CHAPTER 5

The Critic

[kritik] n.(1) A person who describes, interprets and assesses a work of art.
(CETL, 2012)

5.1.   Introduction

'Yes: it has been said…that the proper aim of Criticism is to see the object as in itself it really is. But this is a very serious error, and takes no cognisance of Criticism's most perfect form, which is in its essence purely subjective, and seeks to reveal its own secret and not the secret of another. For the highest Criticism deals with art not as expressive but as impressive purely.' – *Oscar Wilde, The Critic as Artist* (JalicInc, 2000 – 2012)

In the attempt of trying to make sense of the data that this study has produced, one might be tempted to revert to the 'outside out' position (Swain et al, 2004); clinging to the idea that the social world can only be properly understood through the application of the principles of rational thought, the natural sciences, and the pursuit of 'objective' knowledge. (Giddens, 2001) From this stance, one would posit the interpretation of the results providing a 'static' or 'holistic' take on the research problem, which would fail to recognise the ever changing, 'conflictual' and 'processual' nature of culture. (Denzin, 1989 (a)) It would be like an art critic, denying her subjective response to a work of art and claiming that all who look at that particular artwork would respond in exactly the same manner, simply based on the technical elements that the artist used.

Similarly, one might venture towards an 'inside out' approach, (Swain et al, 2004) arguing that "the direct experience of a phenomenon is necessary not only to facilitate a thorough and meaningful analysis and understanding, but also to engender an appropriate political response." (Swain et al, 2004:p.31) This point of view could well exclude those without direct experience of urban poverty in an

116

inner city slum in South Africa from any discussion of this phenomenon; reducing the results of this study to a 'special pleading', a 'sentimental biography' (Hunt, 1966 cited in Swain et al, 2004) without the production of any meaningful recommendations. It would be like a critic, claiming that an oil painting could not be appreciated by anyone other than the one who painted it.

Instead, I wish to approach this discussion from an 'outside in' position. (Swain et al, 2004) This position, though it acknowledges the significance of direct experience, maintains that by itself it is not enough to inform the practice of occupational therapy; people's experiences of disabling barriers that are associated with poverty (inside), must be located within an occupational political interpretation (outside). Using this approach within a reflexive ethnographic paradigm, allows me to explicitly employ my own relationship toward the subjective experience – which is clouded by the epistemology which underlies occupational therapy – as a lens through which to interpret the data. Moreover, within a layered style of writing, this approach allows me to simultaneously consider the data from multiple theoretical angles, which have all shaped my views as an occupational therapist. In that sense, this discussion is much like an art critic, who, in delivering her critique on a work of art, acknowledges and describes her own artistic taste and the emotion that the artwork evokes in her, yet – through the lens of her own subjectivity – also interprets the meaning that the work may, or may not have, for others, not forgetting to apply her theoretical knowledge of art. In writing her critique, rather than closing the discussion surrounding the artwork with a final answer, she is merely providing a few opening thoughts to set the critical dialogue in motion.

5.2. Residential Ruin – Reviewing Participants' Experiences

5.2.1. Poverty, culture and creative participation

An initial glance at the theme 'everyone would have loved to live in Schubart Park,' that arose from the participants' experiences, urges me to consider my assumption that every resident of Schubart Park would have wanted to move out of Schubart Park, had they the means to do so. Moreover, much of what initially led me to conduct this study was based on the assumption that people living in 'sub-standard' housing conditions would move out of those conditions or would want to change them if they could. This assumption is based on the Westernised middle-class standard of living that I impose upon myself – ridiculous really, when one considers how subjective the term 'sub-standard' is or how vastly the definitions of 'unacceptable living conditions' could differ, depending on who's doing the defining. When I think about it, I have a laugh at myself; without fully realising it I have epitomised a brick house with running water, electricity and a flushing toilet, municipal services and a pretty garden with a dog as the ultimate standard for housing. This is not the only assumption that I carried into this study with me. To a more or lesser extent, what I know is the only measure that I have for measuring the world and the people around me; my standard becomes *the* standard, my norms the norm against which all else is judged. This realisation makes me acutely aware of the fact that, as a researcher, a therapist or a citizen with the intention of 'helping,' my assumptions may become a factor that influences the creative participation of people in situations that differ so vastly from my own.

The 'personal tragedy theory,' though usually associated with disability studies (Swain et al, 2004), applied here helps me understand the vast impact that my assumptions may have on people living in situations of material poverty. Much like impairment in this theory, material poverty seems to be "thought to strike individuals at random, causing suffering and blighting lives" and "it has to be

avoided, eradicated or 'normalised'" by all possible means of policy, practice and intervention. (Swain et al, 2004:p.34) Often, it is assumed that people living in material poverty want to be 'normal' (read wealthy) and that they cannot be happy or enjoy an adequate life otherwise. One needn't look far to find this view permeating our language, for instance – is it a coincidence that the word 'poor' which refers to material poverty is the same word that finds synonyms in the words 'miserable' and 'needy?' What may further add to the view of poverty as being a 'tragedy,' is the association that 'being poor' has with 'being dependent.' Many Western-minded professionals – including occupational therapists – who work in services for poor people, "often use the promotion of independence as a central reference point for both theory and practice in their work" (Swain et al, 2004:p.42) and would find it almost inconceivable to imagine a person being happy and financially dependent. 'Don't give a man a fish, give him a fishing rod and teach him to fish,' is a common Western approach to people living in poverty.

Being unaware of the extent to which these Western views pervaded my own thoughts, I initially entered into situations of material poverty and, upon finding people who 'weren't making an effort' or who 'weren't taking control of their own health and their own lives;' I entered into a victim blaming discourse. "Victim blaming occurs when situations that appear as widespread public issues are discussed largely as personal troubles, and responsibility for them is located primarily in the individual." (Wright, 1993:p.3) Leaning on my belief in 'individual rights and responsibility,' I unknowingly bought into the "individual explanation of poverty that holds individuals personally responsible for their economic situation, particularly their own failings;" (Wright, 1993:p.2) in my case – their own 'low' level of motivation. Colleagues, friends and family who share my Western views, expressed their agreement with the personal explanation of poverty in statements that point(ed) to lack of ability, low intelligence, low ambition, or morals as causes for poverty as well as expression(s) of belief in distributive justice, the existence of widespread opportunity, and support for 'work ethic'

119

assertions that material success should occur as a result of personal effort within the legitimate occupational structure." (Various authors, cited in Wright, 1993:p.2)

Research has indicated that the tendency to "hold individuals responsible for failure or success is most pronounced among those in upper- and middle socio-economic status positions, and among those holding other statuses generally associated with greater access to power and wealth." (Various authors, cited in Wright, 1993:p.2) As such, occupational therapists, in trying to clarify the complex social phenomena that are related to poverty, which they come across in practice, might tend to employ victim blaming. Victim blaming could also occur through the use of academic 'buzzwords,' which are developed in an attempt to "simplify concepts and communication about complex relationships, typologies or theories." (Wright, 1993:p.4) The words 'enable' and 'empower,' that is commonly used in considering the service that occupational therapists need to provide to people living in material poverty, strike me as examples of possible vehicles of victim blaming; inherently implying that poor people are unable or powerless unless granted ability or power by those in positions of wealth and power. Though in theorising about poverty and its resultant social problems from a Westernised point of view, we are trying to 'help' our clients, "unthinking benevolence" in which our clients become "the deserving subjects for our sympathy and care" has "undesired consequences" (Wright, 1993:p.6) for our clients. Our victim blaming merely becomes "cloaked in kindness and concern … (and) obscured by a perfumed haze of humanitarianism." (Ryan, 1971 cited in Wright, 1993)

Iwama (2006), Watson and Fourie (Watson & Swartz, 2004) urge occupational therapists to consider whether the cultural underpinnings of the theories and models that they use are in "sync with local people's realities and shared meanings," lest our therapy in itself becomes "an agent of oppression, colonising and perhaps further marginalising people." (Iwama, 2006:p.13) I have, hence, thought it necessary to critically consider the use of the concept of creative

participation from the VdT Model of Creative Ability as a thinking tool for the role of occupational therapy in poor communities – especially in South Africa, in which poverty is prevalent among communities who are considered to hold an African collective world view – by briefly reviewing the cultural premises that underlie it.

The VdT Model of Creative ability is essentially based on the humanistic approach. (Casteleijn, 2001) With the teachings of Buber, Rogers, Piaget' (Van der Reyden, 1994) – and I might add Frankl and Reilly – clearly influencing the work of Vona du Toit, the model has its roots firmly embedded in phenomenology and existentialism; (Casteleijn, 2001) and hence, in a Westernised world view. The Western individualist value system has, at its centre, the solitary 'self,' determined to transcend the environment, that is set in opposition, through acting upon it. (Iwama, 2006) These values become evident in the prime postulates of the VdT Model of Creative Ability; 'Man' is regarded as the starting point for any definition or description; interpretations emanate from and relate to 'Man.' (Du Toit, 2004) 'Man' is depicted as an open system (Casteleijn, 2001) who, in relating with the material-, social- and situational world through the vehicle of occupation is determining the quality of his 'being' – is actualising himself. (Du Toit, 2004) The quality of a person's 'being' (the levels of motivation) is seen to have direct bearing on the quality of such a person's 'doing' (the levels of action) and, as such, the quality of the 'doing' can be used to measure the quality of the 'being.' Hence, in this model, common to models with a Western foundation, identity and occupation are inextricably linked to each other. Successful participation in occupations is equated with having mastered the demands that a situation presents through maximal effort in action, and great emphasis is placed on independence, especially on the higher levels of creative participation.

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'Wake up! I have something to tell you,' I told my husband, coffee-in-hand. 'Numerous things that have been bothering me about this model have started making more sense after thinking about the culture which underlies it. Look…' I said, showing him a visual depiction of the levels of motivation and action. (Figure II in this document) 'Haven't you showed me this picture before?' 'Yes,' I said, 'but look at it again, I want to use it to illustrate something to you. Do you see these levels?' I said, pointing to the lower levels, tone through active participation. 'They are clearly based on a Western individualistic world view, with their main focus being work-readiness. These levels, however,' I said, pointing to the contribution levels, 'are characterised by sharing, mutuality and reciprocal responsibility – values which are much more in line with a collective world view. You know, during my undergraduate studies I once spoke to a therapist working in a poor community. She told me that, in using this model, they managed to get their clients onto a level of active participation, but as soon as the clients were working and earning money, they left the community and didn't want to come back to "give back."' 'Of course,' he said. 'You cannot expect people to suddenly act according to a collective value system after systematically individualising them.' 'Exactly,' I said. 'I am afraid that, in using this model in communities where poverty is prevalent, we might have been unknowingly, systematically westernising our clients.'

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Clearly, the tacit cultural assumptions that underlie the theories and models that we use in approaching our clients may become a factor which influences the creative participation of our clients. Theories and models based on a Western world view may perpetuate our own tendency to place all the 'emphasis on personal characteristics,' to enforce our Western norms on non-Western communities and to victim blame. Additionally we may be blinded to the effects of the macro political-economic factors in creating a structure of lack of opportunity. (Wright, 1993) Kronenberg (2005; 2006) in his exploration of the possible

122

contribution of occupational therapy to the lives of street children, similarly found that the available vocabulary and theories tended to indicate that the children needed to be changed (fixed). Thus, instead of viewing the bigger context as the main issue to be addressed, the children were problematised. (Kronenberg, 2005; 2006) Some of these structural contextual factors become apparent under the theme 'things started changing.'

5.2.2. The environment and occupational choice

Though an array of environmental factors as listed in the ICF, and some factors that are not listed – ranging from the 'indoor air quality' (read 'the horrible smell') through 'political services' – emerges from this theme, I have decided to focus on those factors which can be classified, in ICF terms, as 'societal environmental factors.' Those are the impersonal contextual factors which encompass the social structures, services and overarching approaches or systems which affect the entire community or society. In addition, I will consider how these factors shaped, not only the 'individual environmental factors' (those factors pertaining to the immediate 'social and physical' environment of the participants), but also the occupations which participants chose or had the opportunity to choose.

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I am struck at how, in analysing my data into neat, manageable compartments, the complex lived experiences of the participants seem to have become reduced and over-simplified. It is as though, in the act of capturing a moment in time by putting it down in words, the dynamic vibrancy of the real lived experience is lost. I wish to describe in words, the complexity which underlies the simple statement: 'management changed.'

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123

Like other slums the world over, a combination of factors contributed to turning Schubart Park into a 'slum of despair' – a declining neighbourhood 'in which environmental conditions and services are in a process of seemingly inevitable decay.' (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.9) The first which becomes apparent in reading through this theme is the undeniable Apartheid history of South Africa. Not only does "Apartheid's legacy to the democratic South Africa" include "highly visible income poverty and inequality," (Seekings, 2007:p.1) it has also left those who were impoverished by it, in a housing crisis. The 1913 Land Act, which alienated Africans from most of the land, (UN-Habitat, 2003) the imposition of influx control and the Group Areas legislation, implemented in an attempt to contain African settlement in the urban areas, (Knight, 2004) as well as a lack of housing (UN-Habitat, 2003) for an expanding urban population (Knight, 2004) has left South Africa with a large housing backlog, especially in and around urban areas. The situation of many of the Schubart Park residents was not dissimilar from the description of 'Maggie Heyman, an occupational therapist at the Chemawa Indian school in Salem, Oregon: "…theirs is a more forced kind of poverty because of the geographic isolation and historical trauma of their people, which I believe still very much lives in their spirits.' (Kronenberg, 2006) This is also akin to the description of the negative consequences of Apartheid that Galvaan (Watson & Swartz, 2004) identified in Lavender hill in Cape Town, which included, amongst other things poverty, lack of opportunities or services and overcrowded living conditions.

According to the UN-Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements, (2003) the conditions that remained as the South African Apartheid legacy, would create the ideal circumstances for the occurrence of slums, since "slums result from a combination of poverty or low incomes with inadequacies in the housing provision system, so that poor people are forced to seek affordable accommodation and land that became increasingly inadequate." (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.17) The first change in Schubart Park management, marking the end of the subsidised provincial governance of the buildings under the Apartheid

regime, highlights the significant role that poverty had to play in the decline of the buildings. It becomes apparent that "slums and poverty are closely related and mutually reinforcing." (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.28)

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'So, how was your tour of the city?' I asked my husband, smiling and finding it ironic and satisfying that 'my' organisation and 'my' city was worth an 'academic' tour. The entire class of Theology students had gone on a field visit to the inner city, hosted by one of my colleagues. 'Very interesting,' he said. 'So, what did you do?' I probed a bit further. 'They took us to all the PEN projects and to Schubart Park where the chairperson of the residents' committee spoke to us. Oh, and for lunch we went for a walk through the streets around the PEN offices; they gave us each R8 – the approximate equivalent of $1. They told us that many people in the inner city have to survive with only R8 for an entire day – we had to see what we could afford for lunch.' 'What did you get?' I asked. 'A cooked mealie and a small sweet "vetkoekie." I would starve if I had to live off that every day!'

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Though 'monetary measures of poverty,' such as these, are often used, they fail to capture the multidimensional nature that comprises the lived experience of urban poverty. (UN-Habitat, 2003) The UN-Habitat identifies a number of other factors, besides low income, as constituents to urban poverty. Amongst other things, people "may be poor…because they are not protected by laws and regulations concerning civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights." (2003:p.29) Many of the Schubart Park residents were poor with regards to their income, but the second change in management, which left Schubart Park entirely in the hands of the New Housing Forum of the Tshwane municipality,

clearly points out that they were also poor with regards to the extent that their rights were protected.

In South Africa, access to adequate shelter is defined as a basic right for all citizens in terms of the country's Constitution. Section 26 (1) states that "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing." Section 26 (2) also provides that "the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right." (1996) To implement its Constitutional mandate for housing development, the South African government adopted a Housing White Paper, providing a framework within which "creating an enabling environment," (South African government, 1994) which would allow "social, economic and community life to flourish," (Bank, Makubalo & Maqasho, 2010:p.11) would take place. In addition, "Parliament adopted the Housing Act of 1997. The Act legislated and extended the provisions set out in the Housing White Paper" and "clarified the responsibilities of national, provincial and municipal government." (Knight, 2004) Under the Housing Act and the resulting National Housing Code, each level of government – national, provincial and municipal was given some responsibility for housing delivery. However, the responsibility for ensuring that the right to adequate housing is realized – the responsibility for delivering – is vested with the municipalities. (Knight, 2004)

There are, according to UN-Habitat (2003), numerous factors that could prevent a municipality from implementing its housing policies. Amongst others "apathy and the lack of political will," the "lack or misuse of financial resources," the "lack of adequately trained personnel in most municipalities" and "the misuse and poor targeting of subsidies for the urban poor" (2003:p.145) might have been applicable in this situation. What is certain, however, is that the lack of political- and housing services that were available to the Schubart Park residents and the subsequent collapse in utilities- and civil protection services, had a pervasive

impact on the immediate environment of the Schubart Park community and on the choice of occupations that were available to them.

The disuse, as a direct result of the 'change in management,' of the swimming pool and the tennis courts (factors which pertain to products and technology for culture, recreation and sport) provide an example of how the complex interplay of a number of external factors may restrict the range of occupations that are available for a person or a group of people (Whiteford, 2000) to participate in. Without the facilities available at their home for free, a Schubart Park resident would have to spend a considerable amount of money on travel- and club membership fees to be able to spend time with a grandson, for example, on the tennis court. Whiteford (2000), in an article in which she considers the conceptual origins of occupational deprivation, notes how "those deprived of opportunities to engage in the occupation of paid employment, have the time in which potentially to engage in other occupational pursuits but have little available financial resources with which to do so." (2000:p.202) She quotes Lobo (Lobo,1999 cited in Whiteford, 2000) in suggesting that "leisure has become commodified to the extent that it requires significant discretionary income. Increasingly…you need money to be a leisure participant in Western society." (2000:p.202)

Further, the complete shutdown of the elevators, a factor pertaining to the access inside buildings – or, for many Schubart Park residents, access to the outside of the building – illustrates how such factors may restrict people's occupations to a certain setting; in this case, some of the Schubart Park residents' flats. It seems as though the environment not only restricted the occupational opportunities for the Schubart Park residents, but also affected their participation in occupations that were available.

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In all my visits to Schubart Park, one of the most noticeable observations was how dirty the place was. My field notes are fraught with descriptions of the 'mess,' the 'chaos,' the 'filth' and the 'muck.' I wondered why the residents didn't clean up, or if I would have, had I been in their situation. I tried on various perspectives – from a hierarchical needs point of view, one might ascribe the residents' refusal to clean up to limited aesthetic needs or, from a creative ability angle, one could make a case for limited initiative and low motivation – but these perspectives underestimate the role that factors within the environment could play on informing the occupations that people perform or choose not to perform.

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One such factor, which has been found to significantly affect the willingness of residents to participate in the improvement of their living conditions, (Lall et al, 2004; UN-Habitat, 2003) is the lack of security of tenure; a concept which is regarded as a central characteristic of slums. (UN-Habitat, 2003) Insecure tenure implies that residents face the risk that their "rights to occupy land will be threatened by competing claims, and even lost as a result of eviction." (FAO, 2002) The UN-Habitat claims that, "if security can be gained, neighbourhoods are likely to improve." (2003:p.60) In addition the "lack of housing security makes it very difficult for people to participate in society, to establish firm roots and their networks," "as access to secure tenure has often been a prerequisite for access to other opportunities, including credit, public services and livelihood." (2003:p.107)

Similarly, a range of environmental or community risk factors (UN-Habitat, 2003) contribute to exposing slum residents, more than non-slum dwellers, to criminal occupations. "Some recent analyses suggest that slum dwellers are…victims of urban crime and related violence, often organized from outside slum areas. Slum dwellers are, in fact, more vulnerable to violence and crime by virtue of the exclusion of slums from preventive public programmes and processes, including

policing." (2003:p.xxviiii) Whiteford (2000) adds that, for groups of people who have had little or no legitimate voice and representation, and thus limited legitimate 'participation in mainstream forms of cultural production (Giroux, 1996 cited in Whiteford, 2000), engagement in non-legitimated occupations, such as vandalism and participation in occupational groups like gangs (Snyder et al, 1998 cited in Whiteford, 2000), may become a seemingly attractive alternative. Other risk factors include, but are not limited to, unemployment and poverty, family disruption, the availability of weapons (UN-Habitat, 2003) and inequality. Kronenberg & Pollard (2006) similarly found that "war, chronic poverty caused by serious socio-economic and political inequalities" in Guatemala, "produced a relatively large population of street children and youth at risk, many of whom (chose) participation in gangs for lack of better alternatives." (2006:p.621)

5.2.3. Inequality

Inequality appeared to me as such a prominent factor throughout this study, that it warrants discussion. Also, in few other places in the data did the effect of inequality become as clear as under the theme 'we're going to fight this thing.' The Schubart Park residents essentially directed their fight against their structural environment; an environment that was not only faced with an Apartheid legacy of inequality, but one in which inequality seemed to have been further perpetuated – no longer on the basis of race, but on the basis of social status.

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'They're talking about poverty in South Africa this morning,' my husband said; referring to the talk show on the radio, which he insists on listening to every morning, to the detriment of my own need to start my morning quietly and calmly. 'It sounds like something that you might be interested in.' I turned up the volume to listen. The guest speaker – an expert on poverty in South Africa – mentioned an aspect that caught my attention. 'South Africa,' he said, 'is in a unique

situation, in which it is very obvious to the poor exactly how much they are being denied. The reason for this is that, unlike countries such as India, in which poor people often accept their poverty as their karma, our elected government based their election campaign on promises of change and 'a better life for all.' This has created an expectation among the citizens for a more equal distribution of resources and wealth. The poor people of the country, after more than a decade of democracy, are starting to become impatient, because only the lives of an elect few have changed dramatically, while the situations of many have remained dismal. They see people in the upper social class spending lots of money on big houses and cars, and this makes them angry.'

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Social problems like violence, such as the angry, violent behaviour of the Schubart Park residents, which became so apparent throughout their fight, is '
more common among the poor than the rich. As such, one might conclude that these problems are caused directly by poor material conditions. (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) However Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), in their extensive research, have found that social problems are instead caused by the scale of material differences between people within societies being too big. That is; social problems, such as violence, are more prevalent in more unequal societies. The reason for the significant effect that inequality has on us, according to these authors, is the strong relation that exists between social status and the sense of confidence, adequacy and self-worth with which it endows a person.

"If the social hierarchy is seen – as it often is – as if it were a ranking of the human race by ability, then the outward signs of success or failure (the better jobs, higher incomes, education, housing, car and clothes) all make the difference. Higher status almost always carries connotations of being better, superior, more successful and more able. If you don't want to feel small, incapable, looked down on or inferior, it is not quite essential to avoid low social

status, but the further up the social ladder you are, the easier it becomes to feel a sense of pride, dignity and self-confidence." (2009:p.40) The authors suggest "that increased inequality ups the stakes in the competition for status: status matters even more." (2009:p.134) In the face of evidence, which points to violence most often being a response to disrespect, humiliation and loss of face, one could expect more violence in more unequal communities, in which more people lack the 'trappings of status,' which serve as protection and buffer against shame and humiliation. (2009) The negative effects of inequality penetrated numerous other aspects of the social life of the Schubart Park residents, which I will refer to throughout the discussion as they appear in the data. For now, it will suffice to bear in mind that inequality played an important role in informing the 'tactics' which the Schubart Park residents employed in their fight.

5.2.4. Political activities of daily living

Kronenberg (2005), in considering the concept 'politics' and its relation to occupational therapy, quotes Van der Eijk (2001 cited in Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005): "politics are concerned with conflicts between groups of people, the development of conflicts, the development of co-operative strategies to influence the outcome of the conflicts in one or another group's desired direction, and the resolution of the conflict." Undeniably, then, the Schubart Park residents, amidst their fight for their home, found themselves in a clearly *political* situation. For this reason I have thought it appropriate to consider the 'political nature' of the Schubart Park struggle by using Kronenberg's (2005) suggested 'pADL questions' as a guideline, bearing in mind the authors' suggested aim of 'raising awareness and understanding of…the political nature of people's participation in daily life.' I have found the 'answers' to the various questions so intermingled, that I have decided not to try and untangle them and discuss them one by one, but rather to discuss them as a whole, using the 'pADL questions' as a point of reference.' The 'pADL questions' are concerned with the characteristics and actors within a situation, the aims, interests, motives and means of the

various actors, the political landscape and the broader context of the situation. The latter two aspects have been extensively spoken about in the previous sections and the current discussion should be seen against that background. Also, though numerous actors were involved in the Schubart Park situation, I will highlight those relationships of conflict and co-operation which become clear throughout the data and which become clearly illustrated in the different perceptions that were held regarding the fight.

My initial observation is that the fight for Schubart Park was characterised by angry, violent and destructive conflict rather than co-operation, and that much of the co-operation that did exist was obtained forcefully. The entire residents' community of both Schubart Park and the neighbouring Kruger Park buildings were involved in the struggle. At stake for all of them was a place to stay; though for some an alternative accommodation would suffice, others were determined to remain within the Schubart Park buildings and insisted on its renovation. There were also those for who more was at stake – for example, those who had managed to exploit their living conditions for their own benefit and those who had found a cheap refuge in which no-one was concerned about their paper work. As such, each one's motives were subtly in conflict or in cooperation with the various other actors. The residents had, as their representatives, the residents' committee; some of whom were individuals who were benefitting – financially and in terms of their status – from (and thus, to a certain degree co-operating in maintaining) the conflict at Schubart Park. Other members of the committee were genuinely concerned with developing cooperative strategies to improve the conditions of their home. Clearly then, there was a situation of conflict amongst the aims, interests and motives of the various members of the committee as well as with those of the residents. I am convinced that this situation – in which personal motives for attaining means of some sort are in conflict with the 'greater public good' – is not unique, especially in a broader context in which means are so unequally distributed. In further considering the effect of inequality, one has to bear in mind the status that would accompany one of the Schubart Park 'freedom

fighters' if they managed to 'win' – especially within the specific South African historical context. The benefit of achieving the status of a 'struggle hero,' might far outweigh the costs, even of a few lives; especially when the loss of those lives could be typified as martyrdoms for the greater good.

This might be one explanation for the reason why co-operation between the committee and the residents was often attained through force. Or perhaps the committee realised that, without money or connections and with only limited legal information and ability to communicate their plight to the powers that be (through the media and legal representation), their sheer numbers and force was the only means of power available to them to influence their situation. This would also partially explain the increasingly violent and destructive behaviour of the residents – if force seems to be the only power that you have, your only appeal against not getting what you want would be to apply more force

This leads us to the relationship between the residents and the 'faceless' housing forum and the mayor. In this conflict situation, the residents initially used 'socially acceptable' behaviour; appealing to their constitutional rights and the sense of responsibility of the municipal housing services in letters to the mayor, temporary non-payment and peaceful mass protest action, to object to their situation. The authorities – rather than initiating a process of cooperation in-line with the South African constitution and housing policies- and laws – chose a 'negative' retort of forced eviction, benign neglect and involuntary resettlement, (UN-Habitat, 2003) which led to a more violent and destructive response from the residents, also amongst each other. One factor which merits consideration with regards to the violence that was visible, the residents amongst themselves, is 'displaced aggression.' Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) maintain that "inequality increases downward social prejudices" and that "those deprived of status try to regain it by taking it out on more vulnerable people below them." (2009:p.166)

The sad and absurd irony of the Schubart Park fight, so characteristic of occupational apartheid (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) is that the residents themselves, in a desperate attempt to wield some sort of power, unknowingly co-operated with their own demise; the very tactics which they employed had in the end become the grounds for justifying having them thrown out of their home. During the writing of this document, the final Schubart Park residents have finally been evicted or relocated. It is not unlike the example of 'occupational absurdity' mentioned by Pollard, (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) in which "a group of people with chronic mental illnesses were daily sent to occupational therapy in order to knit squares. The completed squares were passed to another group of people in the same room who unravelled the squares back into balls of wool." (2005:p.80) In Schubart Park, however, the 'knitting' group had proverbially realised what was going on and started to complain. Upon getting no reaction and out of sheer frustration they had started poking and hurting the 'unravelling' group with knitting needles and on the basis of being 'too violent and destructive,' had been denied any further 'therapy.' (In this case an appeal to the constitutional court might see justice prevail yet, though.)

5.2.5. Concluding remarks

Through considering the research participants' experiences of their environment, it was possible to identify certain factors which might affect the creative participation of people living in an inner city. Furthermore, their experiences illustrated the complexity of the interplay between various contextual factors and their possible relation to occupational deprivation and occupational apartheid. There is limited occupational therapy research available to compare these findings with – much of the available work has been done in rural areas rather than in cities and has often included people living with disabilities. However, these findings seem to be in agreement with other studies that focussed on the effects of poverty and the environment on occupation; though it is clear that the

various factors at play differ from situation to situation and are exacerbated by the presence of disability. The experiences of the research participants have, thus, sufficiently served to inform the 'external factors' which are contained in the aim of this study. The participants' perceived impact of the environment might serve better in informing the 'how.'

5.3.   Life in the ruins – Reviewing participants' perceptions

5.3.1. Effort, time and creative participation

Thinking about the contextual factors and their effect on the participants of this study, I have become more sensitised to my own living environment and its effect on me. This has helped me to find parallels of the participants' experiences in my own life, which has made it possible for me to somehow relate to those experiences. So, though I have never had to walk up and down 23 flights of stairs to have water to wash my dishes, my own experience with dishes and their washing facilitated my understanding of life in Schubart Park.

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We had moved into our new home; a rectory even larger than the one that the previous church had provided (apparently the minister whom they built it for had 7 children, so he needed plenty of room). Being much too critical and, hence, never satisfied with the cleaning that anyone else had done and also too proud to have anyone other than myself clean up the mess that *I* have made, I had insisted on doing all the housekeeping by myself. A bigger house, a crawling baby, an incomplete master's thesis and finding my feet in a new community left little time for washing the dishes, and they seemed to pile at an unbelievable speed – I simply couldn't keep up. When I finally got round to tending to the dirty heap, it would take the necessary effort and a considerable amount of time to clean it all up. It didn't take long for me to 'invest' in a dishwasher – a simple

addition to my environment that allowed me to spend much less effort and time on dirty dishes – and then I understood…

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In reading the theme 'it was quite a challenge' – which clearly denotes 'effort', I realised that the complex interplay of the various environmental factors shaping the Schubart Park situation, obligated its residents to spend much effort and, consequently also much time, on those everyday-occupations which, in an equipped and facilitating environment, would take only a small part of one's day. In research on "how the drudgery of getting water shapes women's lives in low-income urban communities," Crow and McPike (2009) note that the daily collection of water, a 'pivotal reproductive activity,' affects the productive opportunities of especially women, living in slums. Further, "inadequate water sources often make this task time-consuming, unpredictable, and difficult to balance with other tasks of the day." (2009:p.53) Slum residents' occupations thus seem to be restricted, in that their environment limits the amount of time and, consequently, energy that remains for participation in occupations, other than those activities that are necessary for survival and self-care. The above-mentioned study also quotes Blackden and Wodon (2006 cited in Crow & McPike, 2009) in their exploration of the concept 'time-poverty.' 'Time poverty' has been found to affect women in particular in that they have to work especially long hours due in part to a lack of access to basic infrastructure services such as water and electricity. Time poverty reinforces income poverty and limits the opportunities outside the household for those who are affected by it. (Crow & McPike, 2009). Kronenberg (2005), in his exploration of the potential for occupational therapy practice with street children in Mexico similarly found that these children's occupational and social participation was denied or restricted to survival. Bazyk & Bazyk (2009), in their work with low-income urban youth, also stress the lack of a balance of occupations, which includes structured leisure occupations for children living in impoverished conditions.

In her 2004 Eleanor Clarke Slagle lecture, Ruth Zemke (2004) exploring the relationship between time, space and occupation, expresses the profound way in which our occupations are bound to space and time; "Time and space can constrain or enable occupations." (2004:p.613) In the real world, time and space "determines where, when, and, in some ways, what occupations we can do. The time it takes to move through space limits the distance we can travel between occupations. Certain activities are constrained or enabled in certain times and places. We have a certain degree of occupational time and place dependence. That is, we depend upon times and places to allow us to 'be' and 'do' our selfhood through our occupations." (2004:pp.613-614) "Places are 'behaviour settings' (Barker, 1968 cited in Zemke, 2004), where individuals and their surroundings together create systems from which emerge a certain behavioural status quo." (Zemke, 2004:p.614) In addition, quoting Tuan, (1977) she remarks that "units of time convey a clear sense of effort." (2004:p.614) In other words, spending more time would imply spending more of our limited resources of energy and attention.

This perspective implies a 'quantitative' element embedded in the concept 'effort;' an element which might warrant consideration from a creative participation perspective. In some of her earliest work, Vona du Toit (2004) describes 'self-application' as one of the fundamental ingredients of initiative. It then logically follows that, if the emergence of creative participation is characterised by the emergence of initiative, 'self-application' or 'effort' would fulfil a character role therein also. The relationship becomes clear when considering Du Toit's (2004) exposition of the term 'self-application;' the quality thereof depending on a person's 'awareness, responsibility and attentiveness' and the direction thereof being determined by one's willingness to turn 'towards one's fellow man' through 'sharing and mutuality.' Hence, the emergence of creative participation runs along the continuum, and is dependent on, the emergence of 'self-application' – through continuing successful 'self-application,' or effort, one gradually becomes more equipped at applying oneself with greater awareness and responsibility,

increasingly paying greater attention to the needs of one's fellow man. According to Du Toit, both the quality and direction of 'self-application' is determined largely by environmental factors. The experience of the Schubart Park residents indicate that the 'quantity' of 'self-application' is intrinsically linked to the time that is available for occupations, and as such may also be largely affected by the environment. The emotional experiences of the Schubart Park residents add yet another dimension to the effect of the environment on the concept of 'self-application' and creative participation.

5.3.2. Anxiety, 'self-application' and creative participation

Anxiety is defined as "a response to a threat that is unknown, internal, vague or conflictual." (Sadock & Sadock, 2003:p.591) It serves "as a warning of external or internal threats" such as "threats of bodily damage, pain, helplessness, possible punishment, or the frustration of social or bodily needs; of separation from loved ones; of a menace to one's success or status; and ultimately of threats to unity or wholeness. It prompts a person to take the necessary steps to prevent the threat or to lessen its consequences." (Sadock & Sadock, 2003:p.592)

The emotional challenges experienced by the participants gives voice to the different shades of anxiety which a conflictual (read political) situation, such as the one in Schubart Park, may evoke. The experiences of anxiety included the more subtle 'status anxiety,' which is described by Alain de Botton (2004, cited in Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) as "a worry so pernicious as to be capable of ruining extended stretches of our lives." Further, he suggests, that when we fail to maintain our position in the social hierarchy we are "condemned to consider the successful with bitterness and ourselves with shame." (De Botton, 2004 cited in Wilinson & Pickett, 2009:p.69) Wilkinson and Pickett have proposed that higher anxiety levels, which they have found to be strongly correlated with inequality, can be ascribed to the high value which is placed "on acquiring money and possessions, looking good in the eyes of others and wanting to be famous,"

138

(James, 2007 cited in Wilkonson & Pickett, 2007:p.69) that is more prevalent in unequal societies. The participants' experiences further included chronic anxiety in the face of crime and looming eviction threats. The UN-Habitat's global report on human settlements (2003) has similarly indicated that the greatest fear amongst slum dwellers was of eviction, violence and crime.

Anxiety is regarded as adaptive when it "prevents damage by alerting the person to carry out certain acts that forestall the danger." (Sadock &Sadock, 2003:p.592) As such it may be regarded as a prompt towards self-application. If, however, the effort is unsuccessful in precluding the threat – as in the case of the Schubart Park residents – it would understandably lead to further feelings of anxiety, helplessness and of being overwhelmed. The theory of flow seems to agree with this perspective; people are regarded as experiencing anxiety during tasks or in situations in which the perceived challenge is greater than the skills that are available to meet it. (Csikszentmihalyi. 1990)

The experiences of the participants in this study seem to emphasise the role that the availability of resources and opportunities could play in enabling the use of above-mentioned skills. The development of creative participation that, according to the VdT Model of Creative Ability, is dependent on success in action, could seemingly be stunted in situations in which the challenge continually exceeds the ability or opportunity to successfully respond to it. As such, the deepening of the quality and direction of self-application itself could be stunted. This becomes clearly illustrated in the increasing difficulty with which the Schubart Park residents were able to 'turn towards' their neighbours and their families. To further emphasise the role of the structural environment in this regard, it is interesting to note that Wilkinson and Pickett have found levels of trust to be highly correlated to levels of inequality. "Imagine living somewhere where 90 per cent of the population mistrusts one another and what that must mean for the quality of everyday life – the interactions between people at work, on the street, in shops, in schools." (2009:p.54)

5.3.3. Meaning and growth amidst the turmoil

In exploring the role of spirituality in occupation, Weskamp and Ramugondo (Watson & Swartz, 2004) pose the following question: "Is it possible for people to live in hope and to achieve the meaning and purpose that spirituality brings while living in poverty and exposed to acute suffering? Can one find even a glimmer of human potential, alive and active under such circumstances?" (2004:p.160) The theme 'sometimes it was good' suggests that the answer to these questions are 'yes.' Throughout this research experience I have become convinced that, amidst the most challenging circumstances, some of the most inspiring stories of the awakening of creative participation and 'turning towards one's fellow man,' may unfold.

"On her visits to the townships on different days of the week, Ramugondo observed many elements of community living that pointed to the hope and human potential that can exist in seemingly desperate situations. For example, one contrast she noted was the dilapidated condition of a number of the shacks, and the spotlessly clean washing on the lines next to them. This suggested to her a sense of self-worth held by the people who dwelt there – that they were able to use very limited resources to strive for cleanliness and therefore retain human dignity." (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.161) Similarly, in this study, the contrast between hopelessness and purpose emerges and the contrast between feeling too unskilled to face the challenge and yet learning practical skills, compassion, humility and gratitude (the clean washing of the spirit) which lightened the burden.

Ramogondo further notes: "It was humbling to see that some women became pillars of support for others, despite their own problems. This helped the 'helpers' to recognise their own abilities." (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.164) The findings of this study similarly point out the value of 'doing for others' in providing a sense of meaning, purpose and positivity despite the grim environment and despite a

'lower' level of creative participation. For me, this opens new questions and possibilities with regards to the term 'contribution' within the VdT Model of Creative Ability.

5.3.4. Concluding Remarks

Through a review of the participants' perceived impact of the environment on their creative participation, it became clear that the environment had a perceptible effect on the quality, direction and quantity of the participants' self-application; an element which, according the VdT Model of Creative Ability, is pivotal in the development of creative participation. Further, the participants' experiences highlighted the relationship between the environment and anxiety, which led to an exploration of the relationship between self-application and anxiety. The 'ability to control the negative effects of anxiety' as well as the ability to exert maximum effort are considered as indicative of the level of a person's creative participation. As such, the environment may play a crucial role in each of these aspects individually, as well as in the way that they relate to each other. However, a thorough exposition of these key concepts of the VdT Model of Creative Ability seems lacking in literature and limits the deductions that could be made from these findings. The effect of the environment, despite being challenging and in many instances severely limiting, also included positive outcomes that might stimulate thought surrounding occupational therapy in slum- or other poverty-stricken communities. The perceptions of the research participants have, thus, given us an inkling of the possible effect of environmental factors on the creative participation of people living in the inner city. The emergence of and change in the participants' creative participation may further inform us in this regard.

5.4. Participation amidst the demise– Reviewing changes in creative participation

5.4.1. Internal factors and external factors

'I have based my entire protocol on the idea that environmental factors might negatively influence the creative participation of people. If they want me to change the aim, I would have to change the entire protocol. I would have to start from scratch,' the student said, frustrated at the school's rejection of her initial research protocol. 'You don't have to start from scratch,' the lecturer replied – always the voice of reason. 'Your emerging hypothesis is that the environment, rather than internal factors, may negatively affect the creative participation of people living in challenging environments. We'll change the aim and say that, throughout the interviews, you'll pay attention to any internal factors that arise, which seem to have an influence on the participants' creative participation.'

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The ICF (WHO, 2001) specifies eight different temperament and personality functions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and psychic stability, openness to experience, optimism, confidence and trustworthiness. I will briefly review their presence or absence in each of the participants and consider their possible effect with regards to the change in participants' creative participation.

'Auntie N' had a cheerful and hopeful disposition which helped her to find the 'silver lining' in difficult circumstances and is indicative of optimism. I experienced her as co-operative and accommodating throughout her involvement in the research process, which indicates agreeableness. In addition, I would describe her as conscientious and trustworthy. Though she was mostly even-tempered, calm and composed (aspects pertaining to psychic stability), the challenges in her environment sometimes affected her such that she became worried and

142

erratic. Her willingness to express her emotions and to seek new experiences indicates that she was open to experience. Also, throughout her story, it was noticeable that her confidence and extraversion grew along with her creative participation.

The other participant that demonstrated growth with regards to her creative participation, 'Mama R,' showed an amicable and accommodating disposition, indicating agreeableness. She was conscientious, trustworthy and her soft-spoken calmness indicated psychic stability. I would not, however, describe her as extroverted, optimistic or open to experience.

'Mr. and Mrs. M' could be described as being extroverted in that I experienced them as being sociable and demonstrative. From their interviews, however, they didn't appear to be agreeable, open to experience, particularly conscientious or optimistic. I did experience them as being trustworthy.

'The man A,' though he seemed anything but conscientious, agreeable or trustworthy in his behaviour towards me, appeared extroverted, open to experience, optimistic and confident.

In considering the dispositional underpinnings, which may enable individuals to construe benefits from adversity, Affleck and Tennen indicate that people displaying specific psychological dispositions, such as optimism, extraversion and openness to experience, are more likely than others to experience positive growth amidst adversity. (Affleck & Tennen, 1996) This would entail that the growth of 'Auntie N's' creative participation could be ascribed to the presence of these personality traits and that the distortion of 'Mr. and Mrs. M's' creative participation could be ascribed to their lacking the necessary personality traits. This becomes especially plausible when considering the way in which 'Auntie N' managed to 'find the benefits' that arose from her life in Schubart Park which is documented under the theme 'sometimes it was good.' However, 'Mama R' also

lacked the mentioned personality traits, and yet she experienced growth, while 'The man A' seemed to display these personality traits and yet his creative participation was disrupted.

Though 'personality' most likely did have an effect on the change that was visible in the participants' creative participation, the extent and nature of the effect can only be speculated. It might be that an optimistic outlook simply shrunk the perceptible threat, so that it seemed less insurmountable. However, such speculation is outside of the scope of this study and merely warrants saying that further research in this regard is necessary.

All of the changes in creative participation, however, could not be ascribed to 'personality' alone. Another aspect which seemed to have had an effect on the change in the participants' creative participation, was the level of creative participation they were on upon entering their crisis.

5.4.2. The levels that the participants started out on

It is noticeable that 'Auntie N,' who seemed to construe the most benefits from life in Schubart Park, and in whom an emergence of creative participation was observable, was also the person who seemed to have started out on a higher level than the other participants. Further, it is interesting to note that 'the man A,' who started out on the lowest level in comparison to the other participants, seemed to have been most negatively influenced by the environment. This might be an indication that the impact of environmental factors may vary across the levels of creative participation.

Certain phrases in Du Toit's (2004) descriptions of the different levels also seem to point out that, depending on their levels, people might be more vulnerable to the effect of their environments. For example, on the level of self-presentation: "the only control of (anger or fear) will be stimulated by the disapproval of the

group," and "will be directed by the pleasant sensation of being 'in favour' with others, rather than the unpleasant feeling of being rejected by them." (2004:p.63) On the contrary, on the level of competitive participation: "satisfaction and fulfilment are attained through competition with others." (2004:p.79) Also, on a level of imitative participation: "he will experience difficulty in handling new or unpredicted situations," (2004:p.72) while on a level of competitive participation: "complex situations can be handled successfully." (2004:p.79)

By reviewing the emergence and change in the creative participation of the participants of this study, it becomes clearer how people on different levels of creative participation may respond differently to environmental challenges. However, in order to draw more definite conclusions in this regard, would require further study.

5.4.3. Concluding remarks

Through reviewing the changes that took place in the participants' creative participation, the possible role of 'personality,' as a factor that influences the creative participation of people living in an inner city, was explored. In addition, the varying effect of the environment on people's creative participation, depending on the level that they were on, was considered. As such, though not many definite conclusions could be drawn, this objective has sufficiently informed the 'internal factors' contained in the aim of this study and has further explored the 'how.' In the following section, we will review the inner city sub-culture.

5.5. **Dissecting the sub-culture** – Reviewing the Schubart Park sub-culture

5.5.1. Sub-culture and creative participation

The UN-habitat global report on human settlements (2003) suggests that slums "are communities in their own right. They are melting pots for different racial

groups and cultures. (2003:p.xxxi) The report further describes the cultural contribution that many slum communities, because of their diversity, have made across the world. This includes the development of new genres of music and art, and new styles of literature and language. However, the cultural diversity that is often found in slums, similarly to the findings of this study, does not always yield such positive results. Rather, the diversity may reflect a mix "of disparate populations." "These populations come together through in-migration. They may well be foes; they may have a history of exploitation or fear, such as whites and blacks; or they may be groups that understand very little about each other's culture." (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.71) When one views the diversity of Schubart Park against the Apartheid history and the recent xenophobic violence across South Africa, it becomes clear that the diversity within Schubart Park was for the greater part disparate, rather than merely diverse. This could be part of the reason why the Schubart Park sub-culture went awry.

The development of a 'counter-culture' in Schubart Park seems similar to findings reported by the UN-Habitat; "observers of high crime neighbourhoods have long identified the pattern of 'oppositional culture' arising from a lack of participation in mainstream economic and social life. Given the apparent rejection of community members by the larger society, the community members reject the values and aspirations of that society by developing an 'oppositional identity.'" (Sherman et al, 1998 cited in UN-Habitat, 2003:p.75) This is especially notable in terms of values that oppose the protective factors of marriage and family, education, work and obedience to the law. As unemployment and segregation increases, the strength of the opposition increases. Efforts to gain 'respect' in oppositional cultures may then rely more upon violence than upon other factors.' Though the effect of the development of such an 'oppositional culture' on creative participation would require more in-depth inquiry, it is noteworthy that the members of this kind of sub-culture actively reject the popular social norms – thus the 'ability to comply with norms,' which is regarded as a factor indicative of the level of creative participation – is directly affected. It is further interesting to

note how the values of such an 'oppositional sub-culture' might distort the values of 'turning towards one's fellow man,' which is contained in a collectivist world-view. The 'lack of participation' is mentioned as a cause for the development of such a sub-culture. As such, perceived victimisation and marginalisation (being left on the outside of the popular forms of participation) are likely contributors to the development of an oppositional culture.

Feelings of being victimised abounded in Schubart Park. This emerged from the theme 'it was quite a challenge' and was then highlighted as a theme in itself in considering the Schubart Park sub-culture. 'The victim' is considered as one of the archetypes – "representational images and configurations with universal symbolic meaning." (Sadock & Sadock, 2003:p.222) 'The victim,' writes Caroline Myss (2002) in her extensive work on archetypes, may manifest when "you don't get what you want or need." (2002:p.116) 'The victim' may serve as a painful reminder of weakness when one remains afraid to stand up for justice or one 'may enjoy getting sympathy.' However, 'the victim' may also serve as a reminder of one's own strength, a guardian of one's self-esteem. "The core issue of the Victim is whether it's worth giving up your own sense of empowerment to avoid taking responsibility for your independence." (Myss, 2002:p116)

This theme evokes a great deal of ambivalence in me in that 'taking responsibility' and 'independence' are such loaded 'Western' values. It is further complicated by the fact that the Schubart Park residents were indeed being 'victimised,' and that the buildings and their upkeep were indeed the municipality's responsibility. Yet, I cannot escape the thought that, in demanding to be taken care of (instead of creating a culture in which they took care), the residents were compromising their own empowerment; their own creative participation. The question that this ambivalence brings to mind, is whether it is possible to be 'empowered' even though you are being victimised? Does 'empowerment' necessarily imply 'individuality'? How would the Schubart Park struggle have been different, had it come from an 'empowered' community? I've

heard that, in an interview with the press, the Dalai Lama was asked why he displays no anger toward the Chinese government, who continued to commit atrocities toward the Tibetan people. His answer displays an example of how I imagine 'empowerment' despite crippling victimisation may look: 'They have taken everything away from us. Shall I give them my mind too?'

But the Schubart Park struggle was not informed by the Dalai Lama; instead it was informed by memories of the Apartheid struggle, unfulfilled political promises and the constitution. It should suffice to say that it seems that the previous exposure of the individuals in a community, serve to inform the sub-culture of such a community. Hence, 'exposure' may be a factor which influences the creative participation of people living in an inner city, deserving further study.

5.5.2 Concluding remarks

Through the review of the Schubart Park sub-culture, it became clear that the cultural composition of an environment may facilitate or hinder the participation of the community living there. Further, it seems as though a diverse mix of cultures would inevitably lead to the development of a unique sub-culture. Such a sub-culture and the values, ideas and beliefs which are upheld by it, may become a factor which influences creative participation, specifically when it influences individuals' compliance with norms. Another belief that might negatively influence a community's participation seems to be the extent to which they are stunted by being 'the victim.' Though these findings are useful in informing the aim of this study, these factors, including the role that 'exposure' plays in affecting creative participation, require further investigation.

5.6.   Realisation of the aim – Putting it all together

The aim of this study was to explore how internal and external factors impact on the creative participation of people living in an inner city. Throughout the

discussion of the findings it has become clear that the influences of external factors, rather than internal factors, dominated what the participants perceived to have had an impact on them. I have thought it worthwhile to compare three widely-used occupational therapy conceptual models in relation to their current perspectives on the environmental effect on occupational performance – the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO), the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance (CMOP) and the Occupational Performance Model of Australia (OPM(A)). Thereafter I will consider how the findings of this study relate to those perspectives and in whether the aim has, or has not been, realised. By viewing the findings in this manner, it should be easy to identify any contributions that this study has made to the existing body of occupational therapy knowledge.

5.6.1. External factors and participation

In a study which explored 'the link between conceptual occupational therapy models and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health,' Stamm et al (2006) linked the different concepts, on which each of the above-mentioned conceptual models are built, to the ICF categories and components. Using the section of their findings which pertained to the ICF environmental factors seemed a useful way of comparing the way in which these models address the effect of the environment on participation. (Refer to Table I)

Concept	ICF Category
MoHO In the MoHO, the environment is seen as consisting of 'physical, cultural and social environments,' which 'constitute behaviour settings' and that 'influence human occupational behaviour.	
Physical environment	e199 Products and technology, unspecified
Social environment	e465 Social norms, practices and ideologies

Occupational behaviour settings	e299 Natural environment and human-made changes to environment, other specified and unspecified.
CMOP According to the CMOP there exists a dynamic relationship between the environment, occupation and person, which brings about occupational performance. 'The key elements of the environment are cultural, institutional, physical and social.'	
Physical environment	e199 Products and technology, unspecified
Institutional environment	e599 Services, systems and policies, unspecified
Cultural environment	e465 Social norms, practices and ideologies
Social environment	e465 Social norms, practices and ideologies
OPM (A) In the OPM(A) 'the external environment is divided into the physical, social, cultural and social environments.' In addition 'occupational performance is embedded in space and time. Space refers to physical matter (physical space) and the person's experience of space (felt space). Time refers to the temporal ordering of physical events (physical time) as well as the meaning that is attributed to time by the person (felt time).'	
Sensory environment	Environmental factors
Physical environment	e199 Products and technology, unspecified
Social environment	e456 Social norms, practices and ideologies
Cultural environment	e456 Social norms, practices and ideologies
Space (physical space)	e299 Natural environment and human-made changes to environment, other specified and unspecified
Space (felt space)	Not coded
Time (physical time)	e2459 Time-related changes, unspecified

Time (felt time)	b1802 Experience of time (classified in the ICF as a body function)

Table II – A comparison between the environmental factors contained in MOHO, CMOP, OPM(A) and the way in which they are linked to the ICF (Stamm et al, 2006:p.15)

The authors mentioned "differences in the definition of concepts and ICF categories" (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16) that affected their choices. 'Sensory environment' in the OPM(A) was linked to the ICF component environmental factors rather than to a more detailed ICF category because of its definition in the OPM(A). 'Sensory environment' in the OPM(A) refers to the "sensory surroundings of a person. Sensory aspects of the environment give a person information about the physical-sociocultural aspects of the environment and its survivability." (OPM(A), 2006) "No detailed ICF categories that match this definition could be found, although it seemed that all aspects of the definition of sensory environment in the OPM(A) were covered by the higher-ranking ICF component environmental factors." (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16) They also explain their link between both 'cultural environment' and 'social environment' to the ICF category e465 social norms, practices and ideologies among the environmental factors. In the OPM(A), 'cultural environment' is defined as an "organised structure composed of systems of values, beliefs, ideals and customs, which contribute to the behavioural boundaries of a person or group of people." (OPM(A), 2006) "In the CMOP, 'cultural environment' is defined as ethnic, racial, ceremonial and routine practices, based on ethos and the value system of a particular group (Townsend, 2002 cited in Stamm et al, 2006). The ICF category e465 social norms, practices and ideologies includes both a cultural and a social perspective. However, 'cultural environment' is not a separate category in the ICF." (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16)

In comparing the models, the authors mention that the MoHO, though it acknowledges that the environment does have an influence on human behaviour,

it does "not explain the interaction and relationship between its components." "Both the CMOP and the OPM(A) explain the relationship between the concepts that are included in the model." (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16-17)

5.6.2. The findings of this study in relation to conceptual models

Viewed in comparison to the findings of this study, it becomes clear that, though occupational therapists have acknowledged and, in many instances tried to explain, the impact of the environment on the participation of people, we have been greatly underestimating the effect thereof. This is clearly noticeable in the limited range of environmental factors that are taken account of in each of the above-mentioned models. Consideration for the effect of societal environmental factors seems lacking in particular, with only the CMOP taking account of the 'institutional environment.' In the OPM(A) the 'political and economic environments' are regarded as further sub-divisions of the environmental factors that are mentioned in Table I, and though their effects are described as 'profoundly' affecting 'occupational performance,' they don't seem to be clearly defined and their interaction with the other concepts of the model don't seem to be explicitly described. (OPM(A), 2006)

Further, it seems as though, in the instances in which the models have described the relationship between the environmental factors and the other concepts, the descriptions have failed to describe the complex interplay which the findings of this study have pointed to. Additionally, the models have mostly failed to acknowledge "that occupational performance is closely related to the perception and the experience of the environment," (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16) except in the concepts 'felt space' and 'felt time' of the OPM(A).

It seems, thus, as though the findings of this research have sufficiently realised the aim of the study in identifying factors that may have an influence on the creative participation of people living in an inner city, and in exploring what such

an influence might entail. These findings may be useful in identifying more specific areas that require inquiry. There are, however, also factors which limit the use of these findings.

5.7.   Limitations to the study

The qualitative nature of this study implies that the findings aren't generalisable. Further, despite the fact that I employed various techniques to ensure that the findings are transferable to different, but similar situations (Refer to 3.7.2. Transferability), the small sample size limits the number of situations to which the findings can be transferred. However, a larger sample would most likely not have allowed me to present such rich and detailed descriptions. In that sense this study could be seen as an exploration of a rather barren field of study, with the purpose of generating more specific areas that require inquiry.

An aspect of safety also limited this study. To fully understand the environment and culture of the research population, and to properly employ an ethnographic research methodology, I would have had to expose myself to potentially dangerous situations, such as going to live in Schubart Park or roaming around the inner city streets at night time. Though I initially planned on going to live in Schubart Park for a period of time, the University discouraged this, for the sake of my safety. This limited the conversations that I was able to have with residents, and thus the triangulation of the study. To try and compensate for the potential loss of data, I accompanied a night time tour of the city within a group of people, guided by a member of a PEN who was familiar with the city. Also, the NPO that I was working for was two blocks away from the research setting and served quite a number of its residents; in addition to my field visits, I made contact with as many residents as possible through the activities of the NPO.

A further limitation to this study was the fact that I have limited experience of practicing occupational therapy in disadvantaged communities and limited

knowledge with regards to social matters. This is particularly limiting within an autoethnographic research methodology, in which much of the data and the interpretations thereof is generated through the researcher's lens. A researcher with more knowledge and experience in the social field might have generated different interpretations.

5.8. Evaluation of the study

Despite the limitations inherent in using an autoethnographic research design, I regard it as one of the best possible choices for this study. Not only did it allow for exploration within an under-researched field, which could serve as a foundation for further research in this area, it also permitted me close and prolonged contact with a population of people that I wish to serve. I was able to understand and relate to the research participants in a way that a more 'distant' methodology would not have been able to achieve. In realising, so up-close-and-personal, the enormity of the effect of context on shaping people's lives, I am 'ruined' for 'traditional' occupational therapy and resolute in pursuing a practice 'without borders.' (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005)

The fact that this methodology is still relatively under-used in South African occupational therapy research, made it difficult, initially, to defend my research protocol. Further, in performing the research and writing this document, I often felt unsure about the way forward. I hope that this study might serve as a beacon along the way for other prospective occupational therapy autoethnographers.

5.9. Implications of the study

5.9.1. Recognising the full impact of the environment

The findings of this study have pointed out that, as occupational therapists, we have failed to recognise the full impact of the environment, in terms of the range

of environmental factors that we have included in some our most used conceptual models.

The findings of this study imply that, in approaching communities who live in material poverty and who are faced with environmental challenges, occupational therapists have to recognise their own contribution to the environment of such communities. Therapists have to be aware that their ideas, values and beliefs, which shape their system of norms, may facilitate or create barriers to the participation of such a community. This is particularly applicable to therapists who employ the VdT Model of Creative Ability, in which the assessment of the quality of a person's participation is affected by his / her ability to comply to a set of undefined norms. Our tendency to 'force' our own system of values on those we serve may subtly make itself known in feelings of frustration toward 'clients' who 'aren't making an effort' or 'who aren't taking responsibility,' and in feelings of 'sympathy' for our 'poor, needy' clients. It may be useful for therapists to regularly employ bracketing to observe their own perceptions, their tendency to victim-blame and their need to 'want,' for those they serve, what they 'want' for themselves. The following practical illustration may demonstrate this well.

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As part of our tour to the inner cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg and Maputo, we visited a project for boys living on the street, driven by an Anglican church in Maputo. Here the boys were taught all kinds of practical skills; basket weaving, fine art and wood work, amongst others, while living on the church premises. The project also made contact with the boys' families and worked extensively at trying to reunite them – when the boys and their families were ready, the boys were sent home. Our entire group immediately noticed that the sleeping quarters contained no beds or mattresses and we were curious, if not shocked. In explaining, the priest directed our attention to a bunch of rolled up straw mats in the corner of the room. 'That is what the children will sleep on once they go

155

home. If we give them beds to sleep on, they won't be satisfied with sleeping on the floor anymore and they might not want to go home.' Belonging to and being with a family was simply regarded as being more important than sleeping on a plush bed in a fancy bedroom.

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It would be useful for therapists working in poor communities to become aware of the different dimensions of poverty, which this study has pointed out. The UN-Habitat global report on human settlements (2003) have identified low income, low human capital (comprising poor education and health), low social capital (involving a shortage of supportive networks) and low financial capital (comprising the lack of productive assets, such as a house, which may be used to generate income or avoid paying major costs.) as the different facets of poverty. "Being part of a supportive family or group, without any tangible outputs, may sometimes be sufficient to fulfil the needs of an individual." (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.163) That is why it is of integral importance that we allow the people that we serve to inform us as to how they wish to be served. By doing that we are allowing them to wield their fundamental power of choice and we are acknowledging that our Western, individualistic, capitalistic culture, which has equated material wealth with happiness, is not the only 'right' world-view.

Furthermore, the findings of this study point out the importance of critically evaluating the cultural world-views that underlie the theories and models that we employ as part of our clinical reasoning. We must realise that, in using a specific model, we are also choosing to impart a specific world-view. This must be done with awareness and intention. As such, the lack of the documented development of the VdT Model of Creative Ability was also highlighted. Iwama suggests that models are adapted and amended in the "cultural relationship between their creators and users." (Iwama, 2006:p.48) This may mean that, in being applied to poor communities, the VdT model has been morphed to suit a more collectivist

156

cultural user population, but because it is so poorly documented, it remains unnoticed.

In addition, this study has named a number of factors that make up the structural- and individual environments of people, which may affect their participation. Many of these factors (and possibly some others that didn't emerge from this study) are not included in the conceptual models that are readily used by occupational therapists. This implies that therapists working in communities have to evaluate their environments beyond the current boundaries of the models that they are using; specifically including structural environmental factors, such as the history of their countries and of the development of the communities they are working in, the services, systems and policies that govern what goes in on in such communities and the prevalence of inequality. It may be helpful to therapists if the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa, similarly to what Watson has described, (Christiansen & Townsend, 2003 cited in Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) proactively monitor and report on employment, unemployment and education and justice policy and legislation. Furthermore, therapists then have to recognise the complex interplay between the structural environment, the individual environment, communities and their members as well as their participation in occupations, as part of their clinical (or social) reasoning.

5.9.2. Recognising the complexity of the environmental impact

Though I have found the ICF a useful tool in that it seems to account for most of the environmental factors that were identified in this study, I agree with Stamm et al. (Stamm et al, 2006) that it is found lacking in describing 'the relationships between its components.' The pADL questions, suggested by Kronenberg et al (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) could be a helpful tool in evaluating the politics, overt and subtle, which are created by the interplay between different environmental factors.

The interactions that became highlighted in the findings of this study may be useful in identifying similar interactions in other communities or for stimulating further inquiry into specific interactions. For example, the pervasive effect of the structural environment on the individual environment became clear, along with its impact on occupational opportunities and choice. These findings indicated that even the choice *not* to participate may be affected by environmental factors. Further, the interplay between time, space, effort and their limiting effect were discussed – this may have specific bearing on the additional effort that we require from individuals during therapy. The interaction between the environment, personality and participation was identified as an area requiring further study.

The findings of this study has pointed out the inability of the VdT Model of Creative Participation to sufficiently describe the person / community – environment – participation interaction. One reason is that (like in the conceptual models which were reviewed) the model understates the environment's interplay with its other constituting concepts. Another reason is that, many of the concepts of the model, such as 'compliance to norms' and 'maximal effort,' as well as their interrelationships are only vaguely described. This highlights the need for further development of the model.

5.9.3. Recognising the importance of 'perceived' environmental impact

The findings of this study further suggests that, in addition to evaluating the various environmental factors and their interactions with communities, individuals and participation, therapists should also consider the 'felt' environment. That is, the way in which the environment and its impact is perceived by a community or an individual. Personality, the level of creative participation that a person is on, and the ideas, beliefs and values of a sub-culture may all constitute a unique experience of the impact of the environment.

5.10. Recommendations

5.10.1.   The VdT Model of Creative Ability

Numerous authors have identified the need for the further development of the VdT Model of Creative Ability (Casteleijn, 2001; Van der Reyen, 1994) through research. I will mention a few suggested areas that might benefit from further inquiry, which where emphasised throughout this study.

I would suggest that the cultural underpinnings of the model be investigated; with the aim of discovering the effect that the use thereof has on communities who do not maintain a Western world-view. This seems all the more important in the light of the fact that it is now also being 'exported' and used in countries, such as Japan, who do not adhere to a Western value system. Practitioners working in 'collectivist' communities may be valuable sources of information with regards to potential adaptations which might have already been made to accommodate the users of the model. In addition, I would suggest that the coherence between the values that underlie the initial levels of creative ability (self-differentiation through competitive participation) and the values that underlie the final levels (contributory participation) are examined. I perceive tension between the values that are contained in, for example, a treatment aim for self-presentation: 'to evoke a feeling of wanting to possess the product' versus 'the individual reinforces his capacity…to make a contribution.' It seems strange that the value of 'wanting to possess' may lead to 'wanting to contribute.'

Furthermore, I would suggest that all the concepts contained in the model be clearly defined and described in terms of their practical manifestation and the way in which they relate to each other. It might also be useful to examine the effect of the environment on each individual concept (for example norms, effort and anxiety), so that one could consider the effects of the environment on each different level.

5.10.2. Internal and external factors

In identifying the limitations of this study, it became clear that studies, similar to this one in their aim, would be useful in broadening the knowledge base of this under-researched area in occupational therapy. Studies which might lead to generalisations regarding the environment and its effect on participation, or studies which focus on a specified number or kind of environmental elements, would be especially useful.

Research focussing on the interplay between specific internal factors, such as personality, and the environment could do much to inform current models that have failed to describe such interactions. It would also be worthwhile to consider ways in which current models could be adapted or amended to reflect a wider range of environmental factors, the complex interplay between such factors and the importance of the 'perceived' environment.

5.10.3. Translating the findings into practice

Once we start understanding the impact of the environment on the communities and people we serve, research regarding the role that occupational therapists have to play will be invaluable. Such research might include ways in which the benefits that can be construed from adversity (such as were illustrated in the findings of this study), may be translated into therapeutic tools.

5.11. Concluding remarks

The environment seems to have a more pervasive effect on creative participation than the profession of occupational therapy had previously envisaged. By further exploring the various environmental factors, their interplay amongst each other, their effect on various innate factors and on participation in occupations, the profession – and models such as the VdT Model of Creative Ability – may make

strides in pursuing the new social opportunities that are afforded them, by terms such as 'occupational apartheid' and 'occupational justice.' This research represents an initial step into a largely unexplored research landscape. I can only hope that my account and interpretations of the stories of the Schubart Park residents may do justice to their experiences, so that meaning and contribution may be construed from the challenges that they endured.