me, and those around me. The use of symbolic forms of language gave us a voice, and we felt empowered to express ideas which were important
to us, even if those ideas were culturally silenced. I noticed that changes were occurring inside my body and mind—positive side effects to these aesthetic practices. For example, my ability to articulate my inner and outer worlds gave me more clarity and self-confidence.

I also experienced some liminal changes in my normal states of consciousness. These included a heightened acuity in my focus, broader perception and awareness, unexpected periods of happiness, and deeper meaning, despite the bleak political climate around me. New mindsets were being born. I would notice that underneath the old depression lay the grief of letting go of one identity, or set of meanings, as I moved into another more complex identity or set of meanings. One painting that expresses this transformation is the image of a women with a seedling growing out of her heart, which is a split-open avocado pit.

This seedling expressed a rebirth. I noticed that as I became less depressed, I could tolerate more ambiguity. I could manage my stress better. I was facing my fears. I was finding a voice. I was happier and more effective. Initially, I experienced this improvement as transient. But as better frames of mind began to last for longer periods, I realized that there must be a physical and chemical basis. I concluded that my consciousness must be changing structurally. As I experienced transformation (defined in more depth in Chapter 2) first hand, I wanted to understand the physiology behind better health.

By turning to the arts as a treatment, I was able to manage my consciousness without invasive external interventions. Health professionals had previously offered me medications, which had had serious side effects. At my darkest point, a psychiatrist had
offered me electroconvulsive shock treatment, which I had refused, but it had been at this juncture that I recognized I must commit to an alternative path toward health. I became curious about the actual site of transformative health.

The body as a site for transformation forms the ancient understanding of yoga. In the 1970s and 1980s, during the height of apartheid, and as my tolerance for the risks of activism grew, I had crossed apartheid lines by engaging with a community of yogis in South Africa, to practice this embodied moving meditation that grew out of the Hindu understanding of transformative practice, where the body-mind is understood to be a unitary vehicle for various states of consciousness. At that time, the practice of yoga was mostly unknown by Europeans, or it was feared and disparaged as a minority practice. Some views about yoga expressed to me at that time, and sometimes even today, range from a general slur against its ethnic origins, to suspicion of some deviance, to outright dismissal of it as the work of the devil. I have always seen it differently, as one of the most sophisticated systems of self-transformation I had ever come across, with an intuitive understanding of anatomy and physiology, and an acute insight into the workings of the mind. I did not let the metaphorical languaging or rituals associated with devotional expression deter my inquiry. I saw these as symbolic ways to express prescientific knowledge about the body’s emerging joy and gratitude.

I persisted in learning from the Hindu sector of town, and began to experiment with cultivating various meditative states of mind. By practicing various breathing techniques, building my focus capacity, and by exploring the misalignments and tensions that showed up in my body and mind, and releasing them, I began to manage my autonomic nervous system to some extent: to slip out of the “sympathetic” mode of flight
and flight at will. This mode is where the body’s nervous system is alert and is stimulated for survival reactions (through increased heart rate, dilated blood vessels, activated sweat secretion, and inhibited digestion and elimination). I could now enter at will into the “parasympathetic” mode, where the body’s nervous system is relaxed, and has rest-and-digest or feed-and-breed reflexes (this mode allows for digestion, urination, defecation, lactation and sexual activity). I would practice this state even when external circumstances would normally have demanded a fight-and-flight response from me, such as during visits to the dentist or during public performances. I would slow my heart rate and lower my pulse. By doing this, I was managing my own chemistry, releasing “feel-good” hormones by various breath and focus practices. I was elevating my states of consciousness more successfully than any medication had done for me. I was more able to maintain equanimity throughout the changes and crises in my life and was able to enter ecstatic frames of mind at will, which by now, seemed to feed me for great lengths of time. I was able to relate to others more positively and became more deeply engaged in the world around me. As I elevated my own moods and insights through these practices, I was able to be more generous in my service to others.

Importantly, I noticed that during my arts practices, I could now also reach these altered states. I noticed that underneath both yoga and the arts were similar meditative states born of deep focus and surrender.

I do not suggest that I have reached any specific destination along a continuum of enlightenment, as I do not feel there is any specific endpoint to be accomplished. I simply feel more content, adaptable, and fulfilled, and these are some of the markers of transformation, which will be discussed in much more depth in Chapter 2.
By the time I was doing graduate work, I had experienced a measure of transformation and had also taken some formal trainings in body literacy, such as massage (where practitioners work with the meridians of the body understood by Chinese medicine), and a masters degree in yoga education (including anatomy and physiology). However, although these practices offer transformative technologies, they do not ask how or what transforms on a physical level. With no scientific manual to understand the principles behind transformation, these ancient practices offer a metaphorical understanding of lines of energy (known as nadis, chakras, or meridians) in the body being “unblocked” by certain practices. Although the Western neurosciences do not recognize this energetic anatomy as real, the Hindu and traditional Chinese understandings believe lines and locations in the body to be literal, physical pathways and sites for energetic transformation.

Due to this conflict between Eastern and Western thinking, I felt the need to do further research to try to understand the principles behind transformation. By blending my own brand of living epistemology with the guidance of scholars, teachers, and a community of practitioners, I had started, to some extent, to manage and cultivate my own consciousness and to relate the arts to meditation practice. But this was only a felt sense of gathering freedom, a somatic understanding, rather than a cognitive or scientific explanation.

1.3. The researcher’s questions

When starting a PhD, I wanted to understand three things: 1) I wanted to know exactly what was changing as one transformed, by whatever technology, whether by means of meditation, the arts, or therapy; 2) I wanted to know if these changes were
common to any who practiced these technologies; and 3) I wanted to know whether
certain principles could be part of a designed curriculum for transformative education.
The possibility of self-directed, mindful change available to anybody became central to
my thinking. I became interested in the possibility of change through art education.

I began to read more widely about transformation, and I realized that the
deliberate maximizing of one’s human potential was not new at all, only to me. In the
East, transformation was also known as a process of self-realization, liberation, or
enlightenment. In the West, transformation took a more secular route through the human
potential movement, particularly through practices such as education or psychotherapy
which focus on growth, maturation, development, and learning—all words that overlap
somewhat in meaning with transformation (the difference between the Western and
Eastern vocabulary and approaches is explored further in Chapter 2). It became apparent
to me that for a PhD, I would need to narrow my interest to a case study of a community
of people who may have experienced transformation themselves, specifically through art.

1.4 How the researcher connected with participants for this study

As I sat on my sofa in Canada, thinking about how to proceed with a case study
for my research questions, I begin to recall the diverse groups of artists with whom I have
worked, including the Simon Charlie Society on Vancouver Island, a group of First
Nations carvers, many of whom have experienced addiction, family abuse and
imprisonment, and who have experienced recovery from trauma through reconnecting
with their cultural art practices. I noticed that I am drawn to working with authentic,
indigenous art practices.
I idly watched a documentary series about art in South Africa. This activity connects me to my homeland, which I miss. The series I watched is called *A Country Imagined*. In it, anthropologist and musician Johnny Clegg (2010) documents the creative energy evident in the recent work of South African artists, writers, musicians, and dancers. The stories are engaging, and one story in particular stood out for me. It is about a group of Xhosa women in the Eastern Cape. The artists and their mentors display a resilience and humor, considering they have suffered through the worst of the HIV pandemic. They have found the creative energy to make art about their situation, a profoundly difficult and taboo subject. Their bravery leaves me humbled. I am instantly drawn to their art—flat, colorful, tapestried images that portray their courageous struggle with HIV. Suddenly, I see the double entendre in the term “being positive.”

I conclude that this might be a community that has a deep experience of transformation through art. I determine to learn more about the village of Hamburg. A little online research leads me to a White woman called Carol, who has provided the mostly Black residents of this village with the initial inspiration to make art about their situation. Carol has started a Trust (Keiskamma Trust, n.d.) as an umbrella organization for various artistic, medical, and educative functions in the village. I discover that Carol is both an artist with a Masters degree in print making, and a medical doctor, and I am intrigued by this unusual combination of qualifications and skills.

The village of Hamburg is set on a rural estuary in a stunning coastal landscape in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. For weeks, their story haunts me, and I wonder how to find out more. I am stymied by the technical difficulties I perceive in approaching this community, as I know there is limited email contact with the villagers who live there. My
studies and life experience also make me cautious about the potential colonial and ethical issues of possibly asking my questions in such a vulnerable village. But I soon discover that there are several YouTube videos created by members of the Hamburg community that have been posted, suggesting a level of media awareness and involvement.

I collect a growing file of Hamburg videos, my favorite being *The Dune Runner*. In this video, I see Vuyisile Funde, an athletic man dancing and singing his prayers across the massive sand dunes of Hamburg, his feet leaving a delicate, snake-like tracery of geometric patterns as he immerses himself in his art-prayers. I discover that the sound track on the video is also his own composition. One of the captions reads “I dream and see pictures and get up and make the pictures in the sand.” The closing acknowledgment by the videographers describes Vuyisile Funde, who has been a watchman for most of his life, but a beating left him unable to work.

He now lives off a disability grant. When conditions are right, he puts on his red skirt and runs intricate patterns in the sand dunes; the patterns are seldom seen by anyone as they fade soon after dawn. (Keiskamma Friends, 2007, March 3)

Here is an art practice that is lived out in the landscape itself, combining sound, rhythm, movement, and imagery, that is neither a commercial enterprise nor a self-conscious exhibition but essentially a transient and private spiritual expression of embodied, meditative, creative practice, being shared with the wind and the waves. Jung spoke about this type of art as a form of transformative dream work (1925/1989, pp. 51–56), a temporal medium—in this case beach sand that gets washed away—not unlike the temporal use of colored sand in mandalas that is swept away after the vision is complete. The art lives for a moment and then is gone forever, with nothing for the artist or
onlooker to cling to, nothing to identify as an object or a possession or a territory or a meaning or a reason. Funde’s prayer-dance is also the kind of psychospiritual movement practice that contemporary teachers such as Gabrielle Roth advocate (1998, 2002) for transformation. As an artist, spiritual practitioner, and dancer myself in the Roth tradition of ecstatic dance, I am drawn to Vuyisile’s practice in the dunes.

I then find online the embroidered images made by the women in Hamburg. I notice an image of the Dune Runner himself, who is portrayed as a shamanic figure, his footprints woven into the tapestry. There are also images of the sick, the dying, and the funerals. As I study these images, I grow quiet. I am aware of the many troublesome issues surrounding intercultural art interpretation (Wilber, 2001b), and I try not to impose my own meanings on these images. James Hillman, for example, warned against the theoretical speculation about art and the reductive tendencies of interpretation. He advocated “sticking to the image, whose often indistinct or paradoxical language spoke with more authenticity than verbal discourse” (quoted in Kidel, 2011). Remembering my commitment to postcolonial research, I try instead to connect with my somatic response to the art. My body tells me I am inspired by the beauty of the images, fascinated by the narrative, moved by the courage of the artists, and appalled by the suffering that is portrayed.

With more online research, I learn that the mature White woman who is prominent in some of the videos is in fact Carol, referred to as U-Dr. Baker (“U” is the traditional South African prefix reserved for those who have earned the deepest respect). In one of the videos, Keiskamma: A Story of Love (now removed from the internet), Carol, who is the only doctor in the area, drives a small white truck along dusty red roads.
She gets out, knocks on doors of tiny, immaculate, brightly painted homes. She enters homes, some without water and electricity, and administers medicines. The pills are antiretrovirals, the medication that helps stabilize those with HIV, although, as yet, there is still no cure. In the video there are also Xhosa health workers from the village, such as Eunice Mangwane, who help Carol to educate the sick about the complex drug regime they must endure for life. In other videos I hear the villagers voice their stories about being personally affected by HIV, about superstitions around HIV, and the stigma of disclosing. I learn too about those orphaned by HIV, and the anger children sometimes feel at loosing their entire family, and the fear of being totally alone. I feel the strength and courage of this community as they take care of each other with enormous, tough love.

I see, too, the creativity that is evident in Hamburg. Apart from the art projects, a music academy has been started by the Trust, and the children perform with instruments for audiences and for videos. Young people are also coached in the Brazilian movement form called capoeira. They perform to music that they generate themselves, while in a room full of their community’s tapestries. Choral music and movement seem to be a constant backdrop to all village events.

There are also videos about the art projects started by the Trust. I learn that these works have now travelled around the world to Great Britain and the United States. I notice the art being used in dance performances by the Richard Gere Foundation in the United States, to raise awareness around HIV and AIDS. It strikes me that this is a lot of creative activity generated from one tiny, rural community struggling with illness, rurality, and underemployment far from the ‘first’ world.
I listen to a board member of the Keiskamma Trust, Andrew Hofmeyr, tell the story of Carol’s arrival in Hamburg. He talks about the HIV pandemic and the Trust’s implementation of several art projects. The question raised is, how can the lessons that have been learned in Hamburg reach other communities? Dissemination of this success story has become an important priority for the Trust.

I hear Eunice Mangwane, a village grandmother and health worker, lead a group of women into spontaneous song, “You must never, never give up.” When I hear this song, I cry, and then I know I would like to ask my questions about the transformational possibilities of art, in this village. I would like to ask these women personally if art has in fact transformed their lives, and if so, how? I have also heard the Board’s question “how can other communities learn from what has happened here?”

I notice that the women in this rural hamlet in the poorest part of South Africa are making a significant effort to share their narrative with the world. I have connected with their story firstly through video and then through photographed images of their art posted online. Garfield (2006) says the arrival of citizen media is said to have enabled ordinary people to create and share narratives as well as become politically empowered, although Wall (2009) argues that although African countries are no longer represented as chaotic and violent as was often the case in the past, they continue to be stereotyped by representations by Westerners. I decide I would like to hear Hamburg’s story directly from the villagers themselves.

I email Carol, introduce myself, and ask for her thoughts about my coming. Carol responds (Carol Baker Hofmeyr, personal communication, Aug, 2011) by saying that this kind of study is important and necessary if the work at Keiskamma is to become
understood and reproducible in other areas. She invites me to come and see for myself the transformation that is happening in Hamburg through art, and says she will personally assist me in obtaining all the information I might need. So I propose this project to my PhD committee. I pass an ethics review by the university, and I go.
Chapter 2: Literature Review on Transformation

2.1 Understanding transformation as change

Whilst writing a proposal for this project and waiting for an ethics review, I continue my research. I find there are many closely allied words for transformation. “Change,” in particular, might be considered almost synonymous with transformation. Goldbard (2006), a community art activist, calls for understanding of human change. She suggests we start by asking “what’s changing” (p. 215), and research could include various processes, such as power analysis, cross-cultural communications, conflict resolution, problem solving, and group processes.

I ask myself, is transformation simply “change” or is it a certain kind of change? And can we quantify it, and if so, how? O’Sullivan et al. (2002) suggest “when we speak of transformation, we need to know from what to what” (p. xvii).

Change is phenomenologically ubiquitous. Parents observe change in their children and call it development. Gardeners observe change in their landscape and call it the seasons. Educators observe change in their students and call it learning. Elders observe change in their bodies and call it aging. The ill observe change in their bodies and call it disease or dying. We interpret change and then experience a positive or negative reaction to our own interpretation.
We impact the world, and we in turn, are impacted by it. This is change - a natural call-and-response process within a living system. Change happens through people, within people, around people, despite people and because of people.

A spectrum of attitudes towards change includes a negative “reaction against,” a more positive “response to,” and a more proactive “deliberate cultivation of.” With this last approach we learn to take responsibility for our own unfolding. In this view, change can be seen as an opportunity for adapted flourishing. It is a conscious collaboration with our own, innate, evolutionary impulse.

Change involves the passing away of the old and the birthing of the new, a complex play of the forces of destruction and creation. These binary forces of change exist at three levels in nature. At the macro level, which includes the creation and destruction of whole universes, cosmologists posit a fluctuating, rhythmical movement over billions of years, between a Big Bang and a Big Crunch (see Davies, 1996; Ferris, 1998; Hawking, 1998, 2001; Hawking & Ellis, 1973; Hawking & Mlodinow, 2012; Hooper, 2006; Rees, 1997; Sagan, 1985; Wollack, 2010; Zukov, 1980). At the medial level of existence of biological organisms, scientists posit two opposing forces: entropy (described by the second law of thermodynamics, which states that all change in the universe results in a movement toward an inert state of uniformity) and evolution (the impulse within the universe to complexify systems and to build interdependency between them, a movement of simple forms morphing over time into more sophisticated, efficient and adapted forms (Brooks, Wiley, & Brooks, 1988; Darwin, 1859/2006; Weber, 1988).

At the subatomic, micro level of quantum mechanics, physicists posit particles continuously flashing in and out of existence (Davies, 1996; Ferris, 1998; Hawking,
One way to think of this continuous fluctuation at different levels of existence is as a wave form—vacillations between peaks (of integration and order) and troughs (of disintegration and disorder)—a binary system that we call our universe.

This notion of change being a binary fluctuation is not only a Western scientific idea. In Asia, for example, the Taoist concept of the yin-yang polarity also suggests that life is change—a fluctuation between opposites, such as winter and summer, up and down, cold and hot, male and female, etcetera, two polarities in constant flux that strive continually to find balance (see Capra, 2010). The Samkhya philosophy of India interestingly understands change in the universe to have three qualities, known in Sanskrit as gunas. These principles are creation, destruction, and preservation—three qualities, rather than a binary of two, that “dance” together, therefore giving rise to the constant flux that is our universe (see Huxley, 2009; Muller, 2003), although preservation, the third quality, could perhaps be seen as a temporal aspect, or the time it takes between the other two fluctuations to peak.

I am interested in all three levels of change, the macro, medial, and micro. But the scope of this study does not include macro or micro change. I will only focus on the medial change, at the human scale, a positive fluctuation of human experience that can be lived. As an educator and artist, I am most interested in systems of change at the lived level, specifically curricula that facilitate change in consciousness. And I will focus here on only one of the binaries of change—the positive, integrative peak of human development rather than the disintegrative and necessary counterpart to human change. I
limit this study to positive growth, although medial change can also include the negative. Neurologists, endocrinologists, gerontologists, for example, all study change at the physiological, cellular or “brain” level, mostly negative. Therapists study change at the psychological, behavioral or “mind” level too, often focusing on correcting pathologies, while educators are more interested in curricula that help people ‘learn’ to change – to adapt and flourish. As a transformative arts educator, I am most interested in how people experience positive foreground change despite possible negative background change, how they learn to self-express themselves into new viewpoints through art despite or because of their environmental challenges, not dissimilar to the goals of therapy. This study therefore will focus more on art as an opportunity for positive intervention. It will look at how people construct a narrative both about themselves and their environment through images, and as change psychologists Coehn and Sherman (2014) suggest, a healthy narrative (such as the song sung in Hamburg about never giving up) gives people enough optimism to “stay in the game” in the face of the daily onslaught of aggravations and setbacks.

Change at the medial, human level is studied in many disciplines. For example, in leadership, business and organizational behavior studies change is understand to be something that needs “managing”, as part of building successful business cultures and driving them forwards (see Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001; van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The specialized field of developmental psychology also focuses on certain human changes from early life to death as a common social pattern, a trajectory that has defined stages where biological change is linked to psychological change (Erikson, 1998). Yet, despite this intensive focus on change, no one
really claims to understand it, nor is there consensus within the field of psychology regarding the definition of change. Kaplan (2012) says this problem continues to divide clinicians, which leads to skepticism by the more science-based medical establishment as to the impact and significance of any particular treatment.

I make no claim here to solve this illusive problem for psychologists. Yet, as a learner and educator, I am interested in optimizing my own capacity for change and that of my students. This conundrum means I know change when I see it, or feel it, and yet I struggle to define or measure it. Change can often be intangible, and yet we can still know it has occurred.

2.2 Western understandings of transformation

In order to understand transformation on the medial level of human psychology, I need to understand what changes within us, so I can also understand the how of change. Notions of the changeable entity within us that “experiences” the transformation, include the self, or the psyche. This entity has been described in several ways by early Western philosophers, such as Heracleitus, Protagorus, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. This self was understood variously by the Greeks to be the body, the soul, intuition, reason, knowledge, or relative truths (Daniels, 1997). I briefly summarize here characterization by Daniels (1997) of Greek thinking on the self, and its capacity for change. Heracleitus, he says, emphasized that there is nothing static in the universe, the mind, or the soul. Everything is ceasing to be what it was and becoming what it will be. Protagoras, who was also called the father of relativism, believed that different truths hold for different people at different times. Truth, goodness, and beauty are subjective and relative and
must be “experienced” by the self. For Socrates, the goal of life was the pursuit of reason, yet at the same time, his chief source of ethical guidance was an inner voice, his daemon, as he called it, understood as the self. Plato, as a rationalist, divided the person dualistically into a material, imperfect body and a mind or soul, or self, which contained pure knowledge. In contrast, Aristotle emphasized careful observation and did not trust rational methods. Aristotle claimed that human beings have a deep, innate impulse to know and find out. In regard to the emotions, Aristotle anticipated Freud’s principle of catharsis. Our essence, the self, is something which gradually comes into being through the course of our development (and which perhaps can be facilitated through an art practice). Aristotle felt each person and each species strives to actualize its own potential (anticipating Abraham Maslow’s pyramid of needs, a hierarchy culminating in needs for self-actualization, 1943,1954,1970/2014,1971).

Today some understand change at the level of the self as evolution, a striving “upward” toward rationality (Schieffer & Lessem, 2014), as more and more potentialities become actualized. French philosopher Henri Bergson complicated this linear binarism and argued for a more intuitive, rather than mechanistic notion of human change, although he also spoke of the evolution of life forms as developing successively “higher” degrees of consciousness (Grosz, 2005).

It is this constant “becoming” of the evolving self (Grosz, 2005) in which I am interested and the ability of art to manifest this human becoming. I am hesitant, however, to use the word “higher” for consciousness, as this implies a hierarchical, upward mobility, a path of some sort that might involve a geography of the self that maps “up” from “down” with an end point, such as Maslow’s pyramid of needs (1943,1954,
1970/2014,1971) from the 1950’s and 60’s, which might be viewed as a little dated. Perhaps the word “broader” or more balanced, “inclusive” or “integrated” consciousness may be preferable here.

While the notions of what changes (the self, soul, intuition, knowing agent, reason or consciousness) have been explored for more than 2,000 years in Western thought by philosophers, the sciences play a more important part in shaping our thought today. The contemporary notion of what changes during transformation can perhaps also now be understood in the language of scientific materialism. In physics, transformation is understood to be “the induced or spontaneous change of one element into another by a nuclear process” (Transformation, n.d. Oxford). In cell biology, transformation refers to changes in the actual DNA structures (Transformation, n.d. Merriam-Webster). These definitions seem to imply that to transform, change has to occur at the deepest core structures. There is a growing literature on this “science of personal transformation” (Langer 2009; Siegel, 2010). I will borrow this metaphor from the scientific understanding that change starts on the inside of the individual and can radiate outwards to the community. For this project, I will define transformation as “the evolutionary movement toward more inclusive forms of individual and community integration and agency, implying the capacity of people to reach more empowerment, and thereby meeting their broader potentials, and positively impacting their communities.”

The question of what changes seems to strike right at our core identity, of which there may be several, all of which can be transformed (Tennant, 2012). This question of who we really are has been contested heavily over the centuries, as we have seen, and is now central to many educational discourses in the West (Gee, 2000) because core identity
pertains to issues of diversity, empowerment, access, and mobility in the classroom. Gee (2000) for example, suggests that identity is now considered fluid and can change over a life time, which is where the arts can be helpful. (The arts and transformation will be explored in 3).

2.3 Eastern understandings transformation

Notions of identity are different in the East, however. Here, our real identity is not fluid, but permanent. Only how we experience the self is fluid. Some of the earliest understandings appear in the spiritual traditions of meditation, where changing how we experience the self has been a deliberate practice for over 5,000 years. Yogic, Buddhist, Taoist and Sufi traditions of transformation practice a “metamorphosis of consciousness in order to experience and interact with higher (or broader, or deeper) levels of reality” (Feuerstein, 1992, p. 32). Although these four very different traditions do have their own individual programs and practices for transformation, they share the central aim of modifying the practitioner’s perception of the self. In these Eastern traditions, transformation of the self is associated with an inquiry at the deepest level of identity, following the question of “Who am I?” (Feuerstein, 1992; Wilber, 1996, 2001a; Wolinsky, 2000) to its ultimate conclusion, so that the practitioner realizes she is neither her mind (her thoughts) nor her body (her feelings) but a larger reality that includes both of these, and more. Side effects of this are “ego-transcendence, self transparency, freedom from anxiety, openness, emotional availability, bodily presence, the ability for genuine intimacy, reverence for all life, the capacity for service and love” (Feuerstein, 1992, p.1).
In this paradigm, the self is thought of as unchangeable but realizable, whereas the
self in Western paradigms is thought to be fluid and changeable (Gee, 2000). In Eastern
thought, the self does not change, only the views of itself change. Transformation here is
the peeling back of layers of illusion and ignorance not dissimilar to therapy (Kandel,
2012) in order to liberate the seeker from the suffering caused by limited views, or
“misidentifications.”

There are, however, significant differences between the Eastern and Western
approaches to transformation of consciousness. Ken Wilber defines these differences as
“growing up” in the West, which is “relatively” real, or “waking up” in the East, which is
“ultimately” real (personal correspondence, October, 2015).

Indologist Georg Feuerstein (1992) points out that
most schools of modern psychotherapy . . . seek to restore a person to “normality”
and are chiefly interested in the ordinary, waking consciousness and its smooth
functioning. . . . Seldom do they [psychologists] have either the knowledge to
supervise, or the means to enhance, the radical path of transcendence pursued in
the spiritual traditions. . . . Such transcendence is equivalent to flawless ecstasy. . .
It is not merely a state of consciousness. Rather it is said to exceed all modes of
perceiving the world (p. 32-43).

Although therapists are beginning to use mindfulness techniques in their practices,
including art therapy (see Rappaport, 2014), this state of consciousness is almost
impossible to describe or understand without experience. However, the main point here is
that in the West ordinary consciousness is seen as desirable, while in the East ordinary
consciousness itself is seen as undesirable and ought to be transcended. These views of mental ‘health’ are radically different.

In the West, transformative practices aim for liberation from suffering. In the East, transformative practices aim, not just for liberation from suffering, but also for ecstasy, known as *Samadhi* (Sanskrit) in the yogic tradition, or *Nirvana* (Pali) in the Buddhist tradition, for it is the experience of this state that transforms notions of the core identity. After this state of consciousness has been stabilized, all need for further transformation becomes redundant (Feuerstein, 1992, p. 34, citing the Hindu text, the *Kena Upanishad* 1:3).

These permanent, structural changes of consciousness are unlike Maslow’s “transient moments of self-actualization” (Maslow, 1971, p. 48), his idea of peak experiences, which pass. In summary, in the West, our transformative technologies generally limit the journey of transformation to a strong, individuated, hierarchical self. In the East, the goal of transformative technologies is to take the practitioner beyond the experience of an individuated self entirely. Both paths are however, in my opinion, transformative trajectories that can be viewed as an identity project.

For this case study, however, we will focus the literature review more on the Western model of transformation, which is the building of an agentic and empowered self with healthy boundaries, where transformation only occurs once other more basic physiological needs are met (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1971) or through a 10-stage process of disorientating dilemmas (Mezirow, 2000/2010), rather than on the Eastern model of meditation and surrendering into an ecstatic identity that is boundariless and which can, therefore, sometimes be viewed as a pathological state by the West. However, this case
study will also include indigenous, African, female models of transformation in its findings, which differ in significant ways from the models of transformation mentioned here, which are generally perspectives from a masculine point of view, and often written about by White academics from the West, even when analyzing Eastern techniques.

Today, in the contemporary, secular West, we understand that changing the self is not necessarily a religious act but rather an educational or therapeutic act. What changes is understood to be the psyche, the word Socrates first used for the seat of intelligence and character (Daniels, 1997), although ideas on how the psyche changes, why, and by what effort, differ contextually. Stein (1998) says the idea that people change and develop significantly in the course of their whole lives “seems to us today to be a commonplace observation. We take it for granted that there are ‘stages of life,’ ‘life crises,’ and ‘developmental phases.’ But it was not always so” (p. 7; see also Aries, 1965; Corsaro, 2014).

Although Stein (1998) mentions stages, crises and phases as commonplace periods of transformation, what is perhaps not very well developed in this stream of thought is that humans do not have to be passive about transforming. We do not have to wait for these life stages or crises to occur, or for the natural genetic and hormonal unfolding of certain phases of our life span for development to occur (such as the terrible twos, adolescence, or mid-life). We can in fact be proactive about change.

In the West, humans have only recently turned to therapy as pioneered by Freud and Jung (Kandel, 2012), as well as certain creative practices, to induce our own transformation. Therapy for transformative purposes is a relatively new concept no more than a hundred years old (Kandel, 2012). Wilber (1996), whose work broadly reviews
and compares modern therapeutic approaches, suggests that human transformation consists of the emergence into consciousness of higher levels of organizing structures “mediated by symbols” (p. 49). We will look at the use of mediated symbols in further detail in the literature review on art as transformation.

2.4 Transformation in psychology and education discourses

In the secular West, transformation theory is focused in two major domains, psychology and education. In psychology, Carl Jung (1959, 1966) was amongst the first therapists (and artists) to recognize the concept of deliberately cultivating transformation, possibly due to his being a student of Eastern philosophies such as yoga (Jung, 2014). Subsequently, other contemporary therapists, especially “positive” psychologists, have looked at ways that humans can meet their full potentials. This stream of psychology focuses on human possibilities rather than pathologies. For example, Carl Rogers (1995a, 1995b) and Maslow (1943, 1954) were amongst the first in the West to speak of self-actualization, which implies transformation through gaining one’s full potential. In the 1950’s and 1960’s Maslow (1943, 1954) developed his theory of human motivation visualized as a pyramid of needs, which I draw upon in the findings section, as it is still used in broad applications today. He theorized a hierarchy of needs that build upon each other and he suggested that only after the successive needs of food, shelter, safety, and belonging were met, could a person self-actualize or transform into their full potential. We will explore in the findings section whether this model applies in Africa amongst women artists.
Later in the 20th century, new theories came into being. Mastering optimal “states of being” also became a practice for unfolding one’s full potential. Jean Houston (1997, 1998, 2004), for example, coined the term “the possible human.” Mihalyi Czikszentmihalyi (1993, 1997), who was also influenced by the practice of yoga, termed this optimal state of being as “flow.” This flow state is synonymous with Eastern teachings of being fully present, or being in the now. Osho (1999), a contemporary teacher of Vedantic philosophy, creativity, and meditation, referred to this flow state as “liberation.” In the perspectives shared by all these teachers and researchers, transformation includes continually practicing optimal states until they become permanent.

Transformation is understood by many names in Western thinking. It is understood as development of some kind: a process of ever-refined needs and motivations (Crain, 1985); as peak experiences (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1970); as moral development and justice (Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1972); as optimal development by self-revision (Rogers, 1995a, 1995b); as shifts in structural consciousness (Feuerstein, 1987, 1992; Gebser, 1986/1991); as attaining maturity or an open-ended process of emergent, self-assembling dynamic neuronal systems (Graves, 1970, 1974); as evolution through six equilibrium stages (Kegan, 1983; Kegan, Wagner, & Lahey, 2005); as moral and identity maturation (Gilligan, 1982); and as ever-expanding, more inclusive identities in different stages and states (Wilber, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000). These are just some examples of the variants of transformation as understood in psychology, although this is not a completely exhaustive list of “development”, the preferred word for transformation in this domain.
In the domain of education, however, transformation is clearly understood to be a particular kind of “learning”, rather than “development” (as in psychology), or “realization” (as in spirituality and meditation practices). Jack Mezirow, the so-called father of transformative learning, and his associates (1990) represent a niche field that use this word very precisely. In the 1980’s and 1990’s they defined transformation as “the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one’s experience. Learning also includes acting on these insights” (p. xvi). Mezirow (2000/2010) further refined this definition: “Transformation refers to a movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives” (p. 19).

In this educational view of transformation, the practitioner “learns” to actualize herself as a form of consciousness management. Educator and philosopher Maxine Greene (1988) notes that “it is actually through the process of effecting transformations that the human self is created and re-created” (p. 21). Cuffari (2011) takes this further, proposing that transformation can become a “habit” that can be cultivated as a life-long endeavor.

From the definitions above, it becomes clear that learning, actualization and development have many commonalities and are challenging to define as separate processes. What is common in the various fields that look at these processes, however, is an understanding that structural changes to consciousness do accrue through effort as well as accident.
After an extensive literature review of all the fields mentioned as interested in human potential (spirituality, positive psychology, transpersonal psychology, creative therapies, and transformative learning) and unable to find any one central text that does a metacomparison, it seems to me that only the labels used for transformation (such as development, empowerment, growth, agency, etc.) and the facilitation contexts and technologies used differ from domain to domain. Perhaps, too, it is ultimately the goal, or range of change, that differs in the approaches.

It should be noted, however, that although these diverse fields agree that transformation is a specific form of positive change involving identity work and meaning-making, the literature within the transformative learning field takes a very specific view of what structures change for the individual. Transformation is not simply a change of mind. O’Sullivan et al. (2002), for example, suggest that transformation involves

a deep structural shift in the basic premise of thought, feelings and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relations with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness; our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy (p. xvii).

Here we note that O’Sullivan et al. (2002) go further than most to define the shifts in consciousness, namely, changes in affect, shifts in consciousness, body awareness, and
notions of power and social justice and levels of joy (perhaps a broader “ecology” of transformation than Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010).

Unlike in other fields, transformative learning scholars do define what changes—it is the self and its various aspects (such as the socially constructed, storied, authentic, autonomous, and repressed selves; see Tennant, 2012). However, these scholars are clear that a major component of transformation is revisional meaning-making for the individual self rather than the community, contrasting with this study, which will look at both aspects of transformation. Bruner (1996), for example, describes revisional meaning-making as having four components for individuals, which Mezirow and associates (2000/2010) also accept, although they add a fifth. They say

Bruner (1996) identifies four modes of making meaning: 1) establishing, shaping, and maintaining intersubjectivity; 2) relating events, utterances, and behavior to the action taken; 3) constructing of particulars in a normative context—deals with meaning relative to obligations, standards, conformities, and deviations; 4) making propositions—applications of the rules of the symbolic, syntactic, and conceptual systems. . . . Bruner’s list is incomplete. Transformation theory adds a fifth and crucial mode of meaning making: becoming critically aware of ones’ own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making interpretation. . . . In this formulation, transformative learning pertains to epistemic cognition—reflection on the limits of knowledge, the certainty of knowledge, and the criteria for knowing. (pp. 4–5)

This last addition, the critical awareness of the assumptions of self and other, is another common factor in transformative learning discourses. This notion relates too, to
the ideas within critical pedagogy, or Friere’s (1970/2006) idea of conscientization, where people learn about unequal power structures and make changes.

Another commonality to defining transformation in these educational discourses is the idea of discomfort, or “disorientating dilemmas” (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010) that surround the emergence of new awarenesses, discourses, identities, and meanings. Discomfort is characteristic of the beginning stages of transformation, but it can lead to an ever-expanding consciousness, seen by some as ultimate health, for example, in the nursing field (Newman, 1994, 1999, 2003).

In the long history of this discourse relating to transformation, which spans two hemispheres and multiple domains, educational scholars have only recently defined the stages of transformation for learners. Mezirow and associates (2000/2010) define ten stages:

1) A disorientating dilemma.
2) Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame.
3) A critical assessment of assumptions.
4) Recognition of one’s discontent.
5) Explorations of options for new roles, relationships, and actions.
6) Planning a course of action.
7) Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans.
8) Provisionally trying new roles.
9) Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.
10) A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspectives (p. 22).
This is the most comprehensive and practical definition of the individual’s transformative trajectory that I can find to date in all the literature that I have reviewed, and it is the trajectory with which I have become personally familiar during my own transformational periods, so this is one lens that I will choose to use for this case study. It seems an apt model considering the extreme dilemmas and disorientating discomfort experienced by individuals in Hamburg (more on this in Chapter 4). Although Mezirow’s theory is sometimes criticized for being too individualistic (Taylor, 1998), and from a feminist point of view perhaps does not consider that the personal is also the political, which is often messy and nonlinear, I will use both Maslow’s (1943, 1954, 1970, 1971) hierarchy of needs and Mezirows and Associates (2000/2010) 10-stage trajectory through discomfort, revisional meaning-making, and integration as a framework to loosely compare and contrast findings in the Hamburg community, to understand if these principles apply to women in highly challenged communities.

Although these models will prove to be inadequate for this study, I use them for their simple visual accessibility in a situation where languages may be a challenge, and participants can be non-readers or writers. There is little other existing cultural or gender analysis of how change occurs in transformation to draw from, and little mention of finding a “voice” specifically through image-making. This dissertation will therefore focus on this aspect of transformation—transformation through art-making that leads to empowering new discourses.

Although psychology and educational discourses do share core changes regarding transformation, such as identity, meaning-making, and growth of agency, they are also quite different in some ways. The term “therapy” can sometimes imply a revision of some
sort of pathology, whereas learning can imply growth. Both psychology and education discourses involve both in some ways, a kind of continuously corrective course setting, and both domains can be limited in some of their methods. Educational settings can, for example, sometimes be more accessible than therapeutic ones. Therapy, for example, is not usually undertaken as an ongoing, regular way of life, such as the way we have structured learning in schools and institutions. Therapy is usually a temporary response to painful changes in one’s circumstances. Although Therapy can be offered in hospitals, prisons and community settings, it tends to be a prohibitively expensive process reserved for those who can afford it, often in one-on-one office settings, thus making it more of an individual, elitist enterprise available to certain classes of adults. Mezirow was also critiqued for not including group learning in his model of individual transformation. However, transformative learning can be offered in grass roots communities, and its practices can be available to all, so this kind of transformative learning is the basis for this research. These practices can be offered by volunteers in social settings, such as ongoing community learning groups, and although practitioners do not diagnose pathologies, they can deliberately focus on discomfort in order to learn (see Hogan, 2014; Yeh, 2014). Although Mezirow’s theory is limited in that he did not include group learning in his model, he did analyse the role of discomfort in learning, so I will compare his model to findings from Hamburg (more on this in Chapter 3), which has undergone some grave discomfort.

While doing a literature search for this project, I found three master’s theses and three PhD dissertations that approached the subject of transformation. Some of these were self-studies of the author’s own transformation, but two included community case studies,

The two case studies were relevant and helpful to my own study. Paton’s (2013) master’s thesis, *Transforming tapestries: How can the Keiskamma Art Project, its processes and art, be understood in relation to a contextual ecofeminist spirituality?* was written after I did my research, and although Paton looked at the Keiskamma Art Project, her perspective was different from mine in that she is a student of religion rather than art, and she linked the subject matter in the Keiskamma tapestries to ecofeminist spirituality. Hall’s (2006) master’s thesis, *The transformative potential of visual language with special reference to DWEBA’s use of drawing as a participatory training methodology in the development facilitation context in KwaZulu-Natal* seems to be the most closely allied work to my own, in that she is a student of art, and she introduces participatory art projects to rural communities of women in South Africa through an NGO known as DWEBA (The Development of Dynamic Women’s Enterprise in Business and Art). These groups of women face similar challenges to those faced by the women in Hamburg, namely rurality, HIV, patriarchy, and underemployment.

Hall (2006) says that at the core of DWEBA’s initiative “was the belief that the process of ‘drawing one’s life’ can be a powerful tool of self-development and affirmation” (p. 11). She says “Drawing was also used consistently as a means of developing discussion, reaching decisions and solving problems. It was a way of rooting
all phases of the project in the participants’ experience” (p. 11). “Starting with their existing skills, DWEBA sought to integrate technical and social skills with its goal of economic and personal empowerment” (p. 13). Hall (2006) cites Terre Blanche and Durrheim, who suggest meaning-making occurs through “distanciation” of experience through the art-making process (p. 54). Hall (2006) concludes that perspective changes were multiple. She says “DWEBA’s methodology—drawing followed by verbal discussion—allowed the craftswomen to see things in two ways: abstractedly, verbally, logically—but also holistically, wordlessly and intuitively” (p. 54). She concludes, “empowerment in DWEBA’s work thus involved both a practical dimension—learning particular skills and tools of analysis—as well as an affective dimension relating to self confidence, both within the individual and the group” (p. 106). These aspects of art-making could, in my view, perhaps all be considered transformational, and comprise some of the 10 stages described by Mezirow and Associates (2000/2010, pp. 4–5).

McCaskill (2008), whose PhD dissertation was an autoethnography, seems to be wider than the others in her referencing of contemporary theory but still remains fairly narrow in her sources, as she draws mainly on two theorists, Mezirow (1991, 2003) and Wilber (1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001,a) for her theories on transformation. She also mentions “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, 1997) and “emotional intelligence” (Goleman, 1995/2005, 1998) as ways of transforming. She reiterates that transformation is a concept that describes “the evolution of self and the awareness of a life changing process that can bring individuals to a heightened level of being” (McCaskill, 2008, p. 1) and that personal transformation is a lasting change in the structures and functions of consciousness. McCaskill (2008) reiterates that “transformation does not mean self-improvement in the
traditional sense, nor is it simply a change of mind” (p. 65). McCaskill (2008) quotes Metzner on the fundamental dissatisfaction with life that must exist before “basic personal assumptions and their sources must be addressed [and] before one can begin the transformational journey through learning, reflection, transitions and other processes that result in a lasting change of mind, emotion, perceptions, identity and self image” (p. xi).

However, McCaskill (2008), a self-identified, African-American Christian with working-class roots, interestingly looks at transformation only from a Western viewpoint, only citing theories from White, American, male academics. For example, she uncritically quotes Metzner in order to distinguish between transcendence and transformation. He says:

A final distinction that can be made is between transcendence as “going beyond” and transformation as “becoming different.” Transcendence is an altered state of consciousness that is always temporary; this includes all mystical experiences, expansions of consciousness and ecstasies. Transformations are lasting changes in the structures and functions of consciousness—of mind, of emotions, of perceptions, of identity, self-image, and so on. (quoted in McCaskill, 2008, p. 65)

This claim might well be disputed by scholars of Eastern literature, who may prefer to describe transcendence as a continual and deliberate practice of transformation that is emergently blissful, thus “going beyond” normal states understood by the West to a permanent stage of boundarilessness (Feuerstein, 1992, p. 32; Wilber, 2001a).

Despite the limitations of the analysis regarding transformation identified here, it is interesting to note that five of the six graduate works reviewed above used arts-based research methods, including autoethnography, instead of empirical data. This reliance on
qualitative methods reflects the difficulty of quantifying change. Most of these dissertations support the link between transformation and the arts and/or creativity as an activity that can aid the practitioner through disorientating dilemmas. In the next chapter, I will look at how this is accomplished.
Chapter 3: Literature Review on Transformation Through Art

3.1 Introduction: What is art?

As I begin to understand transformation, I move more deeply into the question of how art in particular is transformative. I start by looking for existing definitions of art and stumble upon a debate that has troubled academics over the years. I discover there are many different views on what constitutes both art and art-making.

Feige (2010), who highlights this debate, suggests art is a reflexive practice. He says, “instead of understanding reflexion as a theoretical activity, that could be reconstructed in representational terms, we should rather understand it as a practical activity, that changes our understandings, our ways of seeing, hearing and behaving, our ways of narrating aspects of our lives” (p. 139). This would align with Mezirow’s (1991) ideas that transformative learning is reflexive.

Tolstoy (1942) defined art as a “human activity consisting in this, that one man [sic] consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experiences them” (p. 123). This definition takes into account both the art object and the art-making process, with the understanding that art can sometimes be understood as either a process or a product—both a noun and/or a verb—or a gerund. Either way, art is a type of “experience,” according to Dewey (Alexander, 1987).
Since Paleolithic humans first produced parietal images, art-making has been practiced as an external referencing. Visual elements of the paintings or drawings on cave walls were used in shamanic practices for many reasons, including to alter states of consciousness, to manifest visions, to codify information, to strengthen social ties, and to unite goals. From early on, art has served as a transformatively calming action, especially in times of insecurity and uncertainty. In other words, art has been a way to work with anxiety in all its forms (Dissanyak, 1992b, 2000; Steif, 2010).

Arnheim (1966) says that historically the function of art was rarely pure embellishment. “Art served, rather, to make the gods visible and rulers immortal, to exert magic powers, to give praise, to tell about their past, or to unite a crowd by a common rhythm” (p. 350). Fleming (2010) defines art as having served many functions across history and location. Within his definition, he includes “cultural heritage, personal growth, training in functional skills, development of creativity and imagination, understanding of the human condition, problem solving, and the development of empathy” (p. 59).

Arnheim (1966) notes that art is a force for personal change, because it is “the quality that makes the difference between witnessing or performing things, and being touched by them, shaken by them, changed by the forces that are inherent” (p. 342). This ability to move people has been used over the centuries by religious institutions and politic leaders for their own power. As humans became more “civilized,” art in Europe began to serve significant religious ends, by representing the gods, such as the Greek and Roman deities. The notion of art being in the service of religion culminated in the Middle Ages, when art was used by the Roman Catholic Church to make converts of the illiterate
masses through visual stories, probably informing and reforming onlookers, rather than transforming them.

During the Renaissance, art began to include themes other than religion, such as love and the beauty of the human body. Art was not, however, considered at this time to be a practice for everyone, nor was it used “consciously” for individual transformation. During this time, the production of art was considered to be exclusively the domain of male ‘geniuses’, who generally trained in guilds and who were believed to be career artists with a capital “A” (Battersby, 1989; Korsmeyer, 2012).

Over the centuries, however, art has been democratized and opened up to individual rather than institutional practice. It became accessible to nonprofessionals, nonmales, nongenii, and nonguild members. It included not only the religious, but also the secular—for aesthetic, educative, propagandist, leisure, and expressive reasons. More recently, art has moved from the notion of elitist “fine” art to the more mundane business of “selling” and the creation of digital, visual culture, including profit for both individuals and institutions. I will note later in this study that Hamburg’s model includes both personal and communal/institutional practice, both for transformative purposes and for profit, whereby the economics of the art-making cannot be separated from the transformation in personal lives.

3.2 How is art transformative of individuals?

Jung was one of the first therapists in the West to explore the deliberate transformation of individuals through art (Jung, 1971, 2014). This was also his own practice, influenced as he was by Eastern practices, such as yoga and the construction of
mandalas (Moacanin, 2003). Several movements of psychology and art have since followed Jung’s pioneering work in transformation through art, and these scholars offer various suggestions as to how transformation through art happens. Tracing the thinking of art as transformative of individuals, we find the following practices: archetypal dream work and exploring the unconscious with images (Jung, 1959, 1966); the arts as educational and philosophical growth (Read, 1943, 1951, 1960, 1967); creative expression and the six stages of development in children’s drawings (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987); creative expression and perceptive development (Arnheim, 1966); five stages to the fully self-actualized adult, the final one being creativity (Maslow, 1954; May, 1978/1994).

Early in the 20th century, educationalist John Dewey alluded significantly to art as experience (Alexander, 1987; Dewey, 1934/2005), a force within us, which he called an “impulsion,” a natural inclination of the human to interact with its environment, thus exerting more control over it and getting its needs met. This impulsion also produced works of art that were transformational—as the artist transformed her materials, she transformed herself, shaping inner and outer worlds consecutively with each stroke of the brush or hammer of the mallet (p. 79). Dewey influenced many educators, including Greene (1995), who felt “envisioning” through art was also recognized as transformational. Greene (1995) focused on the “possible” through art, rather than on the “necessary,” in order to create new consciousness. She drew on Dewey, saying that without such focus on the possible “there is only recurrence, complete uniformity; the resulting experience is routine and mechanical” (p.20). Greene (1995) saw transformation as imaginative breakthroughs and contradictions of the established and felt art was
helpful with this. She felt that consciousness had an “imaginative” phase, and that imagination, more than any other capacity, could break through the “inertia of habit.”

Contemporary art educators such as Elliot Eisner (2002) focus more on transformation through art as cognitive expansion, including “skills enhancement” and “sensory refinement,” while other contemporary scholars focus more on “aesthetics as an adaptation”—where transformation of the human through art is understood to be cultural adaptation, a side effect of a natural evolutionary biology (Dissanayake, 2008; Dutton, 2009). London (1989, 1992) looks at art-making as a way of being that he suggests should be engaged in collectively to transform culture, rather than for the production of “novel aesthetic amenities” or “distinguished entertainments” (1992, p. 9).

At the core of this understanding that the arts are transformative of individuals is what Arnheim (1966) describes as the external manifestation of the internal—the “physical manifestation of psychical processes” (p. 63). He suggests that psychical processes include images, and that images are preverbal understandings. Arnheim (1966) cites Einstein, who understood thought to be visual before becoming verbal. He recognized his own symbolic, preverbal thought processes in a letter to Hadamard. This externalization of the “oral-visual interior,” as Stafford (1994) calls it, into an art form is the telling of one’s story through media. London (1989) asks, “how can we come before life with no intermediaries and bear witness to our own experience? . . . We can tell our own story if we can be candid, simple, and unflinching. This is the ground of art” (p. 54).

There are some who argue that art does not have to ‘do’ anything (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013) and to insist that it does, leads to the dead-end ‘rhetoric of effects’ (p.216), that belongs to the impossible ‘successionist’ model of proving cause and effect.
Reimer (2009) says “we live in a culture more enamoured with the secondary benefits of the arts than the primary ones” (p.161) of cultural practice. However, even Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) agrees that, because the arts ‘refine, cultivate, transform, enhance, impact and even teach’ (p.213), it is traditional to ask what the arts ‘do’, as I do here. As the traditional understanding of art as “enhancing” or “transformative” aligns with my own experience, it is therefore my philosophical “standpoint” (Harding, 2007) for entering this study. As art education literature at this point offers little literature about transformative processes, I will also draw on literature outside of art education to expand on my own understanding, including literature from public health, community development, spiritual practice, art therapy and feminism.

In my opinion, all the arts, which include language, image, and gesture, serve the above-mentioned functions as symbolic representations of reality. Visual art represents reality through images. Art enables artists to art-iculate experience metaphorically, before the artist necessarily has the verbage to do so. Symbols and metaphors are helpful for communicating that which is hard to articulate, especially in locations where voicing is difficult. When talk about disruptive ideas is dangerous or disallowed, symbolic representation of ideas can be a useful mode of expression. This was my experience of the arts during apartheid in South Africa (more on this in Chapter 5).

How does the use of symbols in art, or metaphorical meaning-making, transform the practitioner? Huston Smith (1976) suggests that anything beyond or outside a person’s level of consciousness “can only be discussed or thought about using symbols, and these symbols can only be finally understood upon transformation to that higher level itself” (as quoted in Wilber, 1996, p. 48). If Smith is correct in suggesting symbols are
central to transformation, that they bootstrap our consciousness into higher levels, we can assert that the arts are vital to this process. Creations of metaphors and symbols help move both audience and artist towards deeper understandings and wider, more inclusive perspectives, on a pre or nonverbal level (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Therapeutic approaches to transformation tend to differ from the practice of the arts for transformative learning, in that therapy does not generally focus on creating symbols, but, rather, on the decoding or interpretation of symbols already present in the client’s thoughts and dreams. Exceptional to this, however, are those specialty therapies that focus on the expressive arts, such as art therapy, which tends to first create a metaphor and then interpret it. The meditational approach to transformation also differs, in that it encourages movement beyond mentally created symbols all together, into an ecstatic emptiness, although there are now therapeutic approaches that include mindfulness practices (see Rappaport, 2014) into their inquiries.

In some views, art-making can be seen both as an individual endeavor to create personal meaning through metaphor, and as a communal endeavor, situated in diverse identities of audience gender, ethnicity, race, etcetera. In this view, which I adopt for this project, art can be understood as relational or as “an extended metaphor for the connections between people, economics and history” (Adams & Goldbard, 2003, p. 162), a kind of Ubuntu. Art itself can be viewed as a cross-border practice, as borders between self and other are breached through communal, shared understandings of metaphors.

It is the “voicing” of a central metaphor that in my view, is one of the most transformative or therapeutic elements of art. McNiff (1998) notes that expressive arts therapists make metaphoric connections between the physical features of artworks and
personal experiences. “When we make analogies between artistic experiences and our lives, the images help us see patterns and themes, . . . it elicits stories from us. . . . The perceptual form evokes a corresponding sense of structure within otherwise undifferentiated life experiences” (p. 102).

In my personal opinion, transformation through art is a performative gerund—half verb, half noun. Transformation occurs both within the story and through the telling of the story. In my opinion, it is the voicing of the story, or the externalizing of an experiential metaphor into the community through image, that ultimately relieves us of the burden of carrying that experience alone. Internal affect is, in this way, shared and translated into art. The visual metaphor becomes a narrative, which is then shared as communal identity or group discourse. Those who experience similar “affect” understand the shared metaphor and story. They then “belong” to a circle of resonance and meaning. In this way, a private discourse is shared or disclosed through art, and the artist is then seen and heard by those who receive and empathize with the image.

As with transformative learning theorists (e.g., Bruner, 1996; Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010), London (1989) suggests that art becomes transformative (rather than merely decorative) through meaning-making. “By shifting our concerns from trying to make the beautiful thing to seeking the honest and the meaningful thing, . . . the paralyzing self-consciousness . . . is diminished, . . . and we nurture our . . . uniquely human quest for establishing meaning in a possibly meaningful universe” (p. 20). Rollo May (1978/1994), for example, suggested it is the job of the artist to “struggle with the meaninglessness and silence of the world” (p. 89) and that this takes enormous courage. In this view, individually made meanings are translated into cultural meanings.
Psychoanalysts (Kandel, 2012) and transformative educators (Tennant, 2012) believe in digging deep into subconscious layers of the self. Artists have the skills to represent these layers visually and communicate them more broadly. London (1989) says:

> When we are motivated to find increasingly complete and satisfying means to convey what is of great personal importance, and draw from both the conscious and the subconscious levels, our images naturally become more vivid, deeper, more articulate and interestingly, more universal. (p. 21)

How does art arise out of the body, which has been noted is also the site for transformation? Dewey (1934/2005) was the first to write about the art “impulsions,” as he called them, that arise in the body. These somatic urges become self-expression through the articulations of meaning, through the medium of art, into a metaphor (on metaphor, see Kovecses, Bencses, & Casabi, 2009; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Shusterman, 2008). London (1989) suggests that

> it is at those moments—when what you know and feel resides in no available form—that you . . . try and try again to discover metaphors to yield up the meaning of that experience. Having created a metaphor within which your meaning resides, you have made that thing called art. You did what you had to do to bear witness to the things you know. That’s all. (pp. 18–19)

The link between transformation and art, or meaning-making, is, in my view, the body itself, from which the somatic impulsion originates as a creative urge. It is the living body that is the dynamic medium for the metaphor (Kovecses et al., 2009; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Shusterman, 2008). The body is both the creator and the translator of metaphors. In this way, the body is the site of individual transformation through art.
Through the use of metaphor, the way we understand things is in terms of “another” thing. We understand our community, our history, and our experiences by seeing them represented in an image, an embroidery, or a painting. “Feeling” is externalized from the body as art, which can then be “witnessed” by both self and others. The artist’s internal inquiry is then seen or heard in physical form. Arnheim (1966) notes that

art goes beyond direct perception. Artistic expression has always been a semantic function, the painted and carved images stand for referents . . . therefore art requires the judging of meaning, relevance and truth. . . . The task is accomplished largely by . . . the capacity for feeling. (p. 314)

So art is both semantic and somatic. To this statement could be added this double capacity is both individual and communal. The viewer’s or audience’s task is to attempt to access and align their cognition and emotion with the artist’s through close and extended engagement with their work.

It is not always easy to look “at” mediated feelings in an art form, as this creates a resonant feeling, sometimes of discomfort, directly “in” the audience’s body. But for the artist, art-making sometimes relieves their discomfort through the externalization of tensions into art (e.g., the distanciation mentioned by Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002, p. 400). Art is made and received through actualizing the stimulus felt in the body. However, silencing of this impulse occurs through repression and suppression when the impulse to express is cut off in the body somewhere. The catharsis of art-making can be seen as the unblocking at some level of this impulse through “acting outwards” into an art form.
By making art, a third externalized dimension—a medium—is created, that is neither the artist, her “somatic urge” or the “real” world. London (1989) suggests that by making art you created something that was more than nothing, and somewhat less than living. . . . Before there were two worlds. The world of everything “out there” and the “you” that saw the world through the window of your eyes. Now there are three worlds. The world out there, the world in here, and the world of things you make. . . appearing alive but not alive. (p. 42)

This is the link between the body and art—the process and the product. As a researcher and educator of art, it is this link that interests me—between the artist and the art-membrane, that captures the outgoing story. In my opinion, it is this third mediated space that holds the cultural flow between artists and their audiences. In this view, art becomes the transition site between the “felt” and the “told,” the body and the world, where the unconscious becomes conscious, visible, and audible. Art becomes a voice literally and figuratively.

This mediated movement from unconscious to conscious knowledge, from process to product, this bodying forth of feeling through images into visual voice, takes both courage (May, 1978/1994) and somatic awareness (Shusterman, 2008) and leads to the transformation of the self through both the body and mind. Art is a psychosomatic act which takes a willingness to feel discomfort (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010) in the body, as well as cognitive and aesthetic skills to articulate urges, so that an audience may resonate. In my view, art-making is a partnership of body and mind. Through the arts, we learn to share one body-mind with another, to make public the internal human experience.
Art is bodied forth, a generous show-and-tell behavior that is mutually beneficial for the evolution of both self and society.

Why humans do this is a question Arnheim (1966) asked in the sixties. He suggested that research is needed to determine the social aspects of artistic motivation. As matters stand now, non-artists keep repeating that artists create in order to communicate something to other people, whereas many artists either ignore this motive or explicitly reject it. (p. 21)

Although there is not much research in this area as yet, some neuro-research seems to be supporting many of the links between feeling, understanding, and perceiving that are experienced when making and viewing art, evidenced by a quantitative meta-analysis of functional magnetic resonance imaging data (see Vartanian & Skov, 2014). And, as Greene (1995) suggests, “transformations, openings, possibilities: teachers and teacher educators must keep these themes audible” (p. 17).

When individuals express themselves through art, “feeling”, “telling”, and “making” are partnered—a systems partnership rather than one cognitive faculty dominating another. Transformation can therefore be viewed as a shift in power, a movement away from dominance of mind over body or words over images. Partnership happens internally, with the partnering of the unconscious and the conscious, as we work with the layers of our psyche (Kandel, 2012). In my view, transformation is not a form of sublimation of feelings into thought, suggesting mind is “higher” than body, or thoughts are “higher” than feelings, but rather a balanced ecology of our capacities.
As reflected in and reinforced by Descartes in 1637 when he published his *Discourse on Method*, humans tend to create hierarchies out of rational thought over intuitive feeling. Numbers and words tend to be given more status than images in education systems, although all three are simply symbolic languages. As Schneider Adams (1994) says, “generally people are still inclined to attribute greater intellectual complexity to words than to pictures” (p. 41). The problem of the dominance of word over image, or left brain over right brain, was well examined, initially as a simple binary, in the seventies in art education (Edwards, 2001) and later, with more meta complexity, in neuroscience (Gilchrist, 2009). These hierarchies can become subverted internally when transformational partnerships occur through art. Edwards, for example, says that one of the transformations noted in her participatory research through drawing was a verbal-visual partnership:

There appears to be two modes of thinking, verbal and nonverbal, represented separately in left and right hemispheres respectively, and that our educational system, as well as science in general tends to neglect the nonverbal form of intellect. What it comes down to is that modern society discriminates against the right hemisphere (quoted in Hall, 2006, p. 69).

The poet W.B Yeats (2015) describes how the bankers of the world look at the arts as ‘idling’, while Yeats calls it ‘hard labor’. In his poem, “Adam’s Curse,” he suggests

Better go down on your marrow bones
And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather,
For to articulate sweet sounds together

Is to work harder than all these (p.1).

This stanza refers to the sometimes uncomfortable act of creative labor that many writers and artists have experienced, as well as the discomfort of transformation mentioned by Mezirow and associates (2000). Many have tried to understand this uncomfortable space, often metaphorically, as Yeats did, as hard labor, or a curse. Martin Buber (1958), for example, tries to articulate the transformative difficulty of articulation: “I can neither experience nor describe the form which meets me, but only body it forth . . . in bodying forth, I disclose” (p. 10). Wittgenstein (1961) suggests we dig deeper than words to find truth: “Words are like the skin on a deep water, then we must penetrate beneath the skin” (p. 52). Through the arts we allow the subconscious its true power, which is distinctly uncomfortable. Creative practitioners have long understood the role that creative forms can play in going beyond the limits of language or numbers. It seems that contemporary neuroscience and ancient wisdom converge around an expanding sense that transformation involves the relationship between the mind and body that is many-faceted.

By visiting the women of Hamburg and by gaining a perspective from an indigenous African experience, rather than a European, philosophical or poetic approach, I hope to contribute to the further illumination of how visual art practice can subvert hierarchies and the role this subversion plays in the transformation of both individuals and community.

Although I have compared Eastern and Western approaches to transformation, I would like to briefly note now how meditation relates to art. Some art educators practice
the arts as a spiritual activity that transforms our way of being in the world. In this view, transformation occurs as the meditative and therapeutic by-product of creativity, for example, through the externalization of affect (art educator London, 1989), through relational bridging of the self toward the other (art therapist McNiff, 1998, 2004), through finding our authentic selves (creativity-as-meditation teacher Osho, 1999), or through healing from trauma (art activists Hogan, 2014; Yeh, 2014). In these views, art-making helps us become more present and awake to each other and aware of the intelligent creative processes that bind us. With this kind of art-practice, concentration is deepened through mindfulness, and surrender to the creative process is practiced. By doing this, art-makers access more flow, which is considered transformative (human potentials educator and yoga practitioner Czikszentmihalyi, 1993, 1997). Art-making then becomes a practice of spiritual actualization and an optimal way to grow knowledge of the self and other. This type of art-making is often performed in groups for deliberate self-actualization. However, it should be noted that transformation can occur whether or not we observe and analyze the process. Transformation is often an unconscious spiritual by-product of art-making, especially in communities where words and analysis are not valued hierarchically over image-making as a simple, embodied self-expression.

3.3 How is art transformative of groups?

Art as a shared practice, or enterprise, also has supportive, communal mechanisms, as has been experienced in Hamburg. Chalmers (1984), for example, mentions that “art edifies people. It maintains and improves their collective existence. Art, directly and indirectly, bolsters the morale of groups to create unity and social
solidarity. As used by dissident groups art creates awareness of social issues . . . for social change” (p. 104).

One of the newest conversations emerging around art as transformative, is that of art activism—for the therapeutic healing of group trauma and as a community development tool. Paul Hogan, for example, is a Canadian working with art in this way in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. In 1996, he created the Butterfly Peace Garden (see Hogan, n.d.) for young tsunami and civil war survivors—children who voluntarily come to his art garden. He facilitates multiple art forms, including painting, costume making, clowning, poetry and dance. He also uses ritual and breath work to ground these art forms in the meditative (see also Chase, 2000; Santa Barbara, 2004).

Lily Yeh (2014), a Chinese-American, otherwise known as the Barefoot Artist, is another activist who brings the resources of art to people who have been severely challenged. She works with poor communities around the world, facilitating art to “bring healing and self-empowerment.” She focuses her work in communities who have experienced trauma, such as the genocide survivors in Rwanda, and she recognizes that “creativity and beauty are powerful agents for healing and social change.”

There are many other examples around the world where art is now practiced in grass roots communities for group transformation, such as The Remix Project in Toronto, the Troubadours of Hope and the Cirque du Mond, both in Haiti. These arts projects differ in their mediums but share a specific value: the centering of marginality. They create spaces to engage people through capacity building, particularly in the areas of self-expression, cooperation, skills education, fraternity, community building, risk taking, and resilience development. Participants in these groups have a variety of opportunities to
perform, travel, and later, perhaps, obtain gainful employment. These projects, which, in many ways, employ creative approaches to community-based participatory research, “transform anger into engines of change” (Shephard, 2014). The intention of such environments is to support individual transformations, build hope, laughter, and self-esteem which might then later lead to community transformation through visioning.

Some community development scholars position the arts as specifically transformative of public health. These scholars suggest that governments take more responsibility for providing access to art-making. White (2009), for example, says, “it is time to stop arguing for the role of the arts as a useful adjunct to health services and declare that the arts sector, by the very nature of what it does, is in the business of health” (p. 5). He explains that the factors which make for health include a sense of personal and social identity, human worth, communication, participation in the making of political decisions, celebration, and responsibility. He says, “the language of science alone is not enough to describe health; the languages of story, myth and poetry also disclose truth” (p. 17).

It is important to note that scholars now suggest that art is not only viewed as therapeutic to pathologies in distressed people and places. Good health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1948) as a “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 100). White (2009) says this moves the definition of health from the biomedical model to a social model (p. 42). He cites a World Health Organization European Office report that identifies health assets in a community as including wisdom, creativity, talent, and
enthusiasm. White (2009) adds “this definition has since become popularized to the point of symbolizing a paradigm shift” (p. 48).

This holistic approach to public health has led to participatory arts being synchronously delivered alongside scientific treatments in some rural areas experiencing health delivery inequalities. Carol Baker Hofmeyr who initiated the Keiskamma Art Project in Hamburg where this case study is based, has used this integrated approach to community health. She has facilitated a dual process for people; medicine makes people’s bodies better, while art gives their lives meaning. Baker’s view aligns with White’s (2009) approach that the emergence of arts in communities has been fuelled by an awareness of the wider social determinants of health.

Goldbard (2006) says some community cultural projects focus on transforming participants’ consciousness as they discover and express their own cultural values (p. 54). These community arts projects are deliberately oriented toward raising political awareness and empowering social transformation. Goldbard (2006) explains that although she has never known a painting to possess the power to move political worlds, community art (such as the project in Hamburg) has the capacity to actualize group awareness of social issues, and to “move gatekeepers and others who wield power to respond constructively” (p. 14).

Art is helpful in enabling agency amongst the disempowered. Critical pedagogists and transformative educators like O’Niell and O’Sullivan (2002) suggest that helpful approaches to the ecology of violence look at the deeply relational aspects of power so that participants can transform their situations. They suggest using ways to explore power that are “beyond the solely cognitive, ways that weave the realms of the imagined and
symbolic, the sensory and embodied” (p. 180), in other words, art-making. There is a
growing awareness, too, of the transformative nature of the arts amongst peace workers
living in areas suffering from conflict and loss. Goodman (2002) says, “drama, art, dance,
music and storytelling are used all over the world for peace-building, reconciliation, and
trauma healing” (p. 193). Dissanayake (1992a) believes that the reason art is therapeutic
is not only because it allows for self-expression, but because it allows us to “order, shape,
and control at least a piece of the world” (p. 83). Scholars such as Huss and Cwikel
(2005) have successfully used art as an agentic intervention in this way. When working
with displaced, lower income, minority groups of Bedouin women, they suggest that art
helped “to illuminate the women’s self-defined concerns and goals, and simultaneously
moved these goals forward” (p. 1). Self-reflection, meaning-making, and considerations
of the possible were evident in their study—all empowering aspects of transformation
and components in the art-making in Hamburg.

White (2009) says there is an increasing convergence of the arts with health and
education due to the fact that community arts build social integration, foster emotional
intelligence, and motivate healthier lifestyle choices. The arts “alleviate stress caused by
environmental factors and provide support in personal and collective trauma, such as
bereavement” (p. 85), important factors for me to observe. The arts are educational, in
that they can incorporate creative health messaging, as well as political, in that they can
be issue-based and support social cohesion. Carol Baker Hofmeyr, as both an artist and a
doctor, implemented this dual practice in Hamburg where community art projects include
education for adults with health challenges. The projects are educational in themselves as
the women learn new eye/hand/aesthetic skills, but the projects also provide opportunities for educators to address the women on important community health issues as they work.

Although transformative learning literature defines how the stages of transformation occur (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010), it is based in a mid-twentieth-century rationalism and thus there is very little in this literature on art as a transformative method. The modality of using art for transformation appears seldom in art education (e.g., London, 1989, 1992), but more in art therapy (e.g., McNiff, 1998, 2004; Malchiodi, 2006/7, 2012), and in feminist adult education literature (e.g., Butterwick & Dawson, 2006; Butterwick & Lawrence, 2009; Clover, 2007, 2010; Clover & Stalker, 2007). I will now look more closely at feminist concepts of how art transforms.

3.4 How is art transformative of silence?

Feminist literature has long contested the positivist model of research (Smith, 1974, 1987, 1999) that reflects a more objective voice which is based on distanced observation of external phenomena through repeatable, statistically driven experimentation with the other. Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) point out

the inadequacies of the scientific model in studying the “social” because research questions have negated the problems of women and marginalized people, thereby silencing their voices and experiences from public discourse. . . . By placing the focus on women and marginalized communities, new questions are raised [by feminist research], silenced voices are brought into public discourse, and social change is facilitated. (pp.144–145)
Although feminism is far from being a unified body of thought, it offers useful lenses rather than a method or a singular position. Some feminist scholars object to the idea that transformation might be personal or occur only within the individual, and they locate empowerment as political. This more radical group conceive of transformation as occurring within an ecology of relationships. Here, the individual is always understood to be a member of a class, race, and gender. Hesse-Biber (2007a) notes that “feminist research is a site where the personal and the political merge and multiple truths are discovered and voiced where once there had been silence” (p. 348). This approach seems appropriate in Hamburg, so I will later look at the ecology of silencing that has arisen in this context.

However, feminist deconstructions of the politics around voice, the body, and representation (who speaks for whom) rarely address the use of visual art, thereby overlooking great opportunities for transformative activism, with the exclusion of some feminist adult educators, who have recently suggested the value of art for adult women learners (see Butterwick & Dawson, 2006; Butterwick & Lawrence, 2009; Clover 2007, 2010; Clover & Stalker, 2007). I would therefore like to further this tenuous link between art and feminist research, which has for some time contested hierarchy and privilege including the privileging of one gender over another, one race over another, the mental over the physical, the mind over the body, the able-bodied over the disabled-bodied. Their discourse has focused on articulation of the bodily experience—the telling of the “feeling,” or the “finding of the voice”—particularly amongst the marginalized, such as women, minorities, and the dispossessed. This body of literature is helpful to this project in that it explores how finding a voice is transformative for those who have been silenced
and how finding a voice is transformative of power abuses. In Hamburg, most of the village women have grown up in a patriarchal, racist system and have been undereducated and underemployed. Finding a voice through art-making and sharing their taboo story, especially with a silenced topic such as HIV/AIDS, is a particularly transformative act in this situation (more on this in Chapter 5).

Ryan-Flood and Gill (2010) define feminist research as “an emancipatory project of bringing women’s voices in from the margins” (p.2). Within this project, questions of who speaks for whom, and about what, are raised as well as many important questions about situatedness, reflexive engagement, ethics, epistemology, power, subjectivity, and agency (p. 2). Ryan-Flood and Gill indicate that feminist social research has long been concerned with questions of breaking silence by the marginalized. They cite others, such as Alcoff and Potter (1993), Harding (1993), Stanley and Wise (1993), and Ramazonoglu (2002) to substantiate this.

The understanding of voice is an important focus for how art transforms. Ryan (2001) cites Faith who defines feminism as resistance to invisibility and silencing. One of the ways that transformation can occur for women is to disrupt power through the dismantling of disempowering silences, both within us and without us. This requires articulation through the use of symbolic languages of words, images, gestures, or numbers. Ryan draws on Lacan, who says “the speaking subject is produced through the entry into the symbolic which is itself made up of signifiers” (quoted in Ryan, 2001, p. 52). In this view, voice can be achieved by “speaking” through certain signifiers. Articulation, or visual voicing, therefore becomes a critical, mediated performance of power.
The power behind voicing also lies in claiming an identity or a position, a differentiation. It is the articulation of the “I am.” Ryan (2001) explains Lacan’s idea that “the entry into language is the pre-condition for becoming aware of oneself as a distinct entity (distinct from the mother)” (p. 51).

Some researchers have noted that voice does not develop into adulthood in uniform ways. They have also noted the link between voice and knowing. Ryan cites an interesting paper by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule who suggest there are five stages of women’s knowing, from silence, through received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, to, finally, constructed knowledge (cited in Ryan, 2001, pp. 69–70). Belenky et al. (1986) are critical of assumptions that people learn in a linear manner, especially women. Silence here is described as a state devoid of “awareness of mental acts, consciousness or introspection” (p. 25), and the aim for these feminist scholars is to draw women into a state of constructed knowledge described as a condition of “becoming and staying aware of the working of their minds” (p. 141). Transformation here through art would be an increasing awareness of self and its thoughts/feelings/beliefs in relation to others through image-making.

Although I agree with these feminist scholars that such knowledge does not emerge in a linear fashion, which implicates both the models I am loosely using, I would emphasize that feminists tend to overlook the state of consciousness that is prearticulate knowing, that is, somatic and imaginal and which can be expressed through images and metaphor. Visual art constitutes knowledge. Developing a voice through visual art is an articulation of knowing that is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed through the
medium of visual symbols. Feminists understandably emphasize their own preferred symbolic languages, usually vocal or textual voice.

Issues of voice (vocal, textual or visual) will be a helpful indicator of transformation in Hamburg as most of the artists are women. Papart (2010) defines the feminist issues around voice and silence for women:

while silence has its defenders (Gal, 1991; Mahoney, 1996), for most feminists women’s ability to make choices and speak their mind has been seen as proof of agency and empowerment (Gilligan, 1982; Olsen, 1978/2003), while silence has been deplored as a “symbol of passivity and powerlessness” (Gal, 1991, p. 175) . . . the search for empowerment has thus become a search for women’s voices. (p. 15).

Due to the occurrence of silencing in intersecting ways across all strata of society, I suggest that voicing through art, or visual voicing, as I call it here, is a transformative option for all, not only for marginalized women artists, although this aspect of transformation might be an assumed given for most men who generally have political voice. However, the activity of speaking out through images can be seen as a healthy way for any person to avoid acting “out,” in more violent ways, or acting “in,” in more depressive or repressive ways.

As we have seen in our discussion above, when the human voice has been silenced by oppression, the trauma of silencing can be transformed at some level through art-making. Images can be “narrative” and the telling of the self-story is thought to be healing. When practiced in community, art is relational and can engage inter and intrasubjectivities into a dialogue. Goldbard (2006) could well be describing Carol’s
work in Hamburg when she says, “the work of artist-organizers and other community members collaborating to express identity, concerns and aspirations through the arts. . . . It is a process that simultaneously builds individual mastery and collective cultural capacity while contributing to positive social change” (p. 20).

Neighborhood development through such cultural practices as art is a way of rewriting the group’s story. This is particularly helpful when the story is difficult to disclose. Reaching others through disclosure (telling a private or difficult story previously silenced, though taboo) is part of the transformation process of both individuals and communities. But although Goldbard (2006) states that art is a compelling vehicle for “self-declaration” (p. 14), I have found no literature specifically linking transformation (as described by transformative learning theorists) to visual voicing. Nor have I found a link between voice, as described by feminists, to visual art. There are, of course, some semantic issues here. For example, in feminist and critical pedagogy literature, the notion of finding a voice is understood to be politically empowering (Freire, 1970; Ryan, 2001; Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010) rather than transformative, although, as we have seen in our analysis, these words overlap in meaning and can be viewed as semantic differences. Within arts therapy literature (Buchalter, 2004, 2009; Malchiodi, 2006; McNiff, 1998, 2004), art is located as healing although it is not specifically located in finding a visual voice. Within community development literature (Goldbard, 2006), arts-for-change and critical-arts pedagogy literature (Boal, 1979; Bogad, 2005; Naidus, 2009; Reed, 2005), and in arts-for-health literature (White, 2009), visual art is considered to be sociopolitical activism rather than transformative of awareness and action. Here voice is implied although it not named as such. As far as I know, the specific linking of art,
transformation, and voice has not as yet been focused upon specifically in the literature and so this link will be the focus in this project when understanding art as transformative. In my view, linking transformation to finding a visual voice is an important connection in Hamburg.

The value of art voicing is that transformation through disclosure can occur simultaneously on a personal and on a cultural level. By making art, either individually or communally, voices from the margins are included in a visual discourse, and these “add human scale information and meaning to the official record by sharing first person testimonies and the artifacts of ordinary lives” (Goldbard, 2006, p. 71). It is understood that by disclosing our stories verbally, stereotypes are challenged (Merryfeather, 2014). But by disclosing our stories visually, we also challenge stereotypes, not only in what is told, but also how it is told.

With an intuitive general awareness of the transformative capacities of art, university researchers are now using art as participatory research amongst very vulnerable, marginalized groups. In South Africa, for example, visual art is used amongst those with HIV/AIDS to encourage disclosure around this tough subject (see Kesby, 2005; Mak, 2006; Manji, 1999; Mitchell, 2008, 2011; Mitchell, de Lange, Moletsane, Stuart, & Buthelezi, 2005; Moletsane, Mitchell, de Lange, Stuart, Buthelezi, & Taylor, 2009). This dissertation follows in this tradition, although I do not use participatory research myself for this project, but, rather, I explore the participatory art classes and practices already existing in the research site (More about the methodology in Chapter 3 and the South African AIDS context in Chapter 5).
How is culture moved forward by including diverse stories that might otherwise be silenced or stigmatized? By including marginalized voices, participants can deconstruct the power of exclusionary discourses. Repressive cultures are moved from a single discourse to many discourses, from a monologue towards a dialogue or even a polylogue. Adichie (2009) warns us of the danger of a single story, which is the suppression of diversity.

Art is not a universal visual language with a fixed set of symbols. There is no alphabet to learn, and visual literacy is not a “simple read”. However, art is a cultural narrative—a visual way to tell stories. Challenges, therefore, lie in researching specific artistic discourses especially across cultural borders. London (1989) says, “much evidence is required to tease meaning from image. . . . Certainly biographical, or better still, autobiographical information is a minimum prerequisite for any real analysis” (p. 63).

Scholars such as Chalmers (1984) suggest that all visual art is essentially “tribal” (p. 104) and he advocates for art as a multicultural or ethnological practice. Kaeppler discusses the anthropological approach needed in projects that cross any economic, gendered, racial, or ethnic lines:

The anthropological study of art is essentially an analysis of cultural forms and the social processes which produce them. . . . Discovering the structure and content of such forms, processes and philosophies from the indigenous point of view is preeminently an ethnographic task. . . . Standards cannot be used cross-culturally. (quoted in Chalmers, 1984, p. 103)

Scholars, such as Huss and Cwikel (2005) in Israel, Hement (2007) in Russia,
Mak (2006), Mitchell (2008), Mitchell et al (2005), and Moletsane et al (2009) in South Africa, have all sensitively employed arts-based research methods across ethnic and economic lines. In fact, “culture is a peculiarly successful means of promoting social cohesion, inclusion, or regeneration” (Belfiore, 2002, p. 104). With this cultural understanding of visual art, images become “echo-objects” (Stafford, 2007). The echo-objects transmit localized experiences through culturally located and determined metaphors. Because these require ethnographic understandings, I will not try to interpret any of the art from Hamburg. I will instead limit my research to interpreting the art-making processes that emerge socially, rather than interpreting the objects that are produced.

3.5 Art and truth

Meaning-making is both personally transformative (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010) and transformative of communities through knowledge/power relationships (Ryan, 2001, p. 33). However, it is important to note that meaning-making is not the same as finding truth. Meaning-making is always relative, and “truth” is acknowledged as a difficult issue within feminism. Ryan (2001) cites Foucault, who states that truth is politically produced to represent and maintain power interests (p. 33). Although some feminists are empiricists (Hesse-Biber, 2007) whose data contribute greatly to the feminist project (see Siebel Newsom, 2010), when subjectivities rather than statistics become foregrounded in some areas of feminism, knowledge is understood to be constructed, rather than “truth.” Some poststructuralist feminist literature contests any liberal-humanist discourse about truth being located anywhere outside of ourselves. Ryan
(2001) draws on Derrida, who claimed that truth, as a stable, coherent reality, is a “fiction” (p. 36).

In this view, all voicing, including narration through visual art, then becomes relative and fictional—a kind of subjectively located story telling. Voicing through images could therefore be understood here as relative symbolic language and critical performance. The arts are allegorical heuristics sometimes disguised as “truth.” In this view, transformations through visual art do not rely on truths, but on expressing and sharing constructed, mediated perspectives in storied visual forms that give us meaning and located identity. Art as an empowering voice, although expressive of somatic urges, feelings, and meaning-making, should not be confused with “truth.” Brodkey suggests one studies stories not because they are true or even because they are false, but for the same reason that people tell and listen to them, in order to learn about the terms on which others make sense of their lives; what they take into account and what they do not; what they consider worth contemplating and what they do not; what they are and are not willing to raise as problematic and unresolved in life.

(quoted in Ryan, 2001, p. 118)

In my journey to Hamburg I will collect relative, storied perspectives from the artists, which will constitute my data (more on my methodology in Chapter 4), so I will need to bear in mind that the stories will not constitute “truth” due to interpretive, artistic license; the distortion of memory; the filters of values; and the translation problems of using a second language vocabulary.

Nigerian, feminist writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie suggests that if we do not reject the notion of a single story, we rob people of their dignity and diversity. Who tells
the story, how it is told, and when it is told are questions of power. She suggests stories have been used both to dispossess and to malign but also to empower and humanize (Adichie, 2009), so it is important for me to collect more than one story in Hamburg.

In the movie *The Help*, based on the novel by Kathryn Stockett (2009), the personal stories of marginalized Black women from Mississippi during the 1960s are recounted. One of the women, Aibileen, states in the movie, “no one asked me before what it be like to be me. Once I told it, I be free”.

In my view, stories that “free” do exist at the personal, relative level, but they also exist at the political level as “discourses” (Foucault, 1980) or “memes” (Dawkins, 1989). Berry maintains that “in order to survive our moment, we must be prepared to take a journey into a new, creative ‘story’ . . . we need an ‘integral’ story that will educate us, a story that will heal us, guide and discipline us” (quoted in O’Sullivan, 2002, p. 4). I understand this comment on both the individual and on the cultural level. By creating a new visual discourse, artists perform integrative transformation. Artists empower themselves and others into a more functional and inclusive way of living and being, through the propagation of visual memes.

All discourses can be understood as stories or memes (Dawkins, 1989) more or less jostling for power. Perhaps visual art can be seen as a way to enter the discourse-jostle both preverbally and symbolically. Without the verbal or visual skills that enable multiple perspectives to gain entry into crushing single discourses, discourse remains homogenized, and people of diversity outside the dominant discourse remain silenced and disempowered. Schugurensky (2002) notes, “reflective discourse can be understood as a process in which we actively dialogue with others to better understand the meaning of an
experience. . . . This in turn promotes a better understanding of issues by tapping into collective experience and knowledge and allows all participants to find their own voice in light of alternative perspectives” (p. 65).

To enter a world of competitive discourses, silence must be overcome through skills-learning in safe places. Ryan (2001) suggests, “the presence of other women allows women to build up personal authority through the telling of and listening to their stories” (p. 118). However, “in overcoming silence and learning to talk to each other, women need to be presented with discourses that position them with agency, rather than with discourses that simply map their oppressions” (p. 119). I believe it was this discourse of agency through visual art in a communal studio that Carol brought to Hamburg.

Through the sharing of stories, a common experience of oppression can be recognized and a narrative of resistance can emerge. A new, communal discourse that is more functional can be authored. This is particularly relevant in an area where individual discourses are unsafe and where community is needed to build safety (more analysis of the South African situation with HIV/AIDS in Chapter 5). Artists in Hamburg have experienced this through the safety of a studio, and through communal art projects such as the Keiskamma Altarpiece, where 130 women worked together to visually tell their story of the HIV pandemic (The Keiskamma Altarpiece, n.d.).

Although the telling of stories is understood to be empowering, under certain circumstances the disclosure of a story can also be disempowering. It is important for a researcher to know the difference. Ahmed (2010) discusses the ethics involved in the researcher and her participants keeping some secrets. Ahmed (2010) discusses issues around safety, the constraints and limits to some knowledge, and the possible
invasiveness of research into marginalized lives. “The desire to know the truth about the other can participate in, and reproduce violence, as if ‘they’ could provide us with what ‘we’ are missing” (p. xix). Feminist research means “a commitment to not causing harm . . . [but] promoting good” (p. xx). She mentions that feminist researchers may be “secretaries”; that a secretary must decide “what to do with what we are entrusted—whether we speak or keep silent—[this] remains an important question” (p. xx). This sensitivity to intimacy and security means that not every story will be told to the researcher nor retold by the researcher here.

There is a tension within feminist literature between the need to include marginalized voices and the imperative to protect and avoid speaking for others. Pillow and Mayo (2007) discuss the politics of representation and the research gaze, issues of authority, and who is recording, representing and speaking for whom, why and how (p. 163). Although Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) state that polyvocality is central to a feminist understanding of how knowledge is built (p. 148), there are “inherent contradictions in the desire to give voice to others” (De Vault & Cross, 2007, p. 173). This is a concern for any researcher who will be telling the story of another in order to give that individual or community a voice. I will need to bear this tension in mind and observe when I am speaking for others or on behalf of others.

Issues of voicing can also sometimes include danger for researchers or participants. Parpart (2010) acknowledges that “openly voicing dissent and opposition is often dangerous and even suicidal among women (and men). Clearly, new ways of thinking about agency and voice are needed, ones that take into account the many subtle forms of agency required to cope in an increasingly dangerous world” (p. 17).
Cornwall (1998) notes “there may be aspects of women’s lives and livelihoods which are especially important to conceal” (p. 55). Silence can also be viewed as a private space to deal with trauma, regain self-esteem and a sense of empowerment in an often unpredictable world (El-Bushra, 2000; Kelly, 2000; Majob, 2004; Silber, 2005). Sometimes silences in women’s narratives may point to experiences that are simply so horrific they cannot be articulated.

Silence can also be culturally determined. Some cultures are more loquacious than others, while others are more comfortable with silence. Art, with its ability to speak without words while providing a measure of voice, also remains ambiguously silent. Parpart (2010) suggests that using symbols (the arts) is useful in these ambiguous situations. She says “symbols can disrupt and challenge the discourse of the powerful, while providing space for solace, sharing and collective empowerment” (p. 23).

As a meditator and artist, I understand that silence doesn’t always indicate disempowerment. It can also be a very creative space. Parpart (2010) reminds us of the transformative capacities of silence. Audra Lorde, whom Parpart (2010) discusses, writes, silence “is a site not only of resistance but also of transformation, the home where new dreams and visions are born” (quoted in Parpart, 2010, p. 23). Parpart (2010) reinforces that feminist researchers must bear in mind the subtleties of silence.

To privilege voice over silence, and secrecy as evidence of empowered agency, ignores the transformative potential of a complex mix of choice. . . . The choice to speak . . . may be easy to measure, but . . . agency with a transformative agenda may take surprising forms, including the judicious use of . . . silence. (p. 25)
Because both silence and voice are ubiquitous and may mean different things contextually, power relationships can be played out through their negotiation. Feminists are greatly interested in the deconstruction of the many nuances that are involved. These can be age related. Phoenix (2010), for example, notes the valuable functions of silence and secrets for children. Secrets give children a feeling of inwardness, privacy, personal identity, autonomy, and independence. For older children, however, secrecy becomes linked with the forbidden, with fear and punishment (Manen & Levering, 1996). For adults, studies find that silence often results from the negotiation of difficult dynamics and so is context specific. Ward and Winstanley (2003), for example, suggest that silence can be viewed as a metaphorical negative space. They have identified five forms of silencing: reactive silence or the absence of response, a form of suppression, self-censorship, self protection, and resistance. These are forms of unconscious repression. But more consciously employed silence and secrecy perform a number of functions in intersections ranging from smooth maintenance of interaction to politeness to the management of shame. Phoenix (2004) says that secrecy can also “signal that there are things too terrible to be said” (pp. 162–163).

I mention these subtleties as a possible dynamic in my case study. In Chapter 4, I look more closely at the complexity of silence in a village that has negotiated patriarchy, racism, poverty, denialism, and the stigma and shame with regards to its struggle with HIV/AIDS. What is of note in regards to transformation in this village is the great creativity that has emerged out of a history of great silencing.
Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Community-based research (CBR)

I look now at the intention and methodology of this study.

With the above understandings of transformation, it becomes evident that the models for transformation (apart from the feminist notion of voice) are rooted in mostly Western, middle-class, masculine standpoints. In the absence of indigenous, female models of transformation, I will loosely apply Mezirow’s 10 stages and that of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to an African setting when working with women artists from a grassroots community to see if there is a good fit between male understandings and female experiences, between academia and indigenous realities.

The intention of my study is to visit the African village of Hamburg and observe and interview the artists from the Keiskamma Trust, with the goal of coming to understand the transformations that these women may or may not have experienced, and compare and contrast these to existing understandings in the literature reviewed above, particularly in regard to voice. I will be guided by the tradition of action research (Lewin, 1946) that is based on the theory of Kurt Lewin, resulting in research that leads to social action, as well as community-based research (CBR), an openness to the epistemologies of others, and empathy toward oppression, informed by feminist theory.

There are many ways one could research a case study such as this,
but some methods will be more apt than others, especially in a sensitive location that has undergone silencing in various ways. In Jung’s opinion, it would be best to put away the scholar’s gown, bid farewell to one’s study, and wander with human heart through the world when wanting to know the human psyche (cited by Mitchell, 2013, p. 1). I will combine this approach with more objective research. I have found it useful to gain knowledge both as an insider, through “experiencing” art as transformational, and also as an outsider through “interviewing” and “talking” to others in many situations, including indigenous learning communities, studios, prisons, and ecstatic sects. By visiting Hamburg, I will be able to gain direct experience of the village art projects and observe the artists in action, as well as test my own understanding of transformation through art. These methods of participation—direct experience, observation, and interview as suggested by Lewin (1946)—lie on a spectrum from insider to outsider engagement.

There is a centuries old tension in academia between qualitative and quantitative research. This binary between the interpretive/metaphorical ways of knowing found in the arts, and the empirical/experimental ways of knowing found in the sciences is oversimplified as there are many other ways, too, of knowing, most of which are not recognized by the academy. Many other epistemologies are, in fact, dying, and some scholars suggest that they need to be reinvigorated. Hall (2014), for example, argues on the UNESCO website for the decolonization of knowledge, explaining that “the enclosing of the academy dispossessed the vast majority of knowledge keepers”. Hall (2014) refers to epistemacide, or the killing of knowledge systems, including those “of the global South, Indigenous epistemologies, epistemologies of the excluded and marginalised, epistemologies of the differently abled, epistemologies of women farmers, epistemologies
of injection drug users and a range of knowledge as diverse as the earth itself” (webpage).

Hall (2014) highlights a kind of cultural imperialism—the construction of power through the dominance of one thought form over another, or as Dawkins (1989) would call it, one “meme” (as opposed to “gene”) over another, creating a hegemony that enables ideological domination, usually by insiders of the academy over outsiders. This notion is why Jung suggests searching for knowledge in outsider communities. In some ways, the global South is considered an outsider by the North, and in many ways countries with low GDPs and high levels of the HIV virus are also considered outsider. The research site of Hamburg, with its economic and health challenges (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5) would qualify in some ways as having outsider status in terms of global power and access. In a situation such as this, CBR methods will be appropriate.

At first glance, notions of “insider” and “outsider” knowledge and power seem like a simple binary. But within outsider and insider places of learning there are also further notions of insider and outsider knowledge. I would suggest that in every community, subtle dimensions of insider and outsider exist and that these notions are fluid and ambiguous. Most people are simultaneously both powerful insiders and disempowered outsiders, in various ways over time and space. At any given moment, any learner, whether she be in prison or in a university or in a rural African village, is located in various ways to various boundaries and is therefore in a fluid relationship to knowledge and power. Those who cross boundaries in search of learning will usually experience shifting contexts, identities, notions of access and belonging, and therefore shifting power.
I am aware that with this research project, I will be perceived as a powerful outsider from the North, even though, as a female, South African artist who did not subscribe to the apartheid position, I have experienced relative outsiderliness. For example, I had less privilege than White, nonartist men who did subscribe to the practice of apartheid. (This relative hierarchy of power in South Africa will be elaborated upon in Chapter 5). Nobody is always powerful, invulnerable, and all-knowing, just as nobody is always weak, vulnerable, and unknowing. Most of us are a combination of both, depending on our movement across our social and geographic trajectories.

I would like to merge Hall’s (2014) notions of CBR with Sandra Harding’s (1993) suggestion that feminist researchers are in a particularly good position to critically locate standpoints, as they are always members of at least one oppressed group. However, she clarifies that “the point is not to rank oppressions but rather to seek analysis that takes into account the kinds of oppression that can produce valuable questions and insights . . . vigorous commitments to democratic inclusiveness, fairness and accountability to the worse off” (p. 55). In some ways, I will be an outsider to Hamburg, being White, and being university-educated in the North. However, in some ways I will also be an insider, being South African, a women and an artist who has experienced a measure of discrimination as well as great loss.

I mention this understanding in relation to CBR, which deliberately engages across knowledge boundaries in order to subvert these insider/outside hierarchies. CBR tries to break down walls between the academy and those outside it. It takes the position of Hall (2014) that all communities have valuable insider epistemologies of their own. In this view, stores of knowledge are not only the preserve of the privileged. All partners in
a CBR project are held as “knowers.” This democratic and respectful concept is particularly pertinent to research across any form of difference.

This dissertation will engage CBR while qualitatively exploring art in Hamburg as a transformative practice. It will succeed in crossing some epistemological and cultural boundaries, but it will also fail to cross others (through the limitations of both the researcher and the participants). It may even refuse to cross some boundaries (out of respect for participants by the researcher, and vice versa).

This CBR will focus on a case study of some of the marginalized epistemologies mentioned above by Hall (2014), namely that of indigenous women artists who are dealing with illness, rurality, racial inequality, and poverty challenges, and yet despite this, or perhaps because of this, have experienced art as transformative in some ways. As a relatively healthy, third-culture kid, I undertake some transnational inquiry, which may seem troublesome to some. This case study recognizes and addresses power issues based on insider/outsider or North/South positions.

CBR offers an alternative to the current knowledge-producing enterprises that systematically deny value to marginalized epistemologies, monopolize the means of knowledge production, and which might unintentionally also dehumanize participants. Tandon (2002) for example, says CBR is an empowering methodology that challenges traditional social science research that is based on “neutrality, objectivity and value-free character. Participatory research attempts to present people as researchers themselves, in pursuit of answers to the questions of their daily struggle and survival” (p. 1). Although my research will be CBR and not participatory research, it will engage with women artists who have experienced participatory research themselves, as they engage in art
projects, facilitated by the Keiskamma Trust started by Carol Hofmeyr Baker, that explore Hamburg’s history, identity, health, and power challenges. These participatory projects already exist and I will be observing a system already in action. As a researcher, I will not be creating new projects for participants, but interviewing them regarding their experiences with existing projects.

Gaventa and Merrifield (2002) argue that in this kind of existing participatory practice, research is not seen only as “a process of knowledge, but simultaneously as education and development of consciousness, and of mobilization for action” (p. 122).

CBR is preferred by those involved in adult education, community development, environmental movements, and civil rights precisely because it is not top-down but rather bottom-up knowledge generation. It is participant-generated knowledge rather than academy-transferred knowledge. If sensitively and respectfully done, it is knowledge that leads to empowerment rather than exploitation.

Empowerment and development of any kind, including transformation, is an “intrinsic” quality. Julius Nyerere, once the president of Tanzania, says

People cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves. For while it is possible for an outsider to build a man’s house, an outsider cannot give the man pride and self-confidence in himself. Those things a man has to create in himself by his own actions . . . by making his own decisions . . . by increasing his own knowledge and ability, and by his own full participation—as an equal, in the life of the community he lives in. (quoted in Hall, 2002, p. 9)

In this statement, Nyerere emphasizes empowerment as an internal action on the part of Africans, not dependent on external help from development agencies or
researchers. Paradoxically, however, he neglects to include women in his view of empowerment, thereby reflecting the further outsider status of women within outsider Africa. My study might be an opportunity for women in the village of Hamburg to express themselves through an interview method. There will be multiple standpoints represented, including artists, community leaders, and administrators of the Keiskamma Trust, all of whom will have sliding scales of insider/outsider status.

Rather than understanding insider/outsider perspectives as a simple sliding binary, philosophers like Wilber (1997, 2000) have argued for a more complex quadrant. He suggests there are four ways to view any event. I shall highlight this idea here, as it is especially pertinent to a study where the researcher’s and participants’ views may be located differently.

Wilber (1997, 2000) says our language reflects which of the four possible standpoints we are in:

1) the interior of the individual (a subjective perspective) reflected by the use of the pronoun “I,”

2) the exterior of the individual (an objective perspective) reflected by the pronoun, “it/he or she,”

3) the interior of the collective (a perspective reflecting culture and its objects) reflected by the pronoun “we,”

4) and the exterior of the collective (a perspective reflecting social systems) reflected by the pronoun “its.”

According to Wilber, all four of these perspectives are present in any event and are available to researchers. He also suggests that all four views have equal bearing on
reality. If this is the case, I suggest that no one perspective (or its pronoun) need be privileged over another in academia either.

Some have challenged Wilber’s nontraditional views however. Bonnitta Roy (2006), for example, has problematized Wilber’s pronoun-lens as insufficient. Others, like Alderman (2013), support Wilber’s idea with regards to research:

In his four-quadrant model Wilber differentiates . . . four major perspectives or dimensions of reality (subjective, inter-subjective, objective, inter-objective; or I, We, It, and Its). Each of these quadrant perspectives is associated with . . . major domains of experience, knowledge disciplines, methods of inquiry, value spheres, validity claims, modes of communication, and so on. (p. 14)

This argument suggests then that our language reflects our epistemological location, from moment to moment, and our epistemological location determines our research methodology. Although most researchers adopt one out of the four of these pronoun positions (usually the objectifying “it” or “its”) without perhaps understanding that any single pronoun is in fact partial, some are beginning to use multiple perspectives. ‘Triangulation’ for example is resistant to the binary or singular perspective, and “meta interpretation” (Weed, 2005) is now used to resist the partiality of “one view only,” which serves only to reinforce the epistemological split between qualitative and quantitative researchers (Harding, 1993; Palmer, 2004).

Based on Wilber’s (1997, 2000) four-quadrant theory, only a dissertation that presents research in all four quadrants would be nonpartial, and without limitation. This dissertation, however, does not claim to come from all four quadrants, as it would be overly cumbersome to do so. I instead acknowledge my limitations, by choosing to locate
my bias mainly in the subjective and intersubjective perspectives of a community. This choice is based on the topic, art and its transformative capacities, which lends itself to a qualitative, interpretive, subjective portrait.

To do this, I will collate stories about how art has transformed one particular community. These stories will not be “truth”, as has been noted, but will represent interpretations of a phenomenon experienced by a village as “integrated validity” (Pereira, 2012, p. 17). Grounded theorists Lincoln and Guba suggest ensuring “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” when “measurability” is impossible (quoted in Paton, 2002, p. 546). Hopefully these indices will be accomplished in my case study. Stories, mostly using the first person pronoun, which will comprise my data, will be transcribed. Once these stories have been studied and reflected upon and central themes have been located and summarized, these indigenous ideas about visual art and transformation will be summarized and compared to the ideas in the literature review and findings will be presented.

4.2 Qualitative methods: Interview-based, narrative, autoethnography

Over a period of two months, I will live and make art in this community and get to know participants. As Muncey (2010) argues, “there is no distinction between living a life and doing research” (p. 3). An informal, conversational, interview format will be used, which Ellis (2004) calls “interactive interviewing” (p. 64). All participants will be aware of the reason for, and the means by which, these interviews will be recorded, and each participant’s verbal consent will also be recorded. All will be aware of the final destination of their story as data for a case study about their experiences with visual art.
These stories will be told through the normal human lenses of standpoint, memory, opinion, and bias, but as Ellis and Bochner (2006) say, these stories do the work of analyzing and theorizing (p. 436). They will serve as an attempt to share as authentically as possible a transformative process through words revealing meaning, “without the error of defining it” (Arendt, quoted by Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 438).

Joyappa and Martin (1996) suggest investigation of women’s lives enhances the possibilities of uncovering adult education and the learning processes of women. But I understand that the very retelling of these art-making stories to an engaged interviewer can be transformative to participants, as well as the later dissemination of their story to a wider audience through a dissertation. Wolgemuth and Donohue (2006), for example, talk about the witnessing of a participant’s story through narrative research, which is “a potentially transformative process that can deeply change participants’ and researchers’ ways of viewing and being themselves” (p. 1027). I expect that I, too, will be transformed in this process, as many scholars suggest that informal learning in a noneducational setting can be transformative (English, 2002; Foley, 1999; Jackson, 2010; Majob & McDonald, 2008).

A notable example of the transformative capacity of witnessing people’s lives was established in South Africa in 1996 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, an innovative legal process, the goal of which was to heal victims of gross injustice through telling their stories and as a way to acknowledge the difficult, lived experiences that might otherwise be silenced. The women of Hamburg would have some awareness of the truth and reconciliation process, as well as their own traditional, centrality of oral culture, and so their participation in this study might be assumed to be informed by a commitment
to the role that witnessing can play in community transformation.

This dissertation responds to researchers such as Wolgemuth and Donohue (2006) who call for narrative research, which they call “inquiry of discomfort”, which requires a more ambiguous social engagement than more traditional methods. It will follow in the narrative tradition already established by other educational researchers (see Clandenin & Connelly, 2000; Ellis, 2004; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Neilson, Cole, & Knowles, 2001). These researchers have followed in the footsteps of yet earlier narrative pioneers such as Tom Barone, Elliot Eisner and others, who have practiced this format for over three decades. In the 90s, Eisner (1997) referred to the “new frontiers” in educational research that fulfilled “the desire to secure more authentic information about the people and situations studied and by the realization that conventional forms of research often constrain the data in ways that misrepresent the phenomena the researcher wishes to understand” (p.260). Disappointingly however, 10 years later, Barone (2007) is still warning that narrative research is “in danger of marginalization . . . as a result of politically charged attempts to reinstitute a narrow methodological orthodoxy” (p. 1).

This dissertation does not claim orthodoxy as it does not constitute “fact” or “truth.” Yet neither is it “fiction” (interpretive metaphor that represents a form of symbolic truth). It is a blend of both, a form of “ficto-criticism” (Fictocriticism, 2004). The University of Tasmania (Fictocriticism, 2004) describes the place of ficto-criticism within the narrative research tradition today:

Postmodern critical and creative work is moving rapidly away from, on the one hand, the traditional academic genres of essay, chapter and journal article and, on the other, the creative genres of fiction and poetry. A hybrid kind of writing, part
critical, part theoretical, part creative, it is proving influential in the reformulation of literary and cultural studies . . . and critical genres.

Ficto-criticism is a contemporary term from feminist writing, which juxtaposes or merges creative writing with cultural and critical theory (see Dawson, 2005; Smith, 2005). In this case study, materials such as narrative interviews, field notes, critical theory, and analysis will be woven together into a ficto-critical metissage. Metissage is a French Canadian aesthetic concept for which there is no real English equivalent, that brings together biology, history, anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, literature, politics, economics, geography, informal conversational text, and visual image. This research could be construed as belonging to multiple forms of qualitative research, such as critical ethnography, feminist phenomenology, or heuristic constructivism (http://qualmethods.wikispaces.com/Critical+Theory), but I am choosing to focus on the research umbrella most closely allied to my own field, namely arts-based, narrative research (see Barone & Eisner, 2011 Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Knowles & Cole, 2008), which understands story—both visual and verbal—as a valid, subjective way of creating knowledge from embodied experience. This is my “standpoint” (Harding, 1993)—how I locate my findings in time, space and approach—in the subjective and intersubjective quadrants (Wilber, 1997, 2000). By weaving together multiple stories and stitching together layers of narrative, anecdote, and critical literature, I am choosing a ficto-critical standpoint presented through metissage. By doing this, I attempt to come closer to the subjective truths of a particular community that other data collection could not do. It will be a metaintepretive (Weed, 2005) study, which includes multiple stories and perspectives as data.
By doing this, I enter the global debate about the narrative tradition, which Denzin (2011) calls the politics of evidence. Denzin (2011), however, urges the interpretative community to create its own standards and criteria for the “truth” project. Richardson (2001), for example, prioritizes five criteria she uses when reviewing narrative research, namely: substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact, and expression of reality (p. 251). She also calls for “a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived reality” (Richardson, 2001, p. 937). Ellis (2004) calls for work that is lifelike, believable, and possible, and for validity, she asks “does the researcher communicate with those different from herself, and does the work improve the life of others or self” (p. 124)? These are criteria that I have tried to live, and which I will bring with me to Hamburg as innate, personal motivations.

By alternating critical theory and autobiographical interview with creative nonfiction in the findings section, I will attempt to articulate two things: 1) the phenomenon of transformation through art as experienced by this community, and 2) the journey the researcher undertook within this community. This is a way to offer a more coherently linear narrative and to reflect the experience of the researcher and her interpretations. Threading, weaving, and sewing also reflect the art methods of this particular research site—tapestry. In an attempt to bring the same richness to the case study experienced by me within this community, many different voices will be drawn upon, including artists, arts administrators, community developers, local leaders, break-away faction groups, physicians, teachers, and therapists. Voices will represent both Black and White community members as well as women and men involved in the art project.
As with most communities, interviews will produce a diversity of stories of self and others, which will evidence multiple views and standpoints, divisions, and boundaries. Participants who will be interviewed for this study may use the pronoun “I” in their stories, indicating a reflective autoethnography (Denzin, 2006). Participants may also talk about others and may sometimes use the pronouns “he,” “she,” “we,” or “it,” which will indicate that some objectivity is being attempted, although filtered through personal opinion. Community might also be implied through the pronoun “we” and some “other-ation” might also be implied through the pronoun “they.” Including these multiple stories of the self’s experience reflects my standpoint as a feminist researcher using autoethnography, which aims to bring marginalized voices in from the edges. Butz and Besio (2004) and Tillman (2009, p. 95) say autoethnography, in particular, counters the political structuring of invisibility, which is also a central focus for both feminist and narrative research. I will expand on this further in this chapter.

Findings in this research will be drawn from autobiographical interviews. My own autobiographical journey through the research site will link these participants’ stories chronologically. Pelias (2011) suggests that autobiography is actually a way of asserting the “I,” of performing oneself into being and knowing, a participatory epistemology, which can be viewed as liberating by some but also impositional or aggressive by others. Some scholars have cautioned that narrative research can be self-absorbed, partial, and partisan, but as we have seen above, most research, including quantitative research, is limited in this way if it comes from only one quadrant. The location of “truth” is clearly an epistemological issue. Pelias (2011), however, counters this doubt by saying that the “reflexive stance is both ethical and self-aware” (p. 622).
Palmer (2004), who highlights the danger of academics using objective language, says

Instead of telling our vulnerable stories, we seek safety in abstractions, speaking to each other about our opinions, ideas and beliefs rather than about our lives. Academic culture blesses this practice by insisting that the more abstract our speech, the more likely we are to touch the universal truths that unite us. But what happens is exactly the reverse: as our discourse becomes more abstract, the less connected we feel. There is less sense of community among intellectuals than in the most “primitive” society of storytellers. (p. 123)

This dissertation will therefore attempt to avoid abstraction where possible out of respect for the participants’ highly personal sharing of their own vulnerability. Instead of aiming for objectivity, this dissertation aims for intimacy, sometimes moving or disturbing intimacy, as participants recount the challenges they have faced. Intimacy here also includes the researcher making herself vulnerable through the research story, by being self-reflective and transparent.

4.3 Transnational feminist research

There are inherent difficulties with research that aims for intimacy or vulnerability, especially when doing this across borders and boundaries. Transnational feminist researchers problematize this issue. They focus on boundaries and how to respectfully work with difference across race, class, and gender. For a transnational researcher there is a tension between diversity itself, which depends on differentiation through boundaries, and intimacy, which relies on breaching those boundaries (Mendez,
The question for me is how do I record authentic intimate stories in Africa from the other side of the world. Intimate research requires that I, as the outsider researcher, be located within the village, which could be viewed as a breach of boundaries.

Transnational feminists look at the need for the maintenance of respectful boundaries despite the need for intimacy. This perspective tries to avoid the essentializing of women’s subjectivities across borders (Buch & Staller, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), while insisting that power inequities between women should not stall the process of bringing marginalized voices in to discourse. They define the problem of multiple realities and diverse experience among women, but they suggest that these unequal subjectivities should not prevent voicing work across nations and ethnicities. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007) suggest that “transnational feminists are interested in examining the interconnections between gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity and national origin . . . the diverse ways in which women and men in particular places and spaces produce and transmit knowledge” (p. 20).

Transnational research is understood in a global context, defined here by Goldbard (2006) as “activities or systems that transcend national borders. The word embodies recognition of dynamic cultural processes that connect human societies regardless of official boundaries. In contrast to ‘international’, it implies multi-directionality, rather than one- or two-directional exchange” (p. 245.)

In this transnational view, keeping communities apart out of fear of potential power abuse is not a helpful strategy for mobilizing knowledge around marginalization. With increasing globalization, “intersectionality” is a term used in this transnational literature to express the idea that people live multiple, layered identities and experience
privilege and oppression simultaneously in different contexts. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007) mention a refined challenge amongst feminist scholars:

Black feminists, third world feminists, and global/postcolonial/transnational feminists often remain uninformed about each other’s theories/perspectives and research . . . what remains a challenge for feminist research is the creation of links between these strands of knowledge building to gather a more complex understanding of the workings of racism, imperialism and neo-colonialism across historical and cultural contexts. (p. 14)

For feminist researchers working transnationally, Kim (2007) says the questions to note are:

What are the ways in which feminist scholars contribute to knowledge production without reinforcing or legitimating their interests and agendas, or those of privileged groups or places? How is feminist production of knowledge explicitly tied to material and cultural politics, so that less privileged groups, communities and places are made visible and integrated into analysis? . . . How do feminists speak about, frame, and engage across multiple divides and putative borders without privileging the interests of dominant groups. (p. 107)

Transnational feminist scholarship attempts to overcome dualities between self and other and between one group of women and another, where a fixed view of the other as being either helpless or weak, or powerful and privileged, disconcertingly reinforces stereotypes. Kim (2007) talks about the binaries that she encourages researchers to overcome, which include “self/other, center/margin, first world/third world, western/nonwestern, west/east, black/white, religious/secular” (p. 109). In her view, by
forging transnational linkages we decolonize our conceptions of self and other and cross multiple “conceptual, cultural, geographical, and political boundaries” (p.109).

Transnational researchers try to bridge the divisions between other feminists themselves. North American Black feminist standpoint theory, for example, has been critiqued by some (see Sylvester, 1995) for homogenizing and essentializing Black female experience and for not being inclusive of South Afro-centric epistemologies, just as White feminists have been critiqued for being “reductionist” (Kim, 2007, p. 111). Transnational feminism attempts to understand the multidimensionality of all experience. By essentializing any group of people, researchers silence diversity. Kim (2007) calls for “a more contextual, more reflexive, and more fluid approach to understanding Black women’s lives. Such decentering is necessary so that the scope, complexities and diversity of Black women’s lives in the transnational world can be successfully captured” (p. 112).

In my view, there are several challenges I face as a transnational feminist researcher. One is to include the marginalized voices of rural Black women, as well as the nonmarginalized voices of rural White women with education and management skills, thereby avoiding the temptation to understand Black women as always vulnerable or White women as always powerful. The second challenge is to ensure that Black women’s voices are not essentialized. To edit out any points of view that are controversial, dissenting, or oppositional would constitute silencing of and deliberate skewing of evidence. As there will be a diversity of opinion in any group of like people, all points of view need to be included. The third challenge is to compare and contrast these voices with the academic literature without privileging those mostly White, academic, male
voices. My goal will be to understand whether these male voices have essentialized the experience of transformation itself and whether their views apply to female artists in an African context.

The fourth challenge will be to keep this dissertation in a manageable format. Brooks (2007), for example, warns against being so inclusive that there is no standpoint (p. 73). She cites Haraway who cautions that “feminist standpoint scholars must be careful to avoid a kind of paralysis that hinders women moving forward together and taking a stand on social issues . . . a state of ‘being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally’” (quoted in Brooks, 2007, p 191). Brooks also cites Hill Collins who “urges us to hearken back to the African’s call and response tradition, whereby everyone must learn to speak and to listen to ensure membership in the community” (quoted in Brooks, 2007, p. 75). This African view that all must speak might lead to an unwieldy dissertation for a Western format. However, Schugurensky (2002), references Friere and Belenky and Stanton, reminds us that developing the capacity “for participating in democratic deliberation is particularly important for people who have been excluded, silenced, marginalized and oppressed most of their lives …which in turn awakens their belief in their own potential to transform larger social realities” (p. 72). So this dissertation will aim for balance between inclusion and exclusion.

For feminist interview techniques, I will be guided by Hesse-Biber and colleagues (2007b) who advise researchers to capture the lived experiences of their respondents as much as possible. They suggest interviews can run along a continuum from informal to formal and that researchers should leave room for spontaneity, asserting a minimum of control over the respondents’ answers. They suggest researchers don’t try to get identical
interviews from each participant, but that when themes emerge, researchers find interviewees who do not necessarily agree, or cases that do not fit. Researchers should test out hypotheses on their respondents. I will test out Maslow’s pyramid of needs, and Mezirows ten-stage transformative path to see if these theories hold up globally.

Most importantly, Hesse Biber and colleagues suggest feminist researchers should practice reflexivity throughout the research process. This keeps the researcher mindful of her personal positionality and that of the respondent. Hesse-Biber (2007b) suggests researchers ask

how does your own biography affect the research process; what shapes the questions you chose to study and your approach to studying them? How does the specific social, economic, and political context in which you reside affect the research process at all levels? (p. 129)

I respond to this call by Hesse-Biber (2007b) for reflexivity by recognizing and examining “how his or her own social background and assumptions can intervene in the research process” (p. 129). This is reflected in the autobiographical threads of this case study, intertwined by interviews, which Hesse-Biber (2007b) says should reveal more of a conversation between coparticipants than a simple “question and answer session” (p. 134). She says there should be no “yes” or “no” questions or fixed numbers of choices. She does not have a specific set of questionnaire items. She says she tends to “go with the flow” (p. 114) of the interview, seeing where it takes her, although she does have some specific ideas of what she wants to find out.

For my own research, there will be some imperatives however. Feminist researchers always gather informed consent from participants and they always explain
how their interview will be used and for what purposes. They listen and are attentive. The researcher must be prepared to “drop his or her own agenda and follow the pace” (Hesse-Biber, 2006, p. 132) of the interviewee. A feminist perspective regarding in-depth interviewing includes seeing the interview process as a “co-creation of meaning” (Hesse-Biber, 2006, p. 132).

With these understandings and methods in mind, I now move to the ficto-critical, narrative.
Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 The Eastern Cape: A context

I fly to South Africa, and as I look out of the plane’s window at my destination, the Eastern Cape, I see gently rolling grasslands with valleys carved by dozens of rivers that snake down to the sea. Massive sand dunes stretch along the coastline as far as the eye can see. Waves that roll in along the beaches, trailing white vapor, pound up against the beach in a roiling surf. This stretch of Indian Ocean is known as the Wild Coast and is famed for its shipwrecks. The sea here has taken six ships in the past 30 years (List of shipwrecks, n.d.).

As we start our descent, East London comes into view. eMonti, or Buffalo City, as this port is also known, straddles the Buffalo River and is home to approximately 300,000, mostly Xhosa, people.

My mother, who also lives here, picks me up. She has offered to drive me to Hamburg, which is a tiny coastal hamlet, an hour south of East London. On the way, we pack the car with food and my research equipment, as I understand the village itself has few amenities—one or two shops that sell bread, liquor, and tools. It is my understanding that residents of Hamburg must catch taxis to buy food 25 kilometers away.

In contrast, the busy streets of East London are packed with vendors, shoppers, taxi drivers, and business people. As we head south, we leave behind the aging colonial buildings of the downtown and pass by some large factories with the signs of global
owners, including Mercedes Benz, and Johnson and Johnson. Then we are in Mdantsane, the large township outside of town, of 160,000 people. It was created during the apartheid era (1948–1994) in a bid to keep Black residents out of town and keep East London “White” (Mdantsane, n.d.).

The area’s history has left a legacy of underemployment and underinvestment. The Eastern Cape is one of the most economically challenged areas in Southern Africa.

As we take the highway, the informal settlements of cardboard and corrugated iron homes become less dense. Soon we are out in open countryside, passing through rolling grasslands speckled with anthills, thorn trees, and grazing livestock that wander onto the highway. Dense bush clings to the craggy escarpments—euphorbias, wild pear, aloe, and cabbage trees. As we drive, my mother and I talk about many things, including the fact that Nelson Mandela was born just west of here in a village called Qunu.

We talk, too, about our own ancestors, who first arrived in this area in 1820. Four thousand immigrants had set sail from Britain onboard 25 ships. They were known as the 1820 Settlers (see plate 1). Many of the immigrants were very poor and were encouraged by the Cape government to settle and defend the Eastern frontier against the Xhosa peoples, forming an “Anglo-Saxon island” in a predominantly Xhosa- and Afrikaans-speaking part of the country (1820 settlers, n.d.); see also Giliomee & Mbenga, 2010, pp. 85–87).

My own ancestor, James Hoole (1789–1845) was a “dyer and straw plat dealer” (1820 settlers, n.d.). He had attended a public meeting in a rowdy London tavern, the Crown and Anchor, infamous for its antiestablishment politics and its speakers who held radical and subversive beliefs.
In a tabloid cartoon in 1791, the tavern was nicknamed “the gates of pandemonium” and depicted as a place “seething with unnatural revolutionary ideas and potential danger” (http://printshopwindow.blogspot.ca/2011/11/gate-of-pandemonium-crown-and-anchor_14.html?m=1). However, it was also a key metropolitan establishment for London’s literary elite, hosting both scientific and literary lecturers including Handel, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Hazlitt. It was also the customary dining venue for fellows of the Royal Society and the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. (http://printshopwindow.blogspot.ca/2011/11/gate-of-pandemonium-crown-and-anchor_14.html?m=1).

Plate 1: Detail from The Keiskamma Tapestry, depicting the arrival in the Eastern Cape of the 1820 Settlers by boat.

It was here that James Hoole first heard Lieutenant John Bailie give a rousing speech in favor of immigration to South Africa through a government settlers’ scheme (Hoole & Hoole, 1993). Voyagers who accompanied Bailie on this expedition to the Eastern Cape onboard the Chapman would be given a hundred acres of land. Six hundred people applied for passage on this expedition, and 270 were selected. James Hoole and
his family were amongst them. They set sail from Gravesend in December, 1819.

After an arduous journey down the west coast of Africa and around the Cape, the settlers were dropped ashore and were instructed to clear ground and plan a settlement with the tradesmen forming the core of a village. They were told to build houses through communal labor, and all tools and books were to be held as common property, while the purchase of slaves and liquor was strictly forbidden (1820 settlers, n.d.).

Plate 2: Detail from the Keiskamma Tapestry. Settlers move overland in ox wagons.

My mother and I talk about our ancestor, who, six generations previously, had lived in a culture that had sanctioned acts of colonization. The 1820 Settlers were promised a new life but had arrived on contested land, with the British pushing north from the Cape, while at the same time, the Xhosa were pushing south, away from the Zulu tribes to the north of them. James and Jane Hoole had arrived during the Hundred Years War (1779–1879) on this frontier between the Xhosa and the British. Eventually, they had given up their unproductive land and had moved by oxwagon to Grahamstown,
(see plate 2), a military outpost nearby, where they lived out their lives and were later buried.

Unable to reverse the colonizing journey of the Chapman, or my ancestors’ choices, and unable to live under the untenable apartheid politics of the Afrikaans government, I had chosen to leave South Africa in order to follow my conscience. My mother, like many others, had chosen to stay, feeling that Africa was her home after 200 years of ancestry. She said Africa was in her blood. Despite her pain at my leaving, she had respected my choice to find a country in whose politics I could believe, and where I could raise my children beyond racism. This choice to join the African diaspora had left a gulf of great sadness between my mother and I, that is relieved only temporarily by intermittent visits.

After an hour of driving, we cross the Keiskamma River and see the sign for the Keiskamma Art Project. We turn off the highway towards Hamburg onto a weathed, rural road, and for another hour we slowly negotiate the pot holes typical of many back country roads in South Africa. Occasionally, we pass a donkey cart carrying fire wood or passengers, or a herd of long-horned cattle that wander, grazing at will. Transport here is scarce, and people walk along the roads. Sometimes we slow almost to a crawl as our vehicle bottoms out over deep ruts. A boy sitting on top of an anthill waves at us as we drive by. He is minding his family’s Nguni cattle, just as many generations of his forefathers have done before him. Here, cows represent wealth and form an integral part of the economy, providing milk, meat, skins, and the traditional bride price, called lobola, although in more urban parts of the country this tradition is now dying away (interview with Eugene Xaba, July, 2013).
Along the roadside, flocks of goats browse, balanced on hind legs, as they reach up toward the acacia trees. Somehow their dexterous tongues avoid the long bleached thorns as they pluck off the leaves. In the shade of one of these trees, a grandmother stands smoking her traditional pipe while talking to another woman who braces herself and then hefts a heavy bundle of firewood onto her head and starts to walk along the road. I reflect that in some ways, life here has hardly changed in the 25 years I have been gone. As a child, I had often hiked in rural areas with my father, and the colors, smells, and sounds of such scenery remained imbedded in my visceral memory.

We pass clusters of homesteads painted in cheerful colors: cerise, jade, lilac, apricot. Pumpkins dry on tin roofs, while tires and rocks hold the sheets of metal roofing down against wind and rain. In the neatly swept yards, pigs and chickens scratch amongst the straggling legumes.

Plate 3: Detail from the *Keiskamma Tapestry*. Traditional domestic life in Hamburg, depicting cattle, crops, homesteads, and women fetching water.

As we drive, I notice the massive candelabra aloes and the thousands of anthills that dot the countryside. We pass the occasional *bouma* or *kraal* (see plate 3), an
enclosure made of thorn branches and woven sticks in which to keep the cattle safe overnight. There are still leopards in Southern Africa, and cattle are also susceptible to being stolen.

As we round a corner, a wide flood plain lies below us where the wetlands of the Keiskamma River broaden out into a lagoon. In the distance, beyond the massive sand dunes, lies the restless Indian Ocean. The sound of its relentless pounding carries across the estuary towards us.

Hamburg comes into view at the end of the road. A cluster of homes, some older holiday cottages, a few run-down municipal buildings, a community hall, a school, a store, and a liquor outlet huddle up against the back of the dunes that protect it from high winds off the sea. A hand painted sign welcomes us as we drive slowly through the village to the town square. Here there is a playground, and children bump up and down on a see-saw (teeter-totter) and whirl around on a brightly colored metal wheel. Cattle chew their cud and fertilize the grass with their dung. Under the spreading fig trees, women sell vegetables to passersby on an upturned box—a handful of tomatoes, some avocados, or a pineapple. We park in the shade of a giant coral tree (erythrina lysistemon) with its orange flowers. It is also known as the lucky bean tree, thought by some in this area to bring good luck to the wearer of a bracelet or necklace made from its seeds.

In my research, however, I have learned that this area has not had much luck historically. This area has had to face many challenges that constitute the underlying tension within which any transformation might have occurred. The beauty of this landscape is a paradoxical counterpoint to the hard lives people have here.

Historically, ownership of the land between the Great Fish River and the
Keiskamma River has been contested between several groups: the Khoikhoi, the Griqua, a Xhosa tribe known as the Mfengu, the British and German settlers, and the Dutch trekker farmers (Boers), although, unlike other areas of the country, not many Dutch settlers claimed land here (Schwar & Pape, 1958, pp. 38–48). It was the English and German settlers who tried to farm the area, who struggled to make a living from maize, millet, and wool, while indigenous peoples moved cattle across the grasslands. Vernon (1998) says the largest contingent of non-Europeans who arrived here were “Xhosa speakers . . . from the Pato group (chief Phato) of the AmaGqunukwebe, who lived in the coastal area between the Keiskamma and the Chalumna Rivers about 40 kms South East of East London” (p. 47). I have seen online images of the frontier wars portrayed by the women of Hamburg in their tapestries (Keiskamma Trust, n.d.).

Plate 4: Detail from the *Keiskamma Tapestry*. The Frontier Wars between the British redcoats and the Xhosa.

Bloody battles raged back and forth here (see plate 4) with scorched earth tactics, and cattle raids contributing to the complicated, fragile politics of this area (Lakeman,
During the hundred years between 1779 and 1879, nine Frontier Wars were fought between the Xhosa and the Cape Colonists. This history forms part of the visual narratives now sewn by the women.

The century following the Cape Frontier Wars saw the development of small urban areas. These communities serviced the low-yielding farmland. The economic history of the area has, however, been traditionally one of alternative boom and bust. Vernon (1998) explains that this gave rise to a nervous and conservative population. She says:

This feeling of uncertainty and lack of confidence was particularly evident among the women who were responsible for trying to feed and clothe their families. Black women moving to town found it very difficult to make an adequate living as there were very few work opportunities. (pp. 38–40)

This area provided a hard living for farmers of all ethnicities, especially for women. Vernon (1998) mentions the entrenched patriarchal system under which both Black and White women lived; the legal controls in the marital system; the conservative forces of churches; and the European class system; all of which subordinated women and retarded the growth of feminist consciousness (p. iv). However, Vernon does add (1998) that “although black and white women lived within a strongly patriarchal system and did not have access to the same resources as the men, they were not always victims. Xhosa speaking women in particular initiated profound changes in traditional structures” (p. 3).

In the Hamburg area there has been a long history of self-sufficiency among Xhosa women who have often had to take full responsibility for their families and so have not been dependent on men as much as other cultural groups in the country.
(Hetherington, 1993, pp. 242–245), although Cheryl Walker (1990) has pointed out that there are still some “issues of sexuality, patriarchal relations within the family, and the control of female fertility which need to be addressed” (p. 4) for Xhosa women to obtain further empowerment. She explains that traditionally many women in South Africa could be extremely conservative in defense of the status quo, but that they could also become agents of rebellion and change. The role of women in this area is an important and complex one, as many of the men, who were once warriors and cattle raisers, have now left for the city, or have passed away through HIV/AIDS.

As I settle into Hamburg, I bear in mind that as I try to investigate transformation, I need to understand what has changed here. In many ways, it is the role of women and men in the community that has changed over time, due to complex historical, economic, and health factors.

The women of South Africa have had to face many challenges, including the Roman Dutch legal framework adopted by the colony, where all women were “married within community of property by which the wife was reduced to the legal position of a minor, and the husband had complete power over their common assets. The father was the sole guardian of the children . . . and should a marriage be unhappy, a wife had no means of escape if the husband did not wish her to leave” (Vicinus, 1972, pp. 1–4).

Xhosa women face a legacy of ethnic as well as legal patriarchy. Vernon (1998) cites Molema who suggests that in traditional Xhosa society in the rural areas control centered around the male chief, with male petty chiefs under him, with the father the head of the family unit. The traditional Xhosa family unit is described by Soga (1932) as being polygamous, with the father arranging the marriage of his daughter and the prospective
husband paying *lobola* or bride-price for several wives, usually a number of cattle for each wife, as agreed upon by her family (p. 265). Today, Black women can still be “traded” by their father in return for livestock, while at the same time, she must still often carry the major economic burden of the family, often single parenting while the husband is absent from the rural family unit, in order to find work in the city.

I notice some significant changes since I have been away from South Africa. For example, changes in traditional Xhosa family life include the movement away from the *lobola* practice and extended units (polygamous marriages with multiple families living together) towards single-parent families, mainly with single women and their children, or grandmothers raising their grandchildren. One website ascribes these changes in contemporary family life to a number of influences, including HIV/AIDS, poverty, urbanization, and the aftermath of the migrant labor laws of apartheid South Africa (South Africa: Family life, n.d.).

I also notice that racial relationships have improved and that in Hamburg, people of all ethnic origin live side by side. Historically, Black and White women traditionally only met, if at all, through domestic interaction, with the Black woman often serving the White woman’s household. These old hierarchies of class, ethnicity, and gender have resulted in the feminization of poverty, as mentioned by Chant (2007), whereby Black women tend to carry an increasing burden as they tend to head up more households alone. Sewpaul states that

as a result of centuries of discrimination Black women in rural areas are often the poorest in the world with decreased access to markets, credit, land, health and education (quoted in Paton, 2013, p. 66).
Women of all colors and class have experienced some measure of discrimination in South Africa, due to conservative, patriarchal views, but there is no doubt that Black women have had the hardest time. The intersecting repressions in South Africa have led to an interesting phenomenon, however, whereby many White women have reached out to Black women of all classes. Vernon (1998) mentions that as early as 1914 “a relatively small, well-off middle class had been established in the white group, and it was from this group that women who worked for change were drawn” (p. 211). This tradition continued in South Africa with the founding in 1955 of the Black Sash Movement, a nonviolent, White women's resistance organization that provided widespread and visible proof of White resistance to the apartheid system (Black Sash, n.d.). Vernon’s conclusion (1998), based on her case study of East London, suggests that White women in South Africa “have played a major role in developing areas of common concern between women of different races, in making contact with black women as individuals, and in creating a fund of good will on both sides of the colour line” (p. 221). I notice that in Hamburg this tradition continues, with many White, middle-class women offering their time and mentorship to the community and driving the creativity of the art projects.

Despite this helpful connection, I notice that rural South African women face further challenges over and above their more urban sisters. Sewpaul (2008), for example, mentions tribal conflict, corruption, debt repayments, floods and droughts, deforestation, climate change, malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, poverty, and insecurity of food, fuel, and water (p. 44). These issues exacerbate tensions across race and class lines. Professor Arthur Webb has posed the question of what has allowed South Africa to survive in recent years without racial conflict. Webb (1992) suggests “it must lie in the past, where
there was co-operation and exchange of ideas and culture across the color line, where good will was created” (p. 7).

5.2 The researcher’s experience

It is my first day in Hamburg. There are several options for accommodation available here as visitors are a welcome part of the meager tourism trade. There have been several outsider researchers here before me, such as New Zealander James McKibbin (2012) who researched Hamburg’s economic development, Turkish-American Ozge Tuncalp who conducted research on Hamburg’s public health (Current students, n.d.), and South African Brenda Schmamann, who compared the Bayeux and Keiskamma tapestries (http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bloomsbury). People in the village are used to researchers coming and going. Carol has informed me in her emails that one of the Keiskamma Trust’s outreach policies is to encourage this exchange.

I have chosen shared accommodations in a backpacker’s hostel so that I can get to know other people, including two other researchers already here. They are of Indian and Black Surinamese origin and are attending a Dutch university where they are doing their Masters in Public Health. They are looking at the high incidence of fatalities in the area amongst pregnant women. The community of Hamburg has reached out to the rest of the globe in many ways, including through research opportunities. This is indicative of their tolerance and openness to visitors, which in turn may fuel the community’s ongoing transformations.

As I sit and drink a coffee on my first evening, I wonder where to start with my explorations. I decide to try and find Carol first thing in the morning. I try to orient myself. Below me is the water of the lagoon, edged with tall, plumed grasses. There is a
flush of red on the banks of the wetlands—a short waxy plant that grows copiously here. The plains stretch out on either side of the river, and the evening light is golden. It is winter, and I can smell the wood smoke from people’s cooking fires. I can hear the sea that is thundering just beyond the sand dunes. A fish eagle calls from the tall euphorbias that cling to the cliffs. Certainly one of the major resources in this community is its natural beauty, which has inspired some of the women’s art that I have seen online and which depicts the local fauna and flora in richly colored, two-dimensional shapes. The natural beauty is celebrated visually here.

The next morning I head out for a day of research. I skirt the long grass as this is cattle country and I want to avoid getting tick bite fever, an unpleasant rite of passage for most visitors to Africa in winter. Instead of following the grassy paths, I walk along the banks of the lagoon to the village where I find the building I am seeking—an old house covered in artwork—mosaic patterns in boldly colored geometric shapes, the looped symbol for HIV, and a rising sun. One wall depicts a large “tree of life”, shaped like a woman with a big heart.

This is Umtha Welanga, Hamburg’s clinic. It is the workplace of Carol Baker-Hofmeyr and her team of village health workers. I have learned from my research that it has been the center of the community’s battle with the HIV pandemic. Into this struggle have come two very strong outsider medicines—antiretrovirals and art—both of which were introduced by Carol, with her dual approach to health, to treat both the physical and the emotional aspects of her patients (Baker, 2008).

After apartheid (a word meaning “the state of being apart”; see Clark & Worger, 2013, ch. 3) ended in 1994, the HIV virus spread rapidly through the country due to some
tragic misunderstandings by the new fledgling independent government. From listening to the women’s stories on YouTube, I gather that everyone in the village is somehow touched by this pandemic—either personally infected or severely affected by the loss of family members and support systems. I notice the absence of strong, young people. I have learned that most residents who remain here are grandmothers (see plate 5), and they are raising their orphaned grandchildren alone. I understand from studying the artwork on the Trust’s website (Keiskamma Trust, n.d.) that, like many other villages in the country, Hamburg has experienced loss, grief, and fear on a tremendous scale. Yet, it is also a community that I suspect has experienced some very positive changes, which might count as transformations.

Plate 5: Detail from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting a memorial service with grieving relatives.
5.3 The Keiskamma Art Project

Schmamann says it was Carol who “recognized the potential for an art initiative as a tool to foster health, hope and self respect amongst local people with the purpose of generating regular income” and that Carol, who was “struck by the scope of poverty and the plight of women unable to support their children” (quoted in Paton, 2013, p. 70), initiated the first visual art project in Hamburg with a 130 women—a large 14 by 22 feet tapestry inspired by the subject matter and structure of the Issenheim Altarpiece. The Keiskamma Altarpiece also opens out like a book to reveal three layers of sewn images (see plates 6, 7, 8).

Plate 6: The Keiskamma Altarpiece, 14 x 22 feet. The front panels depict orphans with grandmothers. The bottom panel depicts the many burials.
Plate 7: *The Keiskamma Altarpiece*, middle panels. An idyllic Hamburg before HIV, including the Dune Runner, dancing his art in the sand.

Plate 8: *The Keiskamma Altarpiece*, third panels, depicting those who have survived and a vision of a new Hamburg.
These three layers tell the story of the village’s suffering but also of their survival and dreams. Baker and the local artists have subsequently coproduced many such tapestries that now appear in public places, such as the Houses of Parliament, and Rhodes University. I understand from the videos I have seen that the art process has played a big part in the positive changes. By fabricating together, and being educated together, a dialogue has grown out of the images. By sharing the work both nationally and internationally, the art seems to have provided, not only an identity and pride, but a feasible business.

Provencal and Gabora (2007) suggest that there is “convincing evidence of the relationship between the creation of art and the therapeutic transformation of the self.” They note that art “can help painful memories to surface to a place where they can be faced and released” (p. 256). They refer to the film, Art Has Many Faces, which states there is a “magic power of the image” that serves to reaffirm the age old saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words” (quoted in Provencal & Gabora, 2007, p. 255). But as we have seen in the section on silencing and transformation, I am aware that a picture sometimes expresses those things for which there simply are no words.

Provencal and Gabora (2007) suggest that the power of images lies in their ability to “access places that talk cannot reach” (p. 255). I look forward to asking the artists if they too feel their images have helped them enter a once-silenced discourse. But I know this will take time and trust.

At the clinic, I am told that Carol is out of town for a few weeks. I am disappointed although I understand. She has been the only general medical practitioner in this region for more than a decade, as well as the director of the Keiskamma Trust, the
umbrella organization that funds the Art Project as well as health, educational, and environmental initiatives in the village.

The new director of the Keiskamma Trust, Thabang Meslane, tells me Carol has recently stepped down both as the village GP and as the Director of the Keiskamma Trust. The community is very anxious and sad about this. He says Carol is much loved and trusted here, and it is hard to find a GP who is prepared to work in such an isolated place with no medical services to support her (field notes, July 2012). As we talk, I notice the colorful tapestry that hangs on the wall behind Thabang, a conceptualized city made by the Art Project, with taxis, buses, and roads connecting the town to a rural landscape, which is full of wild animals. I notice how the art piece reflects a major concern here that transport is hard to find, especially for the sick needing to get to hospital.

I ask Thabang to tell me more about the Art Project. He tells me the embroiderers, who execute the sewing of the tapestries, are not the same women as the artists—those who design the work. These are two separate jobs. He invites me to join the artists in a workshop. A teacher, Marialda Marais, has come from the University of Johannesburg to help the artists prepare work for an exhibition. Marialda has volunteered her vacations for 12 years to help develop art skills in the village.

I readily accept the invitation to join the artists and go upstairs. I introduce myself and explain why I am here—to see for myself the impact of art-making on their village. They listen quietly and make space for me at the table. Someone passes me a pencil with the traditional hand gesture of the left hand to the right inner elbow. I am aware that these traditional gestures reflect the polite, older ways of the village.

I learn that the group known as ‘the artists’ comprise of some of the young people
in the village who have proven to be creative, and have been sponsored by the Trust to attend art college in East London. They have visited other local cities, such as Grahamstown, during arts festivals, and have travelled overseas with their exhibitions. I learn from Marialda that many women from outside the village have come to teach a variety of classes to the artists, including stitching, ceramics, felting, printmaking, papermaking, bookbinding, mosaics, and bead and wirework.

Marialda explains to me that in this particular workshop the artists are developing images for an upcoming group exhibition that Carol is organizing about village life. I am immediately engaged by the drawings, which are powerful, simple, and flattened into two dimensions, in preparation for the application of torn-paper collage on top. As I sit with the artists and work on my own drawing of a cow, I recognize some members of the group from YouTube videos. I notice I feel tired and have some uncertainty of my own. My focus is external, on my surroundings, and I am unable to access my internal creativity in this moment, although my hand can make drawing gestures. I hope that over the months, I will become more comfortable and that some of these artists will be comfortable enough with me to talk to me about what they have learned through making their art. I notice the artists are engrossed in their own work, their pencils moving easily across sheets of brown paper. They refer visually to photos that have been taken in the village—local people with their Nguni cattle and their goats.

As I sit and watch the artists, I try to breath, relax, and contact my own creativity, which seems to be hard for me to access in this strange, new environment, and after months of academic preparation. I realize there will be many challenges ahead in trying to discover what this group of artists and their particular community may have learned
through their art-making. On the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* I have seen the images of a utopian village where there is no HIV in the village and no landscape degradation and where wildlife and food are abundant. I wonder if this is a vision from the past or a vision for the future. I have sensed from a distance that this community has experienced transformation on several different levels. But for many reasons, empirical answers to questions may remain unattainable. I anticipate that some of what may have been learned here will remain unarticulated to me, as there may be many barriers, including language and conventional manners. With some residents being nonreading and nonwriting too, data collection will be verbal responses rather than written. I understand that the residents of Hamburg may prefer to maintain silence for many reasons, either out of politeness, respect, or mistrust, or because they have not articulated these things for themselves. This first moment of drawing together as artists sensitizes me to how important making art together will be for this study.

I recognize that art-learning can happen in several ways without the artist knowing how, why, or even what they are learning. Mezirow and associates (2000/2010) mention four ways in which learning can occur. It “may be intentional; the result of deliberate inquiry; incidental; or a by-product of another activity involving intentional learning; or mindlessly assimilative. Aspects of both intentional and incidental learning take place outside learner awareness” (p. 5). This will apply to the artists of Hamburg as well as to myself as the researcher. The artists and I will learn both intentionally and incidentally, and much will remain unlearned and unarticulated. Although art-learning can lie in between knowing and naming, I am hoping for some self-reporting on
transformative changes, but this data may rather be reflected in the objects and activities associated with the art. O’Sullivan et al. (2002) state that

We do not insist on the primacy of reason or of articulation for transformative learning. We understand that crucial learning often takes place nonverbally, in the inarticulate dimensions of our bodies. . . . No need to pin a name on every experience. (p. xvii)

As change can be experienced as uncertain and sporadic, it is probably best understood after the fact—through the possible distortion of memory, and perhaps, inadvertently redefined retrospectively, in order to add new meanings. I understand that stories of meaningful change offered me may be constructed through the filters of idiosyncratic rememberings, born out of particular locations in time, space, and circumstance, and which do not constitute universal truths (see Hesse-Biber, 2007a). I understand that my own story of the research journey may be subject to reconstructions after the fact due to memory filters. I decide therefore to write field notes every night in order to prevent this as much as possible. Photographs and drawings will also provide some memory stability for me.

I continue to meet, observe, and draw with the artists for the week of their workshop with Marialda. As the artists’ images emerge, I see how their work reflects the local values and traditional cultural lifestyle, with cattle and goats being the central icon. The portraits are mostly of women who wear the traditional headscarves and aprons made from Shweshwe, a favorite fabric here with small, white geometric designs. As we work, Marialda explains that the artists will later turn their pencil sketches into collages (see
plate 9). These collages will then act as designs for appliques, which will be quilted or stitched (see plate 10) by the embroiderers.

Plate 9: Example of collaged art work made in the art project workshop.

Plate 10: Collaged artwork is interpreted through embroidered applique.
The artists’ collages comprise mostly torn, black paper glued onto a brown card background, with red, blue, green, and ochre highlights. As the day comes to an end, Marialda coaxes the artists to take more risks, knowing that the group is moving towards an exhibition of drawings, collages, and fabric designs. She suggests that they work more “vigorously” (field notes, July 2012) when tearing the paper; that the artists trust in the beauty of the torn line, which, she suggests, is as beautiful as the straight line made by pencils. The newly introduced medium of torn paper has resulted in a tentative approach to exploration. Marialda reassures the artists that “by its nature, collage is a simplification of shapes. Paper allows itself to be torn. Work with each material and its nature. Quick, quick! Tear and get a ragged edge. Bring the main color into one positive shape and one negative shape. Use one color, and add black and white, and stick it onto the brown paper underneath” (field notes, 2012).

“I have magic hands,” comments one artist.

“I don’t agree,” responds Marielda in her warm, cajoling manner. “More important is the magic in your eyes. The hands are the servants of the eyes and the brain. The hand must do what it is told.” The artists laugh.

One artist begins to sing quietly. Song is a primary art form in Xhosa society that requires and reflects community through its polyphonic choral layers (see Dargie, 1988; interview with Alfred Ndodlo, July, 2012). Visual art, such as collage and embroidery, is a newer form of introduced voice here. The song being sung reflects the image the artist is drawing—it is a song about cows. Soon, the whole group is singing, participating in an indigenous art form that comes naturally, while concentrating hard on the imported art form, which seems to require a lot of dedicated focus. As a researcher, an interesting
challenge will be to discern the balance and complement between transformation from within the community and transformation brought to the community through Carol and others.

5.4 Silencing in South Africa

As I listen to the singing voices, I mull over what actually constitutes voice, which, it has been noted, is according to feminism one of the most empowering elements of transformation (Hesse-Biber, 2007b; Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010), although not valued in male literature. Recent history in South Africa offers many reasons why artists may experience a tentativeness to voice.

The most profound silencing in South Africa was, of course, the denial of the Black majority their vote. Having no vote means having no voice means having no power in any country, institution, or household.

As early as 1953, Alan Paton, one of the most prominent White, male authors in South Africa, described the capacity of South African culture to mute its citizens. He says, “there is a strange power between people, which makes quite ordinary things impossible to speak of. . . . And because of that power I was silent” (p. 2).

Historically, the suppression of expression ran wider than disenfranchisement. Books were also targeted. Publications imported into South Africa from other countries were banned (see Jacobsen, 1974). Voices from outside were not allowed in, and voices from inside were not allowed out.

The capacity of the creative voice to empower individuals and transform cultures was clearly recognized early by those in power. Artists were heavily targeted. This sector
of society specifically hones their voice in order to destabilize dominant memes. Playwright Athol Fugard, writer and Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer, singer Miriam Makeba and many visual artists (see Williamson, 2004) were banned in an attempt to censor their powerful voices.

This silencing of voices affected everyone from the most vulnerable sectors of society here, such as Black women (see List of women assassinated/executed, n.d.), to Black students such as Steve Biko, who died of suspicious head injuries while in detention (Stephen Bantu Biko, n.d.). His book, ironically called *I Write What I Like* (1987), was only published after his death. Whites were also affected. Neil Aggett, a medical doctor and trade union organizer, also died whilst in police custody after being tortured (see McRae, 2013). Death, is of course, the ultimate silencer, where the political and personal merge in the deceased human body. Many died in South Africa for using their voices.

Although South Africans were officially given back their voices in 1996 when the new constitution came into effect, citizens are still silenced today. The South African constitution now defines and protects freedom of expression specifically as the following: freedom of the press, freedom to impart information and ideas, freedom of artistic creativity, academic freedom and freedom of scientific research, unless any of these activities instigate violence, hatred or war (see Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) are not protected. Voicing in South Africa however, can still be fatal. News24 (2013) reports that 932 people died in police custody in 2011 alone. Freedom of expression for women and LGBT’s is very limited, and creativity is still contested today, especially when involving criticism of President Zuma (Foster, 2012). The human rights
issue of political voice is still in jeopardy today, as illustrated by the silencing of questions from the opposition by the police during the opening of parliament in February 2015 (York, 2015).

Although the arts can impart powerful embodied competencies, especially in situations where one group might attempt to “de-voice” another as a form of discourse control, as I work with the artists in Hamburg I am aware that they may have experienced many forms of de-voicing, including racial, gendered, and socioeconomic silencing. However, the biggest form of silencing here may be around the notion of taboo—the pressure to remain undisclosed about one’s health status, specifically of being HIV positive. I decide to research this topic in further detail as and when I have internet access. At the same time, I decide to do some further self-reflection in the evenings, to take a closer look at how I too, might have experienced de-voicing, in order to better understand this community.

Voice, as I understand it, is more than just noise shaped into words. The strange play of silence within a field of power draws me towards an examination of it within myself. I recognize that I, too, have sometimes chosen safety, or acceptance, over the risk of voicing. These contexts have ranged from familial, to social, to cultural and institutional environments, more so when I was young and less aware of my cultural, racial, economic and gendered conditioning.

In my own experience, being silent at times has usually been due to being raised in a society that espoused the Edwardian value that children, especially girls, should be seen and not heard. But silence later also constituted a measure of taboo, for example, around my history with depression. Silence has sometimes been based on fears—
sometimes real, sometimes illusory—mostly of loss, such as relationship, community, or, on occasion, even life during the apartheid years. It is vulnerability that can remove voices. As a young adult artist I learned that speech was not free. Voice and the power it brings can cost the voicer something of great value, their life.

In the 1970s and 1980s, many South African conscientious objectors had to leave their country in order to feel safe enough to voice. But the reach of the security police was never to be underestimated. During a short term of volunteer work for the anti-apartheid movement in Edinburgh, I was asked to write a play about Mandela’s life in order to raise his profile in Europe while he was in prison. In order to learn details about his life, I had to acquire material that was banned in South Africa. We were advised by the anti-apartheid leadership to rehearse the play in secret, and when we walked through Edinburgh as a group, we were advised to move individually for our own safety. During anti-apartheid rallies, we were advised to stand back from the sidewalks, as photographs taken by onlookers could be used by the South African security police to identify us. I knew that the security police had been given wide powers (Nelson Mandela Foundation, n.d.). For example, almost 3,000 students had been inducted onto university campuses to assist the police in acquiring information during the late 1980s (South African police, n.d.), which meant a level of fear and mistrust between us all. Evidence of the extreme powers given the Security Police at the time is available in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report, vol. 6, p. 7, article 25 (The former South African government, n.d.). Human rights infractions for those who resisted silence included abductions, body mutilations, intimidations, assault, torture, and killings.
My final act of self-silencing was to leave the country. In June of 1986, a car bomb exploded outside a pub within hours of my having left it, killing three people and injuring 69 (Magoo’s bar is bombed, 1986), and rather than risk any further voicing, I chose to immigrate. I recognize the ability to leave the country as having been one of my greatest privileges as a White person.

The tension between my fear of voicing and my inability to tolerate silence resulted in my removing myself from an intolerable situation. This conundrum, of being unsafe either way, resonates with me as a marker of any struggle against disempowering dominant discourse. People choose silence in order to stay safe. But as feminist Audre Lorde (1984) reminds women in particular, “your silence will not protect you” (p. 40).

With this self-reflection I find a new empathy for the artists, one of whom is making a tapestry about the late Steve Biko. It is evident that this image-celebration of a martyred dissident could not have been produced publically when I was a student, and I recognize that there is some measure of safety now around visual voicing.

As my first week in Hamburg turns into another week, I am beginning to hear stories from the villagers. I understand that the community has experienced some major shifts, particularly in their health and in their losses through death. I understand that for any who transition into a new context, there is a period of vulnerability as the old context, meanings, and identities pass away. Losses are grieved in the gap between old and new while the new has not as yet had time to emerge into new meaning. There is a lack of congruency between interior and exterior circumstances as people immigrate into new territory, whether emotional or geographic. According to some, this period of immigration can be experienced as stress, numbness, or depression for the transitioning
person (Ali, 2002; Bhugra, 2003; Harlem Brundtland, 2000; Kandula, Kersey, & Lurie, 2004; Kirmayer, Weinfeld, Burgos et al., 2007; Lupick, 2009; Miszkurka, Goulet, & Zunzunegui, 2010; Pottie, Greenaway, Freightner, et al., 2011; Smith, Matheson, Moineddin, et al., 2007).

Art-making has always helped me the most during any period of transition. I suspect the art projects have supported Hamburg in the same way, as I look at the raw emotions expressed in some of the tapestries (see the Hamburg Guernica, (Keiskamma Trust, n.d.).

The capacity to release emotion and develop a new self, with new meanings, within changing contexts, is considered an adaptive asset, and as a strategy, this skill greatly aids survival in times of transition. Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl (2006), for example, describes this capacity to adapt and find new meaning as “becoming aware of a possibility against the background of reality, or, to express it in plain words, to become aware of what can be done about a given situation” (p. 144). I see evidence of this capacity to envision a possible Hamburg in the Keiskamma Altarpiece with its utopian images of a Hamburg without AIDS.

As a South African feminist concerned with issues of power abuse; as a Canadian educator concerned with issues of optimal health, engagement, and transformation; as a global citizen concerned with issues of freedom of speech; and as an artist concerned with creative expression; I am interested in the politics of representation. This includes voice—who gets a say and who doesn’t; who gets to speak for whom; and who has to remain silent and why. I am interested in how some discourses flourish and others do not.
With a transformative constitution, freedom of expression should be flourishing in the new South Africa.

However, as I do my research in the evenings on current culture, I notice that in some ways the pervasive culture of silencing continues today. The State Secrets Bill (Malala, 2011), for example, was recently passed, curtailing the media’s freedoms once again. The Human Rights Watch (Smith, 2011) in New York described the passing of this bill as “a blow to freedom of expression and democratic accountability.”

With this new legislation, artists and journalists in South Africa are again concerned about the disempowerment that accompanies “legal” silencing. Nobel laureate and writer, Nadine Gordimer (2011), who had three of her books banned during apartheid, found herself recently fighting for freedom of expression again. In a letter to the Guardian, she states:

Workers in all literary modes will be subject to the bill through our fictional characters’ actions and opinions, alive in our books, the dialogue in theatre, the inference of images, even abstract, in painting—all that makes the arts a force in human consciousness. . . . It seems we in South Africa are going Backward To The Future. I sign off with a quotation from Edward Said, “Who is to uncover and . . . defeat the imposed silence and normalised quiet of power?

In another Guardian article, Gordimer (2010) suggests that “in a world in which the government decides what can be published, what material threatens the national interest, writers have to take sides; they are forced to become political.” Gordimer adds at the end of her interview: “I must be careful of what I say. There is a great deal of corruption in high places.” I notice while I am in the country that many feel silenced due
to a lack of trust in leadership that is self-serving and autocratic. The notion of voice in South Africa may constitutionally be a human right, but in reality, it is not yet achieved, especially for artists (see Smith, 2012).

For women, too, voice is not yet an inherent right. Sandra Harding (2007) notes that freedom of speech has traditionally been a male freedom: “Aristotle . . . says that what’s distinctive about man is that he’s a political animal—he constructs his way of life through public discourse. . . . And yet women have been excluded from participation in the public realm. . . . Woman have not been permitted public speech” (p. 9). I notice that although there are more women in political office in South Africa today than ever before, this comment still rings true. Voice in South Africa has been given back to the people in name only.

I have come to Hamburg to observe how the fear of breaking silence has been overcome through art. If I am to fully come to terms with the questions of how some people transform themselves through engaging in stigmatized discourse, I need to first understand the depth of silencing, particularly around being HIV positive. I need to understand the depth of transformation required to overcome the shame of taboo.

The concept of shame is powerful in South Africa. Historically, the word itself has been used ubiquitously. For example, one can appropriately exclaim “shame” when one is pleased or moved by something, like the sight of a child; or when one notices that another person has been hurt. The word “shame” is used colloquially and variously to denote pleasure, empathy, sympathy, and horror. It can also simply mean shame.

Historically, people in South Africa could be silenced by shame and its attendant fear, that of social isolation. Richardson (2007), for example, recounts a story by Paton,
in which a White, married police lieutenant, Pieter, submits to his desire for a young Black woman, thereby violating the *apartheid* Immorality Act (Immorality act, n.d.). In this story, the resulting shame of interracial relations silences an entire family.

I notice that silence in South Africa is now not only racial and gendered, but it is also economic. In a county where between 25 and 50 percent of people are unemployed (South Africa: Unemployment, n.d.), dissenting or sick workers can be afraid to complain or disclose their health status as they can easily be replaced by others (Index Mundi, n.d.). Most insidiously, however, I find that silence is now also a religiocultural practice, specifically around certain issues, such as sex and sex education (see Ahmed et al., 2009) and sexually transmitted illness. This multilayered, multicultural silencing produces a disempowering lack of discourse, especially around HIV/AIDS.

The silence practiced in South Africa around HIV/AIDS is particularly noteworthy because it may be the most dangerous silence of all in a country with the fastest growing AIDS pandemic in the world, where approximately six million people are estimated to be infected. According to Schmamann, South Africa has the greatest number of people living with HIV (cited by Paton, 2013, p. 68). A 2010 statistic estimates that 30 percent of all pregnant women in South Africa are living with HIV (HIV and AIDS in South Africa, 2011).

One of the results of this tragic situation is a large number of children living with HIV/AIDS and children left without parents. These children are known as AIDS orphans and are often responsible for child-headed households (see plate 15). Katherine Hall of The Children’s Institute, University of Cape Town, says according to the Actuarial Society of South Africa, more than 3.4 million children under the age of 18 lost either a
mother or a father or both parents by 2008 (Stuijt, 2009), at the height of the pandemic.

One of the major reasons for the spread of the virus at such an alarming rate is the silence that surrounds it and the resulting ignorance concerning its spread. In my research, I find that although there are now some educational programs focused on HIV/AIDS in the country, cultural silencing around this difficult topic ranges in degree from area to area, family to family, and person to person. There are also many myths surrounding the virus. Some of the comments captured in an anonymous questionnaire, and offered to me in an interview with Susie McClure (2014), director of Skills for Life, a privately owned organization that specializes in delivering adult learning modules to employers to equip their workers to meet new challenges, including HIV/AIDS, revealed the following ideas: “It’s something for old people, not under age of fifteen years;” “HIV and AIDS is a normal disease, because if you use treatment, it’s not easy to die;” “HIV is a disease that can spread by eating with the same spoon without washing it;” “I don’t think it’s good to work with a person who is affected by HIV because he/she can spread it to the whole company;” “HIV is curable because a sangoma (traditional healer) said he has proof that he cured his aunt;” “She has no idea how her daughter got infected because she was a Christian;” “HIV does not exist in our neighbors, it is only in the city, not in our community;” “The only way to get over it is to pray, and eat treatment;” “It’s something that helps to control population.”

Some feminist scholars have focused on silencing through shame and stigma. Seu (2010) says shame is a woman’s existential experience of being in a male dominated society, and suggests:
silence is precisely what makes shameful experiences so powerful and never ending. Because the telling of the experience exposes the subject to yet more shame, silence might be used as a defense, thus inadvertently confirming and perpetuating the negative self-attribution. . . . Shame makes people withdraw into self protective silence. The shameful woman, desperately longing for acceptance, fears that the listener will confirm what she expects: that the shameful experience is a reflection of her failing, inadequate self. Silence might therefore be safer. Breaking the silence in a reparative way, then, is particularly crucial. . . . Shame appeared to be an invisible force that held women back and silently tortured them.

(p. 258)

Having one’s health status silenced through shame can be a gendered, racial, and economic disempowerment, that leads to lack of diagnosis, inadequate testing or medical care, and ultimately can lead to death. However, declaring one’s status openly means being seen and heard in a ‘negative’ light, and brings with it intolerable fears of isolation. Cutler, in his book with the Dalai Lama (1998), for example, says Erich Fromm claimed that humankind’s most basic fear is the threat of being separated from other humans, perhaps worse than death. According to Cutler, British psychoanalyst John Bowlby also claimed that separation and interpersonal loss are at the very root of the human experience of fear, sadness, and sorrow.

Given that researchers in the field of human relationships agree that intimacy is central to our existence, perhaps communal art-making helps maintain a certain level of intimacy through its ability to disclose the most personal issues, and yet at the same time, an unsigned work, or a group work, can maintain a certain level of anonymity when
displayed, as audiences do not know who did which “part” of the visual narrative or who is implicated by the narrative. Dan McAdams suggests that “the desire for intimacy is the desire to share one’s innermost self with another” (as quoted in Cutler & Dalai Lama, 1998, p. 62), even the most stigmatized part. Perhaps group art-making about HIV/AIDS is a way to share “innermost selves” safely, as the shared group identity reduces the risk of losing individual relationships.

Art can transform levels of intimacy, defined by Malone and Malone as “the experience of connectivity” (as quoted in Cutler, 1998, p. 63). A deeper level of existential authenticity be reached through the images of a new, positive identity. At the clinic in Hamburg, I notice that there is a proudly displayed mosaic of the HIV/AIDS icon on a wall of the building. It is not unlike the koeksister in shape, or a partial lemniscate. Perhaps because of the art culture in the village, and AIDS now having a visual icon, being positive is now easier to talk about than it once was. There is less misinformation now in South Africa than there once was, due to the efforts of various private people such as Baker-Hofmeyr and Mangwane, companies such as Skills for Life, and various government education programs. This new “open” outlook in Hamburg contrasts strongly with other villages, however, where, at its most extreme, silencing in South Africa still includes a complete denial of the existence of HIV/AIDS. This is known as AIDS denialism. Seth Kalichman (2009), editor of the journal AIDS and Behavior, suggests in his book that denialism is a coping strategy and can be evidence of paranoia (amongst other things).

Canadian filmmaker Brent Leung (2009) takes a look at the latest AIDS research and the widespread phenomenon of AIDS denialism. His documentary “reveals a
research establishment in disarray, and health policy gone tragically off course.” AIDS is viewed differently in different locations, not only amongst Western scientists, but also culturally, amongst those who live with it. “Aids means one thing in Greenwich Village and something very different in Kampala, Uganda” says one interviewee in the Leung movie.

Unfortunately, in South Africa in the 90s and the early 2000s, under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, the government itself practiced an official policy of AIDS denialism. This ignorance led to devastating tragedy. Boseley (2008) states

The AIDS policies of the former South African president Thabo Mbeki’s government were directly responsible for the avoidable deaths of more than a third of a million people in the country, according to research by Harvard university.

As I research more about HIV/AIDS statistics in South Africa, I discover that at the height of the pandemic, in 2005, there were about 900 deaths a day (Chigwedere et al., 2008). Although the misguided and tragic official policy of silence has subsequently been reversed, and antiretroviral medication is now available in South Africa, including in Hamburg, denialism around HIV/AIDS is still in part due to shame and blame. Papart (2010) suggests that in South Africa

the HIV/AIDS pandemic has silenced many people. . . . Gendered discourses blaming women/prostitutes for the epidemic in Africa have fuelled expulsion from families and communities, despite class, ethnicity and race (Win, 2007). Not surprisingly, many African women (and men) deny their HIV/AIDS status. . . .

The evidence suggests that silence and secrecy can be crucial survival strategies,
offering protection and sometimes spaces for renegotiating harmful gender relations and practices. (p. 20)

The medical journal, *The Lancet* (South Africa needs to face the truth, 2005), indicates “social stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, tacitly perpetuated by the government’s reluctance to bring the crisis out in the open and face it head on, prevents many from speaking out about causes of illness and deaths of loved ones, and leads doctors to record uncontroversial diagnoses on death certificates” (p.546). Paton (2013), for example, adds that women in particular may avoid disclosing their HIV positive status “for fear of being ostracized, and fear of suffering retribution from their partners and are frequently unable to insist on the use of a condom without facing the threat of domestic violence” (p. 68). Amnesty International (2008) says rural, Black women who are HIV positive “see themselves at the lowest end of all” (Sewpaul, 2008, p. 45). Paton (2013) concludes that the impact of HIV on rural women, in particular, and their households, is enormous. In contrast to this silencing through shame, the artists in Hamburg have made powerful visual disclosures (such as the *Keiskamma Tapestry*) about their status, and about losing their family members, even though other families within Hamburg are still reluctant to disclose or recognize the cause of death of their loved ones.

Silence and secrecy around HIV and AIDS can also indicate that there are just simply no words to be found, a verbal paralysis, as the imagination struggles to digest the identity of being “positive,” which is construed as being an intensely negative experience, so much so that some people sometimes describe being ill with HIV as being “bewitched” (Paton, 2013, p. 68).

As I research how silencing may occur in Hamburg, I begin to realize that
conditions for silencing in Africa may perhaps be more extreme than on other continents. I discover, for example, that the spread of HIV can sometimes occur under violent, gendered circumstances. Parpart (2010) says:

post apartheid South Africa has one of the highest rape rates in the world (du Toit, 2005). Moreover, the much praised Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the most part ignored evidence of sexual violence (Goldblatt and Meintjes, 1998), and young men continue to believe women out alone after dark are “asking to be raped” (p. 18).

In a country oppressed by intersecting power abuse and therefore multiple layerings of fear, shame, and silencing, HIV/AIDS is often spread through rape. This often means a double shame as the violence adds layers of silencing for women.

Govender (1999) cites Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, who raises the most unspeakable specter of all in South Africa, the taboo within the taboo itself—the high rape rate here of females under the age of eight years of age, including infants. This practice flourishes in silence due to the myth held by some Southern African men that sex with virgins is not only safe sex but actually constitutes a cure for AIDS. It is believed that the younger the rape victim the more chance of a cure from HIV/AIDS.

For victims, words can sometimes fail when faced with such horrors. And when words do fail, inarticulation can become gravely dangerous, with some preferring literally to die rather than speak about their condition. For the victim, this silence is the split between their psyche and an experience so horrific that it cannot be integrated.

Ahmed (2010) says there are political, cultural, and personal layers to the unspeakable. She says it is not simply that you do not speak, but that you have been
barred from participation in a conversation, which, nevertheless, involves you. She
reminds us, however, that silence is not simply a negative response.

Sometimes silence is a strategic response to oppression; one that allows subjects
to persist in their own way; one that acknowledges that, under certain
circumstances, speech may not be empowering, let alone sensible . . . a lack of
trust can be reason not to speak. (p. xvi)

This indicates that silence can protect the self from the other. Silence can act as
the boundary for a safe zone. But silence can also protect the self from acknowledging
the horror. This silencing is not a deliberate act but can be a subconscious protection for
the psyche. Ahmed (2010) says

A secret might be something we keep from ourselves, something that is too hard
or too painful to come to light. When we keep secrets from ourselves we do not
know we have them . . . uneasiness that doesn’t quite surface as attention. (p. xvii)

This kind of silence a form of psychic death in and of itself, which can lead to
physical death. Reversing this kind of silencing is indeed a form of resurrection.

5.5 Hamburg’s experience of the HIV pandemic

Some weeks have passed, making art with the artists; talking to people about
casual things such as their children, their cattle; the drought; and I am again at the health
clinic in Hamburg, hoping to find Carol, to meet with her and discuss the issue of art as
transformative in Hamburg. But she is still away, and I do not feel that I have a
relationship of this nature as yet with the artists, to talk to them about these more personal
things.
I stand around wondering what to do next, and I see a notice board where there are posters and lists for the patients who walk in and out. One poster is a laminated quotation by Nelson Mandela: “We are called to join the war against HIV/AIDS with the same and even greater resolve that we shared in the fight against apartheid. We have to mobilize all of our people, all sectors of society, all our resources, all our energies.” It mentions that a thousand people now die each day.

As I scour the information board for more information on the Art Project, people needing medical treatment pass me in the hall, greeting me with the traditional triple handshake—hand, thumb, hand. In the foyer, village health workers peel vegetables to make food for the children at risk - those orphaned by AIDS, and the “positive” children themselves, who need a nourishing diet in order to prevent weight loss, fatigue, depression, and other symptoms of AIDS (Symptoms of HIV, 2015).

As I walk down the hall to join these health workers, I notice a laminated description of Hamburg’s historical struggle with HIV. It describes how children still die here because they cannot access healthcare, the elderly suffer from treatable conditions, and clinics regularly run out of medicines. The vast majority are unemployed, schools are derelict, and nutritious food is scarce. Into this already impoverished situation entered HIV and AIDS, which has for decades further eroded the hope and strength of a population already devastated by poverty, and the aftermath of the abuses of the apartheid regime. . . . The Keiskamma Trust started an Art Project in 2000 to act as a poverty alleviation programme in the village, and it aimed to connect rich and poor, black and white, educated and disadvantaged, in the hope that experiences could be shared and
thereby more easily born. Spearheaded by Dr. Carol [Baker] Hofmeyer and Eunice Mangwane, who were motivated by their own grief at the relentless deaths occurring in the village, and the resultant disintegration and depression of their community. . . . From these small but courageous beginnings was born the Keiskamma AIDS Treatment Program, which grew to include a residential facility called Umtha Welanga (The sun’s rays at Dawn). . . . The [art] exhibitions bear testimony to this close association.

The Keiskamma Trust’s vision is outlined as “a healthy community in all respects.” The Trust’s mission is described as “fostering hope and offering support for the most vulnerable. We strive to address the challenges of widespread poverty and disease through holistic, creative and practical programs and partnerships.” The Trust’s values are itemized as “respecting human dignity, creativity, caring, honesty, integrity, commitment, confidentiality and transparency” (Field notes, July, 2012).

As I read these posters, I have a growing respect for the work that Carol, Eunice, and the other women here have started through the Keiskamma Trust. I have not spoken to any of these women as yet, as they are very busy, but from my reading I know a little of their story. Schmamann (2010), for example, suggests that Carol started the Art Project to help people “articulate anxieties around the disease that they felt unable to articulate in everyday discourse” (p. 39).

The clinic is a hive of activity. Children push plastic scooters down the hallways as they wait for their grandmothers or their caretakers. Somewhere in the background, hard-working washing machines vibrate. A meeting is convened in the shade of the outside veranda—healthcare workers discussing business. People come and go, greeting
each other cheerfully. I walk around the small community garden beyond the center, with its windmill that once drew water for the vegetables that used to be grown here for the clinic. The pump needs spare parts now and is now broken. Funds have run out or are being used elsewhere. Beside the rutted driveway stands a spectacular aloe—it looks like a starburst—green waxy leaves fanning out with an explosion of scarlet flowers. A black sunbird dips its slim beak into the nectar of the flowers, wings a blur.

As I walk back inside the clinic, I hear a woman laughing as I pass a small office. I recognize Eunice Mangwane from the YouTube videos. I am very happy to bump into this grandmother who is depicted in the central panel of the Keiskamma Altarpiece (see plate 8). She is the symbol of all grandmothers in this village, raising their grandchildren alone. I have heard her sing, “You must never, never give up!” (Baker, 2008).

I introduce myself to her. I tell her I have seen her on my computer screen, and I have come from Canada to speak with her. Eunice, who is an AIDS educator, counselor, and health manager for the Keiskamma Trust, greets me and laughs delightedly, and says “How! Sisi! [Wow, sister!] Then you must watch the new video about us—it will be on TV on Sunday morning!” I ask her if she will spend some time with me talking about Hamburg’s story. She generously agrees.

Eunice shares Hamburg’s ordeal with me, as people come and go in her busy office. Presently she is working on a project for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), gathering statistics for a baseline survey. She is also the communicator between the Trust, the community, and the local chiefs. On busy community days she is also in charge of “peelings”—preparing the huge pots of vegetables and stews that are served. Eunice coordinates practically everything at the Treatment Center including
medical students who come from English universities to do research or volunteer. Eunice often sleeps at the center so that she can make porridge for the vulnerable children or those who have a problem with “slowliness” as slow learning is called here. Eunice tells me that for grandmothers in the village the work never stops.

Hamburg’s challenges started in the 90s when people started getting thin, she says. Their hair began to fall out, and they began to die. At that time Eunice knew nothing about HIV. Later, in 1998, 1999, when she got to know a little about HIV and AIDS, she teamed up with Carol, but they had no place for beds. So the first hospice was started in Eunice’s house where she cared for the sick. After three years, they started the Hospice Center and the reputation of Dr. U-Baker began to grow as she sourced some antiretrovirals, well before the government was prepared to give out medicine. People started flocking to Hamburg from big cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town. Husbands came home from the mines. Eunice gave counseling and education, and there was nursing by a good team and so people would eventually get up from their beds and go back to work. Even though they were not cured, their health was managed. If somebody from the big cities like East London, Stutterheim, or Port Elizabeth suspected that she had HIV, she would be sent to the village of Hamburg. Carol, who had taught herself about the virus, would do the diagnosis and bloods and together they would check the CD4 count. The patient would be put on antiretrovirals and the patient would leave and then spread the word. And news spread to such an extent that the clinic had no more space. The staff would not turn a single person back, when he or she said that they had hired a car, paid a thousand rand. But there were no beds, not even in the offices. There were two patients
even in the tiny front office. They were breaking the law, Eunice says, because they resorted to floor beds (interview with Eunice Mangwane, July, 2012).

For a moment Eunice is thoughtful. Then as she remembers, she says that there were just beds and patients and ARVs all over the place, until 2004, when the government did their first roll-out of ARVs at the different primary health clinics. Then Eunice had to go and educate the nurses at the clinics, but they were suspicious of Eunice and Carol working together. “You! You and that white doctor!” they said. “You are going to be arrested, Eunice. You better watch it. We see no reason why you should hang onto this doctor, go around talking about HIV/AIDS, and putting people on antiretrovirals. She’s an artist. That is not a doctor. But she’s got money. She might be able to get a lawyer, but what about you?”

By 2006, 2007 people’s eyes started opening. Eunice says, “when their eyes cleared off, and were open, I am telling you, they respected Dr. Baker, Whoa!! Did they respect this woman! I am telling you. People were bringing the sick at night and during the day. Cars! They used to park here like it’s the parliament. So many cars were parked outside there! The clinics!” Eunice whistles. “We could not keep up with the pace any longer. The Doctor had to see sometimes 40, 45 patients a day! Then you could see her mouth go dry. She would get hungry. Then I will stop them and say, ‘NO! NO! Let us give her a chance!’ But her coffee would get ice-cold. She was so busy! And that drained U-Dr. Baker. You know the past eight years to work in those conditions! We were working around the clock. Saturday, Sundays, holidays. You name it. And then eventually, the government had the role-out at the clinics, and we backed those clinics up. Because we could feel the strain. Financially we were going down. The Trust had been
buying antiretrovirals for all the patients, including children. And children’s treatment is more expensive than adults. We would sit, we would count each and every container of ARVs. Boxes and boxes. And then after counting, distribute them to each clinic. We had no computer. These were the computers [she points to her head]. If you’d say ‘so and so,’ we knew exactly who. God gave us that way to remember for the past eight years. We didn’t have to write anything down. We would not even bother going to the books. If we were going to do Hamburg clinic, we knew Hamburg patients. This one is on this regimen. And we would know that that one is on that treatment. We would count the pills, pack them in boxes, lable them. Then we’d go to the next clinic. We’d count. We’d pack. We’d label. It was very strenuous. We had no space and no money. But we were trying to do our best. Most of my patients I would book for a Saturday or Sunday. When I knew that it was quiet. There was one nurse on duty. Unlike weekdays when it was in and out, someone wanted the photocopier, and the cars were coming, the phones were ringing. For eight solid years we did that. Now, strictly we are focused on our overseas funding, our slow learners and teachers. We are now busy with the base-line surveying for CIDA. We have 54 village health workers and 16 leaders. In six months time, CIDA wants a report. They want to see a change out there within five years [she points towards the village]. The village has a population of 3,000 people, and three quarters of the village have never tested for HIV/AIDS. We must give CIDA a report that says we’ve tested so many people, so many are HIV positive, so many pregnant mothers, so many babies born negative, and so on. So our focus is not to be the treatment center any more, but outside, there. They want their statistics.”
I ask Eunice about how the art itself has helped the community. She tells me that art was the very first project that Carol started. Some ladies came from Lesotho and they taught the community of Hamburg how to crochet with plastic bags. Carol had been motivated to clean up the litter in the village, and so they started to collect plastic bags, all the way from the sea to the tip. They would wash the bags, dry them, fold them and then they would make a mat for the front of their beds or a bag or a hat. Some people were quite creative, and they made tops, or skirts with a lining, or a suit. Eunice says the ladies from Hamburg really took it up. It was hardly two years, and the Keiskamma Art Project was really flourishing. Housewives like Eunice, never knew that they had the skill of drawing. Carol would bring people in from various areas and from overseas. They would come and teach stitching, beading, felting, or doll making. And the Art Project played a very big role in opening up jobs for women. Women could then earn their own small salary, doing some embroidered piecework. They became independent because they didn’t have to beg from their husbands. Secondly, the Keiskamma Altarpiece was a very “eye-opening” project, explains Eunice. It talks about HIV and AIDS and at that time, the argument was that if the art talked about HIV and AIDS then they might get infected, even though the women were working on a piece of material. People weren’t educated about it, and were reluctant. For six months there was a bit of a tension.

But the art enabled Eunice to do her HIV education because there were lots of people in the same place at the same time. At first, as she started with education, women would get up and leave, go to the shop, or sit outside in the sun, and ignore the talk. They would say, “we hear in our village that nobody has got HIV.” They would tell Eunice, “you come from Cape Town, we don’t know you.” But working with the art group was
the best time for Eunice to educate the village. “I didn’t have to go and hunt people down. I would always find them there. And to me, I had no problem, because if only one out of a hundred came for a testing, then I would say, “touch wood, at least that one has listened. If she’s positive, we’ve got that one. So, one by one, we started fishing, explains Eunice, then hooking them out with our rods, until people actually understood that working on a piece of material, doing an art piece that talks about HIV/AIDS, does not mean you are going to get infected. After that first six months, the art took off and the women worked hard. The art changed the community.”

“Before the Altarpiece was made, people thought that their children, husbands, or wives were not infected with HIV, but that some people must have some powder or medicine, and then the result would be that their children would be HIV positive. In their minds, their children were being bewitched, or they were not doing their cultural rituals in the right and proper way. Or they were being punished for some reason. Maybe someone was jealous of their children or their husbands, because their husbands were working in Johannesburg, and sending money. They built houses or they could clothe them their families nicely”.

“You know at first it was very, very tense for me and Carol. We would cry as we would come back from the villages. Carol would say to me, “Eunice, I think let’s leave this. I can’t do any more. And I’m feeling bad because I can’t speak Xhosa. You are the one that speaks Xhosa, doing the education. You are the one that they are gunning for. It’s not me. I’m just examining. You know, so I am feeling it for you. Let’s just give up.” That was the third year, when we couldn’t break through the walls. After my husband died, the people said “We think you can pack up and go back to Cape Town, because this
is getting out of hand. They said I was disgracing the family name here, talking about HIV/AIDS. And they didn’t understand this thing between me and the White lady. After the apartheid era, all of a sudden there was a White women and a Black woman, going to different villages, talking about HIV and AIDS. They said this was a very funny thing.”

“But this Altarpiece helped us a lot because it created jobs for people. It educated people. It made people disclose. And it was heart breaking stories. You would get cold shivers when a person comes up and says, this one has diarrhea, this one’s hair is falling out, this one can’t swallow. And others would just start screaming, while I was doing the education, because so many people in this village had died. Then they apologized. One said “You know, Eunice, when you used to go to funerals, or schools, or activities or visit different families, and you would talk. If we had listened, we wouldn’t have so many graves. And a funny thing, this White woman. She’s an artist, then she’s a doctor! It was very strange! If we had only listened at that time! Then we would never have lost our children, or our husbands. But we did not know. And now that we know, we are going for testing.”

I ask Eunice how many people have been lost in the village. She whistles and says “from 1995 till about 2000, it would be about 300 graves. Ten percent of people had died of AIDS. What a loss! It tore families apart. This is a war that left us with wounds, that will take time before it will ever get healed. We’ve got orphans. We’ve got children that are vulnerable, because they have no parents at home. We’ve got widows. We’ve got families with only one member. So it’s a war that we fight, but the battle is still not over.”

I ask Eunice if she thinks the women coming together and talking over their art helped to heal some of these wounds? She answers that it helped very much. “One
woman would be cross with another, because she thought that she had been bewitched. But then the relationships started to be OK. People understood that it was not what we thought it was. So, the art started building them up. It reunited most of the families. We’ve overcome the bad one. The women feel very proud of their art. On the bottom of the *Altarpiece*, are all the graves. At one exhibition there were small pillow cases sewn with the names of the dead. And you know when you work with people, you build that relationship with them. You get to know whatever is going on at home. And when you lose them its like you lose your own family. There’s this bonding. There’s the sharing of confidential things. There’s the trust that you build with them, that when you loose that, its like you’ve lost a tangible thing that you own. It’s been a very tough time”.

I ask about the personal cost of this work to Eunice and Carol, seeing as Carol has just resigned after a decade of total commitment. Eunice says their work has been a great strain on them both. “It’s been a weight you can’t release, because you know these people. We still don’t want to give up hope. Not until hopefully, one day that there will be a cure. It can be very moving when you recall everything that has happened in this yard. Some would die just as they arrived. We had to take people out of the gate with stretchers, one after another. Then the mortuary car would come and fetch them. But people still do not go for testing, for their reasons, even though they now hear about HIV/AIDS over the television and on radios”.

I ask Eunice about the song I have seen her sing on a YouTube video, “Never, Never Give Up.” Eunice says she made it up. She is not sure where she got it from, but she loves singing it.
Eunice’s story mentions many ways the Art Project has transformed the community during overwhelming challenges: by enabling the previously isolated women to meet together; to help them learn new skills; by educating people about HIV/AIDS; by opening up a dialogue; by giving people the support and courage they need to get tested; by helping women heal from trauma; by providing income so that they can be more self-determining; by growing self-esteem and resilience; by gaining a voice through disclosure; by building a community strong enough to reach out to other communities, both locally and across the world.

I have a new awareness of what this community has endured and how they have survived and transformed through receiving mentored art practices and antiretrovirals.

5.6 Making art with the Hamburg artists

I continue to meet daily with the artists in the upstairs room in the health care center, and we do our art-making together. It is almost Marialda’s last day in the community. She tells me that Carol is still out of town, but she is planning a new art project. A biology teacher is coming to teach the artists how to observe and draw botanicals. The grandmothers here have knowledge of the edible and medicinal plants, and Carol is hoping to encourage more environmental awareness through this particular art project (field notes, 2012). She hopes that some of this knowledge can be shared and preserved through artwork, while educating others about local flora. This project will be a way to teach art skills as well as a way to teach the community about ecology through art exhibition.

Marialda walks around the table appraising the village life projects. “Constrain
your colors,” she suggests to us. “That makes it cohesive and controlled, instead of a circus tent, or a fruit salad” (field notes, 2012). The artists smile at Marialda’s humor.

As we work on our art, we are surrounded by medical equipment: rubber tubing and metal kidney bowls. An interleading door is marked “treatment room” and another says “Ward 2.” The pandemic paraphernalia and the artists’ materials merge.

At lunch, I ask Marialda to tell me a little about Carol, as I have not yet met her. She responds by saying that “Carol is an amazing person. She has visions and then they come true. She doesn’t always know how to achieve the vision, but she says the right people will just come along, and they do. I am no mystic, but when Carol says she needs a clinic, it somehow happens. When she gets a vision in her mind, it happens somehow. She draws the right people” (field notes, 2012; see plate 11).

Plate 11: Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting the Health Center, an ambulance, and the Keiskamma Trust.

I ask Marialda if this is how Carol does her art too—through visualization. Marialda answers, “It is hard for Carol to do any art now because she has so much on her plate. Someone always needs her, to take a hook out of their foot, or to come and help
with a baby or a burn.”

As the artists resume work on their images (see plates 10, 12, and 13), the clinic phone rings. And rings. And rings. One of the artists eventually gets up and answers “Molo. Hospice.” (“Morning, Hospice.”) He smiles at the others, knowing he is not a hospice worker but an artist. The other artists laugh in appreciation of their situation and then they settle back to their work. Art and medicine merge here in unusual, hybrid ways.

Plate 12: An example of the collaged art, depicting life in the village.

Plate 13: An example of the collaged art depicting life in the village.
Marialda offers me a story. “Once, a woman was sick in the clinic here with TB-AIDS—a terrible combination that really weakens you. She sent a message to Carol to bring her a pot of yoghurt. Carol, being Carol, came, bringing the yoghurt as soon as she could. It was the early afternoon when all the other patients were napping, but the lady was sitting up, working, despite being so ill. She was embroidering and wanted to see the cow on the yoghurt container so that she could copy the shape. Not all the medicine in the world can give people a creative urge like that, that even when they are so sick, they want to make things” (field notes, July 2012). Marialda adds, “art has given this community pride and dignity—a focus—a reason for being” (field notes, July 2012).

The winter afternoon wears on and the room has a quiet focus. We turn on the lights and continue to sketch, tear, and paste. The artists are curious about me now, but as yet, are too polite to address me directly, which is the custom here. They smile at me but wait for me to open a conversation with them. So I ask them about their art, their ideas, their children. We talk. We work. We talk some more.

Suddenly the prepaid electricity runs out. The artists tell me not to worry, that the local grocery store sometimes tops up the account for the clinic. The artists are hopeful that by tomorrow someone will have bought more electricity (field notes, 2012).

We continue to work in the dusk, and Marialda continues to teach. She says drawing is the essential tool. “It connects the self to the world through observation—identifying each object’s individuality—making each moment a charged moment full of wonder” (field notes, 2012). She says she is helping the artists to see the world around them and translate this into drawings, which become collages, which become the design for the embroideries, which finally become exhibitions and communication.
“Collage is just like material applique. Can you see the resemblance?” asks Marialda.

“Yes, Mama,” one of the artists answers. “We like this technique. Now we will be professional” (field notes, 2012; see plates 14 and 15).

Plate 14: An embroidered example of the Botanicals art project.

Plate 15: An embroidered example from the Botanicals art project.
Marialda pushes the artists further to get them to locate preferences within themselves. As an art teacher myself, I recognize this tactic, to push students to make choices in order to help them individuate their aesthetic further, and to find their own authentic visual voice. “Do you prefer collage or ink drawings?” asks Marialda.

“Either,” answers one of the artists (field notes, 2012).

“Let’s take a vote,” suggests Marialda. The artists are hesitant to put up their hands, and the subject is dropped. Sometimes there simply is no preference or there is an avoidance to have to choose one.

It is now dark, and Marielda gives final instructions to the artists in preparation for their exhibition, and then she calls the session to an end. She has given freely of her attention and advice all week yet she generously invites me to come over to her accommodation for a drink so that I can interview her in more depth about the Art Project before she returns to Johannesburg. We wrap up our work, and I say to one of the artists, “It’s been a beautiful day.” He responds, “it has been more than beautiful.”

Marialda and I head down the road together. The evening cicadas are loud in the darkness. As we traverse through their individual territories, they fall silent and then start up again in our wake. Beyond the dunes, the ocean is pounding, as always, but the water nearby in the lagoon is calm and bright in the early evening. As we walk towards Marailda’s accommodation, the undergrowth thickens, and we run up against a silhouetted shape. I startle and clutch the pepper-spray in my pocket as I am aware that South Africa has one of the world’s highest rates of violent crime as well as abnormally high rape statistics (A look behind the statistics, 2013). But it is only a cow, and we both exhale and relax again as we hear the reassuring sound of ruminants chewing their cud.
around us in the dark.

We talk into the night about the Art Project and the work the Keiskamma Trust did in the early days. Marialda had taught the initial workshops using canvas and bull denim. The artists had dyed it and redyed it to get a water color effect. Then they had divided the surface into three strips that represented the environment. The blue water strip at the bottom had crabs, snails, and fish. The ochre sand dunes in the middle had insects, spiders, and snakes. In the green bush at the top, they had sewn birds such as loeries and egrets. The border had been a series of oysters.

Early on, it had become apparent that some project members wanted to draw and some wanted to sew, and these later had became separate jobs. Marialda tells me that the Trust now makes a little money out of the commercializing of the groups’ fine art skills into simple products, such as cushion covers and bags. Marialda adds that what distinguishes the more organic community of Hamburg from other embroidery projects that are more commercial (such as Kaross, an embroidery collective in the Transvaal founded by Irma Van Rooyen, a fine artist, with five Shangaan embroiderers [Kaross website, n.d.] is the ‘fine art’ component of the big groups pieces, and the exhibitions. Marialda tells me that each piece made in Hamburg is unique, and individual voices are encouraged. There is also an education and health component to the Art Project in Hamburg, and a distinct voice about HIV/AIDS that has developed because of this.

Marialda says that even though on a weekend there would be three or four funerals, people could not disclose why they had died. Fear of social ostricization had to be faced by everyone. The art was a type of cry in the wilderness, a type of rage that the state would not engage with the pandemic. The Altarpiece was born out of a feeling that
people who had no voice were being crucified. It was an attempt to tell a story of how people were suffering. Marialda tells me there is not a grandmother in the village who is not caring for an orphan. There was no home untouched by death (field notes, 2012; see plates 11 and 16–20).

Plate 16: Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, a line of coffins and the HIV icon.

Plate 17: Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting the funerals.
Plate 18: Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, depicting the sick and dying.

Plate 19: Details from the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, the orphans and vulnerable children.
I thank Marialda for her time, and as I walk home in the dark, I remind myself that the Keiskamma Trust is one of several innovative art approaches to address the South African problems of poverty and underemployment. There are other crafts projects such as Ardmore Ceramics (Ardmore ceramics, 2008) and Siyazama Beadworks (Siyazama: Making a positive difference, n.d.) that have established opportunities for mainly rural women to learn and make a living. These art communities use creativity as a way to uplift rural communities and also include some educational work about HIV/AIDS, which is a shared struggle. But what is unique about Hamburg is the powerful use of tapestry as a method to tell the visual HIV/AIDS narrative.

It is Marialda’s last day in Hamburg. Before she leaves, she encourages the artists to be more assertive about their inclinations, to articulate their own choices, to voice what they like and what they don’t like. It is important for artists to respond from their gut, their instinct, their feelings, which is the seat of their own aesthetic. I understand that this can be frightening for some as it requires one to feel. It means articulating what might be
subconscious and intuitive. It means owning one’s own individuality. It means standing apart, being assertive about preferences, about making an impact. I suspect that this is what Marialda is pushing for, some individuation.

She asks one of the artists directly to say why he might like collage work. Marialda waits for a response. This is a tough question, perhaps one he has never been asked before. He shakes his head. “Why, why, always why,” he finally responds. “I just do.”

I sympathize with this artist’s problem, having myself resisted many times the question of answering “why” when I would much rather “just do.” I understand that this project is an attempt to ask “why” and “how” when, some days, I would much rather just “do.” People trained in Western ways of thinking are encouraged to ask these questions. This artist has given me an insight into my own culture. I am aware that my own questions of the artists might be invasive or demanding on this culture. This reinforces my determination to wait until I am offered stories voluntarily.

One of the other artists checks her cellphone. “Lunchtime Mama,” she says to Marialda, and the artists laugh. They are off the hook for now, free from the pressure to articulate or make choices. In my experience, I suspect that transformation is in part due to the discomfort of this struggle around questioning, choice making, and the movement towards articulation and individuation. It is rarely comfortable to strengthen individual preference and identity, as this requires risk and a commitment to ‘become’, to stand out. We will be seen and heard, something we both dread and need. However, this village may have experienced transformation differently from me, so I will wait for stories.
As Marialda takes a cigarette break, I join her on the deck and ask her how she thinks the art-making has changed this particular community. She tells me the fact that the project is here, differentiates this village, and gives it a focus. Each woman is paid piecemeal for her embroidery. It’s given people a sense of dignity and accomplishment, hard to achieve from milking cows and growing maize and doing domestic chores. (field notes, 2012)

I ask Marialda how the art project has transformed the community. She tells me the art has given people a voice. Images can do this in a different way from words to say “we are suffering.” Art is a way of articulating private, individual pain, but as a group.

I ask Marialda how the art has built the community. She says it helps give the village an identity. It builds a strong sense of community, and the contributors feel like real artists. Sharing the art with an audience means that someone wants to “see” what they have to “say” (field notes, 2012).

I notice that Marialda has mentioned several ways in which the people of Hamburg have transformed, despite a resistance to answering the questions “why” and “how.” Mezirow and Associates (2000/2010) is clear that transformative learning can occur without one being aware of its occurrence. I remind myself that a lack of articulation around a transformative process does not indicate a lack of its occurrence. It simply adds to the challenge of my own desire to understand a phenomenon.

As the day draws to a close, the artists are given clear instructions as to how to turn their collages into appliqued embroideries. Marialda’s work is now done. The collages will be handed over to the embroidery studio and the artists will continue to guide the collaborative work of turning them into sewn, fine art pieces. With some
sadness, I say goodbye to Marialda and plan to join the artists at the next workshop that Carol has organized for them with the biology teacher.

On the way back to my lodgings, I come across a snake in the road, its body flattened in a spiral against the tar by a truck. It reminds me of the caduceus—a symbol adopted by many health care organizations as a powerful totem of healing. This visual metaphor for the word “transformation” reminds me of the sloughing of skin or the shift in identity or meaning that is needed for transformation to occur at the deepest levels.

I share a meal with my fellow researchers, two graduate students from Surinam exploring the high rate of mortality in childbirth in the area. We share stories and then we retire to write up our own field notes. Again there is no power, internet, or heating. I go to bed early to keep warm. It is full moon, and a cold wind has started to blow. Somewhere, one of the many homeless dogs in the village has started to howl. A tree scratches at my single pain window with its long bleached thorns, creating shadows that move across my bed. I anticipate snow on the mountains by morning.

Unable to sleep, I mull over the processes and images that I have witnessed at the health center. The Hamburg artists have built portraits of their community—pictures of their cows or someone’s goat or someone’s sister, aunt, or gogo (grandmother; see plates 9, 12 and 13). Some faces are lined and wise, with the traditional headscarf. Some are young and smooth with hair extensions. These are portraits of a community straddling two worlds—the traditional, rural lifestyle and the contemporary, urban lifestyle—a community in transition, guided by skilled art educators who may or may not be aware of how they are guiding a process of individual and community growth through images.
The next week, the artists and I meet with the biology teacher to start the botanicals project. No one is sure where Carol is. It is said she is in Kuruman talking to the San artists, once called Bushmen, about their work, or in Stellenbosch arranging for the next exhibition, but she has donated her own living room as a work space.

Carol’s house is nestled in the dunes amongst the milkwoods and candelabra aloes. I have not as yet met her and I am glad to be in her home. The walls are hung with art, some of which is Carol’s, who has a master’s degree in printmaking. There are also collected images by other artists, images of South African people and trees. A wire sculptured chandelier of angels hangs from the ceiling. I have seen the angel symbol several times now in the local art. It appears in the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* and in the Beading studio—a tiny metal sculpture that looks like a human with broken wings. Many of the people of Hamburg are Christian, while at the same time, they also hold a more traditional belief in the presence of their ancestors. Angels are therefore a metaphor for those departed who are still “present,” of whom there are many, since the pandemic has swept through this area.

I look around Carol’s living room to get a sense of her. There is a sign on the wall “dancing makes everything on the inside light and happy and everything on the outside wiggle.” As I sit on her sofa, I notice all the chairs are covered with cushions that have been embroidered by the women in the art project. The cushions are colorful, with lime-green, brown, or black backgrounds embroidered with farmyard scenes: chickens or cows; birds nests with eggs; local fauna such as loeries, plovers, sandpipers, cormorants, and pelicans; or local botanicals with seeds, leaves, and flowers (see plates 21 and 22). One of the cushions makes me smile. It is a picture of a woman with white hair holding a
hypodermic needle in one hand. She is with a surprised man whose pants are pulled down, revealing naked buttocks and genitalia (see plate 23). The artists tell me this is Carol, the doctor, with one of her patients. They laugh generously.

Plate 21: Cushion art that represents the local wildlife.

Plate 22: Cushion art that represents domestic farming.
As I look at the cushion images that have been sewn by the women of Hamburg, I again catch myself trying to read into the symbols or classify the style of art, which I recognize as a contentious habit. I know there are difficulties in being an art critic and claiming to have authority about the art (see, e.g., Wilber, 2001c). But when I look at these cushions, my art history training reminds me of the debate regarding the use of the word “naïve” art. This label, once regarded as pejorative and therefore avoided by most historians (Fine, 2004, p. 24) is, however, now an official classification of art that is characterized by a childlike simplicity in its subject matter and technique. While many naïve artists appear, from their works, to have little or no formal art training, this is often not true. . . . While this was true before the twentieth century, there are now academies for naïve art. Naïve art is now a fully recognized art genre, represented in art galleries worldwide. (Naïve art, n.d.)
I study the cushions made by this community and am very drawn to the symbols and the style of their work—the bold colors, the flattening of the subject matter into one plane, the heavy outlines, the simplicity of shape, and the absence of light sources and shadows. I notice the stylized emphasis on pattern, often repetitive, with simple, flat shapes filled with bright colors. The designs tend to disregard the rules of perspective that define the spatial relationships of realism. For example, objects do not necessarily increase in size as they become closer to the viewer, and colors do not fade into the distance. Objects “float” and interact in only two dimensions. They can vary in relative size to each other, creating an uncertain spatial relationship. There is a uniform, omnipresent ground of bold color across each piece.

I realize that my desire to analyze Hamburg’s images, to see an inherent identity in the work, or even label this work as art or not, is a product of my own training in the West, an education influenced by scientific rationalism which promotes classification. I understand that some indigenous cultures, such as some of the North American Indian peoples, did not originally have a word for art, as the activity of art-making was not considered to be a separate activity from the rest of life (Dockstader, 2014). So to try to define whether these cushions are art or craft as opposed to just “what people do,” might constitute a cultural imperialism on my part. But when I look at the unique images of this community, I am reminded of the term “outsider” art (see Cardinal, 1972), outsider to the academies, which can be “positively” equated with localized, visual epistemologies that are not constrained by the limitations and hierarchies of “high” fine art canons. These naïve forms are in danger of being lost through insider fine art schooling in Western aesthetics and principles. Given the conventions encouraged by art schools, this term is
now considered a positive, official designation, given to “art produced by people not part
of . . . the art establishment. Outsider artists usually work from an ‘inner vision’ and are
self-taught in their art skills, techniques, and knowledge of art history” (Boddy-Evans,
n.d.).

Everywhere I go in the village, I now notice the work of Hamburg’s artists and
embroiderers on display—in the clinic, in people’s homes, in rental accommodations. I
easily recognize the signature style that has developed here, the group identity or
preferred symbols, despite the large number of individuals contributing to its creation.
There are at least a 150 people involved in the design and production of these objects,
which range from cushions to bags to table clothes to large tapestries, and yet, to the real
outsider eye, such as mine, the pieces seem to share a similar style of visual language. I
wonder if it is Carol’s style or indigenous to the Xhosa women here. In our botanicals
workshop I notice that she is not here to influence the style but completely trusts the
artists to learn from the biology teacher and interpret the plants in their own visual ways.
As we focus on the veins in the leaves, draw the whorls of branches, smell the green sap
of the aloe, the scent of the winter flowers, I realize that I need to ask Carol many things.
After the class, I call her again to see when I can have an interview with her, and we
arrange a time for the next day.

But the next day her dog is sick, and she must go to the vet in East London. I start
to get a little anxious that I may not be able to speak to her at all. Instead, I set out for the
embroidery studio to observe the further mutation of the village life art pieces. The artists
have now handed off their collages and have picked out fabrics and thread colors, and the
embroiderers are now collaboratively at work on the sewing. On the way to the studio,
someone I know drives by and offers me a ride to the studio. He asks me if I have met Carol yet. I tell him I am still looking forward to interviewing with her. He tells me she is a busy woman, that some of the older people in the village revere Carol so much they would like to embalm her when she dies (field notes, 2012). I realize that my research should not be considered more important than the needs of her community. I begin to realize that I may not get an interview with Carol at all, as I am now more than half way through my time here.

The driver drops me off, and I continue on foot, choosing the long way to the embroidery studio, in order to get some exercise and have time to think and feel. I enjoy the solitude. People have taken me into their homes, offered me meals, walked with me, talked with me, sat with me, and drawn with me. In this community, “alone time” is hard to find. As I walk, I notice that everywhere there are cattle wandering along the roads, pulling at the grasses in the culverts, eating people’s lawns, munching under washing lines. White egrets ride on their backs and pick ticks from their skin. I remind myself again to avoid the long grass as I do not wish to get tick bite fever. I choose the beach path where there is no grass.

A fisherman with his long sea rod and gumboots passes me as he returns home from fishing. He greets me and says I must be from the city as I walk too fast (field notes, 2012). I smile and slow down, and remind myself to become more present to the smells of low tide in the lagoon, to the bright winter sunlight on my skin, to the thundering ocean that sucks and pounds at the sand. Today, massive waves trailing spray roll into the mouth of the estuary. The air is saturated with salty droplets, forming a soft, low-lying mist.
I am becoming familiar with the wildlife around me in part due to the images I have seen on the cushions—the plovers, the kingfishers, the oyster catchers, the aloes, the things that matter to this community. They are the markers of this landscape. A way of life has become subject matter for visual art here—a new form of expression for this community since Carol has arrived. She and Marialda have encouraged the artists to see what is around them and translate the environment into two-dimensional lines, shapes, and color. By assembling these images together through tapestry, a narrative about place, identity, history, and belonging is arising in Hamburg. I look forward to seeing the second part of the art process—when the drawn and torn image is turned into stitchery.

5.7 Making art with the Hamburg embroiderers

The embroidery studios comprise a cluster of white buildings that overlook the lagoon. Women sit out on the lawn warming themselves in the winter sun. They chat, laugh, sew, care for their babies, eat their lunch, and chase away the goats that nosily curiously at their embroidery threads. As I join them, I say hello, and they pause in their conversations, needles in mid air. They have seen me with the artists but they have not as yet met me. They have not expected me to visit. I immediately feel the hierarchy that has developed here between the first, more conceptual stage of the art, and the production line.

One of the women asks me where I am from. I tell them I am from Canada and that I have come a long way to see their work. They laugh, and another embroiderer pulls some red fabric from a bag of remnants. “Here,” she says, “I have your color!” (field notes, 2012).
I ask them if they will teach me about their stitching. The manager of the embroidery studio says, “Welcome. Come and sit by me. I will teach you” (field notes, 2012). Inside the studio, there are more women sitting, sewing, chatting, feeding their babies. The manager explains to them in isiXhosa why I am here. They smile and discuss me amongst themselves and then they return to more interesting topics. Toddlers peek out and smile at me from between their mother’s legs or sit on the floor, playing with discarded threads. One woman who has an infant tied with a towel across her back, walks up and down, in a calming rhythm, without interrupting her sewing. There is much laughter and story telling, as needles fly back and forth.

Plate 24: Cushions that represent local life showing various stitches.

Nozetti Makhubalo, who is the embroidery manager here, deftly draws more cows on a pile of fabric squares (see plate 24). She then selects some big spools of colored threads from a cupboard and twists off several skeins that will work well with each background surface color. She then hands these out to the women, as they bring in their completed work and require further piecemeal squares to sew. The faster they work, the
more they can earn. They are able to take their work home with them and sew in between their domestic chores or they can gather in the studio, which has provided a safe community workspace for them away from home. The completed pieces are then made into cushions or handbags by those trained to use the sewing machines. The cushions and bags are sold from the small gift store, along with the ceramic pots and beadwork that are produced in other village studios by other artists in the Art Project. In the store, there are paintings, bracelets, and felted hats and scarves, all made locally (see plate 25). When the artists have a collaborative fine art project to sew, they put their stock sewing aside for the chance to be able to cocreate a commissioned piece, or a big design destined to be part of an exhibition.

Plate 25: The store with its stock of crafts for sale; cow, angel, fish and bird symbols.

I sit down next to Noluntu, who teaches me some stitchery—chain, blanket, box, or running stitch. Behind me, sewing machines whirr and steam irons hiss. Someone presses the wrinkles out of the handwork, another sews the pieces together, and another
sweeps the off-cuts from the floor. Women come and go as they bring in their completed work or collect more. One of the few male artists arrives, entering this female domain respectfully. There is much affectionate banter with him as he talks with some of the older women. Then he suggests color choices for the execution of his own design for the exhibition on village life. Both partners, the designer and the embroiderer, will sign their names using a black chain stitch.

Noluntu draws a cow for me on a piece of fabric and gives me a needle and thread. The other embroiderers watch as I work, smiling and encouraging me in isiXhosa. My knowledge of the language is poor, but the women’s expressiveness helps me understand the drift of their conversation. The gale force winds that have lifted panels clear off people’s roofs in the night is the main topic. There has been snow on the mountains and some torrential rain in the valleys that has flooded some homes. Cell phones ring and are fished out of enormous handbags that also carry babies’ milk, warm hats for toddlers, bread for lunch, scissors, threads and sewing for the upcoming week. Someone asks if anyone knows when Carol will be back. Several of the women confer but no one knows. Everyone needs input and direction from Carol.

I would like to ask the embroiderers, too, for their opinions about how this village has transformed through art, but I need to wait until stories are freely offered to me. Instead, they ask me questions, especially the question that is usually the first to be asked in African society: “How many children do you have?” I answer that I have two boys. They exclaim again with delight. Children are important in Africa, but boys are particularly impressive. Then they ask: “How old are you?” I tell them 51, and they exclaim again, and say that I am small for my age. I know they refer not to my height, but
rather to my volume, where volume is a signifier of health, wealth, and status. They feel I could be more robust. They take my photo, and I take theirs.

Two of the artists begin to braid each other’s hair. Others exclaim over the price of cell phone air time. Others mention how much time washing takes to dry now that it is winter or how sore their shoulders get when they sew all day (field notes, 2012). Someone arrives with spinach from her garden and shares it amongst her friends. Someone else turns on a radio, and several women begin to dance rhythmically while continuing to sew. A baby cries, and several women feel his forehead for fever. I finish sewing my cow, and my square is passed around for inspection. They declare with delight that I can work with them, as I can obviously sew. They begin to ask me about “u-project,” and why I am here (field notes 2012).

I tell them that I am here because I have seen their story on the videos. I have seen how they have lived through some very challenging times, and I have seen their courage. I have also seen the Trust’s website, and I have come to see their art for myself. One of the grandmothers who cannot speak English, but who has been watching me keenly for some time, takes me by the hand to an adjoining rondavel (round hut). I apologize to her that I cannot speak isiXhosa. She indicates with her hands that it is of no account but that she wants me to sit and watch her anyway. I understand from her gestures and inflections that she wants to teach me how to ‘felt’. So she does. She waters down her table and spreads out her fibers, and, with liquid detergent, she starts to rub them into a layer of fabric. We ‘felt’ all morning without any mutually understandable language. Then she offers me a sandwich from her bag, and we eat together in appreciative silence. I notice that this is a very different form of silence than the one that I am researching. This is not
a repression of voice. This is comfortable companionship that lies far beyond language. It is a quiet connection of mutual respect.

5.8 Art in the community

After lunch there is much excitement. I am told that Carol has returned to Hamburg. She will be holding a public meeting in the village hall to inform people about the latest research on how HIV is spread through breast milk. I am excited that I may finally meet with Carol. I decide to head to the community hall. Again I walk along the estuary, avoiding the tall plumes of grass and rushes where the red bishop birds flutter. I watch a kingfisher dive from a branch into the lagoon. As it returns to its perch, it warns other birds of my presence with its beautiful call.

Up on the hill behind me, I hear bulldozers and I turn around to see heavy-duty machinery grading some landscaping at the foot of a sleek, contemporary building with walls of glass that overlook the valley. I have heard talk of this building, and I realize that this must be the much contested multimillion Rand Art Retreat that the government is constructing. I wonder at the thinking behind this development project, built as it is at the end of such a long, dirt road in such an isolated area. I decide to ask for an appointment with the government’s project manager when next I am in East London to research the official reasons for this building, which will in some way institutionalize the community Art Project into a government-funded venture.

In contrast to this sleek piece of architecture on the top of a barren windswept dune, the small community hall is a corrugated iron room with a front porch open to the village’s street, nestled amongst some large spreading lucky bean trees. I go in and find a
seat at the back. News has spread quickly that Carol is now returned to the village, and
the room is packed with village women. They have on their suits and hats and high-
heeled shoes. This meeting is an opportunity to dress up. I am told that over the years,
Carol and the village health workers have spent many hours in HIV education such as
this.

I test my recording equipment as I want to record Carol at least once. With only
intermittent electricity and no access to spare batteries, I want to make certain I can
capture this opportunity. We wait for Carol to come. And we wait.

Here, it is called deshlele, or just sitting patiently. Nobody worries. Carol’s
absence is seen as an opportunity for the women to gather and talk. I notice there are also
one or two men in the audience today. As we wait, the elder next to me closes his eyes,
and begins to hum, and the women begin to respond. At first, they just sway in time to his
resonant voice, and then they begin to sing quietly in call and response, call and response.
The man then stands and starts to stamp out a louder rhythm with his feet, moving in a
two-step up the aisle to the front of the hall and then back again. The momentum builds,
and the room is soon loud with prayers sung and danced from the heart of the community,
as we “wait”.

An hour passes timelessly, with spontaneous choral music. I am moved by this
community’s ability to voice through music, and even though I understand little isiXhosa,
I catch some of the phrases in the prayer, including thank-you’s to Nkosi (God) for Carol
and for CIDA, who has provided generous funding to this community through the Trust. I
realize that the elder thinks that I might be from CIDA, and this is his way of thanking
me. I remind myself to explain my presence to the villagers when I can. There are many not involved in the Art Project who might imagine I have brought funding.

Carol arrives, and I am pleased to see her for the first time. She writes on a flip chart and talks till her voice is almost hoarse. In English she discusses perinatal transmission of HIV, CD4 counts, T-cells, ARVs, and the possible co-occurrences of diarrhea, diabetes, tuberculosis, and hepatitis with HIV. Eunice and the nurse, Mama Zita, translate into isiXhosa so that there is no misinformation. The women ask many searching questions. Carol reminds them that it is important that they understand everything about the disease, especially that which affects their children (field notes, 2012).

After the meeting, there is more singing, and massive pots of chicken and potatoes arrive. It is customary here to share a meal after an indaba (gathering to discuss important community issues). Eunice has been in charge of “peelings” again (preparation of vegetables and cooking). Amidst the chatter and the unbridled laughs, the elder who has just led the prayers comes up to me. He shakes my hand in the traditional triple way and says his name is Atwell. He asks me what I am holding in my hand. I tell him it is a picture of Maslow’s “pyramid of needs” that I have been sharing with the artists. I explain that I am doing a project with the art people, and we are looking at how art meets people’s needs in the community. I explain why I am here, and I know he will let the others know. Atwell asks me when I think about art, what do I mean, because when I talk to the community about art, they might think about many other activities.

Me: Are you asking me what is art? That is a biiiig question, Baba [“father,” a respectful, local term]. Wow that is a big question.
Atwell: Good.

Me: I think it’s something that you make with your hands.

Atwell: Yes.

Me: That is connected to your heart.

Atwell: Good.

Me: And it gives you meaning in your head.

Atwell: Good.

Me: That’s how I think of art.

Atwell: Alright.

Me: It doesn’t have to be pretty. It just has to give you meaning and it makes you feel something. It makes you feel strong. Because it gives you a feeling for who you are, and how you belong, and how you live in the landscape. How you attach to the animals and the trees and to other people. And you can tell your story in the art. And that gives people a lot of meaning.

Atwell: Ja, ja. Totally. That is what I think. That’s very good. You know, a lot of people here, though, when they talk about art, they think about singing only.

Me: But that is still connected to their heart. And it gives them meaning, I saw them singing today. It was beautiful. And everybody’s body’s were moving, and they felt connected.

Atwell and I eat together, and we talk more about the local art form of music, about the problems in the village concerning funding, about outsiders, and the Trust’s Art Project. Other community members come up, some shyly, some laughing, and we talk about “u-project” as my research is now being called. Carol, who is holding another
meeting after lunch to launch an independent school, leaves immediately after her talk. As she rushes out, she says she will speak with me someday soon.

The next day, I walk down to the Municipal building to inquire about statistics on Hamburg and to find out more about the government’s Artists’ Retreat. Inside, the building is empty of people. There is another funeral. I sit on a bench and wait and read an article pinned to the wall, *Artist Retreat for Quiet Hamlet of Hamburg*. David McGregor (2012) from the *Dispatch* newspaper, Port Alfred bureau, says the project is aimed at “kick-starting investment in the quiet seaside Hamlet.” He goes on to say that the Artists’ Retreat, which will cost 28 million Rand (2.8 million Dollars) and is the brainchild of the Amathole economic development agency, ASPIRE, which hopes to boost the town’s stagnant economy, by helping unemployed locals cash in on the unique appeal of the pristine environment for art tourists. . . . By teaching and accommodating all sorts of artists from Hamburg, the province, and from the rest of the world . . . the facilities would cater to such disciplines as film, TV, crafts, music, photography, the visual arts, dance. . . . The facilities will comprise accommodation . . . a restaurant, exhibition space, music studios, a theater, seminar space, and an outdoor amphitheater. . . . Although hoping to attract well-healed artists to pay and stay, the retreat will offer scholarships, endowments, and sponsorships to make the place more accessible to emerging artists from the province.

I notice that what started as an organic individual transformation of some artists, and which then grew into some community transformation through exhibitions and
discourse, is now turning into a government attempt to upscale transformation into an institutional transaction. I wonder if this vision will work.

When the clerk returns after the funeral, she gives me some files, and I start to read the Hamburg Local Development Framework, May 2011, put out by ASPIRE (Amathole Beyond Limits), the Ngqushwe Municipality, and the National Treasury of South Africa. In it, the framework for a revitalization of this area is justified. It describes the unemployment rate as being 76.5 percent and the number of households earning less than R1500 ($150) per month as 66.8 percent. The poverty rate in this district is 80.2 percent, the second highest in the country (p. 34).

Education is also described here, with 26 percent of residents having no formal education, 24 percent having some primary, nine percent having completed primary, 25 percent with some secondary; 11 percent having completed grade 12, and five percent with some “post matric” or tertiary education (p. 34).

Huge problems are identified for development: it will cost an estimated R120 million (12 million Dollars) to tar the road (p. 49); tourism infrastructure is poor; the natural environment is sensitive; there are a lack of municipal bylaws; a lack of personnel to regulate growth and development; there are numerous interest groups who lack a common vision; there is a lack of public transport; poor roads; low socioeconomic status; high unemployment; low income, education and skills; high dependency on government grants; depopulation, with energetic youth migrating to cities leaving the aged; a decline in services; competing towns in other areas; long process of land acquisition; an ad hoc settlement with no planning.; and fragmented development (p. 53).
The files also describe a new vision for the Hamburg Regeneration Strategy, however: “A vibrant, artistic and natural coastal town, where people (both locals and visitors) can enjoy a low-key, small-scale, ecological, tranquil and sustainable environment—sufficient in jobs, food, and quality of life” (p. 54). They continue to say, “The Artists’ Retreat training program . . . will contribute substantially to the development of the necessary foundation for future job possibilities,” such as “construction, hospitality and business administration sectors” (p. 54). With the economic decline of the agriculture sector, rural poverty, HIV/AIDS, and infrastructure backlogs, tourism is seen as the major growth sector for the future (p. 61), with art being one of the major tourist attractions in this village.

I scan through the minutes of the community meeting held on 8 December, 2011 and notice that the building of the Retreat Center was temporarily halted in order to redesign it, when ASPIRE, supported by an advising expert team, realized that there was a disconnect between the vision for Hamburg and the current building plan. In order to attract national and international artists and hence ensure the success of the project, the building had to become more “artistic” and integrate better into the rural surroundings, become more ecologically friendly, with lower maintenance costs, and to reduce the impact on the environment. I note that a total of R36 million had been applied for in grants, with another R37 million expected from partner organizations (p. 9). I imagine other ways this enormous amount of money could have been spent. In the morning, I call the project manager and get an appointment to see her next time I am in East London.

For the next six weeks, I talk to people, make art with people, sew with people, and eat with people. I interview Trust administrators and directors, community
developers, and social workers. I accompany Trust officials into the outlying communities that have been established to feed and educate orphaned and vulnerable children. I spend time with the Trust’s art therapist, specifically employed to develop creativity in the orphans and vulnerable children. (Please see summaries of these discussions in Chapter 6.)

In the mornings, I drink coffee with the local community who share their ideas with me. People begin to offer information for “u-project” wherever I go, and soon I am able to gather interviews from a diverse cross section of the village, mostly women, including artists, embroiderers, mothers, grandmothers, community elders, teachers, public servants, business people, and health workers. Interviewees include Xhosa, Afrikaans, English- and German-first-language speakers, representing the diverse nature of the South African people.

After a month-and-a-half of working together, I finally ask the artists if they will share their ideas with me over lunch. I explain I would like to talk to them about how they have experienced their art-making. To start the conversation, I share with them the image of Maslow’s pyramid of needs (1943, 1954, 1970, 1971). I ask them if they agree with this image and ask them if art has met some or any of the needs that Maslow talks about. I think this may be a way to illicit responses from the artists about any transformation that may have occurred for them without my own ideas and words being too much of an influence. They think quietly and write down their answers. Some take a day or two to think carefully about this question before returning their conclusions. These conclusions appear in Chapter 6. All are in agreement that art has played a big part in transforming their community for the better.
During the lunch meeting with the artists, I notice that itchy spots have appeared on my ankles. Back at my lodgings I bump into Karen Clark, a midwife in the village, and I ask Karen for her opinion. She thinks they are tick bites. She tells me if I get tick bite fever I will get flu like symptoms, and I will need to do what the local villagers do. Grin and bear it. It will not be pleasant.

Karen: *Amazela.*

Me: So it means “endure?”


Me: “Have patience.” I have noticed that is a big thing here.

Karen: So if someone is in labor and she is struggling with the pain, they’ll say

“*Nyamazela, nyamazele.*” So if your baby dies [she claps, indicating it is dead],

“*Nyamazela. Nyamazela.*” It’s like a matter of fact, you know. Grin and bear it. . .

. Because what can you do? You live in a village. And what can you do.

Me: What’s the other saying [in isiXhosa] that indicates patience? “Tomorrow?”

Karen: *Gomso.* “We will see, tomorrow.” *Gomso.*

Me: Or “we will do it tomorrow.”

Karen: Yes. *Gomso.* We will do it tomorrow. We will see tomorrow. It’s quite interesting.

. . . It’s an acceptance of coping with unhappiness. . .

Me: Like “toughen up.”


Me: Lots of people have expressed fear and sadness about Carol leaving. It’s a question of how will the village ever trust another doctor again. That was raised to me. You know, like “what will we do now?”
Karen: Well, where are we going to find a doctor? There aren’t good doctors around . . .

every community goes without a good doctor now.

I realize again that if I am sick, I am not going to get medical help here. For the first time, I really understand how it has been for some of the villagers when they are sick and have no transport to the nearest clinic. I go to bed early and hope to feel better in the morning.

Over the next few days, I develop a migraine-like headache. I feel exhausted, and I begin to sweat. But Carol is finally able to find time in her demanding schedule to talk with me, so I must “endure”. Knowing I am not contagious, I go about my research business. Carol’s husband, Professor Justis Hofmeyr, a gynecologist, is also able to spend time with me before I leave the village. I am relieved that they are able to discuss with me their views on how art has been transformative here (See Chapter 6 for a summary).

As I finish their interview and leave, I realize that I have not asked Carol for her medical advice. I am covered in spots now from head to toe and I am itchy, but the community tells me not to worry—eventually I will get better. “Patience”, they say. Nyamazela. I am relieved to have spots, as they indicate that at least I do not have meningitis or encephalitis—my head feels like a ripe melon about to split open.

As I lie in bed and feel my fever rise, I realize that I do not feel like making art or doing anything else. I do not have enough energy to produce anything. Unlike many members of this community who do make art when they are ill, I just want to stay in bed and close my eyes. I have a renewed respect for those who, despite being either weak or grief stricken at the loss of family members, continue to produce. At a cellular level, I realize how much physical energy is required to create and how much mental energy is
required to transform, both ourselves and our physical world. I realize that it takes more resources to heal than to submit to illness.

In order to get medical help, I will need to leave the village. To do this, I will need a ride. To get a ride, I will first need to call someone who has a car. To call someone I will need to get telephone reception. To get cell reception, I will need to recharge my phone (no electricity) and then climb a hill. But I simply don’t have the energy to do this. I am at a loss as to how to get help or how to leave. But the problem will have to wait for another day—tomorrow, they say here, gomso. In the meantime, I will just sit, deshlele, and “endure”. I will wait patiently for change. In the meantime, I will surrender to sleep. I am utterly drained.

When I awake, snow has fallen overnight on the hills to the west. Outside my window the wind is howling, and the dog has had a litter of puppies in the night. They cry incessantly from hunger and cold. I get up to feed the mother. She is lying passively on her side, resigned to the eight hungry mouths trying to suckle her. The pups nudge urgently against her thin ribs. They don’t stand much chance. There simply aren’t enough resources here to support more hungry mouths.

I get up, dress warmly, and make tea. I must perform, despite feeling ill, as I only have a few days left. Even though I am covered in spots, I know I am not infectious to others. Images that I have seen from the Keiskamma Tapestries come to mind (see plate 18) of corpses covered in spots. Suddenly I understand the images on a different level, and my empathy for the community grows deeper.

It is my last week in the village, and I am still very ill with a high fever and a consistent headache so that I can hardly lift my head off the pillow. The light seems
overly bright and hurts my eyes. I struggle to get out of bed to make my final interviews, and I am drenched in sweat despite the cold. I berate myself for getting tick bite fever despite the care I have taken to avoid walking through areas of long grass. I conclude it is a right of passage. Everybody gets it several times here before becoming immune. I refuse to bother Carol, and I am too ill to walk the hour-and-a-half to the nearest clinic. I am told by my landlady that just before I arrived in the village an entire wedding party became ill with tick bite fever as the celebration had been held in a field.

Finally I make arrangements to leave Hamburg in order to get medical help. But first I will attend the Women’s Day celebrations. I feel the need to celebrate with this community before I say goodbye.

I drift in and out of sleep, and Karen Clark, the village midwife, comes by. As we talk over tea, she talks to me about the dangerous projections from the village onto Carol. Some see her as a White God. She says Carol, in turn, is careful not to own these projections. Once, at a ceremony in the village, candles were lit, one from another, and many of the villagers would only light their candle from Carol’s. Karen tells me, too, about Carol’s husband, Justus Hofmeyr, also a doctor, who had “saved” a small boy who had been bitten by a yellow cobra that had been sleeping under his sofa. I fall asleep again and in my fevered dreams there are ticks inside my bed and snakes underneath it.

In the morning I pack and prepare to leave for East London to get help after I have shared in the celebrations. Today everyone will be making their way up the hill to the Heritage Center for “Women’s Day” celebrations. For days, women have been peeling vegetables while swapping bus stop stories, as local gossip is called here. The music
students have been rehearsing their repertoire with Jennifer Hoyer, the Keiskamma
Trust’s music director, to perform to the whole community.

   I struggle up the hill to say goodbye to the women who will be gathered at the
celebration. I follow a road ridged with exposed layers of abalone shell, and I realize that
I have spent several months now, living on sand dunes that are moving slowly across the
landscape. I am standing on the back of a shifting history, that on the surface of it
resembles solid green hills held in place by thickets of dune bush. Over the centuries, the
waves of the Indian Ocean have rolled in through a soft mist and headed up the estuary
before settling in the lagoon under a roiling foam and dropping their cargo of sand to
slowly form these dunes of abalone shells.

   Someone offers me a ride to the celebration, and I am utterly relieved as the labor
of walking has left me feeling weak. We take off in low gear up the steep grade, past
crowds of happy women walking from all directions toward the Heritage Center. “Hello
Darling!” they shout warmly as they reach out to touch my hand as we pass by slowly.
We pick our way through the goats, past donkeys, herds of cattle, and brightly painted
kraals (homesteads comprising several small buildings) with meticulously kept yards.
Busloads of students arrive in their neat Music Academy uniforms, carrying their
instruments and proud smiles. Inside the hall are replicas of the tapestries made by the
women—the meters-long Keiskamma History Tapestry, which records the history of this
area in tiny stitchery and which wraps around the entire hall, visually narrating the past.
History seen but not heard, as it rolls underfoot.

   There is a long table loaded with plates, cups, an urn, and washing up tubs. I take
a seat amongst the women who are again dressed in their Sunday best. There will be
many speeches later that day and much feasting and dancing late into the night. But first, there is choral music. The young voices of children are interspersed with drumming and the proud, high-pitched ululations of mothers and grandmothers who are celebrating their culture, their children, their community, and their survival. After a couple of hours of listening to harmonies and drum rhythms performed by the Music Academy, I say my goodbyes with a very heavy heart and am finally driven into town to see a doctor.

I am shocked to be told that I do not have tick bite fever. Instead, I have chicken pox, possibly picked up from one of the children I have taken onto my lap. I am mortified to discover that I have been infectious to those around me, especially to those with weakened immunities. Because I have been ignorant of the virus I have been hosting, others have been susceptible to me as I hugged them goodbye, just as I have been susceptible to those who hugged me. A virus has passed from the community to me, and I have no doubt passed it onwards. I realize my own ignorance, and that boundaries between people are very porous and mostly an illusion. I call to let the community know my diagnosis. I am told not to worry, that there is nothing that can be done. Instead I am told to just sit, and be patient.

Any illusion of being separate from this story, as an observer, has now vanished, connected as I am, by micro-organisms, to every other organism I have touched in the past two or three weeks. I go to bed to convalesce in East London, and let the story live on in my body as it plays out in my cells. I realize that I am, “one” and at the same time, “not-one” with everything around me. As I lie in my sweat-soaked sheets trying not to scratch, I understand just a little more about this community and the challenges they face with illness and rurality.
I realize, too, that being told I have chicken pox, although not much fun in mid life, is not at all the same thing as being told that I am dying from HIV. I might never know what that might feel like for some of the women. I do understand however, what it feels like to grieve for the loss of many loved ones in close succession as I have lost five immediate family members and two close friends during the two years of this research project. I have not as yet been able to make art about my own losses, as the women have. However, I know that someday I will.

As I lie in my sick bed, I feel the rhythmic dance, between illness and health, between insider and outsider, between subjective and objective experience, between self and the so-called other. I realize that to some extent these boundaries are academic and exist only at the medial, human level of existence, that at the micro level of viruses, cells, and all things smaller, there are no boundaries. Even at a medial level, I have shared food, knowledge, handshakes, art, hugs, and disease with this community. Intuitively I know that I am forever changed by my experience of this community, although as yet, I do not yet fully understand on a cognitive level exactly how or how much. I may only understand this in years to come as I integrate all that I have learned and experienced by coming to Hamburg. As I recover, I begin to draw cows.

5.9 Returning to Canada

My suitcase is heavy, full of field notes, photographs, computer equipment and sound files. One wheel of my suitcase is gimpy and squeaks across the hot tarmac as I
drag it towards the airplane. The flight attendant does a head count. Her hair is tightly braided into parallel lines that circle her head and then sweep up into a big knot perched at a jaunty angle, like a hat, to one side of her forehead. I am in awe of the stylish, coiffed hairdos of Africa. I am leaving this country with a heavy heart. There is much to be loved here.

We take off over rolling hills that shimmer in the evening heat. The downdraft from the plane ripples across acres of green sugarcane. As we bank out over the Indian Ocean and head north, up the back of Africa, the sun burns red and begins to sink below a horizon smudged by the smoke of many grass and cooking fires. I say goodbye to my homeland once again and prepare to return to university life in my adopted home of Canada.

We fly through a long night, over the Great Rift Valley, Egypt, Europe, then towards the pole. Finally, we are over the top of the world and we are heading south again. By early morning we are over the tundra, then the continental divide of the Rockies and then the Coastal Mountains of British Columbia. As I look out of the window onto the mist that blankets the Strait of Georgia, I see the familiar outline of Vancouver Island, a navy blue ridge splitting through the fog.

I know I have not left home at all, not even for a moment. The planet is my home. I realize too, that this research journey has involved more than interviews about others. It has also been a transformative experience for myself in many ways. Like the koeksister, I have looped back in on myself and have integrated some of my past with my present and understood more deeply my own multiple identities. But more than this, I have felt in my body the illusion of separateness between peoples and countries. At this moment, borders
seem quite dissolved.

As I look out of the plane window, the book in my lap talks to me of uniting the inner wilderness with the outer (Coleman, 2006). Chief Seattle is quoted as saying, “Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect” (p. 103).

This indigenous relational philosophy is also the philosophy of Ubuntu. I have felt the truth of it as a side effect of many things, including art-making, illness and now research. When looking at the world from the great height from a plane window, boundaries and their fixity become a matter of scale and perspective—of near-sightedness or far-sightedness. I question whether there is any inside or outside perspective at all. The somatic experience of separateness could just be the skin that contains us in one place at any given moment, our bodies supposedly solidly defined, but which, on closer examination, turns out to be nothing but porous integument. But as we begin our descent, I remember that air travel sometimes changes how I experience things, possibly due to changes in pressure and hydration.

We descend through the white cloud blanketing Vancouver Island, and the world again breaks into a multitude of entities. We land, and I am again a separate person with a separate passport, with separate views and goals, with a local, fluid identity. I remember that I have a job to do as an educator, researcher, and artist.

I see fir, cedar, logging trucks, computers, black-tailed deer. But for a while in my body I still feel the visual imprints of thorn trees, aloes, anthills, trotting goats, and donkey carts. I see needles threading through hessian and hear echoing voices telling a
village’s story. Once again, I start to drive on the right/wrong side of the road.

In 2014, I am again back in South Africa, checking my sources, asking the interviewees to check their transcriptions, and finalizing my research. One interviewee chooses to withdraw her interview. She feels she has said too much. I remove this interview. Other interviewees give me full permission to print what they have said to me and express pleasure that their story will now be told in written words as well as images.

As I sit in the East London airport ready to leave once again, I buy a coffee and wait for my flight to be called. An article in the newspaper catches my eye. It refers to the completed Hamburg Artists’ Retreat, now called Emthonjeni Arts, which means “wellspring of the arts”. In the Daily Dispatch article “Hamburg hosts artists for three-day retreat” I read that

the province’s first-ever artist’s retreat . . . will benefit both Eastern Cape artists and the community of Hamburg. The facilities director said “We have created 26 full-time jobs, around 20 part-time jobs, and other extended job opportunities. . . . So the retreat addresses rural economic development through the arts.” . . . The retreat has 22 rooms and includes a mini-theatre, a gallery, a restaurant, and dance and recording studios. “Artists who come here also stand the opportunity to be introduced to an international audience, so it is a place for them to regroup while also receiving mentoring and support.” (Ncokazi, 2014, p. 2)

At face value, this is a positive article. It is about what is possible in an isolated, rural community as the result of a transformative process. But what is left out of this press release is the story of Hamburg’s women who did the work, which reflects the political agenda of the government to divert kudos from the Keiskamma Trust to
themselves. What is left out also reflects the political correctness of effacing the efforts of these individual women, in particular the mentors, whose skin color is White, and therefore politically incorrect. What is left out is a whole decade of the transformation of a village that was made possible by the women who have devoted themselves to uplifting their own community through art, education, and health. This article has reduced the transformation of Hamburg to a single story (Adichie, 2009). The new official story is of a government with the “vision” to uplift its citizens, by institutionalizing transformation through a building and a business. This politically correct version of the story is a government pat on the back which effectively takes credit, while silencing multiple stories of individual struggle. The story of transformation through art has now become an agenda for gaining votes. An attempt is made to remove transformation from its grass roots process and the commitment of individuals to their own personal, uncomfortable process, to market an institution and profit from it—art as tourism and power mongering. I will be interested to see if this approach works. Somehow, I suspect transformation cannot be institutionalized on a large scale.

In Canada once again, I ponder the question of transformation for individuals, communities and institutions, while I transcribe interviews and write my dissertation. My mother mails me a second newspaper article, which saddens me. It is entitled, “Arts Center on the brink of closing, 26 stand to lose jobs if crises not solved.” I notice that the possibility of success is down, but the price tag is up from R28 million to R34 million ($3.4 million). Neokazi (2014) says

Emthonjeni Arts in Hamburg, which was only officially opened two months ago, is set to close due to a lack of funding. . . . Facilities director Nomsa Mazwai said
“... a study into the sustainability of this project had been done and the results were that it would work as an economy driver, a novel idea with huge potential for returns.” ... Department of sport, recreation, arts and culture spokesman Manzi Vabaza said ... “This situation becomes painful because the province is in need of such institutions which promote art, and generally art is already lacking in terms of receiving funding, as compared to sport which has tremendous support” (p. 7).
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Comments.

6.1 The artists’ conclusions

So what is transformation and how does one transform through art? As I gather my field notes, transcribe interviews, and summarize conclusions, I realize there is no simple answer. Certainly, there is no ‘one’ answer. Rather, responses from the community are multiple and come in a variety of similes: ‘descriptors’ that loop inwards and outwards, like the metaphorical *koeksister*, indicating that transformation is both a subjective, personal process and an external community process, two arenas of change that feed off each other – an ecology of mutual impacts.

There is so much information after four years of immersive research that at first, writing my “findings” into a linear form seems like an overwhelming task. I start by trying to streamline Hamburg’s story into a format for others to read. I select key words from interviews describing transformation through art, and soon themes begin to emerge from the Hamburg data. They range from the personal to the conceptual, from the practical to the philosophical. Without exception, it is clear that all interviewees have one thing in common. They are passionate about art and how it can benefit people’s lives. Only the choice of ‘descriptors’ for transformation differ.

After months of working alongside the artists and getting to know their story, context, style, and methods, I collate data, literature reviews and interviews into one
Interviews from the artists have been collected from a focus group, where Maslow’s pyramid of needs was looked at. Artists then shared their own reflections on their personal transformations through art. Although abbreviated here, parts of all interviews are included, not because the question of ‘how art transforms’ is inconclusive, but rather because the artists’ transformations are multifaceted. I am reminded of the singing I have heard in Hamburg: in the studio, the community hall, the meetings, celebrations and Youtubes. The artists’ conclusions reflect the polyrhythms of the call and response that is so inate within this community’s creative process. The artists speak individually, yet they speak as ‘one’, about how art is transformative.

**Thobisa Nkani:**

“I did fine art and specialized in both painting and ceramics and some wirework. I like making art so much. It is my chosen career from my tertiary level. It’s my get-rich-easy skill. It’s what connects me with my Lord. He had given me a gift to live. As a gift, I found it easy and not easy ... Men also make art. I have no children and no grandchildren but I am a visual artist. … I harm nobody. … community members support me for making art. And some ask me to help their children with making handworks for their home works from school. … The project taught me about some ceramic techniques, painting techniques, and mosaic making. Sometimes we make orders but most of the time I decide to make what I need, and want to make. … it’s marvelous for me to work as a team. As we lay down our ideas, it helps to work with others because we gain other views/ideas. I learn ideas of making things in other ways. I make wireworks – birds and two figures of the HIV victims. … To be my own boss can help me. To do each and every thing I want at my own time and in my own place. Art helps
me to tell my story, my mind and my feelings/moods. Stories like dangers that occur on the railway stations, awareness for AIDS/HIV. … It was not hard for me to tell my story because I tell a true story… Art makes me feel to be me. … Art can help people ... It can save them, serve them to fight poverty” (personal communication, Aug, 2012).

**Nokuphiwe Gedze:**

“I sell my art to make money, so I can buy food, drink and shelter… then it means I am secure and protected and my life is stable. Art helps to build relationships with other artists, to be able to come together and work as a group, and it unites. I’ve gained a good reputation and I am respected within the community because I have travelled overseas because of the art I am making. I have gained a lot of experience from other artists and artworks they do. This made me realize how important my artwork is and it made me proud. Art is beautiful … I am growing as an artist and I am empowered and art has made a change to my community. I feel like there’s more need for educating the community … using art as a tool, and also teaching young people about art… Art helps you keep healthy. I practice capoeira and I do a lot of art to relieve my stress” (personal communication, Aug, 2012).

**Eddie Janse:**

“Art provides for my physiological needs... I feel pride to have such comfort through art in most cases... Safety needs are met and I feel protected in some ways, as jobs are scarce. There’s self-empowerment through art. I belong to a work group and a place, when we are making art. Let stories be told the world over through beautiful art
that involves different cultures, tribes and traditions … A handful of art works give me status and a very good reputation and I feel confident in my everyday life. Making art has made me who I am today. As an artist I am willing to tackle any challenges, and help others on the way in creating beauty. I achieve useful skills for self-expression. …

Making art meets my self-actualization needs. I have grown through different kinds of art and I feel empowered, and feel I have a voice when I am making art. This voice comes through to the world. I give workshops and train communities on how to use their hands making art, hence create employment and empowerment as I have done to myself...

Making art makes me motivated, and makes me feel the need to help other artists to recognize their talents especially in the rural communities. I feel happy and worthy everytime I think I have achieved this” (personal communication, Aug, 2012).

**Nomfusi Nkani:**

“I haven’t worked since I passed matric (grade 12), but then I met Carol and discovered my artistic skills. Now I get money, that is very helpful for my needs and my family needs. The relationship is very good between me and the embroiderers. I have a helpful [embroidery] partner who works very hard… I have gone overseas, and have met big clients. I believe in myself and I know I can produce work that can help others and my family. I learned new skills like painting, ceramics, printmaking, embroidery and office-admin skills. I feel very lucky to have Carol in our community. Now I am an empowered lady, I know I can make a stand for my art…. Sometimes we do work that heals. It touches some wounds” (personal communication, Aug, 2012).
Lindiswe Gedze:

“We need food, drink and shelter because as artists we need a place where we can do our art, and some breaks for food and drinks to refresh our brain, and we need to have money for things. Protection is needed because of crime. As an artist you need support from your family, and you need to make relationships with other artists. In the end you need to have a goal, and lift up your status. As an independent artist you need to be responsible to other young artists. You need to learn and practice, and it’s good to know yourself, and have confidence in what you do. Beauty is good ... You need to grow up, and make changes, and have a voice, because you want to be a big artist or independent person or group. Help is good, especially in young people, to make them busy, and give them chances of making money with their hands … As an artist I want to … develop my community” (personal communication, Aug, 2012).

The artists of Hamburg mention many changes both personal and communal using their personal language to describe transformations. All agree that many of their personal and collective needs have been met through art, including economic empowerment and self-actualization. Although no artists actually use the word ‘transformation’, other words have been used to describe the phenomenon of positive change, both internal and external, such as money, food, shelter, connection, independence, story telling, voice, authenticity, security, stability, relationship, respect, reputation, pride, dignity, beauty, stress relief, belonging, status, skills, self expression, self actualization, confidence, motivation, happiness, worthiness, travel, networking, empowerment, healing, mentorship. One artist, Thobiso Nkane, says art has ‘saved’ him.
6.2 The art administrator’s conclusions

After gathering artists’ conclusions on how art transforms people, I compare the artists’ conclusions with those of the art project’s community of administrators, social workers and art therapists. Although most administrators and therapists are also artists themselves, most of them now feel the pressing need to focus just on community development rather than personal development. This group of organizers is now technically one step removed from the subjective experience of actually making art, and is concerned more with the facilitation and administration of the art project for others. I suggest that as they witness transformation in others, their perspectives reflect a slightly broader social awareness of how art transforms communities.

Each administrator’s conclusion on how transformation has happened in Hamburg is several hours in length, so their answers are summarized here. I have chosen to select and highlight only a few salient points from each interview, as every one of the interviewees reiterates that art has transformed their community on many levels. In order to create a polylogue, I have included all these voices although I have edited for repetition as much as possible. Excerpts do not therefore reflect the length or depth of the recorded interviews, but rather reflect a summary of the ways in which people transform through art, once again, using a personal choice of descriptors. I then compare and contrast the conclusions of the community with Maslow’s and Mezirow’s theories, and draw further conclusions of my own.

Eunice Mangwane, HIV educator and manager at the Keiskamma Health project: told me that the art project played a big role in job creation, in women realizing they were creative, and in their becoming more financially independent. Art created a community,
started a dialogue, educated people about HIV, combatted myths, and overcame silence. Art moved people out of denialism and into disclosure. Art helped people overcome fears and gave people the strength to go for testing. It reunited families, built trust, and released sadness.

**Marialda Marais, volunteer art educator for the Keiskamma Art Project:** shared her ideas with me that the art gave the village an identity of which they could be proud by differentiating this village from others. The women were able to earn a living, provide for their children, be creative, and regain a sense of dignity and accomplishment after the devastation of the epidemic. She felt that art helped people face their fear of possible ostricization once they had disclosed their status. The art-making, such as the *Keiskamma Altar-piece*, was a cry ‘in the wilderness’, an expression of the rage the village felt around being abandoned by the government, with its policy of denialism at the peak of the pandemic. It helped people protest their political situation and articulate their private and communal pain. It gave the village a focus, helped build a strong sense of community. Their story was witnessed, and audiences could ‘see’ what the community had to ‘say’.

**Nozetti Makhabulo, artist and Embroidery Manager for the Keiskamma Art Project:** said the art provided income, which meant food for the children, and electricity for the houses. It made adults feel better too, through pride, self-esteem, and the development of new skills. Art alleviated people’s poverty and sadness, and brought them closer together, enabling them to share their stories.

**Ida Nozipho, artist and Community Developer:** told me art helps people find answers. It shows how they feel, and enables them to share stories of survival by demonstrating experiences, and ways of thinking. Art gives people a voice, and helps them to talk about
things when there are no words. It gives them space to deal with themselves, helps them express themselves, to get a distance between themselves and their feelings. Art is like a mirror. It has helped her see herself, to see a way forward, and therefore help her survive. “When I am thinking of art, and thinking of transformation, they go together, because one gets a ‘start’ with art. One sees herself growing, which is part of transformation, or transformation itself, and there is a future where one sees herself going. With art, one can trace the journey of transformation”.

**Atwell Ndoldo, Community leader and singer:** has told me that you can tell your story through any art, especially through singing. And that this process gives people a lot of meaning and joy.

**Gaby Nuess, Architect and accommodation owner:** feels strongly that she would prefer to see money spent on education or food-growing schemes rather than on art projects. She acknowledges however that the community is strong due to the art, but she is concerned that the Arts Retreat Center (being built as a government project during my visits) will create division, and will not be self-sustaining and that funding is creating a culture of dependency. She also has some ethical concerns regarding the mixing of funding and business with art, especially in a small village with only one employer, and one agency that brings in most of the funding. There are some problems with nepotism.

**Gloria Steeman, Independent Embroiderer and accommodation owner:** indicated how important it was for women to be able to earn their own money and put food on the table through art. She says “You must see the women I am working with. They are proud, because once they get the money…. It’s a wonderful thing…Women can do all sorts of things with their hands. They can make beads … mats, baskets, out of reeds.” She also
ments that the community has developed many other programs from the art, such as
the hospice, afterschool care, music programs, educational programs. “It comes, all that,
from the mother body, the art… It helps the community a lot”. She also mentions how the
art has helped people to disclose their HIV status and to tell their story. She, too,
mentions that ethical leadership is very important, when money is earned by the whole
community, or when funding or expensive equipment is involved.

Merran Roy, Art Therapist and Creative Programs Developer for the Keiskamma
Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program: has explained to me how she is
fascinated by the chance art materials offer for revisiting opportunities for preverbal
development. She says both children and adults develop a sense of self by exploring the
impact they have on the world. Art has the capacity to offer learning, especially in pre-
cognitive and pre-verbal skills. She tells me that art exposes children to their own
creativity, which later helps with problem solving and self-esteem, as people learn to
impact their environment. Art helps people express their human potential. She says
creativity is evidence of being human, and demonstrates beauty, as well as being good for
tourism and business. It can be a tool for community development, which starts with
personal development. She feels that developing higher levels of focus and engagement
allow people to be both transformed and transported. It helps children differentiate
themselves from their world, thereby developing a sense of an individual self. Only once
people have individuated, can they change their environment. Art helps adults engage
with their experiences, and helps develop a different relationship with their suffering. Art
empowers people to adopt a potent, creative approach to life in general.
Jennifer Hoyer, musician and Director for the Keiskamma Music Academy: has mentioned that art helps put people in touch with themselves. It helps people discover who they are and what they think. Through art, people can express pre-verbal knowledge. Art helps break through stereotypical roles. As they begin to make progress with their art, they feel good about themselves, as language, self-discipline and time-management skills also increase. They develop planning, thinking, organizing, as well as artistic rhetoric. They learn how to concentrate and communicate. They learn that sustained attention to one task will have a result. Through art, people can learn to express an individual sense of “I”, to express disagreement, to form opinions, to locate their own dislikes or likes. Travelling, connecting and interacting with other professionals is also an empowering by-product of the art-making.

Aileen Puhlmann, Project Manager for the Artists’ Retreat developed in Hamburg by ASPIRE: has shared her opinion that the art program in Hamburg is essentially the anchor around which all the other development will be built. The development agency identified this community as being creative, and ready for an infrastructure upgrade. Because art is a very important part of the vision for Hamburg, ASPIRE’s well-intended decision was to development the art aspect of the village further, with the Retreat Center. She identifies art as being good for tourism, profits and development, but that the biggest challenge was to get people to understand that economic benefit was not in having a free Arts Center, but in the other spinoffs she hopes it will create, such as increased traffic to Hamburg, the possibility of food sustainability, and the creation of a real market for fresh produce in Hamburg. There would be improvement in tourism, and agriculture, and some
of the service industries. Hamburg had created their own, unique identity, which ASPIRE hoped to develop into a destination, through the Artist’s Retreat.

**Thabang Meslane, Executive Director of the Keiskamma Trust:** tells me that people can put their thoughts into art, communicate their pain, share their dreams even through they might be illiterate. Women, some of whom came from very humble backgrounds, were now able to communicate with people across the world. Art helped tell Hamburg’s story of poverty and HIV - what the disease has done to their lives and their communities. Their voices were represented in the tapestries. Especially the *Altar-pieces*. Before the art, people had never thought about what they could do personally to create their own livelihoods. Art has given people a sense of choice, and has brought them dignity. They were able to see that they were human beings. They were able to contribute some money to their households, and plan ahead, and get stability. He tells me art can conscientise people to be aware of their environment. The art is good for poverty alleviation, and helps to communicate the anger of the people about the shortage or unavailability of medicine. Art is advocacy at it’s best, for the environment, and for children, who are really affected by the HIV and AIDS, especially those who are ‘slow learners’. He identifies the biggest challenges as quality control of the product, and finding markets in which to sell the product.

**Onati Mtshemla, PRO for the Keiskamma Trust:** tells me that art has raised income levels, as well as the profile of Hamburg. It helps with tourism and cultural exchange. Some people feel they now have better self worth, because they have done beautiful art work. Art helps boost self-esteem. The art also tells the story of the town itself and the
devastation that HIV has caused in the community. She feels that art is both education and health. Through art, people are healed because they can express themselves.

**Magda Greyling, Fiber Artist and Social Worker for the Keiskamma Trust:** says art brings in money, but also helps with community issues of family abuse, sexual abuse, rape, depression, sadness, hopelessness, and alcohol, because art brings self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. When people feel good about themselves, they can protect themselves better. Art addresses most of the physical and psychological needs in Maslow’s Pyramid (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1971), including, in ‘ascending order’ on the pyramid, income, a sense of belonging and accomplishment, and a sense of self-actualization, and helping others.

**Collette Tilley, Financial Director of the Keiskamma Trust:** says art sells and therefore it helps sustain the community education and health programs. Art has also been a protest statement about the devastation that HIV/AIDS has caused. The Art here incorporates vignettes of people’s lives. People look at their own environment through art. She says art cannot be separated from the economics, due to the economic independence it affords, even on a small scale. Art is important for female empowerment because it develops skills, and helps women express themselves while producing something that is good quality, and beautiful to look at. She identifies finding markets as the biggest problem for the art project.

**Annette Woudstra, Writer and Managing Director of the Keiskamma Trust:** says art gives attention to individual lives. Telling stories is at the heart of art, and it honors people’s lives, which the system of apartheid had taken away. She says telling a story through art is especially important in South Africa for this reason. Art encourages people
to look at their surroundings, really ‘see’ their community. She feels the biggest benefit is that people come to understand that their own contribution has a point. Income and work are especially beneficial to women, because work in the home is never really honored. The art project honors those things, of being a parent, and a strong mother. The fact that someone has come and said that these things are important, that their birds are important, and they are beautiful, and worthy of putting on cushions, means that their daily lives are important, that their daily stories matter.

Carol Baker Hofmeyr, Artist, doctor, educator and former Director of the Keiskamma Trust: tells me that even though art doesn’t make anyone better physically, it helps emotionally. It gives people something positive to do, so they don’t feel so impotent in the face of HIV. With the art project, health workers could talk to people, because they were not so ‘shut down’ in fear. Making the ‘history tapestry’ was healing on many levels. It helped people make sense of things. It allowed people to say, “I have a right to be here, and to live here”. The art helps people feel part of a bigger story, belonging to a passage of community over time. It imparts a sense of identity, of belonging. The Altarpiece, where Hamburg is depicted as reborn, helped people to envision a ‘future’ Hamburg. They could visualize the village without illness. Behind that one image is a whole story, Carol says. It helps people talk about HIV, and come together. The process of working together had bonded them to become more of a community. Carol suggests that as the artists and audiences see the art, they recognize themselves and know they are important enough to be depicted. When their story gets told through art, then they ‘become’ someone. Through art, lives are witnessed. In Carol’s view, the artists are now a completely different group of people than they were
before the art-making. Art is work, but it’s more than that, she says. It develops a sense of pride. It opens up a dialogue for people, helps them to grieve and remember their loved ones.

Although all participants agree that art has transformed Hamburg, it should be noted that several participants had constructive criticisms to offer the art project. One participant suggested that, in her opinion, art education should not come before ‘general skills’ education, such as gardening, building or mechanics. Community artists mentioned the problem of the constant need for funding, and new markets, which brings a culture of dependance. Another felt that artists should endeavor to move towards more self-reliance. One participant felt that ethics around money management should be more carefully observed, especially where large amounts of funding, and expensive equipment such as sewing machines, are involved. Another felt that villagers should be consulted about the kinds of art projects being initiated - that participants should have more say. As critical reflection is an important aspect of transformation (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010), it is important to note that thoughtful voices are now reflecting a more critical shift in Hamburg.

6.3 The Researcher’s conclusions

6.3.1 Transformative art is non-heirarchical and non-linear

The intention behind my visit to Hamburg was to explore the question of how art and art-making can transform people and their communities. Before arriving in Hamburg, I had found only two existing models for transformation that could possibly be applied in this research site, both of which suggest orderly ‘progressions’ for
transformation: the linear revisioning of meaning through discomfort to resolution and integration (Mezirow and associates, 2000/2010), and the hierarchically meeting of needs from physiological to self-actualization (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Mezirow and his associates (2000, 2010, p.xii) for example suggest “one does not return to the old perspective once a transformation has occurred”, indicating the path of transformation is unidirectional. However, after becoming acquainted with the Hamburg story over several years, I conclude that these two models have turned out to be valid but limited in some ways for this case study. For example, both of these theorists focus on individual rather than collective transformations. Neither included viewpoints from indigenous, grass roots communities of women in Africa, whose transformations seem to follow a different pattern than those mapped out by these two linear hierarchical models.

In my view, the trajectory of transformation for many individuals in Hamburg follows Mezirow’s 10 stage path up to a point: a path through discomfort, to revisional meaning making, to change and integration of new action, meanings and identities. However, Hamburg’s trajectory also included the building of many collective capacities. These include: the ability to talk about subversive topics; question power structures; develop new hand skills and aesthetic trainings often thought of as women’s work; end domestic isolation; educate through art about HIV/AIDS, including the use of medication and condoms, and the need for being tested; build community outreach, including communication with the outside world; the production of exhibitions, and videos; and leaving home to travel. These criteria of community connection and advocacy, overlooked by the two more masculine models used here as a framework, seem to be
more organic and rhizomatic than individual, linear and progressive, and perhaps therefore reflect more feminine values.

As Mezirow suggests, transformations in Hamburg can be attributed in part to grave discomfort, but I would add that transformation in this site is also due to the introduction of four ‘outsider’ elements: 1) ARV’s, which brought physical change, at the micro level; 2) volunteer mentors such as Carol, Eunice, Marialda and others who brought educational change at the medial level; 3) organized art projects and counselling, which brought emotional change at the medial level both to individuals and audiences; 4) Funding for the Keiskamma Trust from PEPFAR, CIDA and others, that brought economic change at the macro level, in terms of medical care, projects, buildings, and trade.

All these interventions brought relief in some form to the grave discomfort of a pandemic. This was not a linear transformation, however, in ten neat stages, but was organic, sporadic, and involved a whole community of people bringing their skills to bear to create change through art.

This case study therefore expands upon masculine models of linear, individual transformation to include a feminine, rhizomatic, collective experience. Although I deliberately avoid reducing my own research to a ‘model’, I do suggest a metaphor of “resonance”, or rhythmic circles of expanded care to describe the transformation in Hamburg. This feminine model is less individualistic, heirarchical, linear, or static than the two models of transformation that I have loosely used for comparison, and it suggests a multidimensional inclusion of the vulnerable self into an expanding and empowered circle of on-going, call-and-responsiveness.
The word ‘transformation’ is a gerund that merges verb with noun, and in this feminine model of transformation, the ‘action’ part is emphasised - the doing of individual or community upliftment - rather than the non-doing of experiencing states of individual bliss of, say, the meditative path. In Hamburg, transformation happens daily amongst the diapers and the vegetable peelings. Transformation is part of community life and is not a separate path of solitary confinement or individual transcendence of the world, but is rather a criss-crossing of paths, that lead to improved community health on all levels: physical, psychological, social and economic. People on this transformative path are very much engaged with the world however ill they are.

By basing my perceptions of transformation on the conclusions of those experiencing their own transformation through art projects, and those women mentoring other women through collective art-making, this study expands on the existing lens of individual transformation through transcendance, and complexifies this view by acknowledging a collective, indigenous, female, African lens. In being with women performing their own transformations horizontally - women who meet their own growth needs, while also meeting the growth needs of others - this case study finds Mezirow’s linear model to be valid but partial.

This case study also finds Maslow’s pyramid of needs to be valid but partial. Maslow suggested that self actualization occurs sequentially and heirarchically, and that self actualization is only for those whose basic needs have first been met. Most of the participants in this study did describe meeting their basic needs as a vital part of transformation. However, not having basic needs met at first, did not prevent the community of Hamburg from initiating their own transformation. Transformation
happened in Hamburg, despite deprivation of those basic needs of the body described by
Maslow as food, shelter, safety and health. Self actualization occurred in this situation
concurrently with a shortage of many basic support systems. In order to meet lower-tier
needs, higher-tier needs were developed first, not the other way round. A sick and
struggling community marshalled its creative capacities to make art, thus immediately
addressing some higher-tier needs (mentioned by the community as voice, identity,
meaning, dignity, and pride), which only later, generated physical resources that met
lower-tier needs (food, shelter, medicines, condoms, and much later, funding etc).
Interestingly, these lower-tier needs are not generally mentioned by the literature on the
transformation process. Perhaps household issues such as food and shelter are generally
not in question for Western academics. Females in this village however, valued an
organic, rhizomatic, transformation that emphasized community, connectivity, economy
and outreach; whereas the existing literature focuses on isolated, individual attainment -
linear progressions, and hierarchies of certain states of mind. Transformative experiences
can perhaps therefore be viewed as cultural, gendered, and context specific.

It is important to note that this case study’s findings of a subversion of both
Mezirow’s and Maslow’s thinking on transformation highlights a lack of inclusion of the
female, indigenous experience in the extant literature. This case study therefore highlights
that existing literature on transformation represents an insensitivity towards gendered
structures of power, and the feminization of poverty. This project therefore includes
voices that represent diverse female experience, especially the under-employed, under-
served, and under-represented. This case study concludes that transformation can be
experienced differently, by men versus women, by academics versus people beyond the
academy, and by those on a path to ‘transcend’ the world versus those on a path to fully ‘engage’ with it. The transformative criteria mentioned by Hamburg such as employment, respect, dignity, empowerment and voice are probably criteria taken for granted by most academics who write about transformation, who also happen to be mostly White and mostly male. Perhaps transformation is rooted in economic structures of power, so that men and women start their transformations from different places in the hierarchies of our world. In fact ‘basic needs’ are often gender specific, which Maslow did not account for with his pyramid. For women, change has to happen more deeply – from a lower position down the pyramid, including the practical domestic issues of independence, such as the ability to feed children, practice safe sex, and gather together in community. Despite the capacity for women to start making change by first finding a voice (a higher-tier capacity), change ultimately has to be all the way down for women, including physiological needs, such as safety, to make transformation stable and permanent.

For the women of Hamburg, art voicing was found to be transformative of patriarchy and political silencing, which are both non-issues for most men writing about transformation. This study therefore reveals a more indigenous, female point of view from a country struggling to meet basic human rights issues, and gender equality, and from a country sometimes referred to as ‘third world’, by most northerly nations.

Although Maslow’s and Mezirow’s theories on transformation are found to be valid but partial, it is noted that the existing literature does include many similes for transformation not found in the broad variety of similes to be found in Hamburg. The preferred language from mostly White, mostly male academics for transformation
includes: human development; self actualization; mastering optimal states; meeting human potential; living with more flow; peak experiences; ever-refined needs and motivations; self-revision; structural shifts in consciousness; moral and identity maturation; emergent, self-assembling dynamic neuronal systems; human evolution; more inclusive identity; learning through critical reflection; reformulation of meanings and perspectives; more discriminating and integrative understandings of one’s experiences; reconstructing dominant narratives; and conscientization. In the language of philosophy and science, it was noted earlier that transformation is understood as change at the deepest core, of what the Greeks called the ‘self’. In Transformative Learning theory, transformation is understood as change at the core structures of consciousness. My findings show that, although most of these criteria have been met at various levels in Hamburg, the word ‘transformation’ itself, or the above complex descriptors are not used by the participants themselves. The artists’ and administrators’ descriptors emphasised less rarified constructions, such as practical changes in domestic economies, safe sex, voice and outreach. I conclude however, that transformation itself remains hard to reduce to only one word, to one set of criteria, or to something stable over time, and occurs despite the descriptors or lack of them. The terms and processes of transformation seem to be race, gender and class dependant. This study therefore suggests a more inclusive language for transformation, that includes descriptors that are more sensitive to diversity and structures of power. The vocabulary of transformation is broad and is as diverse as the community experiencing it.

I myself chose to define transformation at the beginning of this study as the evolutionary movement toward more inclusive forms of individual and community
integration and empowerment (see chapter 2). After this study in Hamburg, I conclude that this definition remains accurate, because ‘more inclusive’ suggests transformation specific to each community’s diverse situational needs.

6.3.2 Transformative art can be communal as well as personal

As has been noted, Western literature on transformation emphasizes the evolution of individual “paradigms”, while Eastern literature emphasizes individuals attaining more inclusive “identities”. Both views are accurate, but partial, and I would like to now unpack the findings of this case study, to include communal transformation for indigenous women. This project offers understandings of transformation as a broader phenomenon, including educational, social and economic aspects as well. This study therefore adds a new gendered, socio-economic, communal reading, as well as a somatic personal reading. It takes transformation from the medial viewpoint valued at this time, into both the micro dimension of the ‘body’, and the macro dimension of the ‘body’s community’.

This project includes a physiological reading of transformation, and acknowledges that transformation can occur on the inside, at the micro-level of the body, an area often overlooked by existing literature. Transformative changes occur at the micro-level as synaptic connections and a shift in brain chemistry. Malchiodi (2007) for example says mood improvements through art-making can be due to self-soothing, repetitive actions, increased serotonin levels and a shift to the parasympathetic state (Malchiodi, 2007, p.14), and not just as meaning revisions and new integrated identities mentioned by educators or psychologists. This reflects that transformative phenomena are
dynamic and flow in both directions, from the micro to the macro, through the medial, and vice versa. Transformation is invisible at the micro level beyond the neurology labs, and is often invisible at the medial level of learning, but is most visible at the macro level, where one can ‘see’ it and quantify it in terms of new skills, improved health, economies and education, etc., the kinds of evidences CIDA requires for its statistics on change. Transformation at this macro level of environment and economy, includes impacts on community, new awarenesses of the world, and wider circles of audience. Transformation is more of a two-way, sometimes simultaneous flow through the body, rather than a linear, hierarchical pyramid or a ten-stage progression. As far as I know, transformation has not been previously understood as concentric radiations from the body as a primal site – a flow of energy into, out of, and through the micro, medial or macro fields.

While resisting reduction of transformation to a radiant, energetic model, I do however, suggest that transformation can be understood to be a relational, ecology of change, or a harmonic response within a field of “resonance”, much like a chord or drum that starts to resonate with the sounds around it. Transformation in the mostly White, mostly male literature is rarely understood to be resonant, or radiating concentric circles of more inclusive communal- and self-care. It is not thought of as a ‘horizontal’ movement within a community. Transformation is generally understood in the models I have used to be a sequential, hierarchical, ‘vertical’ notion of ‘higher’, ever refined, individual states reaching one step at a time towards the transcendent. This may be true for some men, (not all), perhaps while some women take care of the home front. The Buddha, for example, was able to pursue his transformational path, by abandonning his
wife and children, for a life of enlightenment on the road, while Jesus chose not to enter domesticity at all, as many of his needs were taken care of by the women around him, as well as his disciples. For these men, and for many of the yogis in the Hindu tradition, enlightenment often includes going into a desert or a forest alone, to achieve individual, internal capacities, away from domestic life and the world. Women generally do not have this priviledged option, and have developed a way to transform while producing and caring for others, and while being fully engaged in the life of the community around them.

Women experiencing transformation seem to increase their circle of care, thus transmitting their transformations to other community members, through their stories, their art, their womens’ skills, and by creating community development programmes. This radiating circle of increased care at the community level is certainly evidenced in the children of Hamburg, who have also benefitted from the new critical reflections of the women who now raise them. Young orphans, slow learners, and those who are ill, now have shelter, food and education funded through the Trust’s activities. The Trust employs an art therapist focused solely on stimulating creativity amongst vulnerable children, who are also fed a meal a day by the Trust. Adolescents, too, are focused upon, in an after-school program, and can gain knowledge about the spread of disease and safe sexual practices that save lives. They have access to condoms, computers, and career councilling, and may in the future have access to an independent school. I would suggest too, that as the adults around these vulnerable children and teens transform and understand their own ability to impact their world, the next generation will be affected by
the role-modeling of a growing adult agency. Mezirow and Associates (2000/2010) suggest that

maturity in childhood is understood as a ‘formative’ process that includes assimilation of beliefs, concerning oneself and the world including socialization and learning adult roles. Adulthood itself is perceived as a ‘transformative’ process; involving alienation from previous roles, reframing new perspectives, and renengaging life with a greater degree of self determination… a praxis, a dialectic in which understanding and action intersect to produce an altered state of being” (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010, p. xii).

Women do not generally seek a path to transformation that includes forsaking community, for being alone can sometimes mean being unsafe in the world. However, the children who have been left “alone” in this community by adults who have died are especially vulnerable, and are helped by the art project in many ways, including to process their loss and do ‘memory’ work. Memory work is important in Hamburg, as a way to process grief, remember significant adults, and as a way to offer ancestors their due, of recognition through ritual. Carol says

we created a memorial wall… of all the people who died in our hospice, with an embroidery of one of Picasso’s Weeping Women that the children had done…. We did workshops on grief with the kids, and they drew women with tears like Picasso’s women. The women embroidered pillow slips, with the first name and the age of each person who died in our care… And they covered one whole wall in the hall. … And I remember how moving it was, when we hired busses for the [exhibition] opening. People went to the wall to look for their relatives, and
remembered them … We also had the kids making pots. Each pot would be a remembrance of someone. We need to remember those people, who they were, and why they were important. So now I emphasise more the memory than the rage (Carol Baker Hofmeyer, interview, Aug, 2012).

It seems that female transformation in Hamburg includes the nurturing of transformation within the next generation, as well as connecting with a departed generation, a flow from one generation to the next, merging and connecting the living and the dead in artful ways.

6.3.3 Transformative art is ‘voicing’

So how is transformation ‘transmitted’ to others by women? It is important to note that at the core of a metaphor of radiating circles of resonant care that reflects the more female experience of transformation in this study, is the body. And at the core of the body is the esophagus, or the site of the voice. Voice is technically understood to be political presence in the literature, but it is also embodied sound. The body is an acoustic chamber for change. Speaking out is especially important in a community of non-writers and non-readers, where one’s physicality is essential to political presence. Without denying the importance of economic and health changes in Hamburg, which is the ‘visible’ macro level of quantifiable transformation, I would balance this with the suggestion that radiating transformation can start with the capacity to voice, in this case through art. The capacity to develop a voice seems to me to be the central, positive transformative occurrence for women in this location. As voice has been developed here, first through images, and then through words, micro, medial and macro level changes
have also occurred. This is the way audiences, funders and governments are reached, children are taught, teens are mentored, concerns are raised, and disempowering patriarchal and colonial discourses are changed.

I am left wondering, based on this case study, whether art-based interventions can be a worthwhile first (if not exclusive) strategy in working toward community transformations. As has been mentioned, silencing of the voice in South Africa has occurred at many intersecting levels across recent history, including legislation, denialism, fear, shame, violence, and gendered, economic and racial hierarchies. This geo-cultural-political silencing occurs through inequities in power. Art, as a voicing practice in Hamburg, has disrupted these heirarchies. Women here have ‘outed’ themselves through their art-voice, which has led to demands for change – for testing, treatment, safe sex practices, and new community views on being positive. Voicing, a higher-tier need, has led to more basic, physiological, lower-tier needs being met. If self-actualizing through voice is primary to physiological transformation occurring, then the feminine route to transformation may well require a remodelling of Maslow’s theory, placing the development of voice as critical and central to other radiant changes for women.

The artists in Hamburg have experienced other interesting subversions too. As has been noted, self-silencing can be understood as an act of protection, in order to prevent ostricization and avoid the discomfort of alienation from community, so vital to women. In terms of HIV, not asking or telling can seem safer. However, through making art and working together, isolated silence gave way to community voicing, by creatively facing the fear of ostricization together. In Hamburg, ostricization did not occur as a result of disclosure. Instead, the opposite occurred. Community was developed, which
now includes other villages, as well as international audiences. By resisting external and internal pressures to silence themselves, Hamburg has declared its identity as ‘positive’ in so many ways. Disseminating previously ‘silenced’ stories through sewing (*Keiskamma Altarpiece*, see plates 22 to 25, and 35 to 41; and *Keiskamma Guernica*, see plate 42) represents an artful resistance to taboo and shame, and an act of deeply courageous (May, 1994) voicing.

It is my conclusion that visual voicing was the central act that led to many further rhizomatic changes. By telling its story through tapestry, and then by taking advantage of digital media, for example, this community continues to ‘out’ itself to the rest of the world, and to face, feel and share fears and ‘dis-ease’ around disease, to wider and wider audiences. By becoming transparent and interconnected with wider circles of ‘others’, this community has taken significant steps towards reversing the repression of shame and isolation, through communication. To date, the criteria of visual voicing and outreach have not been mentioned in white male literature. Voice is not generally highly valued for transformation in a male world, where perhaps it is a ‘given’ part of masculine privilege, and where community is not so highly valued.

### 6.3.4 Transformative art is empowerment through vulnerability

The transformative process in Hamburg could not have happened without the community as a whole “owning” a vulnerable identity and voicing it through images. As Carol says in her interview

In the beginning there was such a stigma attached to HIV/AIDS that people would rather their relative died, or they would rather die themselves, than have their
illness disclosed. And parents would rather have a child die than have everyone know that the child had AIDS (Carol Baker Hofmeyr, interview, Aug, 2012).

When vulnerable people disclose through images, whether in the West, East, North or South, that which is intensely private becomes public. Artists turn themselves inside out in order to “transform their suffering into art, their art into awareness, and their awareness into action” (Roth, 1998). Transformation as a ‘group’ helps people face individual vulnerabilities. There is strength in numbers for the vulnerable, especially women, children and the sick. As vulnerability is not of high value in a male world, transformation through vulnerability is not mentioned in existing literature. The paradoxical trajectory of empowerment through vulnerability seems to be a feminine route to transformation, which could benefit the existing understanding of isolated, individual self-actualizations through climbing to higher tiers of disembodied consciousness.

Remaining vulnerable and operating at a human scale will be important in Hamburg. Bottom-up action in the form of vulnerable artists making images from their own authentic vulnerability, has so far been more successful than top-down action in the form of an institutional, government-funded Arts Retreat. While transformation in Hamburg has occurred at both the individual and collective level, attempts to institutionalize transformation may in fact fail. It seems the organic, grassroots actions inspired by enlightened, female leadership (such as Carol, Eunice, and Marialda) has to date, had more transformative impact than large-scale, infrastructural investments made by bureaucrats in the way of upgrades and expansions.
It is important to note that levels of vulnerability, as well as the rate of change, are both factors in whether learning is transformative or not. As has been noted, ‘change’ can occur suddenly, as a result of a dramatic event such as a new virus, or gradually, with a slow, steady unfolding over time, influenced for example, by the leadership of a benign Trust, or a consistently-paced art education. Depending on the intensity and frequency of change, it can be experienced by the vulnerable as over-whelming, under-whelming, or ideally, as a manageable experience. Organized transformative art-learning is an optimal, supportive way to manage and integrate rates of change. With supportive and sensitive curriculae, the discomfort of change to the psyche can be paced and processed. New meanings and more adapted identities can be integrated more successfully as rates of changes are ‘managed’ through curriculae.

In Hamburg, it is art that has been successfully managed as a multi-modal framing for new curricula, addressing voice, identity, health, and environment. Art can be infinitely inclusive in its diverse subject matter, and so is adaptable to any community or individual issue. I will now unpack art as ‘organized, manageable change’.

6.3.5 Transformative curricula support ongoing creative acts

In Hamburg, change has sometimes been slow, sometimes fast, sometimes manageable, sometimes overwhelming (especially for orphans and vulnerable populations experiencing interconnected loss of adult family, health, and support systems). In this village change has sometimes reached crises level. There was no controlling an ideal pace of change in this situation, as mentioned by Eunice in the story of Hamburg’s experience of the pandemic. However, art-making is something that can be
controlled. It is active and manual, giving the physical sense of being able to do something positive and beautiful about overwhelming change. When given the sense that the activity of art matters, which is the gift Carol brought to Hamburg, art is healing at the deepest emotional levels, as is corroborated by art therapy literature (McNiff, 1998, 2004; Knill, Levine & Levine, 2005; Levine & Levine, 2005; Malchiodi, 2007, 2012; Darly & Heath, 2008; Rappaport, 2014). Carol, through the Keiskamma Trust and through her creative curricula, was able to link art with both meaning-making and health services. Even though resources (medical supplies, time and people) have always been limited in Hamburg, the presence of art sustained people in their pursuit of hope and health, just as health-support sustained people in their art-making. The relationship in Hamburg between art and health has been symbiotic, which speaks to complex systems that are responsive and resonant with each other.

Initially, transformation in Hamburg was beyond any one’s control, due to tragic circumstances. Later, transformation occurred through deliberate choices made for certain creative activities such as art. The more ‘proactive’ the transformative learning became in Hamburg, through organized art curricula (such as ‘HIV/AIDS outrage’, ‘village life’, ‘local plants’, or ‘environmental cleanups using recycled plastic bags’) the more control the community gained over perspectives, identities, meanings and economies. Although not yet fully understood through words, transformative learning in Hamburg has now became a self-induced, experiential act of “consciousness revision”, supported through organised curriculae, both at the individual and community levels. Thanks to Carol, art became an organized curriculum for change management.
The parliament of South Africa now proudly hangs Hamburg’s tapestries, not only for their aesthetic value, but also because Hamburg shared what is a collective South African story. Story-telling through an organized creative practice has played a key role in Hamburg’s model of transformation, yet this is a method that is not valued in Maslow’s or Mezirow’s models of transformation. It is also important to note that a growing ability to tell a story creatively and collectively, supported by organized curriculae, was evident in this community, despite vulnerability, illness, weakness, hunger and economic hardship. Many participants mentioned the joy that creative acts brought them, despite daily challenges. This study reveals how vital it is that organized creativity and story-telling be considered essential for the wellbeing of all communities, not only for those whose first-tier needs are well met, as Maslow suggests. Creativity and story-telling are not only acts of leisure or privilege. I would suggest that wo/men cannot live ‘by bread alone’. Food, shelter, safety, stories and creativity are all vital ingredients for a healthy physiology.

This dissertation may be the first to compare notions of transformation across Western, Eastern and Indigenous Southern viewpoints, but it is not the first to note the connection between organized art and rural development. Louise Hall (2006), for example, worked with rural craftswomen in South Africa, with an NGO known as DWEBA (Dynamic Women’s Enterprise in Business and Art), which also means ‘to draw’ in isiZulu. Hall (2006), who adopted a holistic, visual approach to income generation, notes that visual language, used as a participatory learning tool, can contribute a response to some of the challenges facing South Africans in particular. She emphasises that “extremely high unemployment rates, and the scourge of HIV/AIDS,
place a critical premium on successful and sustainable income-generating projects involving women” (p.4).

The Hamburg Art Project uses tapestry to accomplish the same goals as DWEBA uses drawing. But it must be stressed that although Art Projects can organize, inspire and fund women, NGO’s cannot ‘develop’ women, or meet their higher-tier needs. Transformation occurs by the participants’ own efforts, commitment and creativity. Mezirow and Associates for example, suggest that

By becoming critically aware of the context – biographical, historical, cultural – of their beliefs and feelings about themselves and their roles in society, … women [can] affect change in the way they tacitly structure their assumptions and expectations … a learned transformation (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010, pxii).

As Carol says in her interview,

Your story gets told, and then you become someone … There was a photograph taken…when we put up the Keiskamma tapestry in Grahamstown, which went twice around the main room…. The women’s arms are up, like this, and it just shows such a sense of pride in being there, in being somebody people look at (Carol Baker Hofmeyr, interview, Aug, 2012).

At the beginning of the pandemic, Carol asked “who is crucified here? It’s the young wives that are getting infected, and dying, and being left with children, and the grandmothers” (Carol Baker Hofmeyr, interview, Aug, 2012). However, the community’s
new discourse includes raised arms, not for crucification, but for pride and power. Raised arms are an embodied, gestural voice demanding recognition for such things as the use of condoms for self protection in a patriarchal culture; the right to exist safely and without ostricization; the right to admit that a loved one might in fact have died from this dis-owned disease; the right to grieve for those loved ones who died from AIDS; the right to demand government attention including medical care, clinics, medication and education; the need to assess and care for minors who may be ill or orphaned; and the capacity to visualize a future beyond the pandemic, that might include hope, dignity and freedom of discourse. Mezirow’s suggestion, that transformation is achieved through a process of “critical reflection … of uncovering power dynamics in relationships and their hegemonic assumptions…. of assessing ideological assumptions” (1991, p.xvi) is reflected in many very practical ways in Hamburg.

6.3.6 Gender safety in transformative spaces

For transformation to occur, and in order to build community, organized, physical space is needed. The studio space in Hamburg has become a safe community place for women and their children to gather, and to hold their discourses away from possible patriarchal attitudes and the isolation of home. The studio space also provides a place where emotional support and education can occur. Carol says that the studio space itself is one of the best things that happened in the whole project. The women never met each other at all (before). … The process of working together bonded them to become more of a community…. It also helped me to take on those works when no one else would have (Carol Baker Hofmeyr, interview Aug, 2012).
This is the space where Eunice can hold her educational discourses, where mentors can come to share new skills. Yet some participants, like Gloria Steeman, (interview, July, 2012) have broken away from this main studio space to explore their own leadership and form smaller sub-studios in their own homes. In my opinion, this act of self-differentiation represents a major transformation in Hamburg. Mezirow and Associates (2000/2010, p.xii) found “that solidarity, empathy and trust are prerequisites to the learners commitment to a transformative learning group, but such involvement must not become one of unconditional identification, when this deters further transformative learning in new contexts and toward still broader perspectives.” Steeman’s group has exhibited a level of independence, by beginning to motivate for their own themes and projects outside of the Trust’s Art Projects. As agency develops, people become more self-authoring both of their art and of their lives, and develop “a capacity to judge expectations and claims made on them” (Mezirow, 1991, p.xv). It is important to note that for the ongoing cycle for transformation to occur, there must be ongoing criticality and formations of new identities and meanings. Mezirow (1991, p.xv) points out that some cultures encourage criticality while others do not. As we have seen in Chapter 5, South Africans of all colors have over the years been discouraged from developing critical discourse. So Steeman’s break-away group shows a new, developing criticality, first role-modeled for them by the community ‘outsiders’ such as Carol and Eunice, and now embodied within the group. Teachers such as Marialda have continually pressed for more self-reflection and individuation within the art-making group itself, believing that more criticality will develop, as tolerance for questioning and self-assertion grows.
It is interesting to note that it has been ‘outsider women’ who have encouraged new discourses in this site. Carol has been chief amongst those facilitating a reversal of the de-voicing of this community. The new capacity for voice has predictably led, with time, to criticality of the voicing teachers themselves, as we have seen with Gloria Steeman and her break away group of embroiderers. As has been noted (Mezirow and Associates, 2000/2010, p.xii), once a newly transformed paradigm is gained, it can never be reversed. It is perhaps inevitable that multiple studio spaces will occur, as differentiation and autonomy grow.

6.3.7 Transformative art as community engagement and leadership

Researchers warn that transformative learning is not a single occurrence, but is continuous, and at its best, ought to be a life-long process. Mezirow (1991) for example, who suggested the ten stages of transformation, says

findings suggest that … a learner can get stalled - temporarily or permanently - at any phase when typically difficult negotiation and compromise, backsliding, and self deception can occur. This was found especially true at the beginning of transformative learning. With its threat to a long established sense of order, and later when awareness and insight call for a commitment to action that may seriously threaten important relationships (Mezirow, 1991, p.xii).

It is the hope of a document such as this, that communities and individuals may access and be inspired by the on-going transformative process that has already been established in Hamburg for life-long learning. By following certain principles outlined
below for art educators, other studios of learners can choose to induce their own ongoing transformations through organized art-making.

Because transformation is relational, it is natural that relationships may alter significantly too, as old power dynamics break up. Those who engage consciously in transformative practices understand that relationships may be lost, and new relationships may be formed, more consistent with expanded viewpoints. Transformation ‘costs’, just as it ‘benefits’. With an understanding of an ‘ongoing’ transformative practice, practitioners realize that, as the internal changes, so does the external. The micro and the macro are connected through the medial. It is also important to emphasize that committed transformative practitioners have never ‘arrived’ somewhere specific or permanent. What shifts with an ongoing transformation practice, is our very epistemology - the way in which we ‘learn’, ‘know’ and ‘make meaning’. Kegan (1994) refers to these progressive, meaning-making frameworks as ‘orders of consciousness’, but he argues forcefully that while changes are driven by social complexity, transformative learning is by no means inevitable. Transformation depends strongly on the particular environmental and cultural forces at work in the individual’s life. In effect, people have the potential to make the kinds of deep shifts described here, but whether they will or not depends on the particular conditions in their lives (Parks Daloz, 2000, p. 104).

In Hamburg, a few strong women with powerful and unrelenting vision, who had experienced art as transformative themselves, entered a community which, due to its disorientating dilemma, was ready for change. Parks Deloz (2000, p.106) suggests
catalyst events that precipitate transformation are not isolated. “Transformation has a context that is historical and developmental as well as social”. In this case, transformation began through the coincidence of several events and several relationships – through *Ubuntu* (see Chapter 1). But, as with any ‘movement’ of energy, transformative process can tend toward inertia and stasis, unless continually fuelled, not only by inspiration, but by organization and by funding.

Because Carol and the Keiskamma Trust brought many support systems into the Hamburg area, such as highly motivated art educators; trained social workers; art therapists; financial directors etc., funding became essential. It will be important for this art-making community to eventually become financially independent from CIDA (the *Canadian International Development Agency*) and PEPFAR (the US President's *Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief*). As South Africa’s handling of the pandemic transforms, so too will support systems change. For example, the move away from HIV/AIDS denialism to eventually earning praise from the United Nations (Sidibe, 2009) might ironically mean that 3 billion dollars of funding from CIDA and PEPFAR (McNeil, 2014) might move to other, poorer countries (McNeil, 2014) that need it more. This may mean that South Africa in general, and Hamburg in particular, may have to eventually fund its own transformations.

**6.3.8 Transformative art as sustainable organization**

It is important to note that transformation, as an ongoing human practice, needs to be sustainable, energetically. Fuel for transformation includes various resources, both human and financial, in order to become sustainably organized. Perhaps as transformation
becomes recognized as a valued part of normal human evolution vital for our survival, funding models may change, and organizations may structure themselves differently, to include tax-deductible, ongoing, transformative learning programs. The spirited, hybrid art practice of western/indigenous expressive modalities in Hamburg, that includes tapestry, music, dance, beading, felting and ceramics were both performative and transformative, and performative art action requires some level of funding and social organization. Becker (1974) explains

Art works can be conceived as the product of the cooperative activity of many people. Some of these people are customarily defined as artists, others as support personnel. The artist's dependence on support personnel constrains the range of artistic possibilities available to him ... This conception of an art world made up of personnel cooperating via conventions has implications for the sociological analysis of social organization (p.767).

Becker’s notion of art as social organization substantiates that transformation is relational – Ubuntu. Transformation does not happen in a vacuum. Carol, however, who has brought a sense of organization by developing a Trust and creating organized art curriculae, denies any sense of her own uniqueness.

People have said … that I do all these things and give away all this money because of personal guilt of being a white South African. But I don’t feel any of that. Really. Because I think anyone of those people in the same situation would have behaved in the same way. I don’t feel better or worse than anyone in the world… if I want to stay here, which I feel is my home, I’ve got to live through those things (carol baker Hofmeyr, interview, Aug, 2010).
The artists in Hamburg have had to learn to cooperate with outsiders, support personnel, such as embroiderers, teachers, administrators, funders, and buyers. For Hamburg’s story to be expressed through The Keiskamma Guernica, the Keiskamma Altar piece, and the Keiskamma Tapestry, relationship had to occur. Carol had to coach women with innate creativity to a saleable level of production, while connecting them with the artistic traditions of Europe and outside funding and markets, although the women are now learning to select, administer, organize, and teach projects themselves.

To sum up then, transformation, at its best, is an ongoing commitment to a manageable, sustainable, organized practice, which, as O’Sullivan et al (2002) suggest, involves:

a deep structural shift in the basic premise of thought, feelings and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relations with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness; our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy (p.xvii).

It is evident from the Hamburg artist’s self-reporting that many of these conditions have been met through their art project, with increased connections within the community and within the self. Mezirow (1990) says transformation needs to include “acting on new insights” (p.xvi). In Hamburg, ever-increasing circles of care and action have, over time, included acts of relational and organizational transformation based on new insights. Mezirow and Associates (2000/2010) say “Transformation refers to a
movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives” (p.19). A new dominant narrative has indeed been constructed in Hamburg. Instead of individuals silently suffering from illness and unorganized isolation, identity and action have merged and emmerged here as organized community expanded.

As I reflect on my time in Hamburg, it becomes clear to me that I cannot really claim to know about transformation or fields of resonance for anybody else. I can only really fully know about my own transformations, although a full understanding of my own transformations may take years to slowly reveal themselves. Images are burned into my visual memory bank, and I will make art stimulated by this encounter with Hamburg for years to come. But I will particularly remember the spontaneous song in the community - in the art classes, community meetings, embroidery gatherings, Youtubes, and Women’s day celebrations. This art form, being indigenous, has no need of formal training and indicates great community.

I reflect that in some ways, the call and response voicing in Hamburg reveals the connection of the individual with the community, while the visual art reveals a transition between the community and the new audiences and institutions, such as the Trust, the Art Retreat and wider global audiences. Vuyisile Fundi’s video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lTgG9og1SKs ), the Dune Runner somehow captures both in a deeper complexity – blending the voices of song and the images of art-making in his shamanic practice. Fundi typically performs his transient visual-musical practice ‘alone’. This performative spirituality remains ephemeral and temporal and is not meant for an audience, an economy, a studio practice, or an exhibition, and yet paradoxically it is now captured on video and is transmitted to the world as both process
and product. To me this ambiguity reflects a community in transition as transformation continues through the dynamic interplay of the local and the global.

Fundi himself looms large in the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, with an enigmatic, shamanic presence in the panel of an idyllic Hamburg, with creatures swirling around him as he dances in his skirts, leaving his footprints in the sand (http://www.fowler.ucla.edu/exhibitions/keiskamma-altarpiece). He was once badly beaten, yet he remains undeterred. He is perhaps now a visual metaphor for Hamburg itself, chosen by the community to be the central figure in one panel of the *Altarpiece*, implying the centrality of resilience, and the ‘lived out’ art forms that connect the spiritual life of Hamburg. What were once solitary practices have now shifted to include the communal - a deliberate self-conscious attempt to bring their art into a public arena. The spatial, temporal and cultural ‘reach’ of Hamburg’s voice reflects the expanding concentric circles, the polyrhythms of transformation that have occurred here.

**6.4 Implications of this case study for the essentialness of Art Education**

Given an expanded definition of transformation to include gender, community and context, what can we learn from the struggles and successes of Hamburg’s unique situation? What can we conclude about the essential role that art can play in community transformation, and what are the implications for art education? There are principles of great significance to art educators that can be noted, although there are also ongoing gaps that can be identified that generate new questions. For example, although interviews of participants have corroborated much of the existing literature on exactly ‘what’ transforms – needs, perspectives, identity, meaning, etc., to which I have also added
physiology, mood, voice, outreach, health, education, community, economies, and organization - there is still scant literature on exactly ‘how’ transformation occurs. I would suggest that an answer to the ‘what’ of transformation through art, especially for women, has a beginning account here, and I would suggest the ‘how’ is through the centrality of voice acquisition.

By focus on voice-acquisition, art educators can expand the transformative possibilities of their classes or community groups. Participants have confirmed that art-making for voice acquisition serves many transformative purposes: it is empowering (Papart, 2010; Eunice Mangwane, Carol Baker Hofmyer, interviews 2012), and it builds self-mastery as well as collective, cultural capacity (Goldbard, 2006; Merran Roy, Magda Greyling and Ida Nozipho, interviews 2012). Art curricula that emphasise visual voice can also offer an opportunity for self-reflection, meaning making and considerations of the possible (Huss and Cwikel, 2005; Carol Baker-Hofmyer, Jennifer Hoyer, and Annette Woudstra, interviews July, 2012).

As noted in the literature review and reflected in this study, art making fosters the health assets defined by the World Health Organisation (1948) as wisdom, creativity, talent and enthusiasm. In alignment with White (2009, p.85), Hamburg artists and administrators together developed a visual voicing curriculum that was transformative of social health, helping to build community cohesion; foster emotional and social intelligence; motivate for healthier lifestyle choices; alleviate stress caused by environmental factors; and provide support in personal and collective trauma such as bereavement.
If this is the case, then it is important for art educators to take the transformative qualities of art education very seriously in the classroom or studio, thereby sharing the notion of transformation with the therapeutic domain of art therapy. Just as art therapy has had a hard struggle to gain its own recognition within the field of psychology, I would like to affirm that a truly transformative art education needs to gain recognition within the art education domain. Although the two fields of Art therapy and Art Education are slightly different in focus, they are closely allied and share transformative possibilities, and can truly learn from each other. Perhaps a transformative art education lies somewhere in the middle, between art therapy on one end of the spectrum, and an art education focused only on hand-eye skills on the other end of the spectrum. I would suggest that art educators do no get involved in diagnosing pathologies, but this middle ground is where growth can truly happen that changes consciousness within learners.

Because the Hamburg Art Project’s approach is echoed by other projects in South Africa, using other media, in other villages, I briefly looked for common denominators of success. These various projects have different economic models. Some are privately funded for profit, while the Keiskamma Trust is publically funded and not for profit, although the artists, embroiders and administrators do earn their livings from the projects’ income. What seems to be common to the success of these various projects is the leadership of visionary women who believe in the capacity of art to transform (such as Louise Hall with Dweba’s drawing project [http://www.pambazuka]; Fee Halsted with Ardmore Ceramics [http://www.ardmoreceramics.co.za/], Kate Wells with the Siyazama beading project [http://www.siyaz amapj] , and Irma Van Rooyen with Kaross Embroidery [www.kaross]). Although inspired leadership is helpful for the success of a
community art project, art is essentially a democratic approach to transformation, and no qualifications are needed to participate. By drawing on this case study and the experience of the communities mentioned here, other grassroots communities, classrooms and studios can now be encouraged to practice their own transformative learning through art. Art is well-placed as a participatory methodology in any learning space across the world. This democratic approach is particularly helpful to communities with health, rurality and underemployment challenges; communities that may be non-reading and non-writing; communities where participants speak several different languages from each other; or where the economics determine that practices be reasonably priced, or materials be ‘re-purposed’.

So what are the essential principles gleaned from this study that can be applied to classrooms, studios, grassroots communities and even boardrooms, across the world? Parks Deloz (2000) says

In our study of lives committed to the common good… the only experience common to all, is what we have called a constructive engagement with otherness… some sense of empathic… connection across difference was learned… acknowledgement not simply of difference nor simply of commonality, but of both, and the interplay between them (p.109).

From this study, I have come to understand that “interacting with otherness”, rather than abandoning community, is an essential ingredient of a transformative practice for women. For transformative practice to occur for women, there are some specific criteria: 1) a caring facilitator is needed, an engaged leader who builds trust and
community; 2) the voicing of self and community stories is essential, as this builds identity, self esteem, and a sense of belonging, where voice is recognized as transformative and empowering; 3) A democratic approach is needed, bearing in mind the essential equality of all party’s voices in the process. Parks Daloz (2000, p.111) says transformative educators must have “the capacity to hold different consciousness as equals” and suggests those who never lose their particularity yet are not confined by it can inspire transformation. 4) Acknowledging diversity is critical. It is important to remember that people are in different psychological places at any given moment as reflected by the pyramid of needs by Maslow and the ten stages of Mezirow. The ability to honor and hold multiple perspectives, stages and needs is important. Tang (1997) refers to this as “the rhythmic dance of differentiating and integrating”, which is central to the process of transformation. 5) Engaging with ‘otherness’ includes uncomfortable ‘outsider’ viewpoints, ‘outsider’ mentors, as well as ‘outsider’ art-media and art-histories. Although engaging ‘otherness’ in Hamburg includes loss and grief (Keiskamma Guernica); HIV/AIDS and death (Keiskamma Altarpiece); and hierarchies of power through a colonial history (Keiskamma Tapestry), ‘otherness’ can be broadly interpreted as any discourse that has been silenced.

I reiterate here that developing voice is central to transformative art curriculae, as is a visual way of acknowledging ‘otherness’ – of indentity, story and meaning. A transformative visual pedagogy makes vulnerability an on-going practice for both students and teachers so that while the choice of telling a story is clearly held by the student, the safe invitation is always present. Difficult discourses can sometimes be avoided by art teachers, however, who might feel that they do not belong in the
classroom, and perhaps are afraid to engage what they consider to be art ‘therapy’, or are hesitant to include conversations not favored by governing or parental bodies. Parks Deloz (2000) suggests that diversity of discourse is critical for evolution to occur, but also notes that the pace of introducing ‘otherness’ is important:

where there is too little the species may simply not evolve, where there is too much at once, however, a species can become overwhelmed and simply die out. How we engage with difference makes all the difference (Deloz, P. 2000, p.112).

As diverse people express their authentic self-stories into the outside world, monologue is turned into polylogue, and ‘echo-objects’ (Stafford 2007) are created. This ‘otheration’ of the echo-object is the ‘distanciation’, or ‘objectification’ of the subjective, which gives people power over their experiences. Finally, the ‘other’ is integrated back into ourselves, as we recognize our own story in the visual narrative. This may be challenging to accomplish in a classroom, because, as we have seen, this process of creating echo-objects in Hamburg induced an emotional response in artists and audiences, which included weeping through recognition, followed by new discourses (Eunice Mangwane’s interview 2012) and the overturning of hierarchies. It is also important to remember the ripple affect of transformation that can occur in an organization like a school - that audiences outside the classroom are also transformed by the displayed art-making. This implies that in a school situation, the whole community can be brought into democratic discourse through sharing student work. Thus the art room becomes a site for positive community engagement as well as personal change and power shifts, in a
resonant field of expanding care. Transformation through art is personal, collective and relational and is deeply connected to power, meaning and outreach.

Milton Bennet (1986) constructed a sequence of six distinctly delineated phases of adaptation to ‘otherness’, each a small transformation in how we make meaning of the place of the ‘other’ in our lives, which is not unlike Mezirow and Associates (2000/2010) ten-stage transformative process through difficulty to resolution. Bennet (1986) stresses that adaptation to otherness is not necessarily an easy process. The earliest response, he proposes, is simply to deny difference… which assumes that everyone else shares one’s own beliefs and assumptions. When otherness can no longer be denied, one attempts at first to defend against it, sometimes by placing it lower on some hierarchy… then acknowledges that difference exists …. [Then we] Adapt…. Celebrate… and finally we integrate this deeper knowledge of the other with our own sense of personal and cultural identity (Parks Deloz, 2000, p.111).

Thus, educators facilitate the creation of new meanings, identities and democracies by deliberately building curricula that engage with discomfort and otherness, and which include the creation of ‘echo-objects’ (Stafford, 2007). As we practice transformation through the creation of images and objects in a highly verbal world, educators and facilitators may at times have to defend the place of their echo-objects in school priorities. It is important to note that in Hamburg, ‘image’ as a way of storytelling was never considered ‘lesser’ than ‘words’, perhaps due to some members of this community being non-reading and non-writing. It was acknowledged by this community
however, that images led to words, and the complexification of further discourses. The images were pre-verbal and provided the scaffolding to build further dialogue. It may be helpful to remember in settings where hierarchies are in place, including schools, where there is generally a hierarchy of words and numbers over images, that visual voice is primary to verbal voice and numeracy, and that visual literacy is as important as verbal literacy and numeracy in our modern lives dominated by social technology. It is important for art educators of both adults and young students to therefore note that developing visual voice and visual literacy is the primary element in our domain of the transformative process, which is perhaps not complete without also developing further verbal voice. This is not an ‘articulation hierarchy’, of words over images, but is part of completion of the subjective experience into distanciation and objectivity, and an outreach to audience through voice. For any age group, visual literacy leads to verbal literacy leads to empowered voice.

It is important for art educators to understand how discourse develops from image. Hamburg has been able to ‘witness’ its own survival through a series of images which have tracked a continually revisioned discourse, from ‘denial of HIV/AIDS, to ‘decimation by a virus’, to ‘public outrage at no government support’, to ‘surviving the virus’, to ‘envisioning a community post-virus’. These are specific to Hamburg’s experience. However, what is not specific is the common experience of progression from denial, to passive acceptance, to a passionate demand for assistance, to an empowered outreach to others and the building of a new vision of the future. Admittedly, the ability to follow this transformative resonant path does take courage (May, 1974). For example the voicing of an ‘othered’ story still remains fairly unique to Hamburg, even within other
art projects in South Africa. As Hall (2006, p.18) notes with her own drawing project

None of the craftswomen with whom DWEBA worked discussed how they were affected by HIV/AIDS during workshops; neither did this issue emerge in the drawing processes, and neither did the craftswomen request DWEBA’s input on HIV/AIDS or consequent gender related issues.

The preferred silence of DWEBA’s members does not detract, however, from the other ways in which DWEBA’s participants may have transformed. As we have seen earlier, silence can be chosen as protective, and is essential for some women, and transformation is not dependant on words or naming. It is important to add that there are many quiet, internal ways to transform. Reversing silence and finding a voice is only one way, although perhaps the central way in Hamburg’s experience.

There are implications for this study for adult education as well as school classrooms. Given the rising number of people infected by HIV/AIDS in sub Saharan Africa, Hall notes (2006, p.17) the devastating implication that many people will be faced with is a growing need for income-generation that will be constrained by a resulting diminished capacity. However, as has been noted, art seems to invigorate vulnerable communities with health challenges, rather than deplete them further. It may be important to note, however, that most mentors in Hamburg have mentioned their own feelings of exhaustion over time. The fact that they no longer make their own art, now that they facilitate this process for others, is a negative consequence of a location suffering from dire need. However, in contrast to this, not one person in Hamburg who does practice art regularly mentioned exhaustion or a lack of desire or time to make art, whether they were
HIV positive or not. It is vital for educators to remember that art energizes those who do it, and that those who facilitate it need to learn how to sustain themselves, and continue with their own transformative practices to avoid burnout. Although I cannot essentialise a common experience on the part of all participants in this art project, I did notice that self-care was becoming critical for those who managed the Hamburg art project.

It is important to remember in transformative art classrooms that images have the power to aid learners of any age group to develop imagination, articulate dreams, and thereby visualize better futures for themselves and their communities. As was noted in our literature review, Greene suggested art was helpful with imaginative breakthroughs and contradictions of the established. She felt that consciousness had an ‘imaginative’ phase, and that imagination, more than any other capacity, could break through the “inertia of habit”. Certainly in Hamburg, imaginative futurizing has resulted through image-making (Merran Roy, Magda Greyling, and Ida Nozipho, interviews 2012).

Although art-making is already well accepted as a modality for ‘healing’ within art therapy (London, 1989; McNiff, 1998, 2004; Malchiodi, 2006, 2007, 2012; Levine and Levine, 2006;) and for ‘health’ within art activism and community development (Naidus, 2009; White, 2009; Goldbard, 2006; Reed, 2005), it is my hope that from this case study, art-making can be seen as all of these things, including being transformative learning, within an organized Art Education setting. Discipline-based art education, known as DBAE, and generally focused on the transmission of skills, can sometimes be taught as an end in itself in the art classroom, rather than as a tool for enabling transformative learning (see two Ed D. dissertations, Rozek, 1994; Herbert, 1994). It would be my hope that art educators may come to realize that DBAE is helpful but is not an end point. Hand
skills are tools for a deeper learning about the self (the ‘ideal’ of pre DBAE art education in the 60’s) as well as tools for the development of voice and a means for social action, the ‘ideal’ of post DBAE art education at the turn of the millenium.

Art-making is sometimes thought of as dispensible within school programs because it does not translate as a ‘useful’ subject into the workplace, and is therefore often susceptible to budget cuts. Although people such as Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) feel art doesn’t have to ‘do’ anything in order to justify its importance as a cultural practice, from this case study, we can see that art does in fact ‘do’ a considerable amount, and is both a practical and essential modality not only for children’s learning, but for ongoing adult transformation, and the transformation of our world. Art helps to make us whole, and as London (1992, p.13) says “It is only whole persons who can hope to create integrated, whole societies”.

6.5 Implications of this case study for other fields of theory

This case study of art as transformative has implications for other fields of theory too, such as Adult Education Theory (Kasworm & Rose, 2010; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2006), as well as Transformative learning Theory, (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 2009; Mezirow and associates 2002/2010) which, to date, have not engaged with much depth with visual voice as an ongoing transformative practice accessible to all. Because of art’s potential for practitioners to be reflective, to engage with the ‘other’, to explore diverse identities, and to empower through entering silenced or exclusionary discourses, art-making has powerful implications for Feminist Theory too, where a ‘visual’ practice is not as yet understood as a useful voicing modality (Bromley, 2012;

It is my hope that this dissertation might also enliven art education discourse with new insights around transformative curriculae. I suggest that art education needs its own distinct body of literature that links image-making with theories of self-actualization, and which explores the diverse language of transformation, so that facilitators understand the true breadth and depth of art’s power. This literature needs to be distinctive from art therapy, to avoid territorialism, and issues of professional and practice credentialism, and so that art is associated with health and learning rather than the healing of pathologies. Educators could then source information about how transformation occurs, without relying on literature from art therapy, feminism or transformative learning to explain what we do in the classroom. With our own body of literature that links the centrality of voicing to image-making, and transformation to art, art practice in schools or adult learning communities will be given its due respect and recognized as a modality for evolving learner consciousness into, as some academic descriptors note: deeper maturities (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1970, 1971), for making meaning and sense out of lives (Kegan, 1994, 2011), for dealing with change (Kegan, 2009), for ‘visual’ envisioning (Flora & Flora, 2008; Ames, 2006; Koetzmann & McKnight, 1997), for developing multiple perspectives, (Wilber, 2001a, 2001b, 2014) and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993, 2000, 2011), and for building emotional and social intelligence (Goleman, 2005, 2007).
For the art educator interested in a transformative practice, art education integrates all these criteria, when facilitated with the criteria outlined above.

Although art educators collectively don’t yet fully understand the transformative power of their curriculae, the capacity for art-making is a very simple process and is accessible to all. It is recognized as one of the seven basic intelligences common to all human beings. Gardiner (1993), who identifies visual-spatial intelligence in learners, and who argues for art curriculae that bridge these multiple intelligences, says

Perhaps if we can mobilize the full range of human intelligences and ally them to an ethical sense, we can help to increase the likelihood of our survival on this planet, and perhaps even contribute to our thriving (p.12).

Although this study has addressed the question of what transforms through art, I am left with further questions. Specifically, I am left pondering ‘how’ exactly transformation occurs through visual voice. I am also left wondering if transformation through art is a ‘privileged’ path. Even in a grassroots community like Hamburg, somehow art is still linked with hierarchy, where the artists are viewed by some as “different” from the administrators and the embroiderers. Why does hierarchy persist, when it is not wealth or genius that are essential for transformation to occur, but rather courage and commitment? It seems that those who have the courage and commitment necessary to make art, are still often seen as ‘other’ in any community, perhaps due to beliefs around “talent”. Even if transformation is a relational process rather than a hierarchical one, paradoxes of power and vulnerability continue.
Although Carol Baker Hofmeyr has both the courage and the commitment necessary for a truly transformative art practice, she does not believe she is special. She believes she was just in the right place at the right time to facilitate these transformational processes. She says

Every artist needs the ‘story’ to tell, to drive their art. Some people never find it, and some people do. I’ve been lucky, in that Hamburg had a story to tell. I believe in that story. I was lucky that I could link the thing that drives my whole life with the work that’s made here …. I was very lucky in the partnership of the place. I was just the right person at the right time … completely prepared… I had a very strong sense that it was meant to be. That’s why nothing could stop me… and it’s very important for us to have observers… objective people looking at the art project (Carol Baker Hofmeyr, interview, Aug, 2012).

I ask Carol what she will do now that she has resigned as the village doctor. She says she has given the community twelve years, and, as she herself no longer has a life, she will leave the village (Carol Baker Hofmeyr, interview 2012). Maybe she will make art again. She smiles and adds

I always tell this story that someone told me, about a Bushman just sitting on a rock… And then the people come past and say “what are you doing here?” And the Bushman says “just sitting, [deshlele], waiting [gomso]for my own story to catch up with me.”
My thanks to the people of Hamburg for allowing me, the outsider, to come and observe their transformations through art, and for allowing me to sit with them, so that my own story of transformation through art could also catch up with me.
References


Index Mundi (n.d.) Retrieved from www.indexmundi.com


Appendix A: University of Victoria Ethics Approval

Certificate of Renewed Approval

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<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</th>
<th>Sally Adams</th>
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PROJECT TITLE: Ethnographic Interviews with South African Artists

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: None

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an email reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closure
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.

Acting Associate Vice-President, Research
APPENDIX B: Keiskamma Trust Approval form

You are invited to share your ideas in a study about art, and its benefits.

This study is being done by Sally Adnams Jones. You may call her if you have any questions: ph: 043-740-3111, or email her: sadnams@uvic.ca. As a graduate student at the University of Victoria, she is required to conduct research as part of her degree, under the supervision of Dr Michael Emme. You may contact him at the Faculty of Education, memme@uvic.ca, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office, at the University of Victoria, BC, Canada, Ph: 250-472-4545 or email: ethics@uvic.ca.

Purpose of this study:
The purpose of this study is to better understand in what ways art changes people. This information helps other artists like yourself, and helps community workers and teachers who plan art projects.

Participant Selection:
You are being invited to be in this study because you have experienced an art project in your own community, and you have ideas that might help others. People can learn from your experience about the benefits or problems of making art.

What is involved:
If you volunteer for this study:

1) With your permission, Sally may be with you while you make art, at which time she may sit with you, have conversations with you, or take notes.

2) With your permission, Sally might give you some written questions to think about. Then she might talk to you about those questions, and record your responses. She will then study everyone’s responses, and will write a paper about your community’s experiences with art. This paper will also include ideas from other artists and writers, and will be for degree purposes.

3) With your permission, photos might be taken of you, and/or your art, that may be put in the paper, or shared at conferences with teachers and artists.

4) With your permission, a video might be taken of you making art, at a time that suits you. This video may be shared with teachers and artists at conferences so that they can better understand your community’s art project.
Inconvenience and Risk:
There are no anticipated risks to you being in this research. If you agree, Sally might be with you while you make art, and have conversations with you. If you agree to be interviewed, you will be given a copy of the questions before your interview, so that you may decide whether to answer them or not. At any time during the actual interview you may choose to end the conversation, with no explanation, and no consequences to you. This interview might take two hours of your time, after work.

Benefits:
At this time, there is very little information on communities like your own, who use art to help themselves, but there are many people and communities in difficult circumstances. They do not know how art can help them. By participating in this study you can share your ideas about art-making with other communities, and you can also share your knowledge with teachers, who will then better understand the benefits of art. When you tell your story, other people can learn from your experience.

Voluntary Participation:
Your participation in this study must be completely voluntary. If you decide to let Sally learn by watching you make art, you may ask her to leave at any time. If you agree to be interviewed by her so that she can learn more from you, you may choose to end the interview at any time, without any explanation or consequences. If you are interviewed, but decide later to withdraw your responses from the study, you may contact Sally at any time, but before she submits the paper to the University.

Privacy: To protect you, you can
1) choose to not participate. If you do decide to participate, however, you can
2) use a made-up name for your responses.
3) You can choose to not have your photograph taken.
4) You can choose to not have photographs taken of your art.
5) You can choose to not have videos taken of you making art.

If you do allow an interview, photos and videos however, these may be seen by other teachers and artists at conferences about art, or possibly put in a paper or a book about art. Any responses, photos or videos you do allow will be stored on a computer that is protected with a password, or in a locked filing cabinet in a private study area. All responses, photos and videos from this study will be destroyed after five years.

Sharing the Research:
Before Sally leaves your community she will share her findings in a meeting with the participants, and she will invite feedback about the study at that time. When she leaves your community, this study will be written, and it will be shared with others
at the University of Victoria for degree purposes. A summary of this study will be sent to the Trust, who can share it with you. If you agree, your responses and/or photos and/or videos may later be included in articles written for other teachers and artists outside the University. These articles may be posted on a computer website, or presented at conferences.

**Commercial Use of Results:**
Some of this research may later be included in a book written for teachers and artists about people’s experiences with art. Interviews from other art-making communities in other countries may also be used in this book. Although this takes time, copies of this book will be sent to each participant and to the Trust Board.

**Consent to participate:**
Your signature below means that you have read this form, or have had it read to you, and that you understand it, and that you have had the chance to ask Sally any questions you might have.

Your full name: ______________________ Date: ______________________

**Please initial or use a thumb print:**

I agree to have Sally be with me while I make art: ______________________

I agree to be interviewed by Sally: ______________________

Photos may be taken of me: ______________________

Photos may be taken of my art: ______________________

Videos may be taken of me making art: ______________________

I would like to use my real name: ______________________

I prefer to use a made up name, which is: ______________________

I can be contacted at this address (to receive a letter from Sally, or a copy of the book when it is ready - maybe in two or three years.) ______________________

(please note: You may be recognizable in photos or videos, even if you use a made up name.) A copy of this form will be left with you, and Sally will keep a copy. Thank you for your time and your ideas, which help others learn from you.