



# Two

## Marabastad: A Legacy of Utopias

### Historical Context



Mr Pillay<sup>1</sup> is looking out of an east-facing window of his upholstery business, 'Pillay Upholsterers', while he wipes the sawdust from a surface. Business is slow, as usual. A row of taxis is parked along Steenhovenspruit<sup>2</sup>. The buzz of a razor under the shaded gazebo, tells of the barber's work. Boom Street is busy. The river flows under a bridge here, cutting a gash in the landscape that separates the buildings to the east and to the west, including Pillay's shop. The concrete walls of the channel are heaped with brightly coloured litter which falls from the banks and into the river. Between the heaps of rubbish vegetation grows, in quest of water.

From the window he is looking across the river to an open space on the far side, which is filled with heaps of partially burnt rubbish. Between the heaps, small groups of people are sitting on bare mattresses or discarded cardboard boxes. Black smoke lingers over them. Mielies are cooking over open fires in drums, along the high walls of a chicken factory, to be sold elsewhere. Other fires are burning litter or merely providing warmth to huddled groups of people.

It is lunchtime. Mr Pillay closes the shop and decides to take his son for a walk. He asks his son if he can remember the story of how Marabastad came about - the one he had told him the other day. His son proudly rattles off the story from memory.

*Pretoria was declared the capital of the "Boer Republic" in 1860 and black labourers flooded into the city in search of work<sup>3</sup> - and that is why you called this period "A Promised Land for Migrant Labour"<sup>4</sup>, bapu<sup>5</sup>. They settled on the eastern banks of Steenhovenspruit. A few years later this was established as "Schoolplaats"<sup>6</sup> and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Station provided schooling, housing and land for the people. The Marabi*

- 1 See Figure 5
- 2 "Steenhovenspruit" is the name of a river that flows through Marabastad and joins up with the Apies River further north
- 3 Honours Marabastad, (research from the Honours group of 2015) (University of Pretoria: 2015)
- 4 Utopia 1 [1852-1895]  
Mr. Pillay believes that Marabastad is a result of various utopias - impractical schemes for social improvement (definition according to Merriam Webster, (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/utopia>: 2016). This belief was adopted from the Marabastad Urban Vision Group: (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016)  
See Figure 4  
See Timeline with Utopias: Figure 6
- 5 "Bapu" is the word for father in the Gujarati dialect (Indian) according to Wikibooks ([https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Gujarati/Family\\_relations](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Gujarati/Family_relations))
- 6 "Schoolplaats" was a settlement that was established in 1867, according to Honours Marabastad, (research from the Honours group of 2015) (University of Pretoria: 2015)

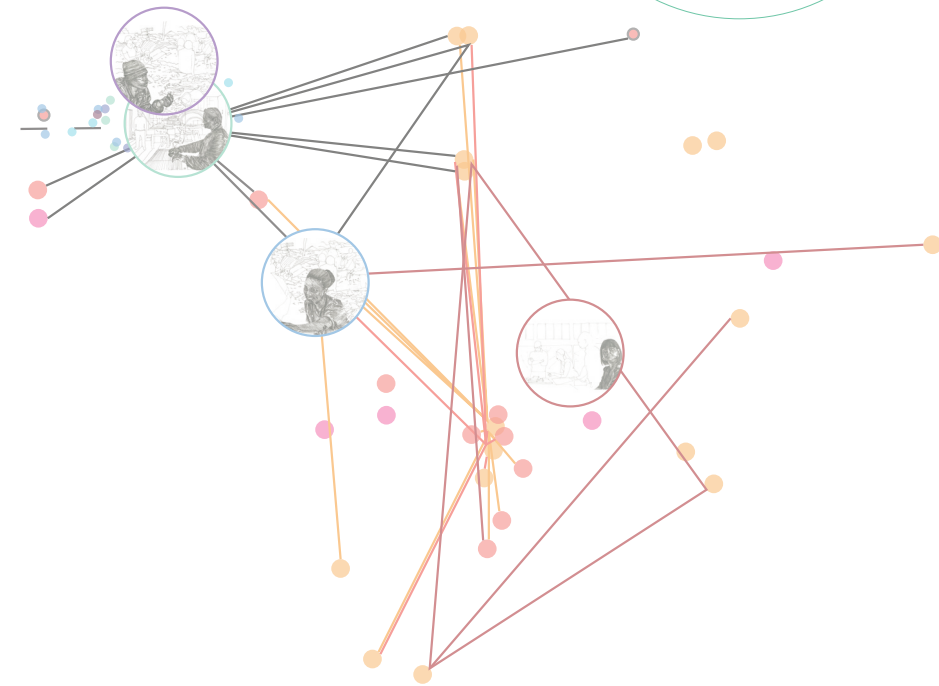
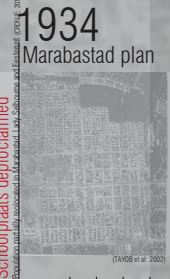
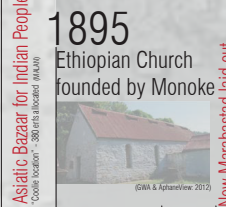
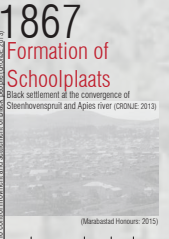
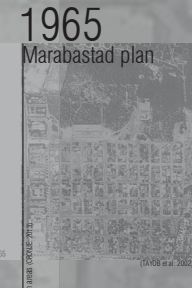
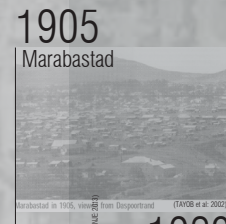
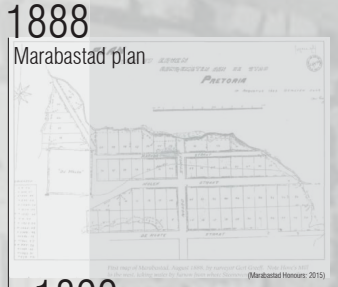


Figure 4: (left) Graphic used from the Urban Vision Book - *Marabastad: A Legacy of Utopias* (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016)

Figure 5: (above) Mr Pillay's perspective of events is narrated in this chapter - highlighted within the greater network (Patrick: 2016)

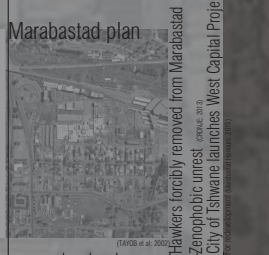
Area allocated for Black settlements (COPLUE 2013)  
**Boer Republic claimed Pretoria as its Capital**  
"Head" Ex



The Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act  
The Asiatic Land Tenure and Representation Act  
Implementation of Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945  
The Population Registration Act  
The Natives Resettlement Act  
Group Area Development Act  
Proclamation of Laudium and Eersteust  
Bantu Self Government Act  
Bantu Self Government Act  
Belle Ombre Station proposed  
Community Development Act 30  
Pretoria Town Planning Scheme  
UN imposed sanctions on South Africa  
Mariarmen Temple is declared a National Monument  
New Constitution of South Africa  
Urban Renewal  
Free Settlement Areas Act  
Provision of Certain Land for Resettlement Act  
Interim Constitution of South Africa  
Development Facilitation Act  
Final Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)  
Housing Act (107 of 1997)

Area allocated for Black settlements (COPLUE 2013)  
**Boer Republic claimed Pretoria as its Capital**  
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1867  
Formation of Schoolplaats  
Black settlement at the convergence of Steenhovenspruit and Agies River (COPLUE 2013)



UTOPIA 1

UTOPIA 2

UTOPIA 3

UTOPIA 4.1

UTOPIA 4.2

UTOPIA 5

UTOPIA 6

"Hut" tax  
To control movement and settlement of black people (COPLUE 2013)  
**Convention of Pretoria**  
Gov. Indaba and endorsed the right to own land (COPLUE 2013)  
**Transvaal Law No. 3**  
Repealed laws that gave Indians & coloureds created separate business  
**Marabastad established as a Government Controlled Location**  
(PREMIUM 1954)

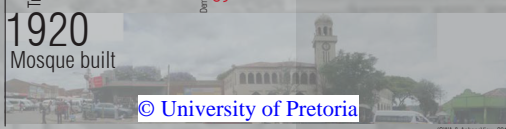
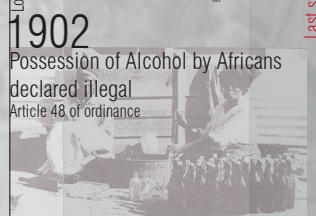
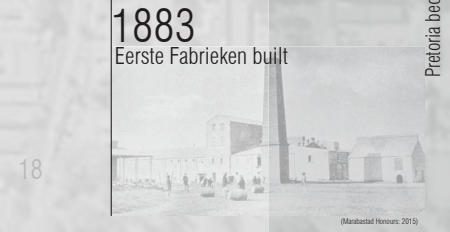
**Native Passes**  
Implemented in Town Regulations Act 37 of 1885 (PREMIUM 1954)  
Widened on roads to planned streets, stop-overs in Pretoria (MAYALU)  
**Section 6 Town Regulations**  
Prevented coloured people from walking on the sidewalks (PREMIUM 1954)  
**South African War**  
Three types of passes introduced  
Native Pass, Mobility Pass and Free Day Pass (PREMIUM 1954)  
**Pretoria becomes a municipality & end of South African War**  
(PREMIUM 1954)  
**Local Council: no governance over Asiatic Bazaar**  
As it was controlled by the government  
Thanks to "hut" tax and business control (PREMIUM 1954)  
**Mass resignation from Pretoria Town Council**  
Due to conflict with central government (PREMIUM 1954)  
**Plans to establish centralized compound for municipal workers**  
Implemented by the Municipal Compound (PREMIUM 1954)

**Notice 151 of Government Gazette**  
Boundaries of Marabastad & Schooneburg, combined, separate occupation of separate  
will living on the premises of their employees (COPLUE 2013)  
**Last structures of Old Marabastad demolished**  
(COPLUE 2013)  
**Transvaal Local Government Commission tightening regulations**  
(MAYALU 2013)  
**Native (Urban Areas) Act**  
Special locations for Black people (COPLUE 2013)  
**Section 14 Transvaal Asiatic Land tenure Amendment**  
Compulsory of "hut" tax  
Temporary housing opposite the market (COPLUE 2013)  
**Clearing of Black suburb begins**  
Moved to Maseru (COPLUE 2013)  
**Commission of Enquiry to investigate violence of Riot in 1942**  
The Trading and Occupation of Land Act  
More restrictive legislation could be passed (MAYALU 2013)

**Iscor opens Slums Act**  
Densification of dispersed inner city suburbs and location of Black people to create black urbanisation (COPLUE 2013)  
**Section 14 Transvaal Asiatic Land tenure Amendment**  
Compulsory of "hut" tax  
Temporary housing opposite the market (COPLUE 2013)  
**Clearing of Black suburb begins**  
Moved to Maseru (COPLUE 2013)  
**Commission of Enquiry to investigate violence of Riot in 1942**  
The Trading and Occupation of Land Act  
More restrictive legislation could be passed (MAYALU 2013)  
**National Party came into power**  
Group Areas Act of 1950  
(COPLUE 2013)

**Marabastad Trading Complex is built**  
Freeway scheme proposed  
Asiatic Bazaar is under Indian Administrative Body (COPLUE 2013)

**Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act**  
**Pretoria Structure Plan & Roadway Proposal**  
Coming through Marabastad (COPLUE 2013)  
**Restitution of Land Rights Act**  
Land returned to those forcibly removed according to Act 22 of 1994 (COPLUE 2013)  
**Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act**  
Act 96 of 1995 (COPLUE 2013)  
**Communal Property Associations Act**  
**Extension of Security of Tenure Act**  
Act 62 of 1997 (COPLUE 2013)  
**Strategic Metropolitan Development Framework**  
Act 62 of 1997 (COPLUE 2013)  
**Spatial Development Framework**  
Proposed core way to Bloed and Boom Streets (COPLUE 2013)  
**Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act 1998**  
**National Heritage Resources Act 25**  
New Municipality of City of Tshwane  
Influx control of white people (COPLUE 2013)  
**Squatters in Marabastad relocated to Mamelodi**  
(COPLUE 2013)  
**Tshwane 2055**  
Vision of the City of Tshwane (COPLUE 2013)



**Establishment of Pretoria's townships**  
Gauteng and Soutwest



*Kraal* on the western banks of the river provided housing for an overflow of people from Schoolplaats. It was declared an informal settlement in the 1870s.

Mr Pillay looks on admiringly as his son finishes the story. They walk past the barber, and cross Boom Street, and then alongside the informal trade stalls on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which line the fence at the substation. There is a pleasant smell of home-cooked chicken from an informal restaurant. Old buildings across the street, house the herbalist, a dentist and formal retail near the Belle Ombre Station. Around the corner, there is a foul odour of coming from the meat market. They can see it set up, nestling in a niche provided by the fenced-off substation. They continue towards the Belle Ombre Station, the smell of partially burnt litter is pervasive. Once inside the station, Mr Pillay guides his son to where they overlook the substation and the greater Marabastad suburb behind it. Leaning against the rough wall, he tells a story.

*So, you were talking about Marabi Kraal - just now at the shop - shall I tell you more about it? His son listens intently. This story is called "influx and opportunity"<sup>8</sup>. Marabi Kraal was established as "Marabastad" in 1888<sup>9</sup> and in the decades that followed much development occurred that influenced the residents' lives. In 1893, three hundred and eighty stands were set out for an Indian location, south of Marabastad, and a New Marabastad mediated between the two locations, with a temporary refugee camp<sup>10</sup>.*

Looking outward from the station, father and son take in the imposing scale of the buildings, and they can see their shop in between a clothing retail store on the Boom Street corner and an auto-body workshop on the Grand Street corner. The row of fenced-in buildings faces Steenhovenspruit. On the opposite side of the block, the Empire Theatre on Boom Street is severely degraded, and there is a restaurant on the Grand Street corner. A number of clothing stores spill from the Empire Theatre onto 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr Pillay has another story.

*This story is called "Permanency and Expression"<sup>11</sup>. There was a change in municipal authority at the time and Marabastad, the Asiatic Bazaar and the Cape Boy's Location were formally zoned as non-white townships<sup>12</sup>. The Indian settlers, in the Asiatic Bazaar, were allowed more freedom than the other non-white settlers. This created a social barrier between us. The black residents in Marabastad were not allowed alcohol, however, both the coloured and black residents had a strong culture of brewing beer in the home for extra income<sup>13</sup>. Beer containers that were not hidden away in holes in the ground<sup>14</sup>, were destroyed by the police. We were allowed to express our culture through the Aga Kahn Mosque (the white mosque) and the Mariammen Temple, which is the tall colourful structure that we can see over there (Mr Pillay points towards the shrine of the temple). However, cinema was enjoyed by all residents, in the early days of silent movies<sup>15</sup>, up until the time that the*

7 "Kraal" is a traditional African village of huts that is typically enclosed by a fence, according to Oxford Dictionaries (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/kraal>: 2016)

8 Utopia 2 [1895-1903] adopted from Marabastad Urban Vision Group: (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016) See Timeline with Utopias: Figure 6

9 Honours Marabastad, (research from the Honours group of 2015) (University of Pretoria: 2015)

10 Friedman, M, *A History of Africans in Pretoria with Special Reference to Marabastad: 1902-1923* (Masters Dissertation, University of South Africa: 1994)

11 Utopia 3 [1903-1912] adopted from Marabastad Urban Vision Group: (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016) See Timeline with Utopias: Figure 6

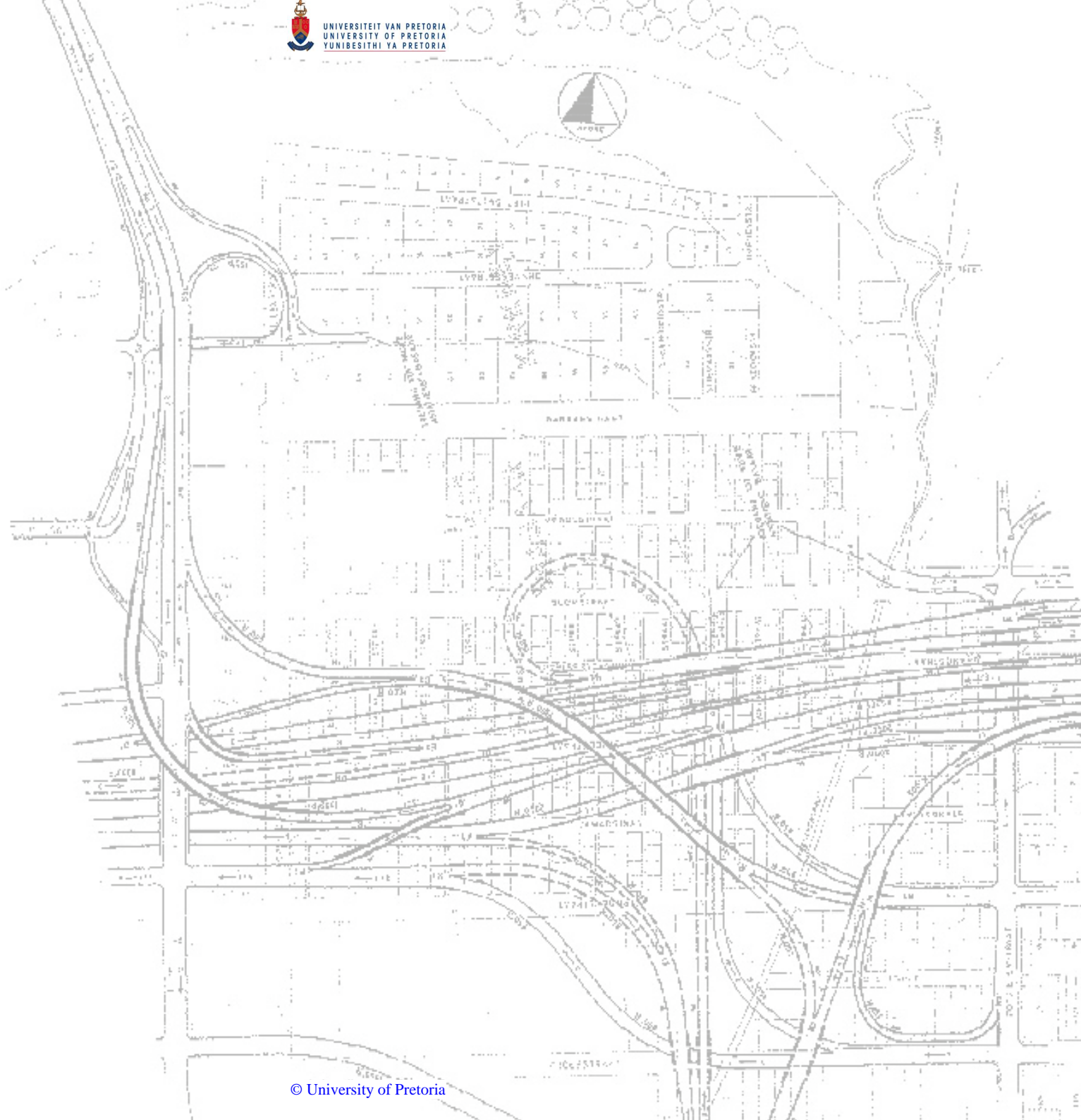
12 Cronje, M.L, *A Brewery in Marabastad* (Masters Dissertation, University of Pretoria: 2013)

13 Mphahlele, E, *Down Second Avenue* (Great Britain: Whitstable Litho Ltd., Whistable, Kent: 1959)

14 Mphahlele, E, *Down Second Avenue* (Great Britain: Whitstable Litho Ltd., Whistable, Kent: 1959), 43

15 Mphahlele, E, *Down Second Avenue* (Great Britain: Whitstable Litho Ltd., Whistable, Kent: 1959), 50

Figure 6: (left) Timeline of the historic development of Marabastad, according to the Utopias that are explained in the Urban Vision Book - *Marabastad: A Legacy of Utopias* (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016)



*Star Picture Palace was re-christened as the Empire Theatre<sup>16</sup>.*

*Our next story is called "Control"<sup>17</sup> and tells of a period of great strife<sup>18</sup>. All Old Marabastad dwellings were demolished by 1918<sup>19</sup>. By 1950, we were relocated from the Asiatic Bazaar to Laudium, whereas the residents of Marabastad were relocated to Atteridgeville and Saulsville, and the Cape Boy's Location was moved to Eersterust. This was all because of the Native Land's Act of 1913<sup>20</sup> where people were forcibly removed from their homes. So this story becomes one of "Control and Segregation"<sup>21</sup>. The Daspoort Sewerage Treatment Plant was built just behind where we are now (he points behind the Belle Ombre railway line)<sup>22</sup>. This created a barrier to the north.*

They turn to face the other small blocks, along the colourful Boom Street, which are similar in character to their block. Mr Pillay mentions the contrast between these blocks, with their harsh, blackened surfaces, and the larger vacant blocks further south.

*This story is called "Changing Character"<sup>23</sup> because there was a freeway scheme<sup>24</sup> that was intended to cover Marabastad<sup>25</sup> - as if it were not there! The planned development of the freeway scheme froze all future projects within the Asiatic Bazaar<sup>26</sup>, but the Trading Complex (where your uncle's shop is) and the Goede Hoop complex<sup>27</sup> (those tall buildings closer to town there), were built. Luckily, the freeway scheme was not completed, but you can still see where they began building - you can see the curve on Bloed Street and the fast one-way traffic that cuts us off from the southern blocks. There is also E'skia Mpahlele Drive<sup>28</sup> that goes past the old Native Reception Depot<sup>29</sup> down there. In 1981 this station, Belle Ombre, was built over the river*

- 16 Mphahlele, E, *Down Second Avenue* (Great Britain: Whitstable Litho Ltd., Whitstable, Kent: 1959), 140
- 17 Utopia 4 [1912-1943] adopted from Marabastad Urban Vision Group: (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016)  
See Timeline with Utopias: Figure 6, pg 12
- 18 To elaborate on this strife:  
The Slums Act of 1934 declared Schoolplaats a slum and therefore had to be demolished and the black residents were relocated, according to Cronje, M.L, *A Brewery in Marabastad* (Masters Dissertation, University of Pretoria: 2013)  
In line with the Native Land Act, the Native Reception Depot was built (1930) in the area that would become "Tin Town" (1938), according to Friedman, M, *A History of Africans in Pretoria with Special Reference to Marabastad: 1902-1923* (Masters Dissertation, University of South Africa: 1994)
- 19 As a result of the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act implemented from 1945-1954, according to Tayob, A., & Pienaar & Tayob, *Integrated Urban Design Framework: Marabastad Executive Summary* (Aziz Tayob Architects, Pretoria: 2002)
- 20 Cronje, M.L, *A Brewery in Marabastad* (Masters Dissertation, University of Pretoria: 2013)
- 21 Utopia 5 [1943-1967] adopted from Marabastad Urban Vision Group: (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016).  
See Timeline with Utopias: Figure 6
- 22 In 1912, according to Cronje, M.L, *A Brewery in Marabastad* (Masters Dissertation, University of Pretoria: 2013)
- 23 Utopia 6 [1967-1987] adopted from Marabastad Urban Vision Group: (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016).  
See Timeline with Utopias: Figure 6
- 24 Proposed in 1967, according to Tayob, A., & Pienaar & Tayob, *Integrated Urban Design Framework: Marabastad Executive Summary* (Aziz Tayob Architects, Pretoria: 2002)  
See Figure 7
- 25 Honours Marabastad, (research from the Honours group of 2015) (University of Pretoria: 2015)
- 26 Tayob, A., & Pienaar & Tayob, *Integrated Urban Design Framework: Marabastad Executive Summary* (Aziz Tayob Architects, Pretoria: 2002)
- 27 Phase one, according to Tayob, A., & Pienaar & Tayob, *Integrated Urban Design Framework: Marabastad Executive Summary* (Aziz Tayob Architects, Pretoria: 2002)
- 28 "E'skia Mpahlele Drive" was known before as DF Malan Drive
- 29 Built in 1930, according to GWA Studio, *Aphane View & Urban Heritage Group, Precinct 2: Capital West Block 09-35* (Heritage Value Mapping) (Pretoria: 2012)

Figure 7: (left) The freeway scheme that was planned to cover Marabastad (Tayob et. al: 2002)



*that was channelised in 1920<sup>30</sup>. The Belle Ombre Plaza was also built then. If you look at all of these buildings, you can see that they do not fit in with the other buildings in Marabastad – but were built as barriers to cut us off from the rest of Pretoria – so they were not trying to fit in.*

They look again at the contrasting blocks between them and the south. The brick-paved Jazz Park sits snugly between these contrasting blocks – right on the curve of Bloed Street. Clusters of green foliage push up the green paving and there is an abandoned playground on the one side. Across the busy Bloed Street, are the burnt, blackened surfaces of vacant lots. “It’s no wonder that they no longer use the park!”, he says to his son. He goes on to mention that Jazz was a significant part of the cultural history of Marabastad.

*Jazz Park fits into the story of “Stagnation and Perseverance”<sup>31</sup>. It was a project that attempted to break down the barriers created by the previous utopias of Marabastad. From up here we can see how physically and ecologically degraded Marabastad has become, as the neglected vacant land has become a wasteland . People do not feel welcome, safe or comfortable staying in Marabastad. That is why it is such a transitory space – it is abuzz during the day (when we are here) and then dead at night (except for the few who dwell here). The trading activities along Boom Street create a positive concentration of energy during the day (he points in this direction). Informal traders ply their trade along Boom Street, feeding mainly off the pedestrian energy from the city, taxi’s or the station. This positive energy forms the true gateway to Marabastad and it continues into the colonnaded public walkways of the old buildings. I remember resting against the shop walls, in the shade of the veranda, where one could see the whole world passing by<sup>32</sup>. The formal retail spills out onto these walkways and mixes with the informal trade, which is right on the street edge.*

They hurry back to the store, because Mr Pillay has lost track of the time.

~

Figure 8: (photo spread to the left) A description of the photos from left to right: Jazz Park’s street edge at the intersection of Bloed Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue [image source: (Marianne de Klerk: 2015)], street furniture on entering Jazz Park at this intersection [image source: (Marianne de Klerk: 2015)], the Boom Street interface facilitate informal trade under the verandas of the shops [image source: (Jeandri Scholtz: 2015)], the use of the verandas as a gathering space in front of the shops on Boom Street [image source: (Jeandri Scholtz: 2015)]

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- 30 Cronje, M.L., *A Brewery in Marabastad* (Masters Dissertation, University of Pretoria: 2013)  
31 *Utopia 7 [1987-2016]* adopted from Marabastad Urban Vision Group: (Nicha,S., Hough, D. & Patrick, N. : 2016)  
See Timeline with Utopias: Figure 6, pg 12  
32 Mphahlele, E, *Down Second Avenue* (Great Britain: Whitstable Litho Ltd., Whitstable, Kent: 1959),111





One day in February 2016, Mr Pillay is looking out of the shop window and notices people who have come to visit the “no-man’s-land” across the river. Curious, as he has noticed them on a number of occasions, he leaves the shop and approaches them. It appears that Dr Radebe and her colleague are working in the community and that they provide medical care for homeless people at the Sediba Hope Clinic on Bosman Street. They visit Grand Street and the Struben Street Shelters on a bi-weekly basis and provide free health support on the streets of Marabastad.

Standing in the middle of the so-called “no-man’s-land”, Mr Pillay finds that he is no longer threatened by this environment. The people are comfortable with Dr Radebe and her colleague, and by extension Mr Pillay. He sees a baby sitting on her mother’s lap while two toddlers run back and forth around a small group of people. A blind man sits quietly, enjoying the sounds of all the activity. His hand rests on another man’s shoulder.

There is bustling activity along the water channel. In the channel, the flow of water is hindered as there are many cracks and breaks in the concrete. In the distance, someone appears to be washing themselves in the channel, while another relieves himself against the wall of the channel. Feeling uncomfortable, Mr Pillay looks up to see that Dr Radebe has moved, and is standing behind a pall of smoke from the mielie drums. Walking towards her, his eyes fall on a couple of men lighting up some nyaope<sup>33</sup> and he recognises one of them - Katlego. He had come to the shop searching for employment a couple of months ago - he had such potential then. Katlego looks right through him and Mr Pillay slips quietly away. On this side of Grand Street a bakkie stands, piled high with mielies. A man is sorting through them and passing them to another person who is organising them into the metal drums. Dr Radebe passes him now; a couple of people follow her to her car. Here she provides health support from a medical bag in the boot. A table filled with bread and juice stands under the dilapidated veranda of an old building. Further up the street a recycling trolley disappears into the buildings. He wanders closer and finds an ad hoc storage area for recycled goods.

~

Having befriended Dr Radebe, Mr Pillay chats with her regularly during her bi-weekly visits. The two exchange knowledge - Mr Pillay tells her the stories of Marabastad’s history and Dr Radebe informs him of the rich network of support facilities that cater to the homeless and vulnerable. Mr Pillay sees an opportunity to plug into this network.

Figure 9: (photo spread to the left) The area that Mr Pillay refers to as “no-man’s-land”. A description of the photos from left to right: “no-man’s-land” across Boom Street, with the Chicken Warehouse in the background [image source: (Sandeep Nicha: 2016)]; Steenhovenspruit just before it flows under Boom Street [image source: (Jeandri Scholtz: 2015)]; retail spills out of the old Empire Theatre onto the public walkways and Boom Street [image source: (Jeandri Scholtz: 2015)].

33 “Nyaope” is a drug that is traditionally a mix of heroin and dagga, but is also known to include rat poison, pool cleaner and antiretrovirals. It is most commonly smoked and it provides an initial immediate high, but individual tolerance increases - resulting in an increase in consumption in order to achieve the same high. The resultant cost increase sees many users change to injecting - they can get the same high at a lower cost. This is according to Department of Family Medicine, *Opioid Substitution and Substance Abuse Harm Reduction through COPC in the City of Tshwane: A holistic and Community Based Primary Health Care Intervention Strategy*. (University of Pretoria: 2015), 6