THESIS

REVEALING LIVES:
excavating, mapping and interrogating life histories of women clothing workers from District Six (1940s - present).

AMANDA SANGER: 18389539

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Social Science in the Faculty of Humanities

University of Pretoria

SUPERVISOR:

PROF. SIONA O'CONNELL

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KEYWORDS

District Six; life histories; women; working class life; apartheid archive; collective memory; nostalgia; memorialisation; popular education; critical pedagogy; racism; restitution; social justice.

DECLARATION

I, Amanda Sanger, declare that **'REVEALING LIVES: excavating, mapping and interrogating life histories of women clothing workers from District Six (1940 - present)'** is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Amanda Sanger

24 August 2020

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ABSTRACT

This study is a contribution to the programme of memorializing District Six through the site-specific stories that are shared in research, education, and the co-curated spaces of the District Six Museum. When buildings, streets, street names and place names are erased from a landscape; when cultural, economic, religious, and educational spaces are shut down; then people's connections to place are disrupted, diverted, reimagined, often lost to future linked generations. These connections, however, continue to live on in people's memories - individual and collective, sometimes lying dormant waiting to be triggered into wakefulness and visibility. In the case of District Six, these memories have lived on as nostalgia about a recent past with the trauma, often, edited out. Consequently, District Six has frequently been rendered as a stereotype - a friendly, unproblematic, tolerant, kanala[1] place, where grand narrative re-enactments provide a sense of closure for some or evokes a sense of renewed anger about the stories not told and the unfulfilled restitution process. The stories of women factory workers are a case in point, where the closing down of factories and the subsequent loss of livelihoods are remembered in two ways. Firstly, through a lens of nostalgia premised on the idea that the past was a better place when we had jobs and could feed our families. Secondly, this recent past is also remembered with a sense of unresolved anger that people are less important than profit margins and real estate - a mentality that resulted in the export of cheap labour factories overseas and gentrification. This study explores the stories of two women clothing workers from District Six. I mapped out the important clothing factories contained in the stories of the two women I interviewed like, for example, the Ensign Factory that was in a section of District Six now rezoned as part of Woodstock. The site and its surroundings have taken on a new corporate brand but still lives with the spectral traces of the old District Six. I make these and other District Six fragments more visible through the stories of Ruth Rosa Phala-Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, using the District Six Museum's oral history methodology – one steeped in a critical pedagogy where the storytellers have agency and are invited into a co-curated sense-making and interpretive process.

[1] A word commonly used in many parts of Cape Town's townships, sometimes narrowly referred to as the 'Cape Malay' or Cape Muslim vernacular because of its roots in slave heritage. It is most often used to mean 'please' and derives from a Javanese word but also seen as derived from the many canals that ran through District Six or 'kanaladorp'. Refer to the body of work on the language of District Six (and the Bo Kaap) by researchers and historians like Achmat Davids, Mohammed Adhikari, Kay McCormick, amongst others).

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PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> Only when linked to historical questions and problems, via methods and theories, can memory be illuminating. (Confino, 1997, p. 1388)

1.1 WHAT AND WHO IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

Revealing lives: excavating, mapping and interrogating life histories of women clothing workers from District Six, was envisioned as a project that would bring women together to share their stories about life in District Six and as clothing workers, as well as to participate in a series of site marking activities at various sites including the locations of the displaced factories they were employed at. This study focuses on the stories of two women, Ruth Phala Jeftha and Farahnaaz (Veronica) Gilfelleon, who are both involved in the museum as part of a 'community of practice'[2]. It lays the foundation for a much bigger project to work with more

[2] This is a concept explored in depth by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, where learning is socially constructed but also relies on a 'complex social, cultural and historical system which has accumulated learning over time'. Ruth Phala Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon are part of storytelling and curatorial projects of the Museum. Ruth: *Huis Kombuis,* a food memory and textile project; Seven Steps Members' Club and Visitor Engagement. Farahnaaz: Peninsula Maternity Hospital memory project; Seven Steps Members' Club and Visitor Engagement.

clothing workers, particularly women, as a District Six Museum archival, exhibition and education programme[3]. The idea is to extend this thesis, it's findings and the use of specific oral history and memory mapping instruments into a comprehensive Museum Memory Methodology research and practice project (Bennett, 2008; Till, 2008, 2010).

1.1.1 People at the centre, in the founding practices of the District Six Museum

The Museum's work with a reconstruction of the recent history of District Six using oral history as a primary research tool and first person testimony in visitor engagement (Rassool & Proselendis, 2001b), is often described as people centred and participatory. This is in the sense of Paulo Freire's life's work where demystification of knowledge is an important part of a humanising pedagogy (Darder, 2017; Freire, 2005; Mayo, 2005, 2010). It calls attention to the founding practices of the District Six Museum Foundation, where the exhibition emerged out of the stories of former residents, shared in a discursive space[4] populated by diverse voices including, academics, education activists, artists, musicians, poets, trade union, sport club and community activists and also many ordinary folk (no intentional political purpose or affiliation) with a connection to the erased landscape of District Six and other sites of forced removals. I use discursive here in the sense of a space that provides a loose framework for the organic generation of ideas, triggered by many modes of creative input and encouraging multiple perspectives across disciplines.

In this scenario, history, memory, culture, and politics collided in an organic, non-sterile petri dish of creativity at a time when Museums in South Africa were largely places for the sanitised narratives of the Apartheid system's anointed experts[5]. In the making of the Museum, the history of District Six was constructed by filling in the silences of an authorised history, written

[3] This will be in partnership, hopefully, with the South African Clothing Workers' Union (SACTWU), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) young workers forum and the Museum's young historians, community facilitators and curators' programmes.

[4] This discursive space was created in 1990 in the old Central Methodist Mission Church at 25A Buitenkant Street, as a product of the Hands-off District Six campaign that was launched in 1987. Discursive in the sense of organic generation of ideas, triggered by many modes of creative input and encouraging multiple perspectives across disciplines.

[5] I'm mindful of the oral history and biography work that preceded the establishment of the District Six Museum notably: Surplus People's Project (SPP) and their documentation of people's stories of displacement from areas like Modderdam, Crossroads and others nationally, in the 1980s-1990s; The extensive oral history archive created by the Centre for Popular Memory (UCT) to document the stories of displacement from District Six, Tramway Road, Claremont, Simonstown, amongst other places; and the work of anti-apartheid teachers who used oral history methodology as an activist tool - part of a critical pedagogy inspired by Paulo Freire; amongst others nationally. It should also be noted that many individuals have done extensive District Six oral history projects or family histories independently of the Museum.

as an exercise of power, with the loud absence of multiple voices of the oppressed and marginalised people of South Africa. This resulted in the re-establishment and rendering of people with histories, politics, and cultural practices like I B Tabata and Jane Gool, Ben and Helen Kies, Cissie Gool, Minnie Gool, Jonny Gomas, Richard Rive and many others directly or indirectly associated with District Six but who were *invisibilised* in the official record of South African and world history by virtue of the fact that they were outside of the scope of vision of Apartheid historians. Instead, these people often formed part of the Apartheid State Security apparatus' official record as dangerous threats to society.

1.1.2 Triggering popular memory as social history

From the outset, the collection of oral histories and biographies was more than merely an act of accumulating stories of anti-apartheid heroes in the vein of constructing a 'hall of fame' or memorial wall, common approaches to official government or 'expert' driven restitution projects. It was not enough to just add to the stream of stories of great men and women in history who make up the grand narrative of our past. Filling in the silences of history was more about activating the memories of those who inhabited the social, cultural, economic, and political world of these 'great men and women' whose lives were revealed as the teachers, trade unionists, writers, human rights lawyers, and community activists who lived as ordinary members of the oppressed. Sound, text, and inscription became part of a curatorial and pedagogical aesthetic (Delport, 2001b, 2001a) that invited responsiveness and engagement, adding layers to a social history of District Six where ordinary people, families, and institutions still demand to be seen. This approach raised a special set of questions about museum collections as a 'living archive', addressed by Valmont Layne, a former Museum Director, when he was the sound archivist (Layne, 2004), a job that emerged out of the staging of a temporary exhibition, Streets: Retracing District Six[6], the project that generated the idea for an archive:

> Now the problem arises. Should the exhibition become the core of a new museum? If so, how does the museum 'collect', dissect and reorganise the memory-laden

[6] The District Six Museum opened its doors in the old Central Methodist Mission Church at 25A Buitenkant Street on 10 December 1994. The exhibition with which it opened was called **Streets: Retracing District Six.** Described as representing an 'archaeology of memory', it was the culmination of years of planning, dreaming, and imagining on the part of the District Six Museum Foundation. https://www.districtsix.co.za/project/streets-retracing-district-six/

> objects it exhibits? How, in fact, does the museum arrest the engaging interactions that take place every time an ex-resident walks in and recognises the Hanover Street sign, or the image of the fish market, or remembers the Globe Gang, Cissie Gool's fiery speeches on the Grand Parade, *diba* dance with the Merry Macks or New Year's Eve with the *nagtroupe*[7]. Or what about ex-residents who carry more painful memories of loss, of domestic abuse, of poverty, of aspirations to live in the suburbs? (p.186)

In this spirit, my extended research project will include the participation of former District Six clothing workers and members of their families in intergenerational storytelling and site-marking, using both tangible and intangible heritage practices typical of the varied methods we use to mark sites of memory in District Six. The Museum is people-centred as it recognises the agency of people who history has largely seen as 'ordinary', mere demographic statistics, unnamed members of a class, a gender, a race, an ethnicity, a place, without the fullness of their humanity. By making the 'ordinary' people a central part of the work of the museum (collections, research, curation, education, and storytelling) the Museum creates a public discourse about the essentialised ideas that dominate representations of people in the writing of history and the practice of museology, heritage, and tourism.

The follow-up project will expand the archive of the museum but, primarily, fill a gap by adding the voices of women clothing workers, largely invisible in the Museum and absent from much of the post-apartheid construction of history[8], yet they formed a big part of the workforce and culture of the city. For most of my 15 years of teaching at predominantly working-class schools on the Cape Flats from the late 1980s, I was able to experience the decline in the clothing industry through the shrinking number of learners whose mothers, sisters or aunties could source textiles and various 'illegally' obtained factory made gowns, jackets, and other stylish items. Almost everyone had family members or lived in the same neighbourhoods with members who worked in a clothing factory. Entire communities were usually drawn into activities and stories generated in clothing factories and radio stations like Good Hope Radio FM dedicated an entire post-lunch time 'push-up production' shout out to clothing workers and their families. While, in many progressive political circles, clothing workers were viewed as politically backward, complicit in the racism that was pandemic in 'coloured' working class

[7] *Nagtroepe:* translation – Night troupes / performers in the annual Minstrel carnival in the City.
[8] I am mindful here of the body of work done by Siona O'Connell with clothing workers; the site-specific research work done by architect Ilse Wolff centred on the Rex Trueform building in Salt River; as well as the ongoing accumulation of biographies of clothing workers throughout the country co-ordinated by the research department of the South African Clothing Workers (SACTWU). Then we have the

communities, the reality and the contribution of, especially, women clothing workers to the social fabric of working-class society is indisputable.

Zuleiga Adams, an historian and former community activist comes from a District Six family of clothing workers. In an informal conversation with her at the Museum before the main research for this thesis started, I was particularly interested in her insights about the impact of the clothing industry working conditions and the culture of work on families and the broader society. The regulation of the factory production line instilled discipline and organisation in many families. This was particularly valuable when her mother was the only one working. When her sisters started working it eased up for the mother. For Zuleiga, this was an important aspect of family life that helped working class families to pull together, share responsibilities where, in big families, the older children took charge of the younger ones. She credits her sisters' hard work in the clothing industry with enabling her and her younger sister to complete high school and escape the, almost inevitable, hard factory life. It is these stories of strength in the face of adversity that we should be excavating rather than just looking for the shallow surface stories in society.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH PROJECT: OCCUPATIONAL, PERSONAL, AND POLITICAL

There are several reasons I started doing this research project that crosses personal, occupational, and political domains. The occupational motivation is covered above: to contribute to building the 'living' archive of the District Six Museum. On a personal level, I have become increasingly aware of how quickly the years are passing by and feel the psychological, physical, and social pressure that comes with this, that I will not delve into here, save to say that my life is littered with many ideas that have not translated into concrete achievements – in some senses, an unfulfilled life. This is not unusual in a world where employment is a basis for survival and where we must play off, if we are lucky to have a job, our personal desires against collective institutional or organisational needs.

The ideas of a 'fulfilled life' or 'happiness' are elusive concepts deeply intertwined with the psycho-social aspects of our lives that are constantly in flux and hardly ever examined with much authenticity, requiring personal courage to face both oneself and the cognitive dissonance that results. In my interviews (recorded conversations) with two former clothing workers, **Ruth**

Phala Jeftha (born in 1945) and **Farahnaaz Gilfelleon**, (born in 1955) who lived in District Six during apartheid, this aspect of an unfulfilled life - doing work for survival and existing with resilience, sometimes in compliance, other times in resistance, always with thankfulness in a less than ideal situation, becomes clear even while it remains largely unacknowledged. It is simultaneously apparent that people have the capacity to find ways, outside of our working lives, to bolster happiness, joy, a sense of fulfilment and achievement. These ways range from finding community in spirituality, social activities, culture, sport, non-formal and formal education or in politics[9]. Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, both remember with fondness and joy their participation in the cultural activities at the Hyman Lieberman Institute[10]; Ruth expresses great pride and achievement in sharing her family members' excellence in music, particularly her younger brother, Christian, who she remembers as having written music for 'Dollar Brand'[11] and who travelled overseas to perform in uniform as a member of the police force. These, mainly, nostalgic remembrances help both Ruth and Farahnaaz deal with their regrets about lives that, maybe, could have been lived differently if not for the Apartheid laws that ringfenced opportunities for a few based on racial classification, gender and aggravated by class inequality and the deep unspoken trauma that results. In a series of empirical studies, a group of social scientists explore the positive effects of nostalgia and find that:

- Heart-warming memories of the past creates and preserves a psychological comfort. Interestingly they found that these positive memories were often activated by coldness (literally and figuratively) also, in turn, generating a greater tolerance for the cold and situations of general discomfort (Zhou, Wildschut, Sedikides, Chen, et al., 2012);
- In a different study, it was found that nostalgia is birthed at the point when an experience or event is 'savoured'. They found that the experiences that we most enjoy, appreciate and cherish are the ones most likely to be remembered with great nostalgia in the future (Biskas et al., 2019);

[9] I am not thinking of formal career politics here but the emotional satisfaction that people derive from community level politics – by being involved in grassroots matters of society.
[10] The Institute was founded as a Community Centre in about the year 1934, the result of a bequest to the City Council by the late Mr. Hyman Liberman for the purpose of providing a reading room for the poorer inhabitants of the City. Its premises have always been in District Six and throughout its existence the University has been deeply interested in its welfare. It housed a nursery school, a library and reading room and was the centre of a variety of organizations, clubs and other activities (source: UCT Special Collections).
[11] From interview with Ruth Jeftha, April 2019

- Nostalgia nurtures a sense of 'social connectedness' in that it encourages empathy and, in so doing, promotes 'charitable intentions' (Routledge & Bogaty, n.d.; Zhou, Wildschut, Sedikides, Shi, et al., 2012);
- In another study about collective nostalgia, reminiscent of many District Six Museum experiences with our process driven community memory projects, a group of researchers found, amongst other results, that when people shared reflections of a heart-warming collective memory from the past, this generated favourable feelings towards the in-group, people were more willing to contact others from the in-group, nostalgia strengthened feelings and actions of solidarity to support the in-group and this effect of collective nostalgia was more pronounced when social identification was high (Wildschut et al., 2014); and
- A similar team found that nostalgia buffers existential threats like death, identity fears and debilitating diseases (Juhl et al., 2010; Sedikides et al., 2015);

These studies counterbalance, in some sense, the more negative socio-political positions of Svetlana Boym[12] (Boym, 2001, 2007; Stankev, 2018) who emphasises in her work the manipulative and abusive ways in which nostalgia is generated in post-Soviet Union countries as a retrogressive nationalism while acknowledging its reflective and restorative values. In another sense the above empirical studies into the affective dimensions of nostalgia explains how it is possible for people in positions of political, social, and economic power or in in public media to manipulate nostalgia in their interests, often fuelling contestations about land, access to resources and political representation. We see how this plays out in the various initiatives to remember District Six, where the nostalgia for an idyllic version of a District Six past is used by various political formations for quick fix solutions to complex socio-political problems, often generating racism and xenophobia in responses to community demands for decent housing, service delivery and access to Cape Town's abundant resources. Nostalgia, however, has been a powerful tool for us at the District Six Museum to collectively deal with the woundedness of the past by encouraging the many acts of nostalgic inscription and storytelling to piece together the fragments of an unjust past. The positive, comforting, and glowing

[12] Boym's discussion of nostalgia is more complex than I have referenced here but the scope of this thesis is too limited to explore her views more critically and appreciatively. I refer to her only in the sense that nostalgia for a sanitised District Six past has been used by political and community leaders to mobilise followers for incredibly narrow political gains.

memories of the past are the starting point for delving more deeply into the painful and negative legacies of apartheid and memories of District Six.

1.2.1 My context: politics, nostalgia, and the evolution of a sensitivity

Today, as head of education at the District Six Museum, I find myself increasingly reflecting on my own life in relation to the stories, photographs, artefacts, and interpretations of former residents of District Six. I too have regrets and, momentarily, hanker after lost opportunities after a life experienced on the 'wrong' side of the Apartheid tracks. Maybe I would have been happier as a marine biologist, married to a non-sexist man like my dad with kids I would leave for him to nurture while I swim with dolphins as I study their mating habits. Fortunately, Marxist political constructs[13] have shaped me to the extent that I deal with momentary lapses into regret by always rethinking and re-imagining possibilities in relation to current reality. This means that I do not see myself as having been born on the 'wrong' side of the tracks but rather that I was born into a world not of my making and should, therefore, find ways that empower and build solidarity. My politics has provided a philosophical framework for living a life of possibility not certainty. While not in any way comparing my experience of growing up during apartheid to Viktor Frankl's experience, in *Man's Search for Meaning*, (Frankl, 1959) he provides useful insights[14] gleaned from his experience of the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps and one of his conclusions about life and resilience that he frames is the idea of a 'will-to-meaning':

> Sensitive people who were used to a rich intellectual life may have suffered much pain (they were often of a delicate constitution), but the damage to their inner selves

[13] Here I am specifically referring to the schooling I grew up with where Marxism was understood as an analytical tool, a lens through which to make sense of the world, with an understanding that we inhabit this world with people who use different analytical tools to see. Two significant aspects about Marxism that helps one to deal with regrets (both personal and political) is that unlike other philosophies, the point about Marxist analysis is that it aims to change the world and, secondly, it recognises that the world we confront is not of our making. I acknowledge the dogmatic way in which Marxism has been employed in political life, particularly by communist parties, in trade unions and in academia. As with all philosophies, these are contested terrains in so far as knowledge is a social construct.

[14] A caution here is to note the important difference between the world view of Viktor Frankl and that of Ayn Rand and why she has become the lodestar for the so-called libertarian as well as supremacist movements in the world. The Ayn Rand idea of resilience is more in line with a 'survival of the fittest' and lacks empathy for those who do not 'make the cut' in society. She has no empathy for those marginalised by society and reduces this to being about a capitulation to victimhood. This thinking often results in displays of stories of individual success: 'rags to riches', individuals from oppressed groups who 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps'. Resilience here is about getting by on your own. Viktor Frankl, on the other hand, draws his insights from an interpretation of a world that is unfair, cruel, and destructive by design and illuminates how a particular approach to resilience can evolve to counteract the debilitating impact of, for example fascism.

> was less. They were able to retreat from their terrible surroundings to a life of inner riches and spiritual freedom. Only in this way can one explain the apparent paradox that some prisoners of a less hardy make-up often seemed to survive camp life better than did those of a robust nature. (p.47)

I understand 'sensitive' here not just in a physical stature sense or as the opposite of strong but in the sense of a person being tuned into their circumstances, to people and on track to find meaning in whatever situation they are faced with. We all develop sensitivities, as sensibilities of one kind or another and these are not fixed. They evolve as we grow in consciousness. My sensitivities to the stories of District Six have evolved over time as I have become aware of the details that make up the broad brushstrokes of the picture I observed from a distance. So, while I can observe and engage with how former residents of *the District* reveal their, sometimes, unfulfilled lives, I recognise and acknowledge these elements in my own life – not with regret (maybe a little) but as a narrative building device. As I always say to students / high school learners when they prepare for oral history projects, 'In order to hear the nuances in the stories you will receive as a gift from elders, you must first listen to and, preferably, write your own stories. This will help you to be more patient, sensitive and alert to the 'voice' of the elder and to understand more clearly how you can facilitate the process of authentic[15] storytelling.'

1.2.2 Personal heritage – a socially constructed imagining.

I am not from a District Six family and have few remembered connections to District Six yet I have found resonance in the stories of the Museum's archive that includes those that found its way into various exhibitions over the years, as well as in the conversations with Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon as part of this study. This is not because their stories resemble mine or that I have a desire to see myself represented in their stories. This is not a study where I get to live vicariously through the lives lived by others. As a researcher, I had no vested interest in providing the oral history extraction tools and setting up the framework of discursive spaces for Ruth and Farahnaaz to reveal their lives, other than to complete this thesis. They got to use the tools and participate in conversations, mostly, on their terms and could choose to extract their own meanings about what they excavated of their lives from their personal photographs, found objects and written remembrances, sometimes jointly constructed with members of their

[15] 'Authentic' storytelling is a concept that has been touted to sell individual stories, cultural products, and various community experiences, as consumer goods representing essentialised social or 'victim' groups. However, I use the word *authentic* here to suggest a process of truth-telling through self-reflection and honesty as well as with integrity.

inner circle. Rather, through this process I created a bridge of empathy in a similar way to how many visitors encounter history and heritage at the District Six Museum. Crain Soudien, one of the founders of the Museum, best describes this mediated experience as "a pedagogical practice that takes the horror and the trauma and asks the visitor to see and recognise the inhumanity in these and to develop a sense of empathy in relation to them."(Soudien, 2008a) The challenge here was to not see all experiences as the same but to recognise a common humanity in how we face situations in moments of political upheaval and the extent to which this political history locks us into an unfulfilled life. The challenge for me, throughout, was to allow both Ruth and Farahnaaz to draw their own political conclusions about political situations, or not. I had to guard against my sensibilities about their lives.

Siona O'Connell also talks about a bridge of empathy, in a sense, in her research into the 'interiority of lives' of family members who lived through apartheid by exploring 'the family album of the oppressed'. Far from being a dispassionate encounter, O'Connell is drawn into the world of the observed:

> It is in this photograph of my mother Elaine, and her best friend Joy, taken some sixty years ago, that I am able to imagine a bridge between the spaces left by the unfulfilled dreams and the lost opportunities. It is in touching their five-year old faces, ruffling their curls and eavesdropping on their childhood imaginings that I find I am able to join in their game of make-believe. And in so doing, I can connect many of the countless ephemeral dots that dance within this frame and hereby picture a resolution. (2012, p.38)

A major challenge, especially with Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, was the amount of work required by her to find photographs, documents, or artefacts as evidence for her life stories or to spark the buried memories to the surface. Ruth Jeftha had been part of previous museum projects that helped her to find and then organise her personal archive, yet for both, the photographs and objects mostly remained unframed, and outside of albums often still in the kodak, movie snaps or a pharmacy envelope. Siona O'Connell addresses this in her Ph.D. thesis (O'Connell, 2012):

> There is a marked difference between the albums of the oppressed and those spoken of by Rose in North East England and Langford in Canada[16]. The collections of photographs of families that I have found from Roger Street, indeed the photographs belonging to my parents, are not displayed in albums of the

[16] O'Connell's reference here: Langford, M. (2001). Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife Memory in Photographic Albums. Montreal, McGill Queen's University Press., Rose, G. (2003). "Family photographs and domestic spacings: a case study." Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 28(1): 5-18.

> conventional and often picturesque sort. They are not on the walls of their homes, or stuck into the corners of mirrors, or onto the doors of the fridge, nor are they the screensavers on their computers. In fact, I struggle to find these images — they do not readily come to hand. They are almost always buried in a cardboard box and wrapped in a plastic shopping bag - mummified. Perhaps poignantly though, they are not discarded, rather they are interred in a spot which at first glance appears forgotten — they never are. It is almost as if by concealing their existence an attempt is being made to attend to the trauma of not-being, an attempt to make the memory less vivid and thus less visceral and powerful. (p.38)

This is so true for my own experience yet, unlike many families who only had photographs from studios like Van Kalker or Movie Snaps but also, like many others who had access to a camera, our walls were empty of framed photographs. I did not grow up with images of grandmothers, grandfathers, and other family members on display in the home. I occasionally encountered a glimpse of a very dark-skinned grandmother Johanna from Kimberley, or grandmother *Stienie* (Christina Cole from Kenilworth, who I knew for a brief moment in my early years), when a box of photographs was brought out during a spring-cleaning. I grew up with a father who always had a camera and, as a screen printer[17], always surrounded us with the science and magic of photography as we turned our bathroom into a dark room to experiment with photo sensitive paper and the impact of light intensity and length of exposure. So, this disconnect with the photographs that tell the story of our family is more multi-layered than just the fact that oppressed people could not afford cameras or photographic development.

My sense is that this has a bit more to do with the impact of oppression and segregation (race, class, and urban-rural divides) on the affective bearing of families in relation to notions of success or achievement. A counterweight to this in working class families, I have found, has been in homes that produced, for example, football, cricket, rugby and music stars or anything else that produced a sense of pride like, sad to say, evidence of European roots in the family. I remember the many times I entered homes as part of the *huisbesoek*[18] strategies used in the anti-apartheid community organising days of the 1980s that many families displayed photographs or newspaper cuttings of family members who generated pride. From 1980 – 1986,

[17] We were a signwriting family growing up, drawing in family friends and community activists into screen printing everything from Pick 'n Pay (my dad, Tommy, worked for *Blue Ribbon*) price cards to t-shirts and posters for anti-apartheid organisations. The process of screen printing is similar to the development of photo negatives (the screen artwork is a negative of the final print on a t-shirt, poster, or card) and then the development of positives – the photographs.

[18] *Huisbesoek:* translation – Home visits: this reference is to the door-to-door visits to set up home meetings or as knock and drop campaigns that were effectively used to connect community activists to a wide swathe of community members as a political mobilisation tool in the 1980s.

home visits or home meetings would happen on most days of the week except, as became a running joke, on Tuesdays when the TV series Dallas was on. Occasionally we would also join in *huisbesoek* in other working-class neighbourhoods as far afield as Atlantis[19] on blitz campaigns or to support the right for workers to organise in trade unions. This life experience served as an informal survey of people's homes and exposed me to a wide range of experiences within so-called single identity communities regarding personal and family pride, community, and political consciousness, as well as responses to their oppressive circumstances. In no way do I want to suggest that any insights I derive from my own life experience or from the developing life-histories of Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, apply uniformly or at all, to others perceived to be from similar communities.

1.2.3 The place of the wound[20] or the basis for a political struggle

I grew up with stories of Second Avenue, Claremont[21], home to my mother's family, the Abrahamses; Livingstone High School, where both parents, their siblings and my four older siblings attended; Dean and Kildare Streets, Newlands, and Hampstead Road, Kenilworth, where my father's family lived. Most of these stories were received, by me, as deeply political rather than nostalgic. If truth be told, up until high school (1976-1980), District Six, for me, was associated with the 'coons' and, therefore, in the deep recesses of my mind, politically compromised. Growing up, I remember that we drew sharp distinctions in our family that I became aware of at an early age – we rejected racism and racial classifications (judging people by the colour of their skin that was pervasive in the 'coloured' community); we never participated actively in the 'Coon' parades that we saw as a propaganda project of the Apartheid government with its proudly displayed colonial British, Dutch and Apartheid flags; we had a strong belief that Christianity colluded in maintaining the apartheid mentality; and we saw it as the height of collusion with an unjust system, for fair skinned coloureds to *'play white'*[22] –

[19] Atlantis was a 'betterment' scheme for 'coloureds' created 40 km outside of Cape Town on the West Coast, as part of Apartheid-Capitalist urban planning – sold as an economic-residential hub but rendered as a site of displacement, unemployment, gangsterism and crime.
[20] From, Mapping Spectral Traces VIII: The place of the wound, an international symposium I attended at Maynooth University, Ireland, October 2016 convened and conceptualised by Karen Till.
[21] Now Harfield-Village.
[22] The problem of *'play-whitism'* was a common occurrence in the 1970s Cape Town as the first generation of families, communities and individual people who were racially classified during Apartheid came of age and claimed their identity. Many recorded oral histories as well as unrecorded testimonies include heartbreaking experiences of marriage breakdown, family splits when one or the other fair-skinned member chose to become reclassified as 'white' officially or who just adopted the affectations associated with being 'white'. In some

and they were many. If a further truth be told, the *'coon' thing* has revealed itself to be more of an aspirant middle-class bias, as I touch on later.

Unlike my older siblings, I am the first in my family to be born outside of Claremont, in 1963, when the family lived in Wynberg. Technically, I was born in District Six at the Peninsula Maternity Hospital but do not feel of District Six, or, for that matter of Claremont. I was born before forced removals take effect but as an apartheid mentality becomes rooted in society, and the effects of a policed State become palpable. A case in point: Imam Haroun, who was born in Claremont-Newlands and based at the Al-Jamia Mosque, Stegman Rd, Claremont from 1955 was killed in detention in September 1969 for his anti-apartheid activism. It is in this period that many people went into exile in other African countries[23] and to Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, the Nordic countries, Germany, and the Soviet Union, amongst other places. Some went to escape police repression of their political activities or because they faced imminent arrest, banning or harassment in their work place; others left as they refused to be complicit in an unjust system, while many (more) left as they started to feel the impending loss of opportunities as a result of job reservation and education favouring people classified as white or because they were part of relationships across the 'colour line' (marriage or cohabitation) that apartheid considered immoral.

The place of the wound for me, therefore, has always been the basis for political struggle nurtured by a sense of injustice that seeks out moments for acts of solidarity.

1.2.4 Confronting the politics of urban planning – a matter of perspective

It is in my final year at South Peninsula (SP) High School, in the year of the 1980 boycotts and awareness programmes marked by 'alternative history' classes, when I experienced a rapid growth in a more nuanced understanding of who the oppressed people are and the diverse cultural institutions that frame experiences of working-class communities as well as the range

instances, this was to maintain the status quo (remain in jobs or suburbs declared white), to access institutions of higher learning or to qualify for leading jobs in the new and racialized job-market. In many instances, 'play-white' was flung at a person if they were snobbish or arrogantly demeaned others as less important.

[23] My mother's brother, Herbie Abrahamse, a politically active teacher, his wife Hazel Ruiters, involved in Trade Union politics, went into exile in Zambia with their five children. A second brother, Cliffie Abrahamse, in civil engineering and married into a Portuguese family, went to Australia. We followed them for a brief year in 1971, only to discover that the opportunity provided to us was to live as 'white' Australians when the indigenous people were classified as fauna, treated no differently to the oppressed in South Africa.

of strategic approaches available to us in the fight against apartheid. Together with two classmates, Michelle Solomons and Bonita Robertson, I was kicked out of the Geography class and we spent the rest of the year, during this period in the timetable, keeping Mr Moerat[24], the Principal, company. If my memory is correct, this lasted for the final three months of the year, maybe longer. Our crime: during a lesson on urban planning and decentralised cities, we informed the teacher, a liberal Progressive Federal Party[25] (PFP) type, about the politics of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and other apartheid laws as the driving force in urban planning that resulted in forced removals from District Six. He did not take too kindly to this and declared that we were insolent. We enjoyed our sessions with the Principal, as I recall, and I failed Geography but remained deeply curious about the politics of urban planning, apartheid forced removals and social justice.

The seeds of the political awareness that bloomed for many as political consciousness, were planted in 1976, when I started high school and observed student anti-apartheid protests and the ensuing repression. These seeds were nurtured in the tentative inter-school activities that arose in response to the violent forced removals of 'Africans', considered as illegal in Cape Town by apartheid authorities, from Modderdam Road *squatter camp* in Bellville South, in August 1977[26]. From the aspirant middle-class bubble of SP High School, I met students who were politically conscious yet involved in church structures in working class communities. This was an awakening for me as someone brought up in a family of atheists. It alerted me to the idea of places, spaces, and institutions as contested terrains. An introduction to Richard Rive's working class District Six characters opened a new sensibility in me towards the multiplicity of voices that make up the wider scope of human action described as resistance. Resistance speaks many languages and dialects including, what we now know of as, 'Afrikaaps'; it goes to church, mosque, and temple; it marches in the *Klopse*[27] parades through the streets of the Cape Flats; and it struggles with identity and the ideas of 'race', class, gender, sexuality, and geography.

[24] This is my recollection of a more detailed experience.
[25] The PFP was under the leadership of Van Zyl Slabbert as the official opposition in the House of Assembly from 1979 to 1986. Helen Susman was in its leadership and has been written into history as a close collaborator of Nelson Mandela.
[26] https://digitalcollections.lib.uct.ac.za/islandora/object/islandora%3A16835
[27] *Klopse:* Translation – this refers to the troupes or clubs that participate in the annual minstrel carnival in Cape Town that has its roots in the emancipation from slavery. The derogatory term for this is 'coons', used popularly across the Cape Flats.

This political consciousness and sensitivity to various manifestations of resistance is the lens through which I viewed the lives of Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon in this thesis.

1.3 AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The main intention of this research project is to continue the District Six Museum's work of exploring, excavating, and mapping site-specific life histories of people pushed to the margins of society – in this case, the hidden histories of working-class women in the decimated garment / textile manufacturing industry. I have a particular interest in working with the fragments of recorded history, personal archives and undocumented memory of women and family members associated with the Ensign Clothing Factory[28] that still occupies such an important space in people's memories of Cape Town before our transition to democracy.

I aimed to explore the contestations, during and 'after' apartheid, in the making of place and how specific agencies, corporates, civil society programmes and projects impact on this by their influence, or marginalisation. Power relations in the city and urban planning decision making (Bonds, 2013; Bosi, 2008; Brahinsky et al., 2014; Klein, 2007; Portes, 1998; Pullan, 2011) plays a huge role in defining spacial and geographical identity. In the post-apartheid period, we have seen most development driven by the stated desire to create and nurture Cape Town as a 'World Class City' (Provincial Government, City of Cape Town, Cape Town Partnership[29], Cape Town: World Design Capital[30], FIFA World Cup[31], Cape Chamber of Commerce, WESGRO[32]) where this is defined by a very particular elitist idea of a world class city[33]. Often, this has meant: cleansing the city of poor people to construct an appealing playground for the global elite; ring-fencing spaces for consumerism and high-end tourist experiences; and development based on an urban planning and architectural design model driven by expensive real estate leading to evictions and gentrification. In the education work

[28] The research project was not just focused on the Ensign factory and does not involve an in-depth study of the business.
[29]The Cape Town Partnership is a Cape Town-based collaborative public-private partnership organisation that exists to develop, promote, and manage areas of the Cape Town central business district as a place for all citizens.
[30]Cape Town was awarded the title of World Design Capital for 2014. This is an initiative of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID)
[31]FIFA is the world governing body for football. The 2010 World Cup tournament was awarded to South Africa and ushered in large scale infrastructural development within a framework of marketing the City of Cape Town, particularly, as a world class city.
[32] WESGRO: The Official Tourism, Trade & Investment Promotion Agency for Cape Town, and the Western Cape.
[33] Policies and interventions of national, provincial, city structures and agencies

of the Museum, we view this as a continuation of the patterns of marginalization and erasure started during colonialism, through apartheid and still dominant in the aftermath of a 'successful' liberation struggle.

The main idea here was to explore, through two former clothing workers' connections to and memories of specific District Six Sites – like the Ensign Factory – the way this contestation, in the shaping of Cape Town, plays out – revealing the many ways that tangible and intangible heritage[34] intersects with the politics of power, representation, loss and nostalgia (Republic of South Africa Act, 1999; Hart and Malan, 2000; Rassool, Proselendis and Eds, 2001; Bennett *et al.*, 2008; Douglas, 2011). As the research project evolved, a deep exploration of individual sites proved to be somewhat unrealistic in terms of time constraints, access to information about factories like Ensign and their owners who moved to Atlantis during the final years of Apartheid, and the lengthy process required to build trust with women workers who I was lucky enough to still find alive or healthy enough to participate. A major challenge, however, was that almost all the women clothing workers who started out working at Ensign, worked there for a short stint, and worked at multiple factories making it difficult to explore, with them, their memories of specific sites.

I also aimed to provide a discursive and interpretive space for women workers to excavate and interrogate their own memories of a particular historical period and place when they were factory workers (Bennett et al., 2008). The workshops, group discussions and site-specific walks involving former residents of District Six who shared similar experiences of factory life, provided useful insights and perspectives, helping us to sharpen the questionnaire, practice 'memory work' as well as reshape the scope of the research project so that it encompassed multiple factory sites as part of the life histories of two women, Ruth Phala Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon. The intersections between personal and group identities, between private and public lives and between reality and perceptions were shown more clearly by the constant *to and fro* between individual oral history interviews and group workshop or reflection sessions. The journey of this process was, therefore, not a linear one.

[34]Tangible heritage refers to the material evidence of our past, mainly archaeological, architectural (objects, artefacts, buildings, places, and monuments); intangible heritage: the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural **heritage** (UNESCO).

1.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

The specific objectives of this project were to:

1) Provide a discursive and interpretive space and analytical framework for women to excavate and interrogate their own memories of a particular historical period and place when they were clothing factory workers.
2) Analyse and interpret the contestations, during and 'after' apartheid, in the making of place and how power relations determine the outcomes in defining spacial / geographical identity.
3) Record, collate, document, and interpret the stories of two former clothing factory workers using the District Six Museum's oral history methodology.
4) Use the fragments and coherent parts of stories as a basis to construct[35] the life-histories of two women – former clothing factory workers; this will all culminate in as comprehensive as possible a package of information for each of the two women consisting of: (A) a short profile; (B) a photographic portrait of each woman[36]; (C) a life history (D) a personal archive of recorded stories, photos, video clips, objects,

This thesis is presented in two parts:

Part One consists of two chapters that provide the political and social context for the stories of Ruth Rosa Phala-Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon. The methodological framework for the research design is also clarified in this part, drawing on the methods and approaches of the District Six Museum that have developed over the last 25 years of its existence.

Part Two provides the introduction to the two main participants in this research project and analyses their stories as well as responses to questionnaires, in workshops and during site walks. In Chapter Four I clarify the relationship between myself as the researcher with both Ruth and Farahnaaz, outlining the complexity and dialogical nature of the association over time. The main elements of the life histories of Ruth and Farahnaaz are presented in Chapter Five and this introduces the two memory catalogues (organised personal archives) that are

[35] The intention here is not for me to receive the stories from the two former clothing workers – Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon and then take over the responsibility for the construction of their life histories. As far as is possible, I will follow their lead in terms of the content but with an active engagement on my part..

[36] This was initially meant to be a portrait with an object associated with the clothing Factory but changed to an open idea where both Ruth and Farahnaaz could choose how they wanted to be represented. Ruth chose to use the portrait of herself that was taken for the Museum publication, *Huis Kombuis; food and memory* (Smith & Huis Kombuis project participants, 2016) Farahnaaz chose to be photographed without an object from her factory life.

attached as addenda. The key findings of my research are presented in Chapter Six. These are derived from my analysis of the responses of the two participants using the following six lenses:

1. Discourse
2. Community: family, identity, culture
3. Working Life
4. Context: socio-economic, political, and union insights
5. Fragility of memory - erasure - gaps and dealing with shame.
6. District Six Nostalgia and the search for dignity

CHAPTER TWO: THE STRUGGLE FOR MEMORY AGAINST FORGETTING[37]

> We cannot undo the fate of those in the past who fought for justice and were murdered for their pains. But we can rewrite their narratives by our own actions in the present, and even give them a classical happy ending.[38](Eagleton, 2009)

In conducting this study, I was challenged to revisit some of the broader themes that we work with as a site museum in a city that remains aloof, often hostile, to processes of memorialising that centres the restitution of dignity of people displaced from the city during apartheid because they were not 'white'. What is the purpose? What is the best process to serve the appropriate purpose? How should aesthetics be incorporated in the thinking about memorial productions, especially projects that make intangible heritage visible? The dominant narrative of Government, at all levels in South Africa, mirrors many international trends that result in the insertion in public and private spaces of plaques, statues, visitor centres designed for the tourist gaze, occasional public artworks, if the budget allows – basically a template driven aesthetics. Organisations that form part of the stakeholder community involved in formal land restitution claims, are largely in alignment with Government practices of memorialisation that is deeply rooted in the colonial practice of memorialisation despite this not being in the long-term interest of members of oppressed communities whose histories become subsumed by the mimicry of colonial aesthetics in the representation of power.

2.1 THE PROCESS, CONTENT, AND PURPOSE OF MEMORIALISATION

The process of memorialisation is mostly '*expert*'[39] driven where the subject matter for memorialisation are the great men, women, or events of history. A walk through the city centre of Cape Town will quickly affirm this: Statues of Jan van Riebeeck, Jan Hofmeyr (*Onse Jan*), Cecil John Rhodes, Queen Victoria, Jan Smuts, amongst other reminders of our colonial and apartheid past. Sites like Heritage Square, Greenmarket Square, Church Square, and the

[37] A reference to "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Milan Kundera
[38] *Waking the dead*, by Terry Eagleton, referencing the German philosopher, Walter Benjamin, who committed suicide in 1940 before he could be handed over to the Gestapo. This article first appeared in the 16 November 2009 issue of the New Statesman, *Dead End*. https://www.newstatesman.com/ideas/2009/11/past-benjamin-future-obama
[39] The idea of expert is a highly contested notion, made more so by the crystallization of knowledge centres and knowledge production outside of the usual institutions of knowledge production (Universities, Government, and corporate research agencies, for example).

Company Gardens are presented as objective examples of urban planning, alluding to European excellence and the development of civilization in South Africa from the backwardness of the tribal cultures that preceded colonisation. The socio-economic and political histories of these sites are marked by the erasure of the history of slavery, oppression of indigenous people (particularly the Khoe and San groups) and exploitation of the natural resources for the benefit of Europe. In essence these sites, are celebrations of European people and culture through the eyes of experts limited in a vision that looks at the past only from the perspective of the conqueror. An expert-driven process is not, in and of itself, a problem. There are many examples where the idea of expert is broadened in scope to cut across academic and practice disciplines and to integrate with popular methods of engaging wide groups of people connected to the people, places and events being considered for memorialisation. The dominant strands as represented in the distant past by the King choosing an expert to memorialise his legacy or the Romans marking their sites of conquer with phallic obelisks as they built Empire, however, persists in current State and private memorialisation initiatives. Participatory, innovative, deeply researched, and multiple perspective approaches to memorialisation are sidestepped even when the arguments are strong, to cut time, which translates in bureaucratic-speak to money, and for what is falsely considered to be more efficient[40].

Also, significant to note, is that when memorialisation processes are presented as participatory, often, this has usually come to mean a once-off presentation session where experts or government officials grant participants from marginalised groups[41] the privilege of receiving their largesse in the form of a predetermined idea for a memorial statue, site-marking information panel or plaque, peace-park, or exhibition. These showcase events often allow some time for feedback or a *Q&A* session but serves the memorial team more than those listed as the beneficiaries because it usually happens as a media event, it cuts down the research time needed as part of a bureaucratic tick list, fulfils a quick-fix paint-by-numbers process as well as provides the expert team with usually unacknowledged details (banal), insights, clues to

[40] Efficiency has become part of corporate governance language to basically mean the use of less overheads in the production of goods and services for maximum profit (private wealth and political credit). Overheads are usually cut by cutting human involvement. In post-apartheid memorialisation processes, for example, this has resulted in a multitude of Mandela statues throughout cities in SA as well as the naming of important buildings, boulevards, university buildings, etc after Mandela as a quick fix to supposedly counter the colonial memorials that we all navigate daily in our cities, educational institutions, and entertainment areas. We see how even the idea of 'expert' has been stripped down to the bare minimum of reproducing the ideas about legacies of a few individuals who have become close to those with power to implement memorial projects in government and private circles.

[41] It should be noted that powerful communities with private and cultural capital, or the weight of organisation (civics, unions, universities, identarian populism)

theories and beliefs. A limited research lens fails to point to the complex and layered history of a place, giving in to the stereotypes and standard tropes that then deepens superficial notions doing the rounds in society. A reduced vision often mutes the varied experiences and responses that people lived during apartheid, giving free reign to the idea that displacement of people from District Six was about *betterment.* District Six was a slum, the city centre needed to be cleaned up as was happening in many major cities of the world.

Memorialisation took centre stage in the national consciousness during student protests in 2015 at UCT against the Cecil John Rhodes statue that greeted the bulk of students every day at the foot of the Jamieson steps overlooking the sprawling rugby fields. It was sparked by the throwing of human excrement *(poo-bombing)* at the prominently displayed statue by Chumani Maxwele[42] that shocked those who felt their heritage was being violated as well as by those who saw the action of using human faeces as 'uncivilized'. On 9 April of that same year, the Rhodes statue was removed, a major victory for the *Rhodes Must Fall* movement but this generated more intense discussions about memorialisation and influenced the awakening of international movements. More specifically, this foregrounded issues about decolonisation of public space and what symbols, images, stories, histories should dominate the post-colonial/apartheid landscape.

A participatory approach is not only relevant to the memorialisation of events from history or specific to the site, in this case District Six and factories because of the numbers of people associated, in the past, with these. It is an important way to generate ideas about individuals like Nelson Mandela, for example, that speak to his relevance (or not) to people in the present and from varied perspectives. A deep participatory process that uses various creative methods to generate knowledge also serves to contribute to ideas about the aesthetics of memorialisation. The creative form that shapes the subject matter being memorialized, provide important aesthetic elements that hints at who the city designed for, who is welcomed or made to feel excluded by the sense of a place and how a reckoning with the past can promote a prelude to social justice. In the case of the latter, specific aesthetic forms like, for example, bronze statues, limits the scope of who benefits from job creation, education, further participation in memorialisation projects. Furthermore, the participatory processes that

[42] This is a reference to the March 2015 protest by UCT student, Chumani Maxwele who became a prominent #Rhodesmustfall and #Feesmustfall campaigns for transformation at former whites-only universities.

combine oral histories with performance of memory and other arts-based activities, usually generate aesthetic products at the end of healing and community learning processes.

All this rests on the purpose of memorialisation. Nation-building in post-liberation societies, remains the dominant purpose for the large scale memorialisation projects that usually follow political transitions. In the case of violent transitions, the old usually gets torn down and is then replaced with memorials that promote the values, beliefs, attitudes through the new symbols that represent these. In form, this is an act of nation-building that is a continuation of almost all past conflicts– the victims, in a sense, become the perpetrators. As in the case of conquering or marauding armies, the spoils of victory - the land - becomes marked by the images, sensibilities, and knowledge production of the victors. This form of nation-building through memorialisation sets in motion 'cultural' wars between citizens who hold onto symbols that mark themselves as different. In South Africa, for example, heritage symbols remain markers of race, tribe, and ethnicity, often pitting people with common class experiences against each other in the struggle for representation. While legacies in representation need to be dealt with, the nation-building through memorialisation approach short circuits important healing and learning mechanisms that can be created to build the common ground needed for an inclusive nation-building process that deals with the material reality of inequality and not just the symbolic representation of this inequality. Importantly, though, it must be noted that new political and social elites are usually coalesced around these symbolic memorial projects. We see how the passion, energy and education that went into mobilization for liberation, however patchy and uneven it may have been, is not matched by an appropriate mobilization of socio-economic forces to shape a new society, with a widening of the gap in inequality, evident. The post-apartheid landscape is dominated by government propaganda, corporate appeasement, and memorial projects to divert attention away from the need for real transformation. Together these provide for a vicarious experience of change or success that is achieved only by the new elites and cultural beneficiaries of their largesse – the artist, for example, who completes a huge sculpture of Mandela, Sisulu, or some other stalwart of the anti-apartheid struggle, achieves the success of the completed work but this often remains just a vanity project when completely delinked from broader community processes of learning and healing.

In the Museum publication, *City-Site-Museum, reviewing memory practices at the District Six Museum* I explored the role of memorialisation in the context of a critical pedagogy, that drives

the Museum's intergenerational work with memory as a humanising experience and a critical thinking lever. (Sanger, 2008, pp. 96–109)

Recognising that 'memory work is not neutral and not always a benign practice', the key questions for me were, why memorialise? Why invoke memory? What should the nature of memory work be? In my experience, since starting to work at the Museum sixteen years ago and moving from the world of a classroom practitioner to a museum practitioner, I have had many encounters and been involved in many organised activities in the field of memorialisation. My overwhelming sense is that it is predominantly seen through the lens of the bureaucratic process of marking public spaces, highways, national airports, theatres, university, museum and civic halls with names or statues depicting the great heroes of the past. This inevitably becomes a scramble to get the attention of various actors in government (local and national), access funds and then compete against a set of criteria that usually measures the spectacular nature of the person or event to be memorialised, the authorised experts involved in the proposal, existing access to funding and the timeframe for delivery. The quicker the delivery of the most monumental, populist, or proven success record in a return on investment and the support of individuals close to government or to people with money usually win the right to memorialise. Occasionally this pattern is disrupted but it is usually a result of the largesse of powerful people with the cultural capital to exercise their voice and largely reshape or re-mark the landscape in their image or aesthetic vision. In the article I emphasise the important criteria that is usually excluded or instrumentalised and diminished in official big-money memorialisation projects as a failure to apply a critical understanding of the various ways in which memorialisation has been implemented in history to learn from the past. Here I note four ways that stand out as being relevant to the Museum's work around experiences of historical trauma:

- memory work is used to close a chapter in history and avoid the deep exploration that can assist nations to come to terms with their past[43] (Till, 2005)
- to open wounds as part of a process of national healing and reconciliation[44]
- to sustain conflicts and for revenge

[43] See Karen Till's work on the politics of working with the memory of the Nazi state in Till, K.E. 2005. *The new Berlin: politics, memory, and place*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
[44] This refers, for example, the work of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, the Freedom Park initiative in South Africa and Memoria Abierta's work with the experiences of state sanctioned kidnappings and murder in Argentina, amongst many others globally.

- and, lastly, to sustain conflicts for enrichment.

In the past with the Roman, Greek, British and British Empires; in countries run by dictators and currently in many post-liberation countries in Africa, memorialisation is used to gloat and in a boastful fashion mark their subjugated territories with monumental statues and architecture to signify greatness, power, and conquest. Post-apartheid South Africa continues in this direction with its Mandela fetish but the contestation around memorialisation in this country is fuelled by a more complex political landscape where political, economic, and cultural capital is not settled in a singularly dominant state. We have a fractured ruling class with elements from the old South Africa still, effectively, holding on to its symbols from the past and able to do this legally. This either rubs salt into the wounds of black South Africans for whom these symbols and their representations matter or they provide opportunities, when encountered, for learning about our colonial and apartheid past. During protests, for example, places with colonial and apartheid symbols become places for performing history and are momentarily transformed into sites for resistance and education.

2.1.1 Privileging grassroots women workers' experiences

This thesis reports on a research project that privileges grassroots women's 'voices from the past'[45] who were approached and selected by me because they were from District Six, worked in the clothing industry and were at various stages of being part of the museum's community of practice. They have ordinary stories that resonate with people universally in that they represent the mother, sister, aunty, granny, wife, life-partner, worker-colleague, churchgoer, working class neighbour, citizen and elder. They do not hold official positions of power, have not been in the leadership of major national or international organisations and have not achieved earth shattering political, economic, or cultural achievements. They, also, do not share many of my personal beliefs (philosophical, political, or cultural) so I do not aim to live vicariously through the sharing of their stories or the aspects they choose to allow me to share in the form of this thesis and the wider project that they, I hope will play a leadership role in. Yet, they form part of the millions of women workers around the globe who, despite their major contribution to the productive forces of a country as workers, mothers, wives, etc, go largely unacknowledged when histories of place, events and people are written. As we continue to

[45] A reference to Paul Thompson's 'The voice of the past', Chp.2 of 'The Oral History Reader' (1998) where he advocates for a fuller account of the past by including, through oral history, the stories of the marginalised and all those rendered voiceless in the writing of history.

build the District Six Museum archive, the idea is to ensure that its development continues the trajectory started with the organically, intellectually, and richly textured making of the museum in 1994 in the old Central Methodist Mission Church at 25A Buitenkant Street, now the permanent[46] home of the Museum. The exhibition with which it opened was called *Streets: Retracing District Six* described as representing an 'archaeology of memory'.

2.1.2 The social history of apartheid – the world that Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon inhabited

On the 11th February 1966, District Six was declared a White Group Area (Group-Areas-Act-1950, 1950) marking the official start of the systematic displacement of people to the racialised ghettos and 'garden villages' created on the Cape Flats. This was part of a large-scale Apartheid47 social engineering project to consolidate segregation and police the people of South Africa in all spheres of life – private, social, educational, economic, and political – through the implementation of wide-ranging laws [48] (SA History online, Apartheid Museum, District Six Museum, Holocaust Centre). Prior to this, however, 'Africans' were forcibly removed from District Six to Uitvlugt in 1901, later displaced to Ndabeni and finally resettled in the migrant labour enclave of Langa. This pre-empted the 1913 Native Land Act that Sol Plaatjies famously pronounced on in the opening words of the first chapter of his book, *Native Life in South Africa*, first published in 1916 and quoted here by Jaffer (Zubeida Jaffer, 2014), "Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth."

To meet the stated aims of the Nationalist Party government, city planning was rigidly framed by an ideology of white (race) supremacy that resulted in large-scale forced removals of people who were not classified white, to the periphery of cities. For many socialist intellectuals influential in the anti-apartheid movement at the time, racist ideology was seen mainly as a mechanism for super-exploitation and rapid economic development in the interests of a

[46] As permanent as is possible: the building is leased to the Museum and the Museum's curatorial practice rests on a dialectic where research, collections, education, and exhibition making is constantly resisting the comfort of certainty and permanence. It is often a lack of funding that prevents the intended aim of constantly refreshing the exhibition by layering in new perspectives, new excavated information, and critical elements from our recent past to trigger old memories or inspire contemporary responses.
[47] Apartheid was a system of institutionalised racial segregation that existed in South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s.
[48] https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/segregationist-legislation-timeline-1950-1959

minority (Simons & Watson, 1983)[49]. Central to this dream of an apartheid South Africa was the extensive reshaping of the physical landscape – geographical boundaries solidified by roads and train lines as racial barriers, reframing the connections of people to the natural environment, architectural design and aesthetics (Bonds, 2013; Bonilla, 2013; Brahinsky et al., 2014; Rassool & Proselendis, 2001a). From colonialism (1600s), through the apartheid era (1948 – 1990), oppressed people's history has largely been erased, neutralized or rendered as colonial narratives of the conquered and domesticated native or of the uncivilized and barbaric hoard (McVeigh & Rolston, 2009), always stripped of the individuality and complexity that comes from recognising the social agency of all human beings when represented with dignity.

2.1.3 Correcting the historical record

> Write, record, and take that photo! Tell the untold stories, tell the sad stories, tell all stories because they all deserve to be remembered.[50]

While this pattern of exclusion and erasure continues, in post-apartheid South Africa (in the constitutional sense) there has been a major drive to 'correct' or provide an alternative account of the historical record.[51] Stories and politico-historical accounts to rehabilitate the place in history of important resistance and liberation individuals (Kratoa, Autshumato, Mandela, Tambo, Slovo, Ruth First, Sisulu, Sobukwe, Kathrada, Albie Sachs, Michael Lapsley, Sara Baartman, and Winnie Mandela amongst others) have dominated this intellectual landscape. At a much more low-key level, we have seen biographies, oral histories and testimonies of many 'other significant figures' usually as part of an attempt at a 'restitution of dignity' for oppressed individuals or groups. The emphasis here, particularly, has been on the potential loss of narratives and valuable knowledge of those who made 'major contributions in the field of education, medicine, arts, local politics and sport'. At a more grassroots level, we see many organisations that work with constructing the collective memory of sites or events of historical

[49] The context for my understanding of the impact of colonialism, apartheid and the relationship between social policy and economic imperatives is drawn largely from my reading of, amongst others, Jack and Ray Simons, Neville Alexander, Eddie Webster, Luli Callinicos, Govan Mbeki

[50] This is a quote from Mitzi Austero, *Nonviolence International* (Southeast Asia), an International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC)) member organisation from the Philippines. From my informal notes while listening to a webinar (n.d) https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/home/

[51] SA History Online; various biographers, sociologists, historians, and creative writers like Luli Calinicos, Alan Wieder, Crain Soudien, Ciraj Rasool, Nadia Davids, amongst others.

trauma[52] use storytelling, in one form or another, to deal with 'the wounds of our recent past'(Beyers, n.d.; McEachern, n.d., 1998; Nanda, 2004; Rassool & Proselendis, 2001a).

In their research into international processes for transitional justice from a Northern Ireland vantage point, Bill Rolston and Claire Hackett explore the potential and limitations of storytelling, particularly that, while 'unofficial processes of storytelling present opportunities for collective solidarity, the stories often go unacknowledged by the wider society'. For them, storytelling is not unproblematic, and should not be just a way for victims to 'get things off their chest' (Hackett & Rolston, 2009).

The body of work of the District Six Museum (Bennett et al., 2008; Chrischené. Julius, 2007, 2008; Layne, 2004a, 2008; Parenzee, 2000; Rassool, 2006; Rassool & Proselendis, 2001a) regarding its site-specific oral history practice, has been extensively explored by several key role-players in its development. A key element of District Six Museum research is to involve participants in learning journeys that provide platforms for them to inscribe themselves in various ways into the empty District Six landscape and onto the many surfaces of the Museum's *Digging Deeper* exhibition or at the District Six Homecoming Centre. Our learning journeys, particularly, are invitations for elders who have lived through forced removals to interrogate their own memories of place, objects, time, historical events, personal events, community rituals and cultural practices, amongst other aspects of life history excavation.

This character of the District Six Museum and the role of former residents of District Six and site-specific oral history in its exhibition and research programme is best illustrated by Chrischene Julius, its current Head of Collections, Research and Documentation (CRD):

> The Museum was constructed as a space where one was able to articulate a sense of the razed spaces of District Six and its communal life, as well as one where that community could be mobilised towards the objective of land restitution. Oral history and testimonies were key features of the Museum. Alongside these testimonies, however, ranged the debate around the appropriate form a District Six memorial project could take, one that would consider the active participation of ex-residents. Today, while the institutional character and organisational structure reflects on a superficial level the features of a Museum, it is in the contestation of these that spaces were created where the role of oral history - as a dynamic methodological element - was emphasized as an example of both a curatorial and research practice. (Chrischené Julius, 2007, p. 49)

[52]District Six Museum, Institute for the Healing of Memories, Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, Robben Island Museum, Constitutional Hill, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, amongst others

The history of clothing factories like the Ensign factory and the stories of people associated with this contested history (Douglas, 2011; Chrischené. Julius, 2007; Rassool, 2006; Rassool & Proselendis, 2001a) is another part of the broader Museum programme to help reconstruct the history of District Six – a slow process often engaged in one person or place or site at a time.

Contestations about all aspects of District Six, from the 'facts' about its origins and historical development; the identity of its people and the significance of their right to return in relation to contemporary struggles about land, abound. Specific questions and issues commonly emerge in contemporary disagreements over the authorship, interpretation, custodianship of District Six public knowledge production and in the wealth of grassroots narratives generated in campaigns or during spontaneous public outbursts, particularly on independent radio programmes[53]. These frequently play out in scenarios that aim to influence, one way or another, dominant ideas about District Six and what, if ever, a future District Six redevelopment should constitute: whose voices and stories are germane to the project of restitution? Which historical moments should be invoked – for whom and how, in our present political climate where the stated aim of the post-apartheid Government is to establish a constitutional democracy by correcting the wrongs of Apartheid? How far back in history do we go to make a case for who deserves restitution? Where and what should the nature of restitution[54] embody? Should identity based on race and ethnicity continue to frame experiences of marginalisation in the present, as the basis for restitution?

Then, two linked but differently motivated questions emerge out of a strong default position in South African public discourse when people encounter projects or campaigns for redress, always presenting important areas for redress as adversarial rather than complementary – *whataboutism*: (1) What about the many other places of forced removals like Claremont, Harfield Village, Newlands, Simonstown, Kirstenbosch, Constantia; the places in Paarl, Stellenbosch, Kleinmond, George, Hermanus, Gansbaai, Elands kloof, Malmesbury – just to

[53] Here, based on my experience of Cape Town township life, I specifically refer to the enthusiastic programming of two self-described Muslim radio stations: Voice of the Cape (VOC) and Radio 786. It should be noted that both generate an audience beyond just Muslims, for District Six related stories and because these are often the radio stations of choice for talk shows, played on Cape Flats bound mini-bus taxis, in working class neighbourhood corner shops, restaurants and throughout shopping zones in places like Athlone, Epping, Rylands, Lansdowne, amongst others. People gravitate to these radio stations because they have become part of the social and cultural fabric of the Cape Flats alongside the religious-tribal motivation.

[54] Restitution is predominantly received as being about returning to the place you were forcibly removed from and as an opportunity to own land and property. What about issues of access rather than ownership? What constitutes a restitution of dignity? Is restitution the same as restoration of a past condition / status?

name a few in the Western Cape? (2) What about the people who were classified as bantu or native, denied South African citizenship in the land of their birth (the great majority of South Africans, using racial classification, ethnicity, and social class as the main criteria) displaced and criminalised for being in the urban centres of South Africa without a pass because of influx control laws (most notably the 1913 Land Act)? Pertinent to this thesis, it should be noted that the Cape Province became a coloured labour preference area and to qualify for access to basic livelihoods (in, construction, clothing, fishing, and food production industries, especially), people had to pass officially as coloured or Cape Malay.

District Six Museum, from the outset, demonstrated an awareness of the interconnectedness of its work with the memory of District Six to the universal nature of experiences of displacement and the need for solidarity built on the recognition, in our practice, of a much deeper and wider scope of historical and political experience. *Remember Dimbaza* (Rassool & Proselendis, 2001a, sec. Foreword), is a key statement that visitors encounter, either on entrance to or on exit from the museum (often read as a poem), that clearly highlights this intention of the Museum.

What form of memorialisation is required to support the project of restitution or should memorialisation activities take place aloof from the contemporary struggles of people who experienced material as well as psycho-social loss during apartheid? These contestations often rest on a bed of nostalgia for those who feel a direct connection to its loss or on the hard ground of political and economic expediency that aims to look ahead to the future needs of the city, province, or country. In public dialogues between government representatives and the claimant community about the failed restitution process over the years, it is often stated that return should not become an 'emotional' issue; government bureaucrats are egged on to do a 'difficult but necessary job efficiently' by keeping their eye on the policies, procedures, and available budget. Many museum professionals, consultants, academics, and researchers also contest the important place of 'the community' in the deep theoretical matters related to the framing and interpretation of the wide scope of knowledge related to District Six. The complex socio-political discussions about reconstructing a displaced community becomes a non-essential luxury – in essence, a 'business as usual' ideology dominates.

District Six tends to dominate the public discourse about urban land restitution and marginalised Cape Town Heritage. Urban displacement during apartheid often reads as synonymous with forced removals from the area named, in 1867, as the *Sixth Municipal*

District of Cape Town. In many ways, this aggregating of the apartheid forced removals experience into an iconic District Six experience serves to render invisible many other sites of urban forced removals, as well as the myriad of ways throughout South Africa's colonial and apartheid history in which conquered and oppressed people were displaced. This is particularly the case in circles outside of university teaching and research, including the rudimentary ways in which educators, barring a few, cover the teaching of Apartheid.

In workshops with school learners as well as tertiary level students who are not specifically studying areas associated with the history, sociology, philosophy, geography, amongst others, I have observed a scant general knowledge about displacement during colonialism and apartheid. Few students have demonstrated a knowledge of the basic 'facts' of South African history, for example, beyond the ideas that 'Apartheid was not right'; 'white people treated black people badly'; and 'Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress won or were given South Africa to rule as some sort of a gift from FW de Klerk'. Occasionally, students will be familiar with forced removals from Sophiatown, often, these students are from Gauteng. The purpose of this thesis, however, is not to dig into the quality and scope of students' knowledge about the basic facts of South Africa's past. As a social group[55], the students who visit District Six Museum as a school outing, outdoor classroom activity, or for a specific research project, provide a significant basis for making initial assumptions about the state of public discourse regarding District Six forced removals and the apartheid experience. It is a rough indicator of the huge gap between the informed[56] and uninformed or disinformed public, that represents the social context within which political and economic contestation over land or for dignity currently plays out. Much of the struggle for District Six today is kept alive by

[55] To illustrate the basis for this observation, from April 2017 – March 2018, the following number of students participated in learning programmes at the District Six Museum: 1475 SA school learners; 1268 SA university students; In the 2018-2019 year under review, 1670 SA school learners and 999 SA university students are recorded as having participated in learning programmes. These programmes vary from a minimum of 2 hours to two-day workshops with plenty of moments for students to express both baseline and informed knowledge about South Africa's past. All these programmes include an orientation session that provides participants with the space to demonstrate their baseline knowledge and then reflect on this in relation to the Museum's scripted narrative and interpretation of key political, historical, social, and economic elements that help us to explain the present. It often comes as a shock to participants, for example, when they realise the link between the two 1950 Population Registration and Group Areas Acts and the segregated city we live in today.

[56] Today, universally, this layer in society is commonly referred to as the 'woke folk' – often with disdain when the protests die down. It is almost always expressed, pregnant with the idea of a disconnected few who do not represent the views of the people they purport to fight on behalf of.

nostalgia for a romanticised past and driven by forces conscious of the opportunities (both selfish and selfless) that land restitution at the centre of a branded 'world class' city affords[57].

It is important to, also, to recognise the long shadow of history in the making of the segregated and institutionalised racism of the apartheid years (1948-1990). All the area above the Eastern Boulevard (Nelson Mandela Boulevard) was declared a 'White Group Area' on 11th February 1966. This followed on from a 1962 City Council proposal for a 'Slum Clearance Scheme' as part of a vision to, ostensibly, modernise the area. The National Party Government led by Hendrik Verwoerd, during this time, was consolidating the country as a Republic[58] and halted these plans. In 1964 the Orwellian Committee for the Rehabilitation of Depressed Areas (CORDA) was established after an investigation of District Six, Woodstock and Salt-River was instigated by the Minister of Community Development and Coloured Affairs at the time, PW Botha[59]. This was all part of the institutionalisation of Apartheid segregation in cities across the country and results in large scale dislocation of people based on racial categorisation. Numerous apartheid laws, many with firm foundations laid during the colonial period[60], implemented in tandem, served to frame and entrench a deeply racialised society with everything governing life from the cradle to the grave enforced along racial lines. The Pass Laws, by which millions of Africans become locked into tribal homelands (Bantustans) and, if permitted in the urban centres, limited in job opportunities and social mobility, for example is preceded by the 1856 Masters and Servants Act that is, in turn built on the foundations of the laws that control slave labour in the late 1700s and the *'Hottentot code'* of 1809. These, to name a few of the pertinent laws, all serve the same purpose – to curtail the freedom of

[57] This is one of the main themes to have emerge out of the analytical work of the District Six Museum over more than 25 years, presented at conferences and recorded in the public domain through various mass media platforms. It is also evident in the political discourse that forms part of the '*Reclaim the City'* and other social justice movements.

[58] South Africa became a Republic on 31st May 1961.

[59] Following a stint as the *'kragdadige'* (tough) Minister of Defence, Botha became Prime Minister of SA on September 28, 1978 after B. J. Vorster's resignation.

[60] The context for understanding the connectedness between laws that morph from those that are used to control slave labour (enslaved people), conquered communities (Khoe and San particularly), Bantu labour (Pass Laws) and then into the Apartheid Laws that are often referenced ahistorically in popular discourse, comes from the resource material we use at the District Six Museum for school and university workshops. These are from various sources I have collated over the years as a teacher and education facilitator amongst which are: Jack and Ray Simons', 1983, *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950;* Eddie Roux's 1964 book, *Time Longer than Rope, a history of the black man's struggle for freedom in South Africa*; Valdi van Reenen's, 2006, Resource guide on the Pass Laws to support the High School Oral History project co-ordinated by Cecil Esau for the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR). Valdi and I were members of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) alternative curriculum initiatives that involved the production of many worksheets and workshops to teach anti-apartheid alternative history – or a 'People's History' in the 198 -1990s and then, more formally during our democracy.

movement of human beings to ensure a steady and compliant stream of free (or cheap) labour. This legal framework became even more useful with the discovery of diamonds in the 1860s and then gold in the 1880s. The 1913 Native Land Act consolidates the exploitation of black people that then continues throughout apartheid, going through various iterations of Bantu Labour or Urban Areas Acts: Bantu Urban Areas Act, No 25 of 1945 that facilitates prosecutions and banishment to the 'homelands'; Bantu Labour Act, No 67 of 1964 that facilitates recruitment, employment, housing, food and health conditions under national government control; Bantu Labour Registration, Gazette No R.1892, 3 December 1965 that enforces the 'Coloured Labour Preference policy' in the Cape. These policies are important to understand in how people choose to remember District Six and other sites of forced removals in the Cape and forget the connections between various South African communities displaced through policies that aimed to 'divide and rule'.

2.2 APARTHEID, COMPLICITY, AND RESISTANCE

A quotation from Samora Machel, that I have used for years in community activist workshops to instigate discussions about how history and memory are not neutral pursuits and is a complex struggle between complicity and resistance, comes to mind:

> Some people, with a certain nostalgia, the worshippers, and admirers of the colonial system, cherish and nurse its structures instead of smashing them. This is typical of a mentality in bondage to decadent values, negative values - counter-revolutionary values.[61]

Often, in times of crisis and uprising we must take sides as active members of society. However, in reflecting on the past, it is important that we challenge the normalized idea that history will always be written by the victors and about the victors. It is important, if we want to learn from history, that we include the stories of the collaborators and the oppressors to give us a more complete understanding of the dynamics of the past.

In the introduction to the 1990 publication, *the struggle for District Six*, Shamil Jeppe and Crain Soudien point to this situation in public discourse:

> It would be pretentious to exaggerate the significance of this latest offering on District Six. It comes in the wake of a new public awareness about District Six which has been stimulated to fever pitch by a dizzy succession of plays, poetry

[61] https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/1980-samora-machel-transform-state-apparatus-instrument-victory/

> readings and the like. On the other hand, it would betray equal affectation, unworthy of the cause which this book serves, not to acknowledge its distinctiveness. It is the first serious attempt, and hopefully not the last, to bring together and illuminate the historical record of District Six. What it seeks to do is reveal the complexity and amplitude of a tale which can only here be adumbrated. (Jeppe et al., 1990, p. 13)

They further state, what has become a key aspect of how the District Six Museum works critically with the politics and memory of District Six as noted in various publications (Bennett et al., 2008; Chrischené. Julius, 2008; Chrischené Julius, 2007; Layne, 2004a, 2008; Rassool & Proselendis, 2001b; Sanger, 2019; Smith & Huis Kombuis project participants, 2016): the District Six story 'cannot be reduced to single or essential truths' and should be viewed from multiple perspectives of 'the beleaguered proletarian', 'the impudent urchin', 'the precious matriarch', ' the 'meneer' from UCT', and the 'rabid revolutionary walking to a step not always familiar to the people.' It must be clarified here that the idea of understanding events from our recent past through a multifocal lens has, often, come to mean that there is equivalence between the perspectives of those who defend Apartheid and those who critique it, and this is not the case. The merits of a multifocal perspective are contained in the ability to see all perspectives to appraise the value of each in relation to each other as well as in the context of our own philosophy, values, knowledge, and interests (personal, political, economic social and cultural).

The District Six Museum's archival, curatorial, educational, and operational practices are steeped in the ideas that emerged from the *Hands-off - District Six* Conference and this is given philosophical and political shape by the subsequent 1990 publication referenced above. I allude to, reflect on, and sometimes unconsciously draw on these ideas throughout this thesis in ways that is not always technically referenced. The conference and the publication have, to a large extent, served as a lodestar for my work at the District Six Museum.

The disconnect, however, between the locations of those 'in the know' and the masses as it is experienced today - or as is generally represented in the relationships between universities and society; intellectuals or experts and society; museums and society - is not a unique phenomenon in world history. In *Social Structures of the Public Sphere,* Habermas locates the evolution of the public sphere from 'courtly noble society' to 'its counterpoise in the town'. He presents the argument that 'the bourgeois avante-garde' of the educated middle class... through its contact with the 'elegant world' become a force that can reimagine the 'monarch's personal sphere' as a public sphere in the eighteenth century stated quite evocatively here:

> The ‘town’ was the life centre of civil society not only economically; in cultural-political contrast to the court, it designated especially an early public sphere in the world of letters whose institutions were the coffee houses, the salons, and the Tischgesellsschaften (table societies). The heirs of the humanistic aristocratic society, in their encounter with the bourgeois intellectuals (through sociable discussions that quickly developed into public criticism), built a bridge between the remains of a collapsing form of publicity (the courtly one) and the precursor of a new one: the bourgeois public sphere (section 5). (Habermas, 1962, p. 30)

He later unpacks this:

> This early public, then, comprised both court and ‘town’ ...one sees here the first signs of that combination of the economically unproductive and politically functionless urban aristocracy with eminent writers, artists, and scientists (who frequently were of bourgeois origin). (p.31)

It is not uncommon to hear people involved in grassroots struggles for survival or a decent life, dismiss the erudite and academically engaged theorists as on the one hand, ‘irrelevant’ and at the other extreme, ‘enemies’. These criticisms of those who may have important intellectual perspectives can veer from being justified to being anti-intellectual and limit more critical ways to confront deep socio-economic and political problems. Habermas, however, signals us to a problem of methodology where theorisation needs to be grounded in a ‘public sphere’ and where this is understood to be a discursive space that is inclusive of the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. He is critical of the ‘centres of criticism’ (intellectual engagement) in France and Britain of the time, particularly, where these centres became spaces where aristocratic society and bourgeois intellectuals (the potentially revolutionary forces of the time) developed a ‘certain parity of the educated’ (p.32) alluding to the complicity of the writers, artists, scientists, and other intellectuals with the oppressors.

This mirrors, to a large extent, how the colonial and apartheid experience has been stripped of its complexity in the process of being narrated to ‘outsiders’ of this experience – often as a simple linear narrative of ‘us and them’. The methodology of the research for this thesis is one that rests on a more complex set of mechanisms for working with the memory of our recent past.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

> The Museum represents a living memorial and is more than just a static display. Through this space we have created an arena which enables us to reaffirm our identity, celebrate our heritage and confront the complexities of our history. (Vincent Kolbe) [62]

This research project rests on the District Six Museum's methodology (theoretical underpinnings and practice – collection, curation, and education) using the research and oral history memory catalogue / mapping tools that we have created to collect information *with* participants[63] in our research processes. I explored, with participants, the nature of people, space and place and the many ways in which people make sense of the situations they find themselves in, either choosing to be complicit, laissez-faire, to resist or combinations of these over a lifetime.

Oral history was essential to the creation and curation of primary exhibitions in the making of the District Six Museum such as, *Streets: Retracing District Six* (1994), *Digging Deeper* (1996), *(Dis) playing the Game* (1996), Protea Village's *Paradise Lost* (2002), *Fields of Play* (2010), and *Huis Kombuis, a Food and Memory Cookbook* (2016)[64]. More recently, it has been an essential driving component of the Museum's work in developing the research needed for the progress of the National Heritage Site (NHS) project and campaign, and in the developing youth programmes like *Tell your story to a 'born free'* that forms part of the *Baluleka!* Youth Network[65] and Re-imagining the City workshops. A large part of the Museum's mission is driven towards providing a space (platform) that enables people to express their voices in an uncensored way, on several levels and across many modalities. This finds expression in different ways, the important aim being to document, collate and archive the stories and to continue to explore innovative ways to exhibit these. Central to the Museum's work is its emphasis on a people-centred methodology that focuses, not only on products and outcomes, but on the processes involved in producing these as well.

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[62] Vincent Kolbe, ex-resident and founding member of the Museum; https://www.districtsix.co.za/permanent-exhibition-digging-deeper/

[63] This is in counter reference to my work with people from marginalised communities (and others) who are often reduced to statistics or are stripped of their agency in research about them. Working *with* participants or *in* community suggests the centrality of participants to the process of interpretation and meaning making in research.

[64] https://www.districtsix.co.za/permanent-exhibition-digging-deeper/
https://www.districtsix.co.za/past-exhibitions-landing/

[65] Baluleka was chosen as a name for the Youth Network as it speaks to the need for youth from marginalized communities to recognise the important voice they have in society – it is an Nguni word for 'Be important'.

An extensive study into the *Digging Deeper* exhibition and the Museum's oral history strategy was conducted by colleague Chrischene Julius who now heads the Collections, Research and Documentation Department (CRD) of the Museum and is also its Acting Director at the time of writing this. She explores crucial ways in which the *Digging Deeper* exhibition marks out and frames the Museum's oral history programme and general memorialisation practice. She notes that *Digging Deeper* was chosen as the working title and the organising framework for the exhibition chosen to open the restored District Six Museum building in September 2000, marking the beginnings of an intentional practice. The exhibition aimed to 'dig deeper' into the museum's *collections, processes, and meanings*[66]. *Digging Deeper* was also preoccupied with the various ways in which the *collection, resources and spaces* of the museum were used.[67] For her, the exhibition articulated 'the central intention of the museum to enquire into the pasts of South African society, and to work with the memories of those affected by forced removals.' Most pertinently, however, she extracted a key element of our practice that we continue to nurture: 'to deepen our knowledge of District Six, to excavate deeper questions about people and places, while exploring the intersections beyond the geographic space of the District.' Finally, to reiterate the sentiments in *Remember Dimbaza*, Julius reminds us of the important symbolic value of District Six that, while representing a specific moment in history and a particular place, the Digging Deeper exhibition, in so far as it represents the oral history work of the Museum, resonates more universal cases of displacement, and forced removal.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This is a qualitative research project where I, however, reference quantitative studies on forced removals, labour history in Cape Town, employment statistics and flight of capital from South Africa just before and during the period of democracy[68]. I worked, primarily, within the framework of the Museum's oral history methodology which rests on an action research approach[69]. The Museum uses the broad term 'oral history' to refer to the range of ways to gather and document the memories, lives, and stories of people – audio, visual or written texts.

[66] This is noted in many of the museum workshops, pamphlets, organizational principles and curatorial practices and is also referenced by Chrischene Julius in her thesis as a reference to an 'Introductory note, A Guide to the District Six Museum and the Digging Deeper exhibition' (Chrischené Julius, 2007, p. 72)
[67] From 'A Guide to the District Six Museum and the Digging Deeper exhibition' as noted by Chrischene Julius in her thesis, (Chrischené Julius, 2007, p. 7)
[68]Democracy here refers solely to the 1994 – present period defined by the universal right to vote for all citizens.
[69]An action research approach is participatory, involving theory and practice by researcher and participants with regular reflection and 'learning-by-doing'.

Participants are encouraged to collect, document, collate, archive, and interpret their own lives as far as possible, in critical but kind spaces with museum professionals, family, friends and peers.

I used various methods in this project: (1) Individual sit-down interviews, (2) collective storytelling and sharing of experiences, (3) recorded walking conversations, as some examples. I triangulated the individual stories of women factory worker experiences in workshop sessions where we mapped, categorised and interrogated specific memories that participants gathered using our memory-mapping catalogue tool **(ADDENDUM 1).** The information about objects, people, places, events, and experiences of apartheid laws as well as other memories of growing up in, or connections to, District Six and the clothing factory were often 'mere' fragments or, in some instances self-contained short stories. I used these as the basis to construct the life histories of two women, Ruth Phala Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, former clothing factory workers. These life-histories remain incomplete but will grow in content as participants gain confidence, confront their blind-spots, fill in their memory gaps or choose to stop working on it. Drawing on our *Digging Deeper* methodology, participants were invited to multiple sessions (individual and group sessions that collectively formed a learning journey) created as discursive spaces[70]. Participants were then invited back to cross-examine their own lives, their experiences and senses of District Six as well as their experiences, knowledge, and perceptions of the clothing Factory (history, location, union politics, family, cultural and social lives, women workers' identity, division of labour, power relations, amongst others).

This has culminated in a comprehensive package of information for both Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon consisting of: (1) a short profile; (2) a photographic portrait[71] by photographer Paul Grendon[72]; (3) a complete life history (4) a personal archive of recorded stories, photos, videos, objects, memorabilia.

[70] The District Six Museum calls this a 'Memory Design Lab' where oral history participants are invited into a series of workshops with artists, performers, academics, activists, amongst others to co-construct exhibitions, events, learning programmes, storytelling sessions and walking tours of the area.
[71] The initial idea was for the women in the project to choose an object associated with the clothing factory/ies they worked at, that they wished to be photographed with. This will become part of the bigger Museum project to document District Six factory workers' lives.
[72] Paul Grendon, a dear friend, and collaborator with roots in the anti-apartheid movement of the 1990s as photographer and painter, passed away suddenly in September 2019. The photographic elements of this research project had to be curtailed. The personal archives of Ruth and Farahnaaz would have included a portfolio of Grendon photographs capturing both women at various sites referenced in their oral histories. His absence is deeply felt.

Above left: Farahnaaz Gilfelleon is on the right of the pic with Susan Lewis and Jasmina Salie, former District Six residents. Susan is a returnee and all three were from families forcibly removed to Hanover Park. Here they are handing over Museum catalogues / publications to staff members at the Hanover Park Library after the launch of their suitcase memory exhibition that they co-curated with youth involved in our Young curator and community historian projects. *Above right:* Detail of the suitcase memory box exhibition in the District Six Museum to support the campaign to declare the area a National Heritage Site.

This will form the basis for a website with the potential to recruit youth[73] from Cape Flats schools to work on an exhibition about the interior and exterior lives of District Six women clothing factory workers. The website and exhibition do not form part of the writing up of this thesis although both Ruth and Farahnaaz's stories formed part of pop-up exhibitions at either the Cape Town International Airport, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, the Garden Centre, or public libraries (Langa, Hanover Park, Manenberg, Crossroads and Nyanga).

The memorialisation practice of the District Six Museum is, in relation to dominant and popular discourses (memory / history / imagination), a counterweight to narrow, simplistic, romantic, and nostalgic narratives about District Six. My research into the lives (internal and external) of women clothing workers aims to add further weight to this.

In designing the research framework and processes I was guided by these important questions:

1. How can District Six become a pedagogical space with possibilities and challenges from both epistemological and ontological angles?

[73] This forms part of the Museum's *Tell Your Story to a 'Born Free'* intergenerational dialogue and oral history programme where youth are encouraged to produce exhibitions with audio and video productions from in-depth oral history interviews with elders who lived during apartheid. Youth are encouraged to explore themes about life during apartheid and then research the theme, identify appropriate elders from their community to dynamically interview (be in dialogue with), and then recruit other young people and elders to become part of a participatory and community / school process of storytelling and listening. *'Born Free'* is a concept that is included as one of the overarching themes that instigate contested opinions about generational differences or similarities in the experience of oppression.

2. What is our critical pedagogy? How does our memorialisation practice rest on this and where does it depart or not align?

3. How, in our practice, do we engage with the ex-resident community (identity) and their memories (in the context of personal and collective memory, the fragility of memory, nostalgia, and the restitution of dignity) of District Six and then, for what purposes?

3.2 THE MEMORY MAPPING PROCESS

My oral history and memory mapping process draws on the existing elements of the Museum's pedagogical practice, part of which is outlined below:

3.2.1 Site specific oral history and memory mapping

The above images are from a site-specific oral history research project with people connected to the Peninsula Maternity Hospital (PMH), a site that was demolished as District Six became a white Group Area, during Apartheid. Photographs are by Paul Grendon and the postcard used for the invitation is from the Museum's archive.

I am aware of Miwon Kwon's work for her Phd[74] on site-specificity about public art and community engagement as well as the extensive use of site-specific interventions in various expressive arts festivals globally as well as here in Cape Town. The District Six Museum, as

[74] Miwon Kwon, (1997): One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity. Published by: The MIT Press

well as many sites associated with forced removals, have often been used as a palette and/or canvas by artists interested in instigating public discussions about social justice issues in the city (Haroun Gunn-Salie, Scott Williams and Tazneem Mononoke Wentzel (Burning Museum), Primrose Mrwebi, Garth Erasmus, Malika Ndlovu amd Khadija Tracey Heeger, amongst others). This thesis, is however, only tangentially concerned with theories around site-specific art, its uses, value, and impact. I use site-specific only in the sense that it points to the Museum's ongoing educational and curatorial programme to inscribe the voices and memories of former residents onto the landscape, remnants, and new buildings of District Six and onto the many surfaces of the Museum as ephemeral or semi-permanent site-markers. Site-specific is used interchangeably with place-specific or to mean in-situ - in the original place.

The Peninsula Maternity Hospital memory project[75] (pictured above) made extensive use of an arts-informed research process (Cole & Knowles, 2001) that I use, albeit sparingly, in my sessions with former clothing factory workers and other associates for this thesis. Drawing from my own experience with the District Six Museum over 20 years in various capacities, I used our tried and tested techniques of mapping memories of place (clothing factories and District Six sites). I also used popular education methodologies inspired by educators like Paulo Freire[76], where part of the process of writing life histories of women (in this instance) is premised on techniques that create both safe and critical spaces for those outside of the formal academic stream, through demystifying knowledge production, making it possible for members of marginalized groups to recognise their power and agency in society. In this construct, the researcher or teacher is not the saviour nor the miner of gems. The extract that follows about the relationship between teacher and students is pertinent to the relationship between the researcher and *the researched* that I want to avoid. In the opening of chapter two of *The pedagogy of the oppressed*, Freire could so easily be suggesting that research is suffering from a 'narration sickness':

> A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of

[75] This is a project of the District Six Museum in partnership with the Provincial Government. It brought a diverse group of participants together in a research project to excavate, map and interrogate the memories of the old Peninsula Maternity Hospital.
[76] Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator and critical pedagogy theorist whose praxis I have drawn on throughout my life as an educator (formal, informal, community, school, unions, and museum).

being narrated to become lifeless and petrified. Education is suffering from narration sickness.(Freire, 2005, p. 71)

3.2.2 Site marking – 'People lived here'.





This is an act of occupying space with story, place making and decolonizing spaces to create a living yet ephemeral memorial trace. The Museum engages in inscriptive practices throughout spaces that have either been (1) re-imagined by those with access to power to compete in the real estate market of a quickly gentrifying City or (2) claimed as an unstated extension of the Apartheid (1948 – 1994) urban planning agenda – spaces dominated by the university formerly known as the whites only Peninsula Technicon[77]. This thesis provides the basis for clothing workers, who have identified important sites from their life experience and excavated memories associated with these sites, to engage in a deeper exercise of contributing to the collective memory of District Six and its memorialisation.

3.2.3 Tell your story to a 'born free' knowing and owning your story by telling it.

This is an act of knowing, healing, restitution of dignity and making the intangible visible. It provides opportunities for intergenerational listening and sharing. It is also an anti-racist practice as youth[78] are encouraged to see beyond the stereotypes microwaved into existence by segregation. Individual learners / youth who form part of our *Baluleka*! Youth Network dig

[77] The Peninsula Technicon is now rebranded as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, District Six campus

[78] I generally refer to youth as young people in or out of school – between the ages of 15 and 30 years of age.

deeply into the stories surfaced from the initial encounters of women clothing workers that I set up with groups of learners who visit the Museum. Each of the selected women had the right to choose to be part of this or not. From my experience, most ex-residents of District Six who are involved in our oral history learning journeys relish the opportunity to share their story with young people. With permission from all parties, I use the essays, photographic albums, objects and video clips of interviews as references when I construct the life histories with the women clothing factory workers who are part of this project.

Left: Community workshop with participants in long term partnership project between Disrtrict Six Museum and Ombon'Omhle (Langa). Former residents of District Six who were forcibly removed share their stories with Langa High School learners in a whole day Saturday Learning journey. **Right:** Former staff member, Revina Gwayi shares her experiences of living during Apartheid, particularly with the Pass Laws and the impact this had in separating her family, with Wynberg High School learners as part of our school visit programme.

3.2.4 Working class life histories: women clothing workers of District Six

I used the memory-mapping catalogue tool (**ADDENDUM 1**) – a framework / storyboard - for participants to map their own memories of site, place, objects, people, events, rituals and historical timeline. I also facilitated workshop sessions (individual and group) to assist in the completion of this process. This then formed the basis for the recorded oral history interviews, creating a more even playing field between researcher and research project participant.

How will these accounts of memory be presented? My intention is to add to a more complex and layered story of the recent past by contesting some of the common ways of writing history:

- As grand narratives of 'truth' – the authorised 'facts' of history
- Where people are presented as either victims, perpetrators, or bystanders.
- As narratives that promote a hierarchy of 'victimhood'

In this thesis, I have tried to make sense of clothing workers' narratives as a springboard to illuminate the relationship between cultural capital, urban planning and memorialisation in a contested city where the relationship between the 'urban frontier and the centre'(Pullan, 2011) defines social justice concerns as democracy, or something else, struggles to take root.

3.2.5 Website | Blog | Exhibition: Memories of clothing factories and District Six[79]

The results of the study will also be presented in the form of an online exhibition of women workers' stories also highlighting the process of unpacking their oral histories, the critical feedback of members in my reference and workshop groups. This section of the research project is not included in this thesis, however. It forms part of the launching of the District Six Museum's larger scale oral history project with clothing workers. Both Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon's life histories have been presented as part of exhibitions curated by youth, using the information gathered in the research for this thesis. Of note are exhibitions at public libraries in Langa, Manenberg, Hanover Park, Nyanga and Crossroads.

3.3 KEY ELEMENTS OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

3.3.1 Memory work: the oral history practice of the District Six Museum - for what purpose and in whose interests?

Here my intention is to provide a clear framework to explore, mainly through the oral histories of working class women, the history of specific clothing factories derived from the extensive practice over 25 or more years of the District Six Museum (Bennett et al., 2008; Chrischené. Julius, 2007, 2008; Layne, 2008; Rassool, 2006; Rassool & Proselendis, 2001a) . The writing of history and memory work is not neutral and often not a benign practice. Throughout history, in situations of social and political transformation, we have witnessed groups (in power and resistance) invoke memory for various reasons amongst which are: To close a chapter in history and suggest that society 'move on'; to open wounds as a process of healing; to sustain conflicts and for revenge; to gloat and boast about the achievements and successes of a group, community, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, amongst others. The District Six Museum's methodology is primarily driven by a grassroots approach where the aim is to make visible,

[79] This aspect of the research project with clothing workers from District Six is not finalised for this thesis but forms part of the Museum's oral history campaign.

mainly but not exclusively, marginalised people's experiences of sites of erasure and of apartheid. We then co-present these in publications, exhibitions, educational programmes, online platforms, amongst others, as products of dignified and ethical research practice where people are agents of their own stories about the past.

3.3.2 Site specific oral history testimony in the work of the District Six Museum

The identification and mapping of sites, in a remembered District Six, formed part of the Museum's initial work with site-specific oral history testimony. The image on the left forms part of a Heritage Impact Assessment of District Six completed with the Museum (Lucien Le Grange Architects, 2003).

The image on the right is a brochure that was produced to guide oral history testimony and storytelling walks with former residents of District Six to triangulate stories and to fill in missing gaps in memory, research, and history. Both are attached as part of **ADDENDUM 4**.

From the outset, in the creation of the District Six Museum and then later in the consolidation and institutionalisation of its practice, site specific oral history has been central to its work to support the project of return of displaced people from District Six and other places of forced removals. A key challenge here is to make a case for the importance of marginalised voices - specifically working class women's voices - (DuBois, 2000; Layne, 2008; O'Connell, 2017) in the narratives of displacement / forced removals in Cape Town. Motivation for this approach to oral history is to use site, the remnants, and absences in landscape, linked to personal, organised as well as fragments of archives to trigger memories of place. In the case of District Six, the physical elements that made the place was largely destroyed out of existence and people often find it harder, than is usual, to remember without the material references.

3.3.3 Exploration and excavation of the site-specific memory of the Ensign Clothing Factory, District Six[80]

I explored the various ways in which the renaming of major parts of District Six (Zonnebloem, The Fringe, East City, Woodstock) as part of a gentrification drive during the post-apartheid period (1994 till now) is a continuation of the logic / pattern of apartheid urban planning (segregation). This approach to zoning continues to marginalize the most economically vulnerable, overwhelmingly, Black[81] people, from accessing the City.

In the proposal by big corporate interests to redevelop a key part of the old District Six, the framing of 'site sensitivity' in the findings of the archeological assessment was confined to the 'material' and archeological value of the land. Despite this valuation taking place during the time (2000) of an emphatic District Six Restitution process where the District Six Museum and its partners shared a common concern as illustrated by a Heritage Impact Assessment of District Six (Lucien Le Grange Architects, 2003) where it is noted:

> In anticipation of the redevelopment of the area as part of the land restitution process, there was a concern that the memory associated with the area should be treated with great sensitivity. The report draws attention to the intangible heritage of the area and details the remnant material traces on the landscape that add to the sense of place of this delicate and contested area.

At the same time, various national institutions as well as UNESCO firmly highlighted the important issue of 'intangible heritage' in matters of restitution.

I explored the personal and collective archives of women workers, other District Sixers, the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU) and others associated with the site. Below is an example of a photograph from the archive of Joyce Jonathan, a member of the District Six Museum's Seven Steps Members' Club.

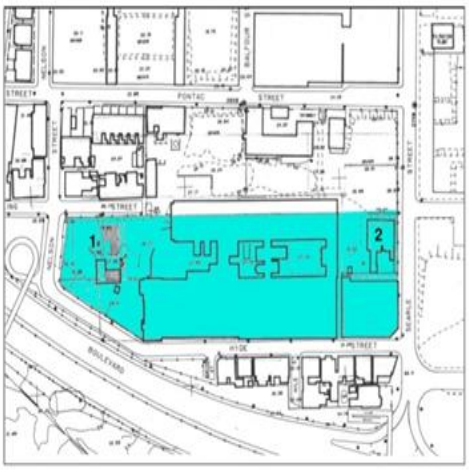
> I was only 15 when I started my first job as a machinist at Ensign Clothing Factory in Searle Street, opposite Trafalgar Baths. Eventually I became a supervisor and a manageress after working there for 47 years. (Smith & Huis Kombuis project participants, 2016, p. 177)

[80]Now, this part of old District Six has been rezoned as part of Woodstock. Ensign Factory was demolished in 2000 when its owners moved the operation to Atlantis.

[81] Black is used in the sense that Steve Biko used it – as a political construct – to counteract all apartheid created race categories designated for oppressed people: Coloured, Indian, Native / Bantu / African.

Left, Joyce Jonathan, 91 years old now, outside the Ensign Clothing Factory. She is a participant in the District Six Museum's Huis Kombuis project – a food, memory, and textile design project since the start more than 10 years ago. Pic: from her personal archive, produced for Huis Kombuis.

The prevailing corporate and academic approach, however, enabled the redevelopment of the property as a Business Park and retail space that has seen the almost total erasure of the memory of District Six, specifically the memories of working-class women associated with the Ensign Factory.



1. Well
2. Hillside House

Source of map: Archeological Assessment: Tim Hart and Antonia Malan, Department of Archaeology University of Cape Town, 2000

The archaeological assessment of the District Six site purchased by Clicks Stores was prepared for Trevor Thorold Architects in September 2000 who then contracted Tim Hart and Antonia Malan, Department of Archaeology University of Cape Town to conduct trial excavations on a piece of land bounded by Searle, Hyde and Aspeling Streets, Woodstock, Cape Town (Figure 1). Development plans for the property were in progress necessitating the need for a heritage impact assessment before any construction activities could begin.

The buildings circled in red show the aerial view of pic. 2 and pic. 3 above which is now the *Kwikspar* store, part of the Boulevard Office Park development – the huge glass and steel structure that can be viewed from the recently named Nelson Mandela Boulevard (formerly Eastern Boulevard). This used to be the Ensign Clothing Factory space for management gatherings and meals[82]. The arrow points to the Ensign entrance that was located directly across

[82] This is gleaned from site-walks and a recorded discussion with Farahnaaz Gilfelleon who worked at Ensign straight after completing her primary school years.

from the walk-over bridge that connected people to the heart of District Six after the highway was built in the 1960s.[83]

The following is the recommendation for the development of the site:

> We consider that much of the site (apart from Hillside House and the newly discovered well) is not archaeologically sensitive due to severe disturbance of the landscape. In the event of unexpected finds occurring during construction activities, an archaeologist should be contacted immediately to assess the situation and if necessary, rescue any material that may be impacted.(Hart & Malan, 2000, p. 2)

Pic 1: Entrance to Ensign, 2000, Stewart Harris, https://www.flickr.com/photos/myskygarden/6529717773
Pic 2: Hillside House today; **Pic 3:** View of Hillside house from Searle Street; Pic 4: Two aerial views of the site that has now been turned into a commercial centre, part of the District Six area rezoned as Woodstock after the Eastern Boulevard was built.

The only real consideration in these kinds of heritage assessments is archaeological – a narrow version of the discipline, in this case. This very premise privileges the history, heritage, and culture of those who were able to mark the landscape with their symbols of colonial and then apartheid conquest – monuments, plaques and statues, elite validated technology, architecture, art, and spatial design, to name a few. The intangible heritage of oppressed and marginalised communities in society are almost completely ignored in this frame, except when needed for

[83] In response to a campaign led by the District Six Museum, this area has been rezoned as part of the recently renamed area of District Six (2019).

decor. In the case of District Six, the important remnants of places that serve to mark points for return (both symbolic and material) are completely off the radar of City and Municipal politicians, developers, and their associated urban planners. A big question here is to what extent these archaeological assessments merely provide the basis for gentrification of place and culture, thereby salting of the wounds in society of those adversely impacted by Apartheid forced removals. My research is contextualised by the extent to which the current practice of heritage assessments in South Africa supported by SAHRA, Heritage Western Cape and other related institutions continue to privilege the beneficiaries of Apartheid, with space in some cases to accommodate a new black, politically connected elite. The argument for the latter is that it supports the transformation agenda. The key question remains, however – in whose interests? In this sense, my research project aims to unpack stories of marginalisation through apartheid urban planning and into post-apartheid government and corporate strategies for land usage where sites of forced removals that hold memories of displaced groups like women clothing factory workers are now on the open market.

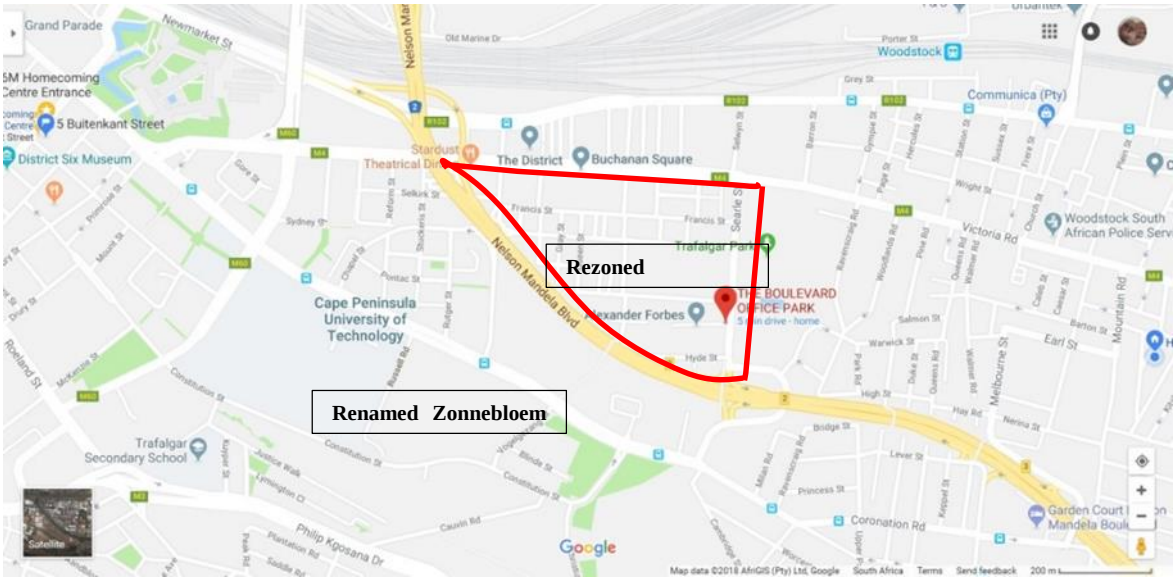
The following is the text for an online advert referring to a new office block on the site of an important District Six landmark – the old Ensign factory, now part of a rezoned Woodstock:

> Prestigious Office (527sqm) to Rent, Woodstock | Blackbird Properties | For Rent/To Let R69, 564 per Month - Office Space.[84]

In *'The class politics of privatization: Global perspectives on the privatization of public workers, land, and services in the publication, International Labour and Working-Class History,* Jennifer Klein (2007) reflects on privatization as an issue of globalization making the class agenda of privatization explicit, viewing it not just as the "opening of markets," but as a clear attack on the working classes and on the public claims that workers and citizens are able to make on the economy's resources and productivity. The experience of the District Six Museum and its work with the collective, contested and living memory of the area underpins the observations of Klein. In the quest to make the intangible heritage of District Six tangible, we have been variously met with: outright hostility from those eager to brand their entrepreneurial pursuits in 'the Six' as innovative and globally competitive; exasperated

[84] An example of the initial marketing and promotional information put out in public to encourage the redevelopment of the area where Ensign is located. This section of District Six has also attracted Clicks, Hi-Tec and other corporate enterprises. It should be noted that many of these companies wasted no time investing in programmes with the schools and remaining District Six community, redefining the space as Woodstock.

paternalism from 'the experts' with a long resume affirming their preordained knowledge of the area, and support from those who recognise the importance of contesting the historical canon with its roots still firmly planted in colonialism and apartheid.



The area of District Six showing the freeway - Eastern Boulevard (yellow) that cut off the lower part that was then rezoned as Woodstock. The plan for this freeway was first mooted in 1947 with detailed plans for the development of the Cape Town foreshore. The freeway was then built through District Six in 1968 as part of a bigger freeway construction programme (Pistorius et al., 2002, pp. 44; 50). Map Source: Google

It is important to note that when you zoom out of this Google Map to get an overview of the entire area, still known in popular discourse and in some official circles as District Six[85], then it is split into two areas today. The area to the left and below the Nelson Mandela Boulevard (yellow) was officially renamed Zonnebloem. The area to the right of the Nelson Mandela Boulevard is now officially part of Woodstock. This is indeed an irony signifying Mandela's posthumous complicity in the new 'Divide and Rule' urban planning approach during our democracy - a consolidation of the place of a 'great man' in history while implicating this history in the erasure of memory of grassroots, marginalized communities. District Six is now the considerably smaller area of its former self – the location of the restitution process now encompassing the District Six campus of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

[85]In 2018, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, officially renamed its Cape Town City campus the CPUT, District Six Campus.

Aerial view of above google map showing the freeway through District Six built in 1968.

In the end, my main hope is that this research project and thesis will contribute a few more pieces of the puzzle to ultimately illuminate as much of the lost and erased history of District Six, particularly, through the stories of women workers from the area. The opportunity to fulfill this mission of the District Six Museum is fast approaching impossibility as the people who lived through the forced removals of 1966 into the 1980s age, many becoming deceased. Soon, we will only have those with memories of childhood in District Six or those who have received oral testimonies passed on within circles of family, friends, and communities of practice (schools, churches, clubs, etc.), mainly unrecorded and continuing to live on as part of the general mythology of District Six.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOUR: CONVERSATIONS

> Always, in all my books I'm trying to reveal or help to reveal the hidden greatness of the small, of the little, of the unknown - and the pettiness of the big. (Eduardo Galeano).[86]

This chapter fulfils objectives three and four as set out in my research proposal and reiterated in the introduction (p.17). I reflect on the stories of two former clothing factory workers as articulated in recorded interviews, collated titbits of memories shared in workshops or written up using the memory catalogue tool and documented site-specific encounters. The many fragments as well as the coherent parts of their stories were used towards constructing their life-histories. For Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, their life histories are at different stages with many gaps, from my perspective. What is important, however, is that they have been able to draw together disparate aspects of their life story into a comprehensive, albeit starter, package of information consisting of: (A) a short profile; (B) a photographic portrait of each woman; (C) a compilation of elements that make up a life history (D) a personal archive of recorded interviews and stories, photos, videos, objects, and memorabilia.

The life histories in this research project rests on Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon making sense of their own lives by attempting to write their own stories. The tool I developed to assist

[86] A popular quote from Eduardo Galeano that I have used often in workshops and presentations on the work of the Museum. It resonates deeply with me and drives many of my interests. Sourced from the internet but first encountered years ago as a photocopiable resource in a time when we had to hide sources, particularly Marxist sources.

with this is the Memory Catalogue[87] that allows individuals to explore their own lives methodically, on their own, or with youth in the Museum's various programmes, family members or friends. The value derived from this:

- There is **healing power in writing** one's story as it allows the writer to reconcile with major events and moments in their life. Where individuals have experienced traumatic or difficult situations, writing one's own story places the power in one's own hands to decide when and how to represent these situations. This allows individuals to confront and choose what of their life's baggage to shed, ignore or deal with.

- The **fragile strands and pieces of memory** can be rendered more clearly. Writing one's story, is like defragmenting files that are stored in disconnected places in a computer hard or mobile drive making recall slow. It joins together memories of past events that have, over the years, become scattered with some aspects clear and others less so.

- Where there are **educational deficits**, particularly regarding writing skills, the memory catalogue allows one to make notes as preparation for speaking about one's life and make visible one's personal archive. This tool was of great help to a former resident, Mogamat Benjamin[88], a regular participant in Museum programmes, who left to go and work while still at primary school and found his voice by exercising his voice over the years. He was able to show that telling his story was a crucial element in writing his story. The memory catalogue tool allows us to collectively work with the reconstruction of life histories from '*stukkende* stories'[89].

[87] The memory catalogue is a simple but enabling tool that addresses the unfair power relationship between researcher and participants from oppressed / marginalised communities in research projects (the researched).
[88] Mogamat Benjamin was a popular figure at community meetings and events that related to District Six restitution, memorialisation and reversing the legacies of apartheid. He was quite vocal, often popping up as a voice on the radio giving his piece of mind to Voice of the Cape journalists or squeezing himself in front of television cameras to air his views about racism. His formal educational deficits did not stop him from writing his story by participating in workshops or by telling his story to others who were able to write his thoughts on to paper. He was incredibly fastidious about correcting mistakes in detail and, from practice, learnt to read. He passed away from a heart attack while in a District Six Museum workshop to prepare a site specific art installation along the route of the Museum's annual 'A walk in the night' to mark the emancipation of enslaved people at midnight on the 31st November. He truly represented what it means to have voice and personal power over his own narrative. He was the popular *Kafunta*, a drag queen who was also a *voorloper* (lead walker / dancer) in the Pennsylvanians, a District Six – Hanover Park, *Klopse* troupe. His drag queen name was derived from the album made famous in South Africa by British soul singer, PP Arnold.
[89] *Stukkende stories*: translation– incoherent, broken or pieces of stories.

- Exercising voice is a practice that allows people to represent self on their own terms and with confidence. The memory catalogue tool facilitates this process and provides opportunity for former residents of District Six involved in our various memory design labs to exercise their voice. This is a counterweight to the many situations where people from marginalised groups or who have formal education deficits are treated as voiceless people who are dependent on others, with relative power, to give them voice, a process that robs people from exercising their own social, cultural, and political voice, evolving into their power and confidence.

4.1 CHECK-IN: POWER AND PRIVILEGE IN RESEARCH INTERVIEW RELATIONSHIPS

The focus of this thesis is on the life histories of two former clothing workers, **Ruth Phala Jeftha** and **Farahnaaz (Veronica) Gilfelleon**, whose families lived through the consolidation of Apartheid laws in the 1950s, District Six forced removals from the late 1960s and its aftermath – life on the Cape Flats. The conversations unpacked and codified in this chapter must be read in the context of a much longer relationship than the transcribed interviews referenced lavishly here. Ruth and Farahnaaz, to different extents, are integrated into the daily life of the District Six Museum. Both work closely with me in the Museum's visitor engagement programme where they often get to share their story and memories of District Six, growing up during Apartheid and being forcibly removed or watching family members being unhappily displaced to the Cape Flats, with school learners, university students, community and affordable housing activists, academics, or general visitors - local and international. To bolster the content and construction of their stories, they have been part of many memory methodology, storytelling, and Museum guide workshops across all departments of the Museum (Education; Collections, Research and Documentation; Exhibitions; Seven Steps Members' Club). All these activities involved other District Sixers and, sometimes, people from other sites of forced removals.

I formulated an extensive questionnaire[90] to trigger memories, attitudes, beliefs and to illicit responses across the length and breadth of the participants lives. The questionnaire covered everything from memories of childhood to adulthood; District Six as a neighbourhood both

[90] The questionnaire, ADDENDA 2B & 2C, was weaved together from various interviews we prepared during numerous Museum learning journeys with intergenerational groups of participants as well as from those used for the Museum's general oral history programme.

imagined and experienced; experience with social, sporting, cultural, religious, and economic institutions; involvement and observation of major political events during their lives; knowledge of political and social discourse during their lives and the people who were central to the associated activities, movements, or events.

The questionnaire and memory-mapping catalogue instruments formed part of the pre-interview phase of this research project. Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon were encouraged to use both as brainstorming tools to collect, interrogate and organise their memories of the past as part of the production of their own initial personal archive. Part of this pre-interview phase involved a necessary growth in consciousness about the value of personal, family and community memory (fragments and coherent chunks of memory) as well as in the acknowledgement that information about all lives lived during a particular historical period is important knowledge to help us reconstruct a higher definition picture of our collective past. According to Paul Thompson, in chapter two of the Oral History Reader (Perks et al., 1998), "In the most general sense, once the life experience of people of all kinds can be used as its raw material, a new dimension is given to history." (p.24.) Thompson further reiterates his view that, to get a full picture of the past, we need to go beyond the formal documents preserved in official government archives or those archives constructed by individuals and organisations with the power of voice: "The historian of working-class politics can juxtapose statements of the government or trade union headquarters with the voice of the rank and file - both apathetic and militant … for a more realistic reconstruction of the past." He argues that 'reality is complex' and that oral history 'allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated." In the twenty-five years of the District Six Museum, this contestation has defined the oral history milieu we have existed in (Bennett, 2012; Bennett et al., 2008; Chrischené Julius, 2007; Layne, 2008; Rassool & Proselendis, 2001b). In the work we do with reconstructing the history of District Six and the City of Cape Town as a contribution to a much bigger project of asserting the power of a 'history from below', the following questions have always been at the forefront of our practice: who constitutes the stories that make up the 'history from below'? What voices do we include? Are there people, narratives, events, or snippets of the past that do not deserve inclusion? Do we establish a hierarchy of sorts, where political bravery (organisational and intellectual leadership) in the face of an intransigent apartheid government is privileged? Does exclusion of people's stories that do not reflect the 'heroic' or spectacular narratives of life under apartheid cheat us of a fuller understanding of the past and create the history of resistance politics, however skewed, as universal, coherent, and hegemonic? Paul Thompson answers

these questions by exploring the purpose of history in Chapter Two of the Oral History Reader (Perks et al., 1998) which I extract here:

1. It can be 'obscure' – where academics engage in knowledge production for its own sake.
2. It can be used as tourism – where the past is stripped of its 'suffering, cruelty and conflict'.
3. It can be 'blatant' – where the past is used to provide justification for war and conquest, territorial seizure, revolution and counter revolution, the rule of one class or race over another – or, where no history is available, it will be manufactured.

A profound, work relationship has impacted on my formal interviews with Ruth and Farahnaaz in two ways:

(1) The interviews are conversations in the real sense that two people, familiar with each other, sit down to chat. I did not have to think much about how to make them comfortable or how to get them to talk and I had license, in some ways, to dig into parts of their lives with the privilege of a *huiskind*[91] – an insider.

The conversations were a conscious attempt by me to subvert the dominant relationships of power that pervade these kinds of 'anthropological' or ethnographic research exercises. I was constantly aware of the thin line dividing 'participant observation' where the power of the researcher remains hidden, only to be exercised during the interpretation phase of the process and the oral history methodology practiced by the District Six Museum which is mindful of the privileged space occupied by the researcher as a potential *omniscient* person in the relationship. It is undeniable that the information and knowledge available to the researcher as required by the research process, provides a much more solid platform from which to make deductions or reductions about 'new' information that results from interviews or conversations (structured and unstructured). The pressure on the researcher to deliver 'new' knowledge, complexity and coherence is ever present and, to meet deadlines, can result in a 'reversion to type' – a slippage into the 'line of least resistance' where it is just easier to take all the responsibility for narrating the 'truths' embodied in the conversations. In *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Paulo Freire describes this relationship as it plays out in a classroom or any learning situation as involving

[91] *Huiskind:* translation - literally, home child (a *homie*), with a shared history of local experiences, possibly also shared elements of class, gender, 'race', geography and, tied together in implementing the Museum's visitor engagement programme (a common space).

the teacher (researcher, facilitator) as *a narrating subject* and the students (participants, interviewees, community members) as *the objects* who are the listeners.

In relation to issues about 'race' identity or reading ability, for instance, Farahnaaz worried about why I seemed to have doubt about her narrative of a father who 'was a dark skinned Indian with straight hair from Zimbabwe' when I asked about why there are no photographs of her father and where she heard this about her father's origins. These doubts were discussed quite openly in the context of experiences[92] over the years with many families from coloured group areas who flaunt photographs of their European family members with little explanation of their dark skin, effectively erasing the memory of one entire side of their ancestry. Here Freire's idea of the relationship between the past and an empowering sense of identity in the present to participate in building a future as active agents – 'beings fully aware of their incompletion', is pertinent:

> Looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future. (Freire, 2005, p. 84)

The pre-interview, a necessary part of the oral history process was, largely, taken care of before this research project was formulated and required just the finalizing of the logistical elements to prepare for an interview – availability, venue, arrangements for recording equipment and personal photographs or documents needed as memory joggers as well as for scanning. A fair amount of difficult negotiation and facilitated processes were still necessary to cover the gaps in memory or the non-specific ways in which people express their ideas in conversation or to stem the tide of an unconstrained stream of consciousness and thought experiment where key words activate tangential stories – both on the part of myself, the interviewee, and the interviewees;

(2) The interpretations of the written text in the transcribed interviews result from meanings shaped by layers collected (consciously and subconsciously) through the sum of interactions over a few years. When Farahnaaz responds to a question, in the formal interview that I put to her about her father's origins, then it is in the context of the many times we have spoken about this.

[92] These experiences have been anti-racism political engagements during the 1980s, engaging with students in English literature classes during my teaching years as well as through gossip and hearsay where this has become common knowledge.

My awareness of the extent to which people choose what and what not to present of themselves to others was extremely sharpened during the interviews. The elements of their lives that they chose instinctively not share in previous encounters in the Museum was in stark relief to the aspects they shared when prompted, probed, interrogated, or nudged. In similar instances I remarked on aspects of Farahnaaz's and Ruth's accounts of their factory life with, "Why have you never shared this? It's such a powerful narrative that visitors to the Museum should hear and it is something that people, universally, can relate to?" In different ways, both their responses were, "We were not asked!" As discussed with them, and, in our memory, methodology workshops generally, it is not as simple as this. The fact that we must probe (within limits of respect for privacy and sensitivity) to trigger these memories or personal issues suggests a more complex relationship that people have with the wide scope of their memories of past experiences that is never presented to the outside world in its entirety. Features of themselves often lay buried and hidden, rising to the surface sometimes in traumatic fashion, other times as a wisdom – as knowledge. In this sense, Halbwachs is correct in his assertion that memory is both individually and collectively generated and is shaped by the constraints of space:

> It is not completely sealed off and isolated. A man (sic) must often appeal to others' remembrances to evoke his own past. He goes back to reference points determined by society, hence outside himself. Moreover, the individual memory could not function without words and ideas, instruments the individual has not himself invented but appropriated from his milieu. (Halbwachs, 1950a, p. 51)

Furthermore, what is it about the idea of a museum, even one like the District Six Museum that purports to be a counterweight to traditional museums as well as a space to affirm the voices of members of marginalized groups, that makes former working-class residents of District Six hesitant about revealing their factory lives? Here I am not referring to class conscious and politically organised working class members of the District Six community who have, to a certain extent, become practiced in talking in public about their work and political lives. Remembrance is not an objective exercise in the recall of memories about one's past and people mature, from childhood, into becoming aware of the expectations of the various communities and organisations they affiliate with, as Hallbwachs explains:

> As soon as a child leaves the stage of purely sensory life and becomes interested in the meaning of images and scenes that he (sic) perceives, it can be said that he thinks in common with others, that his thought is divided between the flood of wholly personal impressions and the various currents of collective thought. He is

> no longer enclosed within himself, for his thinking now commands entirely new perspectives which he knows are not his alone. (Halbwachs, 1950a, p. 60)

My initial intention was to excavate and then cross-examine the stories of three to five women who worked at the Ensign (African Clothing Factory) specifically. I put feelers out, managing to catch the interest of quite a few people who remembered Ensign fondly. Many people responded to me on social media or by email that their father or mother, grandmother or grandfather, aunt or uncle, sister, cousin or neighbour, worked at Ensign. Many of these people were deceased but the daughter, son, family friend or niece were keen that their stories get written up because, amongst other reasons, 'People used to work hard back in the days and the factory girls were glamorous and sophisticated, not like the *woes and lalai*[93] girls today" to piece together bits of various responses in the spirit in which these were shared. This kind of popular nostalgia about factory life during apartheid has become common place in people's memory snapshots of Cape Town with "before the ANC[94] destroyed our country" often as the subtext, but more often, just a longing for a past remembered in the present situation of hardship all around us: rampant unemployment, homelessness, more visible and vicious crime, income that cannot keep pace with the rising cost of living, obscene wealth noticeable alongside obscene poverty, and I can go on – needless to say, people experience their present always in relation to a past where the experiences have either become dimmed through time or have been passed on by their elders in essentialised snippets that gets firmed up as fact by other essentialised snippets doing the rounds in 'the community'. Halbwach's central idea about the relationship between individual and collective memory constructed within spatial boundaries is instructive here:

> …we may say that most groups - not merely those resulting from the physical distribution of members within the boundaries of a city, house, or apartment, but many other types also - engrave their form in some way upon the soil and retrieve their collective remembrances within the spatial framework thus defined. (Halbwachs, 1950b, p. 14).

[93] *woes and lalai*: translation – this phrase usually refer to hectic and uncouth locals.
[94] In this sense, ANC (African National Congress) is often used as a metaphor for 'Black' – as in 'African' or 'them'.

4.2 SETTLING ON RUTH PHALA JEFTHA AND FARAHNAAZ GILFELLEON

I went through quite a long process of trying to identify former clothing workers from the Ensign (African Clothing Factory) before settling on Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon and broadening the scope to factories that District Six residents worked at beyond the area. Several people responded to my Facebook call and through word of mouth, eager to participate in some way. Many were male or people who had deceased family members associated with Ensign.

Below are some of the former Ensign factory workers I engaged:

Joyce Jonathan (age 90+) a member of the District Six Museum's *Huis Kombuis: food and memory project*, forcibly removed from Diep River and a strong supporter of the non-racial SACOS sports movement – she became a supervisor at Ensign after twenty-seven (27) years. She was politically active with the *Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM)* as it was known at the time, with a strong commitment to non-racialism. Her views on the Job Reservation Act that favoured those classified as 'coloured' in the Cape Province[95] during apartheid, would have been insightful for this phase[96] of the research.

Jean van Niekerk (age 80+) was a supervisor at Ensign till retirement and is a District Six returnee. I found out about her Ensign connection after reading through the recorded oral history transcripts of Farahnaaz. Both she and her husband worked in the clothing industry for years. Unlike her husband, well known as a *talker* who loves sharing his story with all and sundry, Jean did not want to be in the limelight, as she described it, and had constant fights with her husband about turning their home into a 'tourist stop'. We planned the follow-up interview and her daughter assisted, using the catalogue memory tool, to compile photographs and snapshots of stories from her mother and father's recollections of their lives in District Six,

[95] The Cape Province, now the Western Cape, was declared a 'coloured preferential area' in terms of job reservation. This, however, only applied to preference in relation to people classified as 'Indian' or who the state saw as 'Bantu', 'African' or 'Native'.

[96] The intention of this research, beyond its academic value to me as a Masters level thesis, is to form the basis of a proposal for an extensive oral history campaign to develop an archive, of life histories of former District Six women (and men) who worked in clothing factories. This will include an exhibition and public education programme to raise awareness about the importance of working people's lives in the history of this city. This will add to the life histories being done by SACTWU, the body of work related to clothing workers completed by Siona O'Connell amongst others.

as clothing workers and of the Ensign factory where Jean worked for her entire working life. I will revisit this as part of the larger Museum oral history campaign[97].

Johanna Jacobs (age 70+) is a District Six Museum Seven Steps member, whose daughter saw my Facebook post in the District Six group and informed me that her mother worked, for years, at Ensign.

Patience Watlington (age 70+) is a participant in the District Six Museum's *Huis Kombuis* project and a member of the Seven Steps Club. She worked at Ensign for a month and then went on to become a nurse. Her deceased sister worked at Ensign for years and a cousin was the caretaker who lived, onsite, in the house on Searle Street, adjacent to the Spar that used to be the Ensign management's recreation space.

Shariefa Ismail (age 50+), was introduced to me by, Aloma Matthews, one of the participants in a series of storytelling workshops with poet, spoken word artist, writer and actress, Khadija Tracey Heeger. Shariefa was forcibly removed to Hanover Park. She started her working life at Ensign but went on to work at many other factories because, "in those days, one walked out of one factory and into another, just like that." Shariefa, sadly went through major conflict with her own family about selling their home in Hanover Park and was eventually evicted; she resisted, finding solidarity from her neighbours, and they were then arrested. This is a sad trajectory, shaped largely by the real estate developers, that the imperative of the South African Constitution to ensure the right to adequate housing[98] is now determined, primarily, by the market. During our democracy, when we should be using the constitution to mobilise State and private resources for the common good and, particularly, to reverse the many traces of Apartheid's legacy, instead, we witness the many cases of eviction from rapidly gentrifying neighbourhoods, often pitting family members against each other.

For various reasons, some mentioned in the snapshots above and others alluded to in my implementation, I settled on two women for the case studies of this phase of the Museum's oral history research project with workers in the clothing industry. I also shifted my research from a focus on a single site (the Ensign Factory) to stories of multiple factory sites associated with

[98] This is enshrined in section 26 of the Constitution, which states that: 1) Everyone has a right to have access to adequate housing. 2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of this right. (source: SA Human Rights Commission Fact Sheet, online)

the two women participants (Ensign, Manhattan, Novaray, Creation Clothing Wear, Kelner and Sons, Zeidemans, Bernadette and Val-Hau). A further idea of mine to include these women's stories as snapshots / short life-history portraits also fell through when I ran out of the luxury of time and photographer, Paul Grendon, who I had started working with to capture the participants in the District Six Museum's suitcase memory box project, passed away suddenly.

In the end, I reverted to working with two District Six Museum Seven Steps Club[99] members who formed part of the Museum's visitor engagement programme and project team that I coordinate and facilitate. I was particularly interested in how a major part of their lives, as factory workers, was almost totally erased from their personal stories shared with visitors[100] to the Museum. While Ruth included a reference to sewing in her *suitcase of memory* that is installed as part of the Museum's *Digging Deeper* exhibition, factory life is largely absent. The interviews that were completed during March and May 2019 were complemented by the numerous and regular visitor engagement team meetings where trust and familiarity were built up over a period of five years with Ruth Jeftha and three years with Farahnaaz Gilfelleon. Ruth Jeftha, her husband, Desmond and two of her sisters, Miriam and Lydia were involved in Museum programmes since almost the beginning of our existence twenty-five years ago. Lydia is now deceased, and Miriam has been hospitalized, on and off, for most of this year. She served on the District Six Reference Group for the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. Both Ruth and Farahnaaz come from, self-described, 'mixed' families or what the apartheid government classified as 'mixed – marriages', which were illegal in terms of apartheid laws.

Ruth shares this part of her family's story with visitors to the Museum, as a powerful and moving narrative about her personal experiences with Apartheid while Farahnaaz has expressed difficulty and unease with sharing this part of her life, complaining often, about my various attempts to triangulate and verify aspects of her story. Ruth has expressed that she finds the opportunity to share her story of living with the Apartheid *Mixed Marriages* and Immorality

[99] This is an institutionalised forum for ex-residents of District Six and other sites of forced removals. It meets monthly and individual members then get involved in various memorialisation and site-marking projects of the Museum as these arise as well as become storytellers in our visitor engagement programmes. It is a lively Museum space that allows former residents of sites of forced removals and returnees to participate I the life of the Museum on many levels.

[100] Ruth and Farahnaaz form part of a team of ex-residents who work at the Museum as 'tour guides' / docents to provide first person testimonies of the experience of life in District Six and then forced removals to the Cape Flats. They also form part of an extension of this programme – customised introductory workshops on *Divide and Rule: Apartheid forced removals* with participants from primary school learners all the way through to University students and crossing over into various community-based groups.

Acts, a healing process that is now a conscious part of the deeper interrogation of her past with a Sotho father and 'coloured' mother.

Farahnaaz (Veronica) Gilfelleon (FG) is a District Six Museum Seven Steps member, who was born in District Six and was employed at the African Clothing Factory (Ensign) the initial sole focus when I first cottoned on to the idea of adding the site-specific stories of women workers to our District Six Museum *living archive*. I discovered this in a conversation with her as we were returning from the installation of our suitcase memory exhibition at the April 2018. I had taken a shortcut through Woodstock and was entering the Mandela Boulevard off-ramp at Searle Street as it goes under the highway to Kaizergracht Street – an intersection that forms the border between Walmer Estate and District Six (officially Zonnebloem at the time of doing this research). Just as we start driving out of Woodstock, I point out my interest in exploring the memories of women who worked at the famously / infamously known, Ensign Factory. We argue about where it was located as the built environment has changed drastically during our democracy years[101] and the free reign that developers have, to change urban landscapes without consulting communities affected by forced removals during apartheid. What settles the argument, for the moment, is Farahnaaz announcing that her first job, after she left school, was at Ensign!

Ruth Phala-Jeftha (RJ) is also a District Six Museum Seven Steps member who was born in the Bo-Kaap but moved as a toddler to No.35 Stone Street, District Six with her family. She worked her way up from a machinist to manageress at various factories in and on the edge of District Six in the Buitenkant Street precinct. She is connected to Farahnaaz in two significant ways: firstly, she was Farahnaaz's floor supervisor at the Salt River factory, *Manhattan*, that employed many District Sixers during apartheid and in its immediate aftermath; secondly, they both have experiences of growing up in what the apartheid system described as 'mixed-marriage' families.

[101]South Africans participated very successfully in the country's first democratic elections based on 'one person-one vote' and proportional representation. This resulted in a Government of National Unity elected on 27 April 1994 to fuel, what many saw as, the reconstruction and development of a country torn apart by a history of colonialism and apartheid.

4.3 MAPPING THE SITES THAT FORMED THE BASIS FOR MOST OF OUR CONVERSATIONS

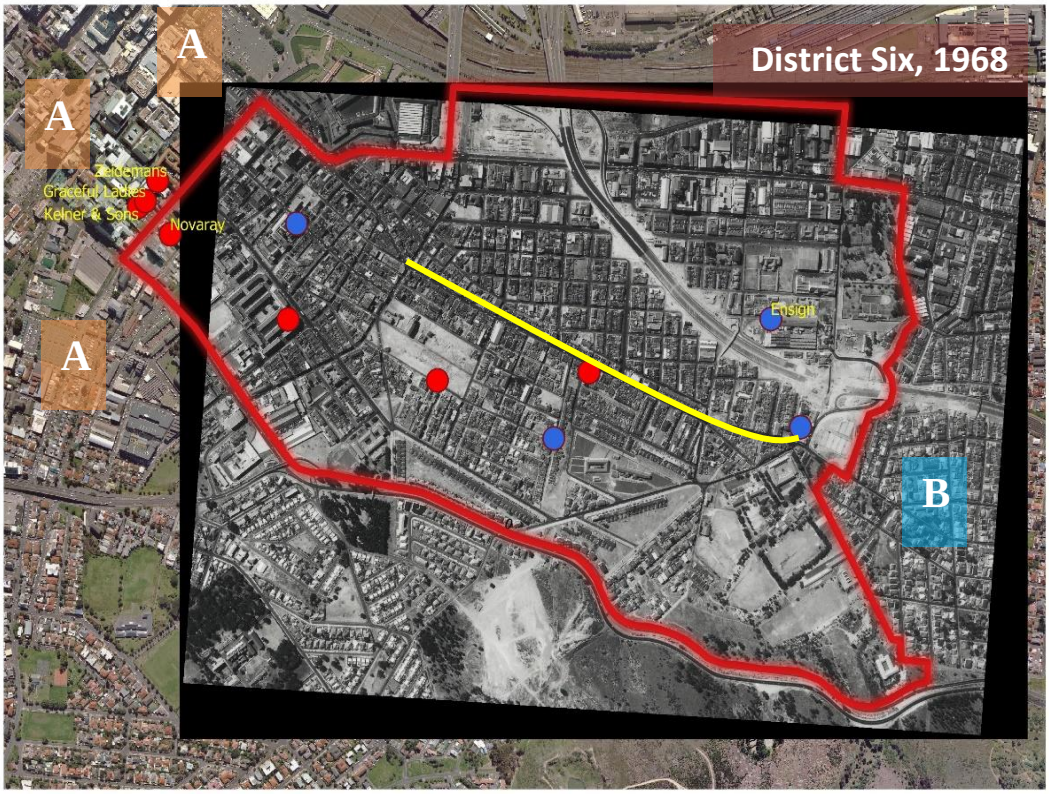
Below are four maps with the area of District Six clearly delineated by the red borders showing the devastation brought on by the proclamation of District Six as a White Group Area in 1966. According to research done by the Sustainable Urban and Housing Development Research Unit (SUHDRU) of the Cape Technicon (now Cape Peninsula University of Technology) landlords, by law, could only sell their property to the State (Pistorius et al., 2002). In the first map, 1968, when the first demolitions start, the area is almost fully occupied with Hanover Street, a section of it marked in yellow, still the main thoroughfare linking District to the City centre (A) and Walmer Estate (B) to the right. The red and blue sites on these Geographic Information System (GIS) maps were kindly marked by Sedick Motala, Head of the Urban Planning and Civil Engineering Faculty at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) who has worked closely with the Museum's archive for more than ten years now.

RED DOTS: places and factories associated with **Ruth Jeftha.**

1. Factories that Ruth worked at are all at the top left corner of the above pics. Zeidemans; Graceful Ladies; Kelner & Sons and Novaray that relocated to Atlantis, almost 50 km away up the West Coast in the late 1970s. Manhattans, Salt River is not included here.
2. African Methodist Episcopal Church School in Blythe Street: 1951 – 1955
3. No.35 Stone Street family home: 1948/9 till it was sold – date uncertain but Ruth was still at primary school any time before 1957)

BLUE DOTS: places associated with **Farahnaaz Gilfelleon.**

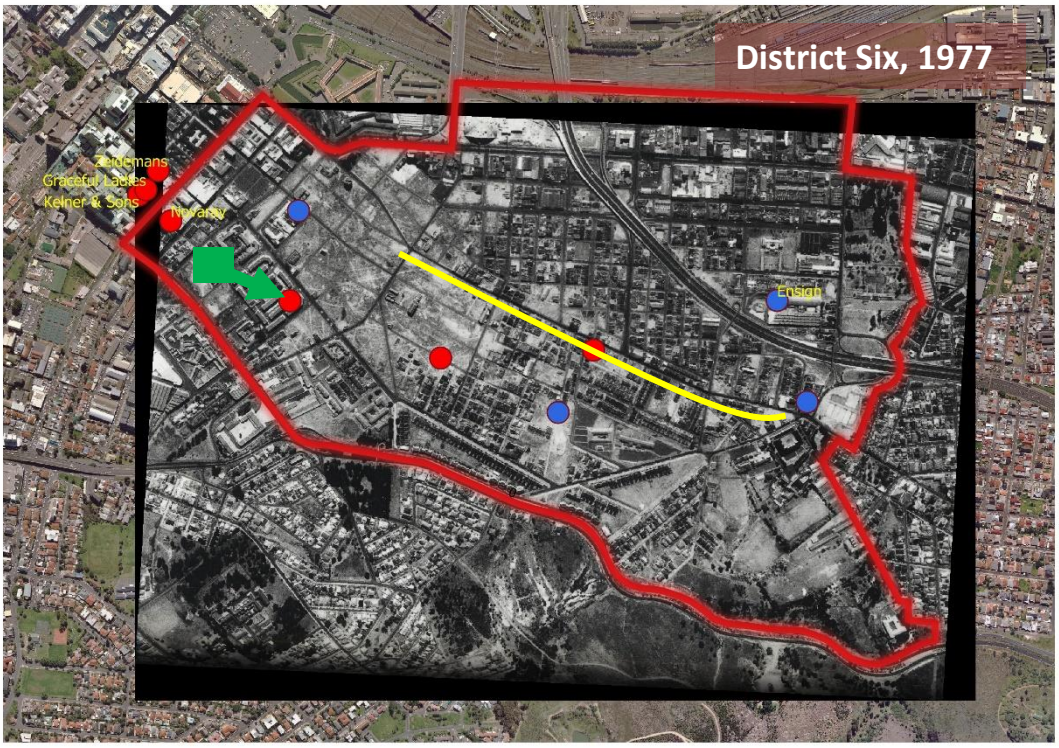
1. The only factory that Farahnaaz worked at included in this pic is Ensign (African Clothing Factory)
2. Peninsula Maternity Hospital (PMH)
3. No.48 Horstely Street family home
4. Holy Cross Primary School



Source of pics: District Six Museum archive; the GIS mapping over four different years: 1968, 1977, 1983 and 2007, was done by Sedick Motala, CPUT / UCT lecturer and researcher who is a close associate of the Museum. The **yellow line** indicates the old Hanover Street that was the lifeblood of the community and, from many accounts, of the city.

The 1966 map above, illustrates a still populated yet, overcrowded District Six. Despite visions and plans in the 1920s to address the serious overcrowding and poor sanitation in the inner-City inspired by the Garden Cities (Ebenezer Howard, Britain) and Neighbourhoods Unit (USA) concepts in urban planning that were trending at the time (Pistorius et al., 2002, pp. 38;41), it could not meet the needs for housing in the Cape fast enough. The Garden Cities concept becomes subverted by the urban planning imperatives of the Apartheid Government for the consolidation of a racially and class segregated city. The de-congested neighbourhoods that continued to develop during this time were mainly middle-class and white group areas where residential spaces away from public transport routes and mainly accessible to families with private transport. The intended Garden villages for people displaced from District Six, Claremont, Newlands, Simonstown, amongst other places translated into the dormitory towns for the working class with buffer zones that are industrial estates, green belts, or middle class

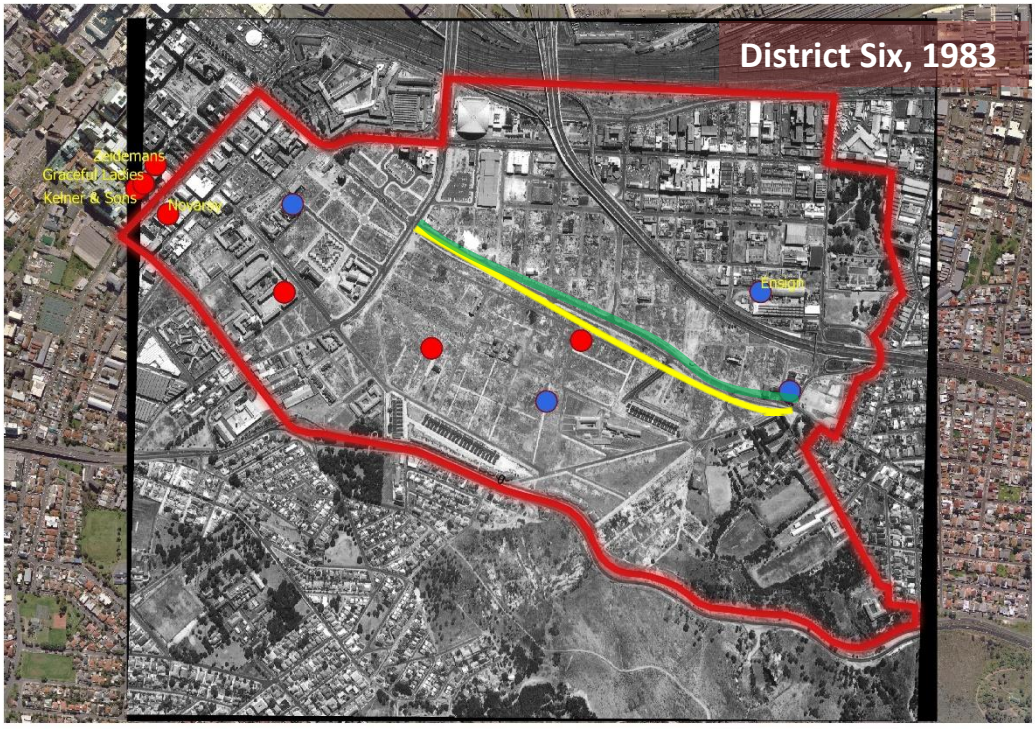
coloured group areas. From 1964 – 1969, according to the *Texture and Memory* publication[102] (Pistorius et al., 2002, p. 48), 18000 were forcibly removed from places like District Six, Mowbray, Newlands, Claremont, Wynberg and other places declared for white people only. People classified as coloured were displaced to Wynberg, Heideveld, Bonteheuwel and Hanover Park. 'Africans'[103] were either deemed illegal and displaced to the Homelands (Ciskei, Transkei, in the Eastern Cape, for example – if Xhosa speaking) or were in possession of a passbook[104]



By 1977, above, big sections of District Six were bulldozed but Hanover Street was still functioning as a route into and out of the city. By this point, Farahnaaz was working at the

[102] Research report of the Sustainable Urban and Housing Development Research Unit (SUHDRU) of the Cape Technicon (now Cape Peninsula University of Technology).
[103] I regard anyone who is born on the African continent as an African and, for the purpose of this thesis will use the concept to refer to people labelled thus by colonial, then Apartheid and now democratic South African classification systems.
[104] The passbook or *'dompas'* (stupid passbook) was a requirement for people classified as 'non-citizens' or Bantu and referred to as 'Africans' to work and live in the urban centres of South Africa. Furthermore, the Cape was deemed a 'coloured preferential area and 'Africans' were under huge restrictions in terms of jobs, health, education and, primarily, freedom of movement. Any form of behaviour, for example, seen as disobedient as refusing to quiesce to abuse of various kinds or levels, could have resulted in the loss of a passbook and banishment to the Homelands. These were run by tribal Chiefs who collaborated with the apartheid Government alongside Coloured, Cape Malay and Indian 'leaders' who were mainly perceived as apartheid puppets by those who opposed Apartheid.

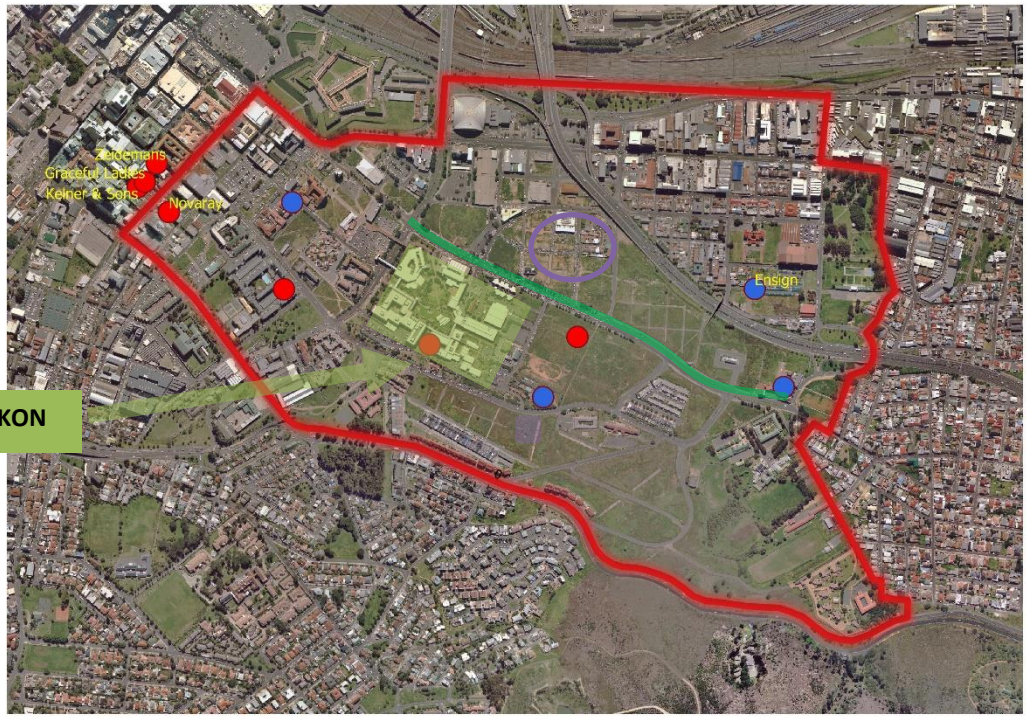
Creation Wear CMT (Cut, Make and Trim)[105] factories (1975 – 78) in Salt River. Ruth gave birth to her second son, Timothy in 1976, was living in Elsies River and worked at Novaray, in Commercial Street, on the District Six side of Buitenkant Street, the yellow dot marked on all the maps, inside the red boundary that defines the site of District Six the Museum works with. The housing and sanitation crisis in the city was not solved by the so-called slum clearance initiatives started in the 1930s with the displacement of people from Well's Square, illustrated roughly where the green block is on the 1977 map, above, to the newly built Canterbury Square-Bloemhof Flats where Ruth's mother and younger siblings still lived.



In 1983, we can see how huge swathes of land were cleared, preparing the ground for the building of a whites-only tertiary institution, the Cape Technikon. Kaizergracht Street, **marked in green**, is constructed as the main thoroughfare to replace Hanover Street finally erasing most of people's reference points to the important sites – the Star Bioscope, the fishmarket, Waynics, the iconic Seven Steps, amongst other places as can be seen clearly by 2007, below. (See **ADDENDUM 3** for a more detailed mapped list of demolished District Six sites). The

[105] These were smaller factories that serviced the bigger ones like Manhattans, Rex Trueform, amongst others to meet targets. This system – the *Just In Time* (JIT) system was used by the owners of larger factories to scale down the number of workers, minimise employer benefits and maximise profits in a move towards casualisation. My knowledge of this is derived from my time as a trade unionist (education sector) affiliated to the Congress of SA Trade Unions (COSATU) in the 1990s when major efforts towards cheaper production strategies in the manufacturing industry gained momentum.

Technikon is constructed over the streets where people like Ruth Jeftha (Stone Street), Noor Ebrahim (Caledon Street), Nomvuyo Ngcelwane (Cross Street), Mr Abubakr Brown (Hanover Street)[106], and many others lived.



By 2007, the struggle of former residents of District to return is fraught, stalled by political in-fighting and contestation over the land, between private interests, the City of Cape Town, various District Six resident groups (some fragmented along lines of former owners and tenants) and a National Government under increasing pressure to deliver on a privatized form[107] of restitution throughout the country by a newly forming political elite.

[106] **Noor Ebrahim** is one of the founding members, storytellers of the District Six Museum. **Nomvuyo Ngcelwane,** is a former resident of District Six and author of the book, *Sala Kahle District Six*, that provides a perspective she feels is seldom acknowledged of 'Africans' who were forcibly removed from District Six to the 'Native Yards' on the Cape Flats. Her story is an important part of the *Digging Deeper* exhibition, for this very reason since its inception in 2000. **Mr Brown** was a longstanding member of the Beneficiary Trust – the first District Six organisation to formally mobilise former residents of the area around a campaign for a collective return and dignified housing. He has been a volunteer storyteller at the District Six Museum for the last, approximately, ten years.

[107] Restitution has rapidly become about individuals, who are able to prove their families owned huge tracts of land or farms, being given privatised solutions to access land as a means to become 'rich' as opposed to the original idea - to reverse legacies of apartheid spatial planning.

CHAPTER FIVE: ELEMENTS OF LIFE-HISTORIES

The main life history elements in this section form part of a developing catalogue that consists of a photographic portrait, short profile and life history snapshots constructed from interviews, storytelling workshops and fragments of well-guarded or unorganised personal archives: photographs of family and events as well as of objects and memorabilia dearly held on to. This catalogue will continue to grow as individuals find more elements currently scattered and lost amongst family members - surviving siblings or their children - or take up opportunities to use today's easily accessible technologies to record more of their stories as they become more clear, confident, and more open to sharing aspects of themselves they are not ready or prepared to do yet.

Life History Elements	**Ruth Jeftha**	**Farahnaaz Gilfelleon**
A. Photographic portrait of each woman with an object associated with the clothing Factory	Jac DeVilliers (*Huis Kombuis* Project)	Paul Grendon (Community Library Programme incorporating the suitcase memory project)
B. Short profile	Biography outline – Resume Timeline - life events	Biography outline – Resume Timeline - life events
C. Life history	Family Tree Catalogue of memory snaps Mapping of locations	Family Tree Catalogue of memory snaps Mapping of locations
D. Personal archive of recorded stories, photos, videos, objects, memorabilia.	Suitcase Memory box Recorded interviews Transcript of interviews Maps and photographs Videos of visitor engagement	Suitcase Memory box Recorded interviews Transcript of interviews Maps and photographs Videos of visitor engagement

The portrait of Ruth Jeftha was taken by photographer Jac de Villiers as part of the Museum's *Huis Kombuis* project. The portrait of Farahnaaz Gilfelleon was taken by photographer Paul Grendon as part of the Museum's community library programme incorporating the suitcase memory box project.

Photographs by young photographers for the wider Museum oral history campaign to capture life histories of former District Six residents who were clothing workers, will aim for the same

aesthetic quality. It represents a more contemporary take on the popular Van Kalker studio photographs (Frieslaar, 2011) that many people in District Six and surrounding communities lovingly cared for in personal family albums or carried around in their wallets, purses, and handbags, ready to whip out, as many still do to this day, for an impromptu storytelling session. Frequently, this is accompanied by much laughter at the way the subject was posed, 'whitened or lightened', with consent. The photographs of weddings, anniversaries, graduations, confirmations, births and of many other activities, marked important rites of passage for people as they moved through life from birth to death during troubling times.

The Van Kalker project (Bennett, 2008) of the District Six Museum derives from a photographic collection donated to the Museum in 2004 by Irvine Clements who worked at the Van Kalker studio in Woodstock Main Road, eventually becoming its proprietor. The studio was created in 1937 by the late J. G. Van Kalker who, from many accounts, was an eccentric photographer famously known for providing a service to the people of Cape Town, amongst which was to 'lighten' their skin. This became popular when apartheid laws started to impact directly on people's lives, restricting access to jobs, marriage possibilities, freedom of movement and where people could live or engage in leisure activities because of the colour of their skin. A Van Kalker photograph also became much sought after by those caught up in the desire to 'play white' in the same vein that many black celebrities today have been tracked in social media posts from their early dark-skinned days to a whiter version helped on by more powerful smartphone cameras. I have heard former District Six residents in our many organised reunions joke that Van Kalker was the first smartphone camera because he could make dark skinned people look white. The photographs also reflect a collective story of Cape Town's diversity presenting portraits of people across race, class, and religious boundaries, particularly rendering the invisible (demographic statistics) as visible people of the Cape. Here I refer particularly to how the Van Kalker collection provides photographic evidence of the 'African' presence in the City, of 'mixed families' as it became known during apartheid. From many accounts, it was one of the most popular photographic studios in Cape Town. Bennett captures the politics and cultural spirit of studio and the collection through her facilitation of first-person testimonies in workshops that formed part of the Museum's Van Kalker project. She notes that the photographic studio provided a space in which the aspirations of black people could be articulated through imaging, as racial discrimination becomes endemic in the years eventually culminating in the institutionalisation of an apartheid system from 1948. She very eloquently articulates the role that the studio played in the lives of Capetonians despite the effects of

apartheid legislation such as the Group Areas Act (1950) that paints a picture of dignity in the face of a despairing world that embraced racist segregation:

> …the studio became part of many families' traditions as sitters could present themselves as dignified and respectable. Portraiture became a means through which the sitters could narrate their own stories. As these photographs found their way into collections of frames that went onto mantelpieces and walls, they took on shrine-like qualities of devotion and reverence. Through the display of Van Kalker photographs as material objects in prominent positions in the domestic interior, it provided a way for many people to enter history without words in an intimate space where the home was transformed into a visual collection of cultural knowledge and possibility.(Bennett & Julius, 2007)[108]

5.1 RUTH ROSA PHALA JEFTHA

5.1.1 Photographic portrait

The portrait of Ruth in her catalogue (**ADDENDUM 4**) was stylised and taken by Jac deVilliers as part of the District Six Museum's *Huis Kombuis* project (Smith & Huis Kombuis project participants, 2016).

5.1.2 Life History

a) Overview of a life

The information for both the family tree (5.1.3b) and resume (below in this section) comes from the transcript of the conversation where Ruth and I systematically constructed the basic information about her family members, life events, chronological work history, amongst other things. Both these form a part of her catalogue **(ADDENDUM 4).**

The question put to both Ruth and Farahnaaz was: If you were to construct your life history as a resume or curriculum vitae, what would you include?

[108] This quotation is from the notes of one of the workshops (11 November 2006 / 27 January 2007) that is reported on in this reference. I do not have the exact source from 14 years ago.

The following is a summary of her life and the main elements that make up what would constitute her resume in a world where working class people are treated with dignity and respect in society.

Ruth was born on 19th June 1945 and lived at 88 Wale Street, Bo-Kaap till the age of three when her family moved to 35 Stone Street, District Six. She was the third of eleven children and they all lived in a big communal house, later moving to 124 Block C, Bloemhof Flats. She married Desmond Jeftha in 1971 and lived in Kensington, Elsies River and then moved to Lotus River where they still live today with their two sons, Jonathan, and Timothy. Her father, Herman Phala, died in 1965 and her mother, Rosa, passed away two days after being forcibly removed to Lentegeur, Mitchell's Plain in 1981. Ruth insists that her mother was healthy and died of a 'broken heart' as is a common testimony from former District Six residents about those elders who passed on because of the Group Areas Act. The science of this idea is open to scrutiny but as a belief, it is etched deeply into the imagination of District Sixers, in popular discourse.

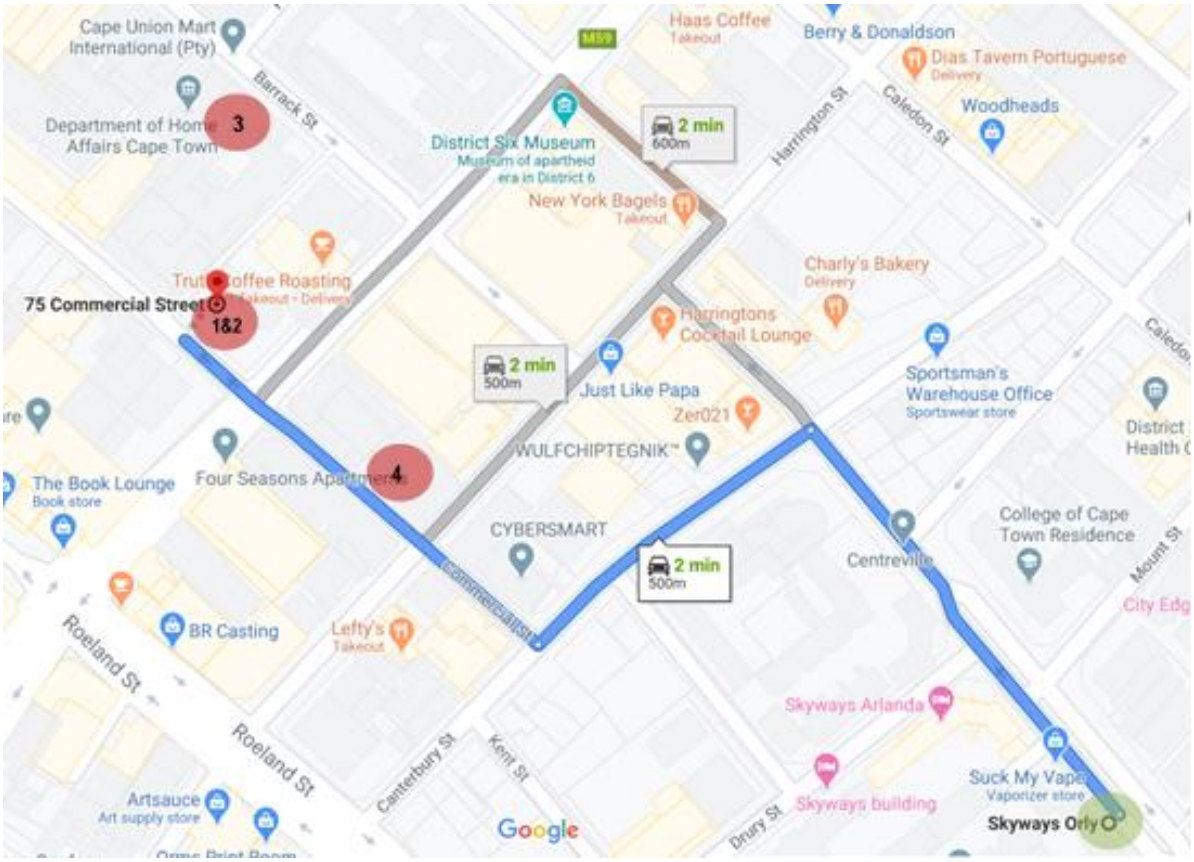
Education

In 1951, in the year she turned six, she started her schooling at the African Methodist Episcopal Church School, which was in Blythe Street, District Six. In 1956 she moved to the School of Industry, Roeland Street, Cape Town to complete her Standards four and five and then completed her final school years (Standard six – ten) at Roggebaai High School.

Work

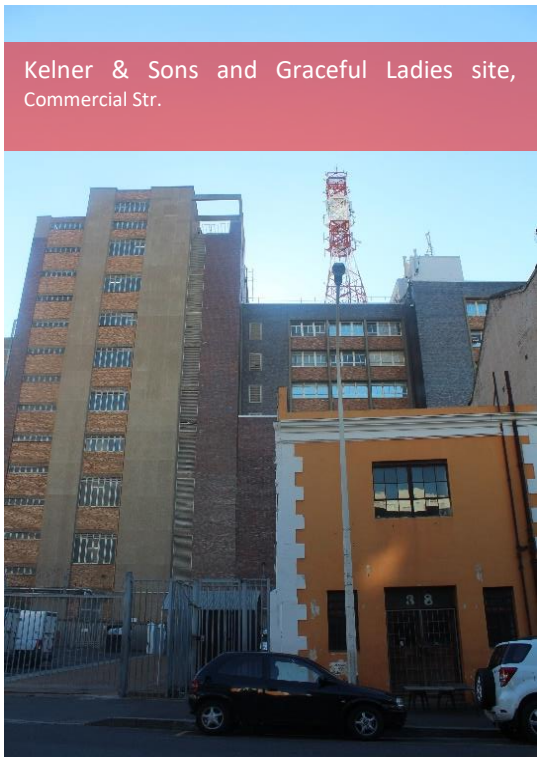
The annotated Google map, below, shows the location of the first four clothing factories that Ruth worked at after completing high school in 1962 in relation to where she lived in District Six at the time. This is all a block away from the District Six Museum in an area on the border between District Six and the Central Business District (CBD) that is undergoing rapid gentrification since the dawn of a democratic South Africa. The factories were almost all relocated from this area in the 1970s, mainly to Atlantis, about 40 km north up the West Coast of Cape Town. Factories were offered tax incentives and workers were sold the idea of an improved life in suburbia, close to their places of work. This rezoning of the inner-city plan coincided with the implementation of the Group Areas Act, 1950, as Atlantis was earmarked to become both an industrial centre as well as a residential township for people classified by Apartheid as 'coloured'. While clothing factories like Emme Jeans continued to maintain a

presence in this part of the city, most of the labour-intensive manufacturing aspects of factory work were moved out of the city centre to industrial zones. The Google map shows how the zoning imagined during apartheid years continued to be implemented and 'improved' into the present. Warehouse shops, quaint specialised services in design, artisanal eateries, select coffee-shops, bespoke vegan or environmentally friendly grocery, vegetable and nut shops alongside galleries, a museum, theatre, and art centres have all replaced the corner *'babbie'* shop[109] and affordable takeaway experience.

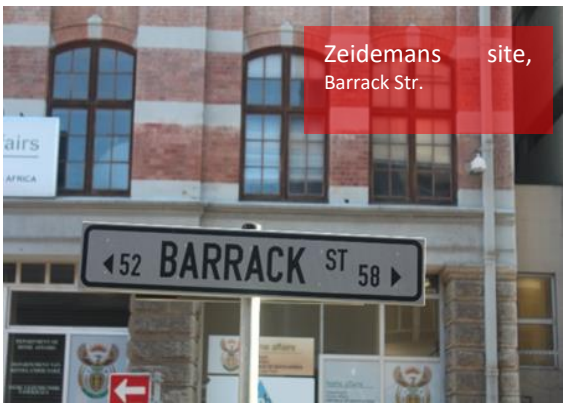


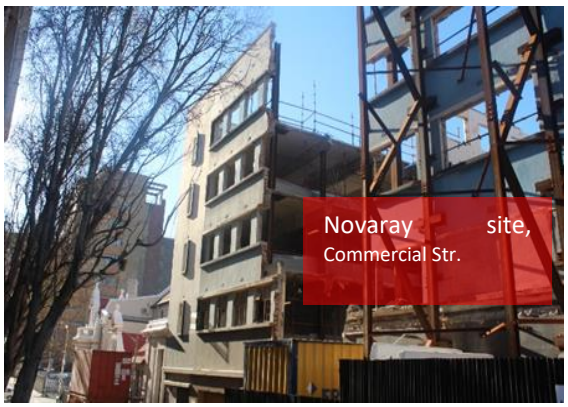
Refer to p.73 for details of sites on the google map above.

[109] 'Babbie' is Cape Town slang for local shopkeeper derived from the Indian family word for father, as I was brought up to believe. It was often used offensively in a similar vein to 'jood' on the Cape Flats – to mean someone who exploits or over-chargers on items to increase profits. Where corner shops continue in city spaces they are now generally referred to as the 'Pakistanis' or 'Somalis' as in 'Go buy a loaf of bread at the Pakistanis / Somalis' irrespective of whether this is the origin of the shopkeepers' or not.

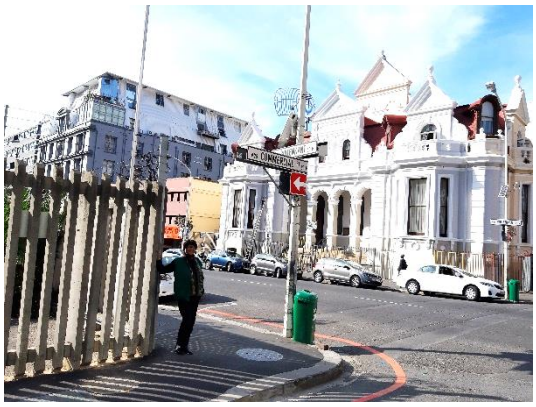


Above: 1&2 on the Google map - The site of *Kelner and Sons* and *Graceful Ladies* Factories were located on the corner of Buitenkant and Commercial Streets. Below are the sites of *Zeidemans* and *Novaray*, the factory Ruth followed to Atlantis. Pics: Andile Weeder





In 1963, in the new year after leaving school when her father had a stroke, Ruth stood in line, all dressed up, for a job at *Kelner and Sons*, located in the corner block at the intersection of Commercial Street and Buitenkant Street, Cape Town. She was 17th years old. This is about 500 metres from where she lived at the time – Bloemhof Flats (now Skyways).



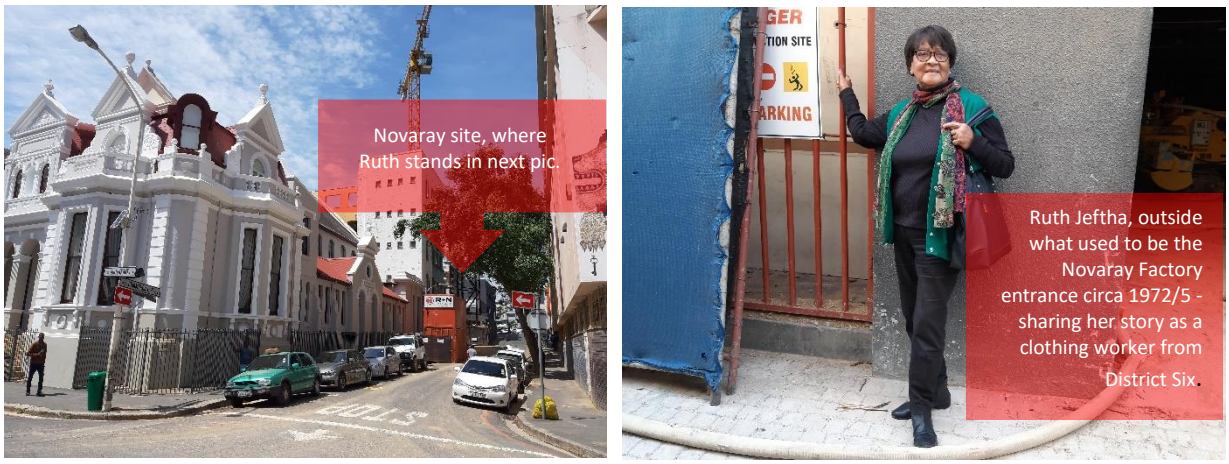
"I came to this place after my mother read the advert in the paper, put on my best dress and when I got here there was such a lot of women and young girls standing looking for this job."[110] Photographs taken by husband Desmond Jeftha who accompanied us on the site walk.

Three years later (1966/7) she took her second job as a machinist at a lingerie company, Graceful Ladies, in the adjacent building and then in 1969, followed her eldest sister, Francis, to Zeidemans around the corner in Barrack Street. This clothing factory was in the building that now serves as the Department of Home Affairs, Cape Town and was run by a German immigrant boss, Mrs Zeideman, who is described by Ruth as both strict and kind. She ran the factory treating the workers in a paternalistic way that Ruth brushes aside in a similar way to how many parents still respect those teachers who use corporal punishment in the classroom – as a necessary evil to get things done: 'Spare the rod and spoil the child'. Mrs Zeideman was a tough but good employer who got things done and took care of her workers.

Ruth at the entrance to the Zeidemans clothing factory, Barrack Street, now the Department of Home Affairs. Photos taken by Desmond Jeftha.

[110] Site-specific interviews with Ruth Jeftha, 25 June 2019.

Ruth, however, soon moved on to the Novaray factory in 1972, located across Buitenkant Street in Commercial Street. By this stage Ruth had been married to Desmond Jeftha for a year and lived with him and his family in Kensington about 12km away in the northern suburbs. Her oldest son Jonathan, she remembers was three months old. This obviously brings up the issue of job security for women clothing workers who got pregnant. While the Garment Workers' Union (GWU) had a closed shop arrangement with the clothing industry bosses and took relatively good care of their workers in terms of health and family benefits, they were known to fall far short on challenging the employers in terms of unfair labour practices. It is unclear if Ruth chose to leave Zeidemans or if she was not allowed to return after her period of 'confinement', as pregnancy was referred to.



Pics taken by (Left): Andile Weeder; (Right): Desmond Jeftha

The factory was sold to Lawrence Green and Ivor Sher who soon, thereafter, took the tax incentive and moved the factory to Atlantis. Ruth was a floor supervisor at the time and recounts a story of how the factory bosses organised a festive event to promote a move to Atlantis. Workers were invited to bring their families along for a bus ride to the site for the new factory and for a picnic in Atlantis. Workers were encouraged to take up the offers to buy or rent property at special deals in the new Atlantis – a proposition for 'betterment' in Garden Villages (Pistorius et al., 2002) as often preceded forced removals. Ruth recalled that "many of the 'girls' bought houses and moved to Atlantis." Desmond was offered a job as a machine mechanic at the Novaray factory in Atlantis with an improvement in his salary and a company car. He had been working at Jason Shirt Factory at that point. Ruth Jeftha started working here

after 1972[111] when her first child, Jonathan, was 3 months old. Her second child, Timothy, was born in 1976, 4 years after starting at Novaray. Ruth worked at Novaray for about 10 years, as far as she can recall. She will continue to look for her employment card to include in her personal archive (memory catalogue) to clarify this at some point. She and Desmond travelled from Lotus River, in the Southern Suburbs, throughout the working week providing transport for two fellow workers on route to Atlantis. They would often get back home late from work and were fortunate to have the support of a neighbour who took care of the two sons.



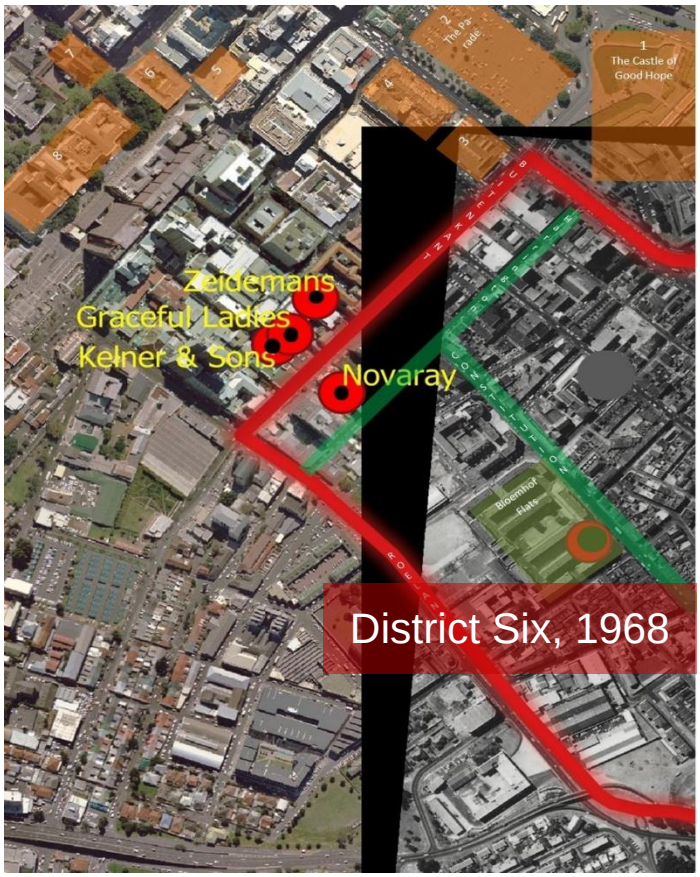
Above left: Novaray clothing factory, Atlantis, lunch break. Circa 1984. L-R: Vera (supervisor), Sonya Fabriek, Lydia, Desmond, Ruth (supervisor), Ian Carelse (cutting room manager), Hilda (pressing room supervisor). Pic: set-up by Desmond Jeftha and taken on a timer. The two photos **above, centre and right**, were both taken by Desmond. The one of Ruth in the late 1980s when she was a manageress at Manhattans, Hopkins Street, Salt River. The photo on the right was taken during the site walk with Ruth in May 2019 at the same entrance. Manhattans no longer exists with the building now occupied by small scale, specialist factories.

In 1985, Ruth took up a job as manageress and eventually, quality controller, at Manhattan Clothing Factory in Salt River where she worked till 1998 resigning, at 53, after discovering that a young 'white' employee who she mentored was soon earning much more than her at the factory. She then started a home industry with her husband - RJ Fashions - in 1998 employing several unemployed, former clothing industry women workers along the way. They were able to source a few industrial sewing machines from Novaray when the company dissolved.

The section of District Six focused on in the map below is on the border of the City Centre, close to the locations of important city sites that many District Six stories encompass. This section of the former District Six is now referred to as the East City, where Buitenkant,

[111] In the timeline that forms part of Ruth's resume in her catalogue (ADDENDUM 4), she indicates that she started work at Novaray in 1975. In recall, she has blurred when she started at Novaray and when the factory moved to Atlantis. This is one of the issues she will have to resolve with more tangible evidence like her employment card. In the interview she used the memory of her eldest son's birth in 1972 as an aide memoire.

Roeland, Harrington, and Constitution Streets have been rezoned and is rapidly being gentrified, ostensibly part of a city improvement drive. This area was promoted as the Fringe[112], the centre for marketing the City as the World Design Capital in 2014. The discussion focussed on a specific patch of ground designated The Fringe in a quarter on the edge of what is now termed the East City. The Fringe is more than a mere designation. It is a branded as geographical enterprise that, it is claimed, aims to uplift, and renew a deteriorating, decayed expanse of urban space on the edge of the inner city. Officials steering the project aim to revitalise the social and economic life of the area through re-casting it as a design and innovation district that will become a flourishing socio-economic district.



1- Castle,
2- the Parade,
3- the Drill Hall (Now the Central Library),
4- City Hall,
5- Church Square,
6- the Slave Lodge,
7- St. George's Cathedral
8- Parliament.

Source: District Six Museum. Enlargement of detail of GIS map created by Sedick Motala (CPUT).

[112] https://africasacountry.com/2013/06/the-fringe-district - an article in the online publication, Africa is a country, by Duane Jethro that reflects on a public discussion on "District Six on the Fringe: the absence of memory in design-led urban regeneration" held at the District Six Museum Homecoming Centre, in 2013. The African Centre for Cities, through their *Public Culture Lab*, and in collaboration with the District Six Museum hosted the discussion to critically explore the way this part of District Six was being rebranded as the new design and innovation district. Speakers included: **Kai Berthold:** *Exploring gentrification in cities around the world;* **Bonita Bennett**: *District Six Museum Statement: Erasure of memory in the remaking of the East City*; **Ismail Farouk:** *Conflicting rationalities: Post-apartheid spatial legacies and the Creative City;* and a very hopeful, **Andrew Putter:** *Harrington Square for the neighbourhood.*

b) My story: Ruth Rosa Phala-Jeftha

Ruth's story has been drawn from a series of interviews, and workshops I facilitated. It is constructed in her voice but is edited as is the case with biographies generally. The profile that forms part of this thesis and Ruth's catalogue is combined with her story in the *Huis Kombuis food and memory cookbook*. It also serves as her 'script', in a sense, for having conversations with visitors at the Museum. Ruth has been sharing her story with visitors to the Museum for more than six years now and this research project has added a layer that incorporates the details of her life as a clothing worker in factories located in and alongside the area of District Six that has undergone rapid gentrification.

In discussions with her she has shared that, being part of the visitor engagement programme of the Museum, has allowed her to heal from the wounds of apartheid. She has been able to talk openly about coming from a 'mixed' family and to share, with pride, photographs of her family, including her father, a 'Sotho man'. This is significant in that it is a well-known phenomenon, often shared pejoratively, that many Cape Flats 'coloured' families have removed photographic evidence of African heritage - 'the blacks' – from personal archives. Throughout my life I have encountered homes of people with photographs proudly displayed of European (Scottish, Irish, Dutch, French and German) grandparents and no photographic evidence to explain the dark skin that predominates in the family or how the family came to be classified 'cape coloured' by the apartheid Government.

What follows is a resource card of Ruth's story in her own words:

Sharing my story with school and university students as well as with visitors to the District Six Museum from all over the country and the world helps me to heal from the wounds of Apartheid. This allows me the opportunity to explore my family heritage and, especially, acknowledge that my father was a Sotho man who was married to my mother, a very fair skinned woman. This resulted in lots of emotional trauma growing up at a time when it was not acceptable to marry across 'the colour line' and when even members of our District Six community said hateful things to us.

I was born in 1945, lived at 88 Wale Street, Bo-Kaap till the age of three when my family moved to a big, communal house at 35 Stone Street, District Six. I was the third of eleven children. We shared this house with three other families: a Muslim family, a Xhosa family, and us, the Christian family. With my great-aunt, we were actually 14 in our house, later moving to 124 Block C, Bloemhof Flats, Constitution Street, when the house in Stone Street was sold. It was our first residence that had electricity. My father, Herman Phala, was a spray painter at Norton Motors in Waterkant Street, and my mother, Rosa was a housewife.

When we moved to the Bloemhof Flats, my family decided to buy a fridge even though we were used to setting our jelly outside on the stoep. We didn't have an electric stove, so we brought our black Dover stove to the Bloemhof Flats. We had a lovely kitchen. It was my weekend job to put wood or coal in the stove. Sometimes

we ran out of wood, we went to this furniture factory and come home with bags of firewood. We cooked our best food on that stove.

My parents were both economical and creative and because they knew that there were many mouths waiting for every crumb that they had. My mother worked in service for a madam. The difference between the dishes that she made for those people in comparison with what she made for us, was vast. We did not waste anything. Nothing went into the bin because there was never anything left. She made tasty food like pilchard smoortjie[113] that I so enjoyed as a child.

She used pilchards in tomato or plain pilchards to make fishcakes for evening supper. She braised tomato and green peppers with the fish, put a potato in it and if she wanted to make a lekker lang sauce, that is sauce that would feed a lot of people, she grated a carrot into it, and we had it for supper. Eventually as we grew older, pilchards became a filling for sandwiches to take to work.

I attended two primary schools: the African Methodist Episcopal Church School in Blythe Street until standard three and the School of Industry in Roeland Street after that. Then I went to Roggebaai High School in Suffolk Street, Green Point. I had to leave school when my father had a stroke.

I married Desmond Jeftha in 1971 having dated for 8 years after meeting each other in the A.M.E Church choir. We got engaged on my 26th birthday, 19 June 1971 and, after marriage, went to live in Kensington with Desmond's family. We later moved to Elsies River when I got pregnant with my first son, Jonathan who was born in 1972. After a while we moved to Lotus River where we rented a house from a friend for R25 a month. We then bought our own home in the same area where we still live today with our two sons. My second son, Timothy, was born in 1976 after a pregnancy that survived very turbulent times in South Africa – teargas, police sirens, flying bullets and stones.

My father, Herman Phala, died in 1969 and my mother Rosa passed away two days after being forcibly removed to Lentegeur, Mitchell's Plain in 1981. She was never able to accept the loss of her home in District Six after it was declared a white Group Area on 11 February 1966. She bravely resisted the instructions to move for a long time and witnessed the demolition of many places around her and further up into the heart of District Six. Gradually, the government put pressure on people to move out of District Six. Officials brought lorries, workers packed up people's things and they moved. My mother stayed. The flats in the various blocks emptied out. The Bloemhof Flats slowly became a vacant complex. The mother had lovely antique furniture. I remember an Afrikaner official demanding, "Give me that clock. I'll give you a nice house. Give me that." My mother refused so they just left her. The saddest thing was that by that time, everybody had moved out; the Schaffers, the Links… everybody. She was there downstairs in Block C of the Bloemhof Flats - Flat 124. They cut the electricity, then they cut the water. She was still sitting there. To add salt to the wounds, Bloc C, Bloemhof Flats was demolished to make way for parking garages for the new white residents of District Six that would eventually be renamed Zonnebloem in memory of the old Dutch Farm that was established before the City was rezoned into Districts. We all agree in the family that my mother died of a broken heart.

It was Saturday, 14 June 1981. My mother had to move to Mitchells Plain. There she sat outside in the car and asked, "Why did you bring me here? I don't want to be here." That was the Saturday.

On the Sunday I sent my youngest brother to the shop to buy carrots and a newspaper. He never came back. There was an accident along the road, one of those wide roads in Mitchells Plain. He could not remember where the house was. We found him in Victoria Hospital. My husband and I took my mother to the hospital. On the Monday I was at work when my sister phoned me, "You better come; mother doesn't look too good." Desmond and I got lost in Mitchells Plain when we went to see my mother. People said. "Go this way, go that way." We didn't know the area. The roads were wide and when we eventually got to the house in 16 Lobelia Street, people were standing outside. They said, "The woman who moved in here on Saturday, is dead." It was my mother.

[113] '*smoortjie': translation – this is the colloquial way to describe a quick meal, usually cobbled together from left-overs from the night before or now, more commonly, used to refer to a quickly and freshly made rich stew or hotpot or stir-fry!*

My mother was dead.

That was the saddest, most traumatic moment for me and my family. It was so hurtful. We couldn't forgive the government for doing what they did. My mother was only 58 years old. It took me a long time, prayer, and much spiritual support to eventually forgive those that I blamed for my mother's death. We all learned to forgive but we will never forget.

At 17 years old, straight out of high School, I got my first job at a clothing factory, Kelner and Sons, in Commercial Street just off the corner of Buitenkant Street. I got to hear about a vacancy at this place after my mother read an advert in the paper. I remember that I put on my best dress and when I got to the factory gates there were so many women and young girls standing in a line looking for this job. I couldn't really see myself as a factory worker and thought that it was a menial job. After almost losing my nerve and turning around, I was called out of the crowd by the boss and asked if I could work a machine. Following the advice of my mother, I answered that I could even though I had no experience but had confidence that I was a fast learner.

After a few years' experience as a machinist, I applied for a similar job at the adjacent Graceful Ladies Clothing Factory on the advice of one of the workers that I got to know. After a few years I then moved to a factory around the corner in Barack Street, Zeideman, after my eldest sister Francis, who worked there, informed me about an opportunity to take on extra work on Saturdays. This relationship eventually led to the boss, Dorothy Zeideman, a German, offering me a job. I then took a job in Commercial Street, around the corner from the Ned Geref Kerk, at Novaray where I became a supervisor. I was inspired a lot by the management style of Dorothy Zeideman, who was tough but fair. After a few years, the factory was sold and the new owners took us and family members out on a picnic trip to Atlantis, to promote the new township and the new factory. Desmond was offered a job with me and we got a company car to travel in and out from where we lived in Lotus River. Three other women travelled with us.

After Novaray closed down, I took up a job as manageress at the Manhattan Clothing Factory in Hopkins Street, Salt River. I worked here for 13 years, eventually ending up as a quality controller for more than 10 CMT (Cut, Make, Trim) factories associated with Manhattan. I resigned from Manhattan when I was 53 years older after discovering that I was being treated unfairly by the Management. They were using me to mentor a young white quality controller who was being paid much more than me. I left and never looked back. Soon afterwards, Manhattan was liquidated, and I got a few of the sewing machines as well as one from Novaray's Mr Green and opened RJ fashions at my home. My first big job, of many. Was with the Orient Community Entertainers, now known as the Ashwin Willemse Orient Community Entertainers, Klopse / Coon troupe from Manenberg. I produced all their performance uniforms until they wanted to cut costs which made it difficult for me to sustain the small business.

Further aspects of Ruth's life history are captured from the interviews I conducted with her, in **Chapter Four: Conversations**, of this thesis.

5.1.3 Archive

From the interviews, informal and workshop discussions, I was able to render the main elements of Ruth's life history, with her involvement and final voice as three elements that collectively make up her personal archive of snapshot memories and stories, inscribed photographs, (video clips), objects, and memorabilia identified as important to her:

- Suitcase memory box
- Family tree

- Catalogue of family photographs and memory snapshots
- Map of significant locations

a) Suitcase memory box

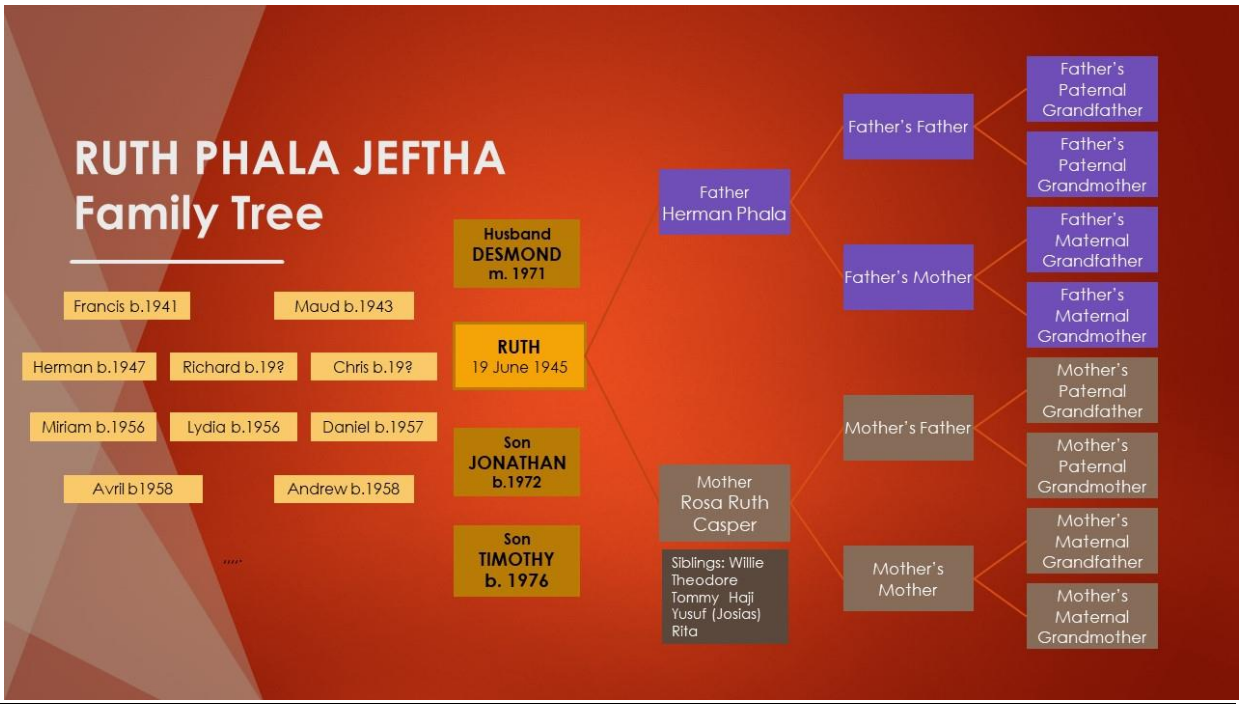
Pic of suitcase taken by Mandy Sanger. Location: *Digging Deeper* exhibition at the District Six Museum.

This suitcase is made up of objects, photographs and memorabilia collected by Ruth as part of the Museum's 50-year commemoration of the 1966 declaration of District Six as a whites only Group Area. Ogilvy-Mather[114] translated the Museum's memory box concept and aesthetic into a promotional campaign at the Cape Town International airport. It is now on display as part of the Museum's permanent exhibition: *Digging Deeper*.

[114] Ogilvy-Mather was a marketing company who approached the Museum to do pro-bono marketing work as part of the 50-year commemoration of the 11 February 1966 Group Areas declaration. Video
https://www.mediaupdate.co.za/marketing/106158/a-suitcase-labelled-forced-removal
https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/suitcases-open-up-window-to-the-past-2027738

Pic of interior details of Ruth's suitcase, taken by Mandy Sanger. Location: *Digging Deeper* exhibition at the District Six Museum.

b) Family tree



A larger rendition is in the catalogue, **ADDENDUM 4.**

In constructing Ruth's family tree, the final genogram illustrates the many gaps in information about family members beyond the parents. This incomplete family tree serves as a tool for Ruth to dig deeper into her family's heritage. She is particularly interested in revealing aspects of

her family history that defied the colonial and apartheid segregation laws, specifically laws that prohibited relationships and marriage across the 'colour' line. Acknowledging and sharing these aspects of her family history has become a source of healing and now, pride, after a life of hurt where members of the District Six community, particularly but not exclusively, were quick to disparage her family with mean spirited racism.

c) Catalogue of family photographs and memory snapshots

Worth noting, Ruth is married to Desmond Jeftha, an avid amateur photographer who captured many family, social, work and holiday photographs. He worked in the same clothing industry as a machine mechanic and in the last stage of their working lives, with Ruth at Novaray in Atlantis and then at Manhattans in Salt River. Many of their photographs have not been included in this phase of Ruth's memory catalogue development, as it is a process of finding, categorising, inscribing, and organising that she and Desmond wish to take time over. Desmond, for instance, has photographed many events associated with the annual *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* minstrel carnival, *Klopse* preparation sessions, sport, and cultural activities that they enthusiastically participate in.

Ruth's catalogue consists of photographs that she has chosen to share for this thesis. Quite significantly, there are no childhood photos and only two photographs that depict her factory life. This could also be the case of many families who just do not have many photographs of their early life, for various reasons: no personal access to cameras, economic situation may not have prioritised this in their budgeting, amongst other reasons.

d) Mapping of significant locations

Refer to the attached **ADDENDUM 3** for the memory maps developed with Ruth's participation to guide our site-specific storytelling sessions and then also to stimulate her memories of the recent past (a few of which are rendered here):

Refer to the attached **ADDENDUM 4 (**Memory Catalogue of Ruth Jeftha) for the mapping out of significant locations in Ruth's life.

5.2 FARAHNAAZ GILFELLEON

5.2.1 Photographic portrait

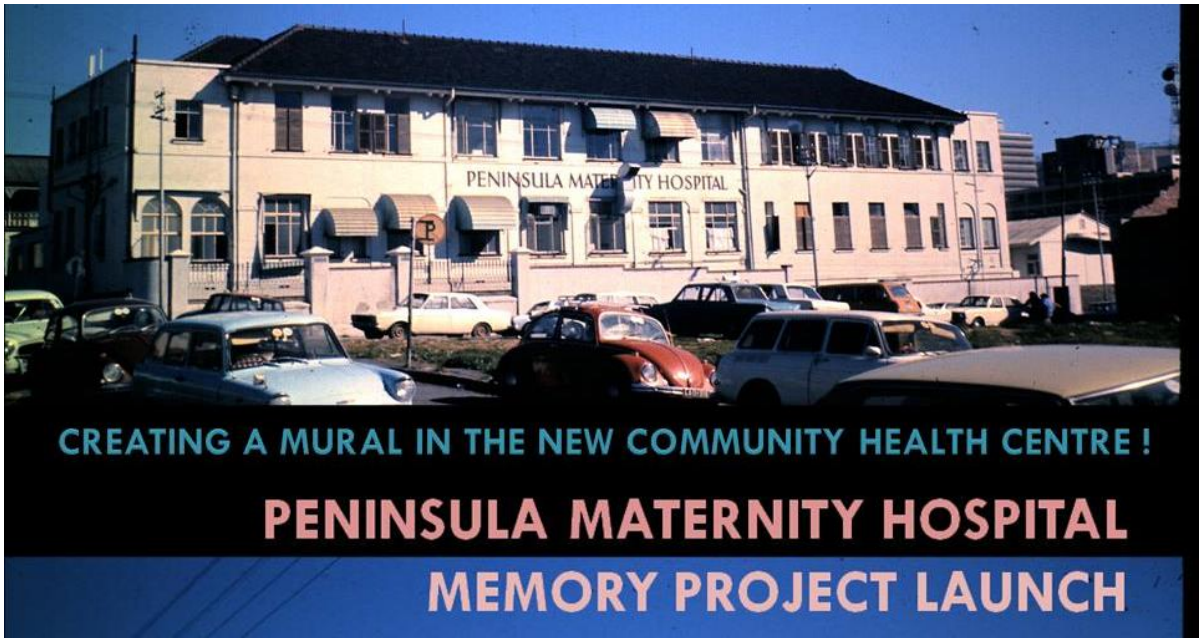
The portrait of Farahnaaz in her catalogue **(ADDENDUM 5)** was stylised and taken by **Paul Grendon** as part of the District Six Museum's Suitcase Memory Project with community libraries, 2017-18.

5.2.2 Life history

a) Overview of a life

The information for both the family tree and resume comes from the transcript of the conversation where Farahnaaz and I would systematically construct the basic information about her family members, life events, chronological work history, amongst other things. Both these form a part of her catalogue **(ADDENDUM 5).**

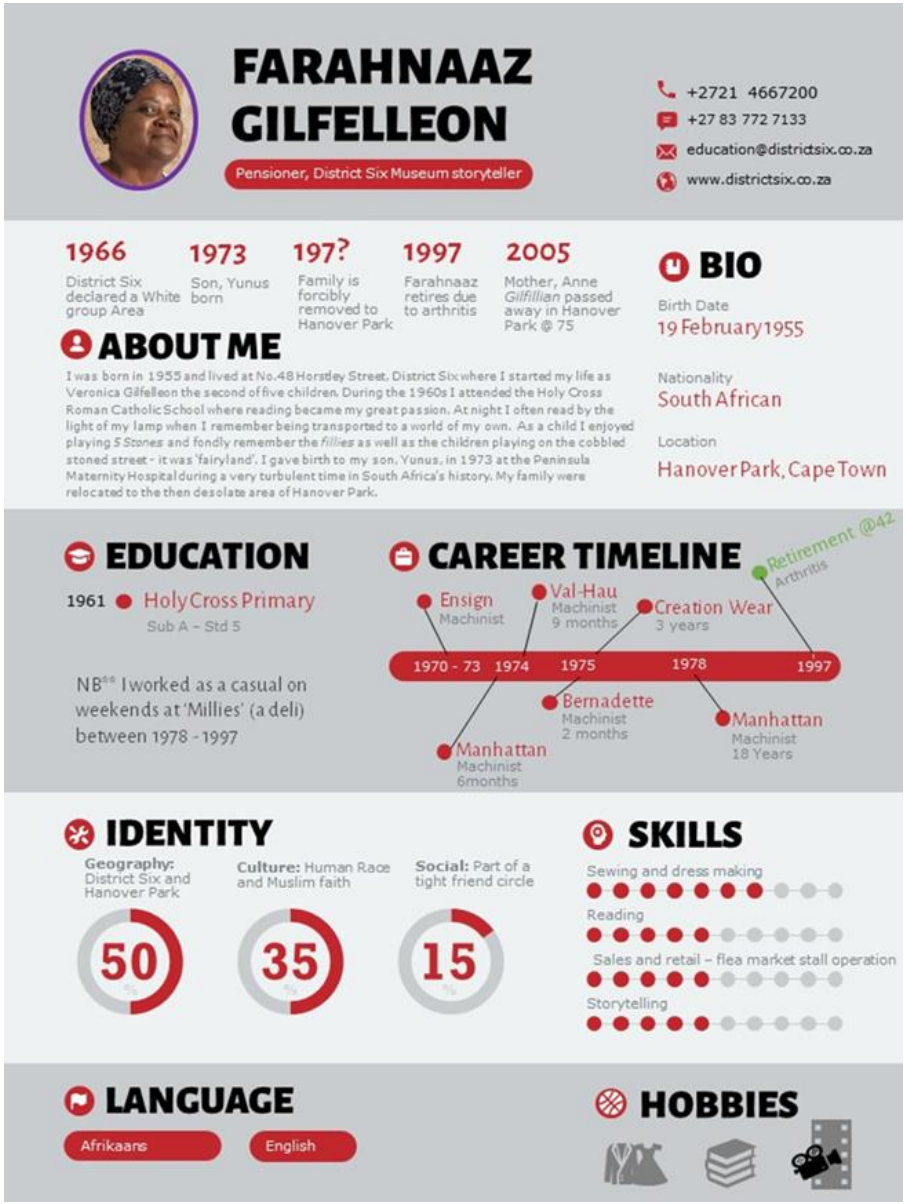
The question put to both Ruth and Farahnaaz was: If you were to construct your life history as a resume or curriculum vitae, what would you include?[115]



[115] This question is repeated from section 5.1.1 (the life-history section for Ruth Phala-Jeftha) of this thesis. I have done this as the compilation of the two life history sections (5.1 and 5.2) follow the same structure.

This research project has provided one of the first opportunities for Farahnaaz to piece together the threads of her story. She started life at the Peninsula Maternity Hospital (PMH), District Six and was a passionate participant in the Museum's PMH memory project[116] that resulted in an exhibition co-curated by elderly, former residents of District Six, their grandkids, former cleaners, nurses, and doctors of the old PMH, with artists and staff members of the District Six Museum.

The resume below captures the main elements of her life and is yet to be fleshed out in greater detail:

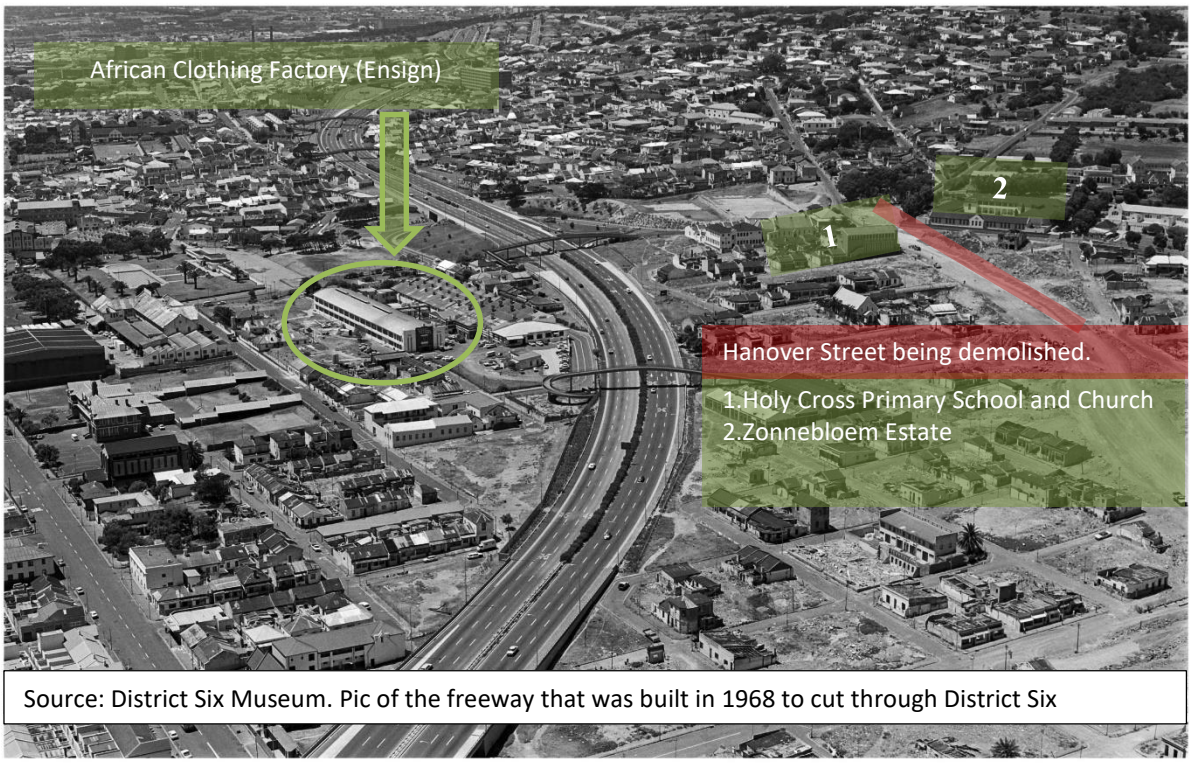


[116] https://www.facebook.com/Peninsula-Maternity-Hospital-Memory-Project-1357601397597131/
https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/Local/Peoples-Post/keeping-maternity-memories-alive-20161115
https://www.athlonenews.co.za/news/memory-project-maps-the-history-of-d6-10905094

NB** Ruth's resume is not included in this format in section 5.1.2a above. It is included in her catalogue, however: **ADDENDUM 4**)

b) My story: Farahnaaz (Veronica) Gilfelleon

Farahnaaz's story has been drawn from a series of interviews, and workshops I facilitated. It is constructed in her voice but is edited as is the case with biographies generally. The profile that forms part of this thesis and Farahnaaz's catalogue is combined with her story as told to youth in the Museum's Tell Your Story To a 'Born Free' programme. Youth curated her story with her in the form of a mobile suitcase exhibition that travelled to public libraries in Langa, Hanover Park, Manenberg, Nyanga and Crossroad-Philippi. It also serves as her 'script', in a sense, for having conversations with visitors at the Museum. Farahnaaz has been sharing her story with visitors to the Museum since 2016 and this research project has added a layer that incorporates the details of her life as a clothing worker in factories located in District Six and Woodstock-Salt River, both areas that have undergone rapid gentrification.



Source: District Six Museum. Pic of the freeway that was built in 1968 to cut through District Six

What follows is a resource card of Farahnaaz's story in her own words:

I was born on 19 February 1955 in District Six. My mother's name was Anne Gilfillian and she had three children. My mother worked as a domestic worker for white families and was very hard working. I remember my mother giving me a bath and putting powder on my body after the bath. Then, she would dress and feed me.

Sundays were very special to us. On Sundays we would wear our best outfits. We would get up early, have a bath, get dressed and go to church. Sunday lunch was a very big affair. Roast chicken, baked potatoes and gem squash. Sometimes we visited family and friends in the afternoon. Some Sundays we would attend Muslim weddings which were always colourful occasions.

Food played a very important part in our daily lives. Our food was cooked on a Dover stove. We had porridge with brown sugar for breakfast. Sometimes, my mother would grate orange peel over the porridge to give it a nice flavour. Lunch was peanut butter, jam, golden syrup or scrambled eggs. Supper was fried fish or frikkadels. My mother loved cooking and baking bread.

I have fond childhood memories. I had a hand-me-down school blazer because school uniforms were very expensive. I liked school. We had music, art, physical training (PT), drama and swimming. I could read before I went to school. My eldest sister, Therese, taught me to read although I could not pronounce some words. I am still fond of reading. Reading opens one's mind. It can take you to places, you never dreamt of. The more you read, the more you want to know. I would sell my supper for a book. At night, when I wanted to read, my mother would put the lamp on. Then, I was in a world of my own.

It was fun living in District six. It was like living in Fairyland. There were all sorts of characters. We had fun, but we always had respect. We had two stables in District six, one in Horstely Street and one in Stone street. The horses were used to transport fish and vegetables. They were also used for weddings.

I left school in Grade seven (Standard five, back then). I went to work at Ensign Clothing Factory in a part of District Six that is now officially Woodstock. The factory-made clothing for government workers as well as the president's suits. My wages were R6.16 and after deduction, I received R5.33. I gave my wages to my mother. She gave me R2.00 for pocket money.

As a young girl, I could do certain things, but within limits, like going to the 5 o'clock show at the Avalon movie house. I also did activities such as modern dancing and ballet with the Eoan Group.

Then came 'the big move' to Hanover Park. I didn't like it one bit, but we had to move. My mother's sister and brother lived in Factreton. They moved in the sixties, and I went and lived with them. It was not so far as Hanover Park and I had easy access to work.

Further aspects of Farahnaaz's life history are captured in the interviews I conducted with her and is analysed by me in **Chapters Four** and **Five** of this thesis. The transcripts of interviews and notes from workshops will be available in the District Six Museum archive.

5.2.3 Personal archive

From the interviews, informal and workshop discussions, I was able to render the main elements of Farahnaaz's life history, with her involvement and final voice as three elements that collectively make up her personal archive of snapshot memories and stories, inscribed photographs, (video clips), objects, and memorabilia identified as important to her:

- Suitcase memory box
- Family tree

- Catalogue of family photographs and memory snapshots
- Map of significant locations

a) Suitcase memory box

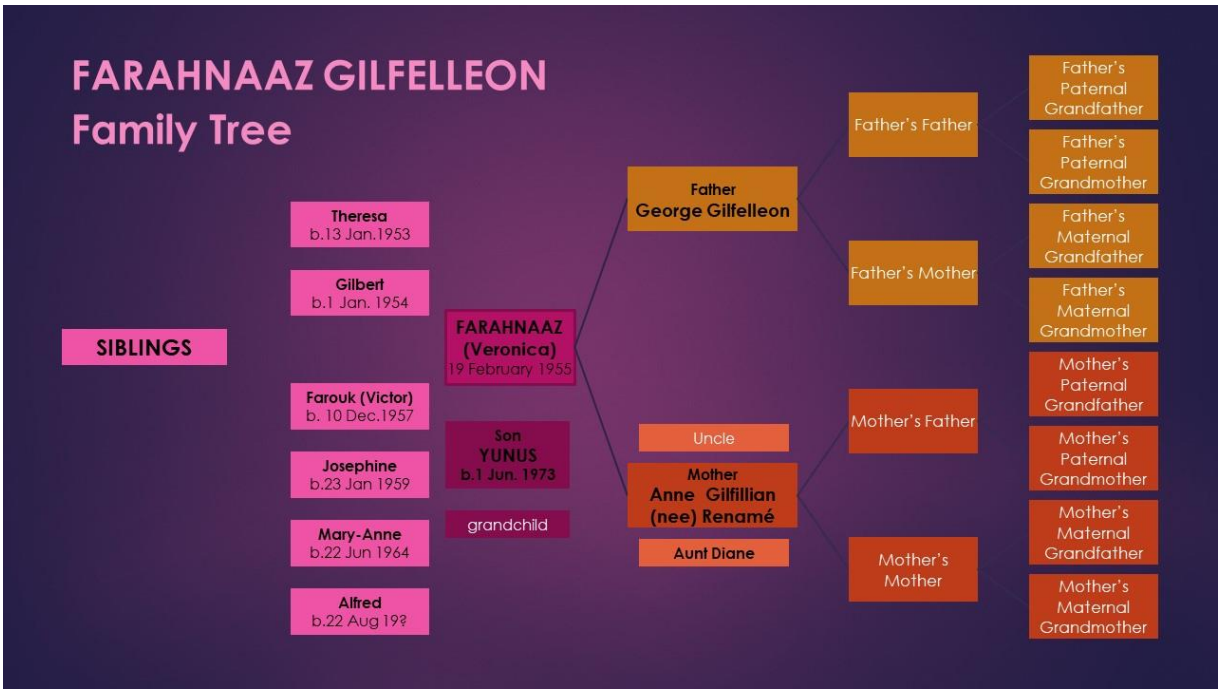
Photograph taken by Paul Grendon for the District Six Museum

This suitcase is made up of objects, photographs and memorabilia collected by Farahnaaz as part of the Museum's 50-year commemoration of the 1966 declaration of District Six as a whites only Group Area. This was developed in a series of District Six Museum memory methodology workshops that I facilitated and was translated into the Museum's aesthetic by a young aspirant artist, Kirstie Pietersen for the Suitcase memory box workshops with former residents of District Six who form part of the Museum's Visitor Engagement programme. This suitcase is part of a mobile exhibition that was launched at various community libraries in 2018-19 – Philippi; Hanover Park; Manenberg; Crossroads; Langa and Nyanga.

b) Family tree

The following is a graphic representation of the information about Farahnaaz's immediate family and illustrates the many gaps in information about family members beyond the parents. This incomplete family tree serves as a tool for Farahnaaz to use to dig deeper into her family's heritage. In the recorded conversations (interviews), workshop discussions and numerous

follow-up sessions, it is obvious that many aspects of Farahnaaz's family history and heritage have been erased or just does not exist. Erasure that is the result of changes in identity as



required by apartheid laws is evident in the different spelling of the family surname, Gilfillian and Gilfelleon. This could have come about as an administrative error but is usually the result of the adoption of names to 'pass' as white or 'coloured', in this case, possibly to legally live in Cape Town during Apartheid. Farahnaaz insists her father was a 'Rhodesian Indian' who worked in the hotel industry and who would have required a permit to remain in the City – a highly likely story despite the absence of photographic evidence. There are many sensitivities related to identity (from my perspective) that Farahnaaz is unwilling to acknowledge as a problem (my perspective) and this is her prerogative to explore on her terms. She insists, in various activities of the Museum, that she has never 'really' experienced racism despite the acknowledgement that people have used generally considered racist descriptors117 to refer to her. On the surface she has received these pejorative labels as affectionate and playful rather than mean-spirited. This might be a case of cognitive dissonance and could suggest that there might be other blind spots in her history that she must come to terms with, or not.

c) Catalogue of family photographs, objects and memory snapshots

[117] Examples of these are brought to light and discussed in later sections of this thesis, particularly, 6.2.2 and 6.4.2.

The pictures included in the attached catalogue[118] of objects Farahnaaz associates with babies in District Six of the 1950s, were sourced from the internet as memory triggers. Other photographs are from Farahnaaz's personal collection and also sourced by her from family members. The collection and organisation of this initial fledgling catalogue of objects and photographs was as preparation for the memory methodology and suitcase memory box workshops facilitated to prepare Farahnaaz's story as part of the Museum's community library mobile exhibition (2018-19).

The comments were generated in workshops as guiding questions to facilitate Faranaaz's ongoing construction of her personal archive in terms of collection, a more layered storytelling and to encourage her deeper reflection and interrogation of her memories.

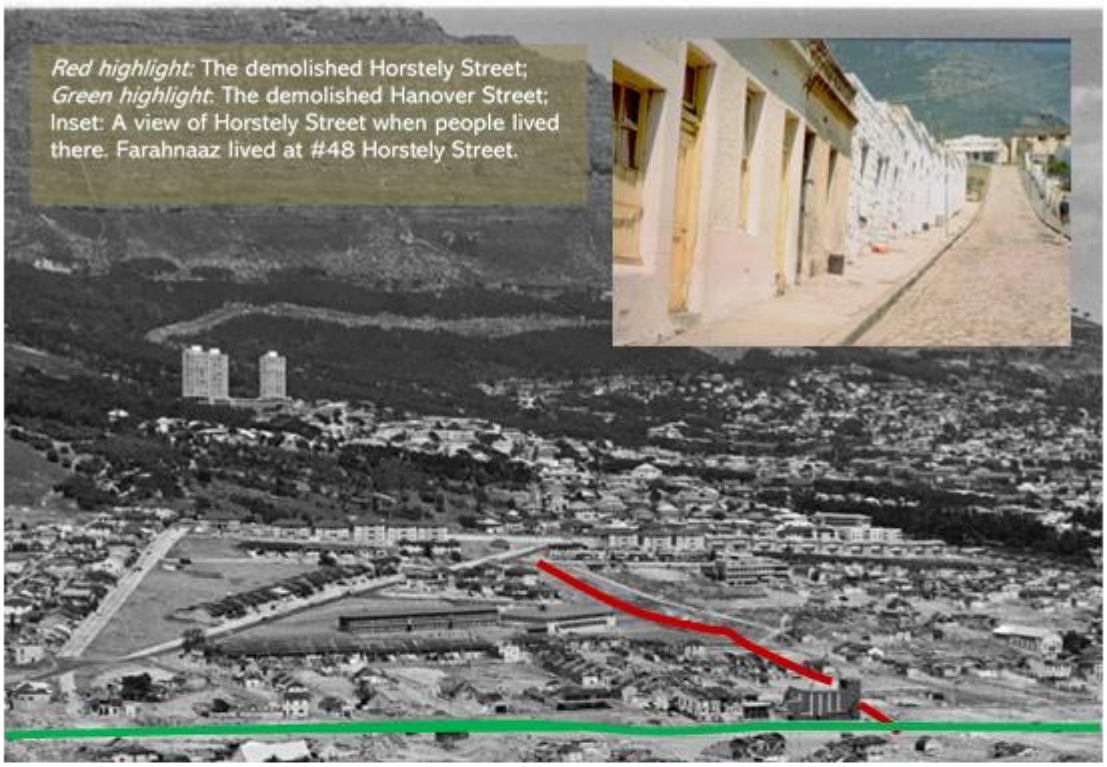
The text that makes up this memory catalogue have been transcribed from the notes written by Faranaaz on photographs and sheets of colour coded paper and then presented in snap storytelling sessions involving the District Six Museum's visitor engagement team of ex-residents. Various interns, volunteers and short term facilitators assisted at various points in the data capturing for Faranaaz. A crucial part of our methodology involves the social construction of memory where, in workshop situations with other former District Six residents, Farahnaaz lists items that she would have had access to as a baby. She doesn't have the 'evidence' of the actual items but compiles these items from familiar images on the internet or from magazines. Linda Fortune, a former District Six resident, was an education officer during the early stages of the making of the Museum and went a step further during the making of her memory box – she created replicas of common items from her home in District Six that was detroyed and used reference material in the public domain – often from old magazines or advertisements in one or the other archive.

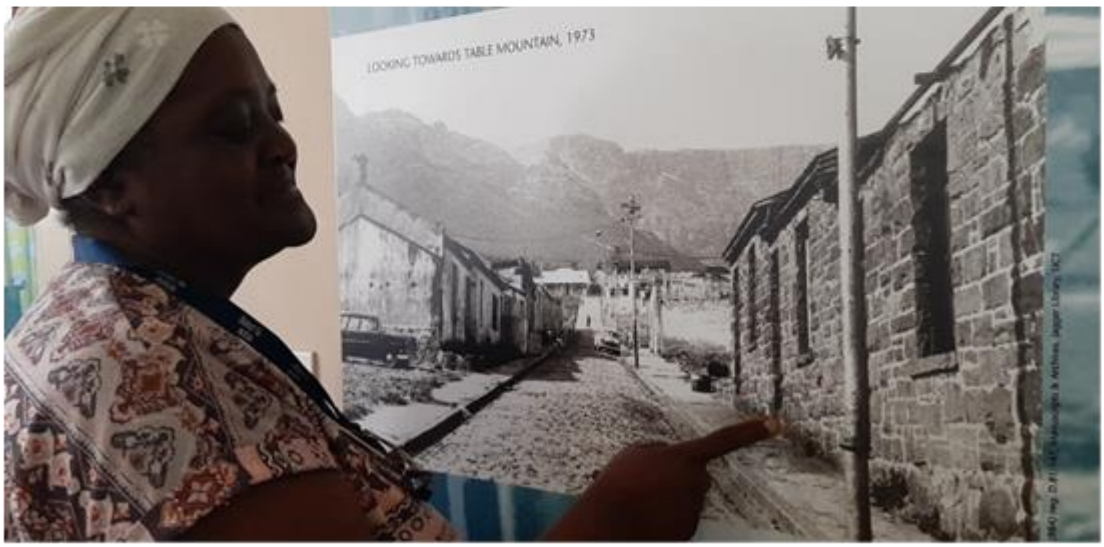
d) Mapping of significant locations

Refer to the attached **ADDENDUM 3** for the memory maps developed with Farahnaaz to guide our site-specific storytelling sessions and then also to stimulate her memories of the recent past (a few of which are rendered here):

[118] The memory catalogue is attached as **ADDENDUM 5**.

Refer to the attached **ADDENDUM 4 (**Memory Catalogue of Farahnaaz Gilfelleon) for the mapping out of significant locations in Ruth's life.





Farahnaaz Gilfelleon pointing out her family home at #48 Horstely Street. The pic above is part of the Memorial Hall exhibition focused on Horstely Street at the District Six Museum. 1973, Manuscripts and archives, Jagger Library

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS

I used the following interpretive framework[119] to extract and reflect on the information, knowledge, insights, and interpretations – while noting the silences and gaps - from the series of conversations, workshops and informal discussions that marked my encounters with Ruth Phala Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon when I began to use the 'memory catalogue tool' in site-specific storytelling workshops from 2018:

1. Discourse
2. Community: Family, identity, culture
3. Working Life
4. Socio-economic, union, and political insights and context
5. Fragility of memory / erasure / gaps / shame
6. District Six nostalgia and the search for dignity

It should be noted here that I used the framework above to read the transcripts of interviews, notes from workshops and my memories of informal engagements in relation to my reading of mainly academic literature across these themes. These findings are in the form of a dialogue where I engage with the transcripts always keeping in mind that my understandings are derived from (maybe even infected by) my relationship with Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon over several years in my capacity as the manager of an education team that includes both as volunteers. As with all oral history transcripts I have read, I was not always able to find thoughts, ideas, or reflections meaty enough to comment on for all the elements of this framework – from my perspective. This is in the sense that the interviews allowed lots of stream of consciousness moments as well as tangential discussions. While I used a questionnaire, this was mainly a preparation tool, in tandem with the memory catalogue tool, for workshops, and for Ruth and Farahnaaz to use to trigger and discipline their thinking about their own past, giving them time to gather their thoughts and apply some form of categorisation. Then, I have tried to ensure that my voice on these issues is quite distinct from the voice of each participant and it should be noted that the themes that make up my analytical framework is largely my construction of the important issues related to this research project. It was my intention to

[119] This framework was the lens I used to interpret the transcripts, workshop notes, site walks and unrecorded conversation. It should be noted that I was not able to find thoughts, ideas, or reflections meaty enough to comment on for all the elements of the framework.

workshop this with a wider group of clothing workers as a typical District Six Museum sense-making exercise, but timelines and availability of participants did not allow for this.

6.1 DISCOURSE

6.1.1 Politics, power, and ideas

It is often flippantly stated that the winners in political, cultural, and social conflicts get to write history from their perspective during the transition period. This rewriting usually starts with the dismantling and, depending on the intensity, desire for revenge, quality of and trust in reconciliation, the destruction of the symbols of the 'losers. In this frame, the victims often become the perpetrators: Apartheid South Africa, Israel, Afghanistan, are examples from recent history. The triumph of a victors' perspective is short-lived and the ideas of the old is never entirely replaced by a new canon or a hermeneutically sealed ideology. The new history continues to live uncomfortably with the ruins of vanquished ideas as recessive genes waiting for fertile conditions to mobilise the forces in their favour and the right moment to emerge as public discourse, to re-establish institutions that may authorise the old as a coherent body of new knowledge. The 'winners write history' is no more than a present-day meme that hides the complexity of how ideas disseminate in society and around which socio-economic, political, and cultural struggles are waged. Even in the case of authoritarian and oligarchic societies, 'uneasy lies the head that wears the crown' tends to be a truism.

In the case of South Africa, the transition to democracy was not a 'victor takes all' process and the 'new South Africa is largely a continuation of the old with all the major institutions built on the bedrock of colonial and then apartheid ideologies (schools, universities, public and private media, religious institutions, structures of governance from local to national, the economic infrastructure, amongst others) remaining, largely, intact. The democratically elected government quickly replaced the ideological framework used for fighting a liberation struggle[120] with an internationally sanctioned[121] growth pathway that would not disrupt the

[120] The Freedom Charter and then the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) were the dominant driving forces in the liberation struggle led by organisations affiliated to the African National Congress (ANC). This does not discount that, particularly on the left, smaller pockets of activists were united by various other calls to action and programmes like the New Unity Movement's Ten Point Programme.

[121] International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank': Institutions created at a meeting in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA, 1944. Their initial aims articulated as 'rebuilding the post-war economy and promoting international economic cooperation'. The source, however, of debt, dependency, and global inequality, often enforcing a dogmatic economic and governance regime on poorer countries.

apartheid economy, society and culture but grease the pathway for assimilation of a new black middle class into existing structures of power, providing a new South African face of 'democratic' capitalism.

The conversations about this transitional period that we continue to live in today, are markedly different in tone, timbre and language between political conscious or politically organised people and 'ordinary' people - those whose connection to organisation is limited to school, church, and other structures that reproduce cultural hegemony, through no fault of our/their own.[122] So, while those who were in organisations against or for apartheid have learnt a recognisable political language to talk about our recent past, 'ordinary' people have ideas, thoughts and perspectives that, more often than not, represent the vast milieu outside of organised politics. These perspectives give us a fuller view of ideas roaming around and gathering in society than we can hope to get from 'the canon' of the time.

6.1.2 Recalling the past

For many, the assumption is that if someone has experienced something, in this case, growing up in a place like District Six, then recalling the past of personal and family life events, the apartheid laws that governed their lives, the forced removals, and the aftermath is easy, unproblematic, and accurate. This, however, is not the case. Recalling the past rests on and is shaped by many elements like, individual cognitive and conceptual abilities[123]; one's grasp and scope of spoken and written language[124]; practice in storytelling; orientation to one's past; attitudes towards and beliefs about the place and its community, and possession of the

[122] The division between the two groups here is purely for analytical purposes. The reality is that the relationship between these two groups (politically conscious and 'ordinary') in society is a porous one and non-binary. Political consciousness is not a neatly defined, packaged, branded, and sealed entity, except when corporatised. People move from political consciousness to 'ordinary' and vice versa often, influenced by circumstances and the choices they make to respond or ignore. There is an unequal balance when it comes to political influence and voice in society where at the extreme ends and under extreme conditions, politically conscious people are the ones who can mobilise ordinary people towards political goals, in or against their interests. Sometimes 'ordinary' people with cultural and economic capital can present as confident and influential in society, however devoid of a recognisable ideology they may be.

[123] I do not use these concepts as congenital traits in people, as 'God-given' or as characteristic of hierarchically arranged communities defined by race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, formal education levels of achievement. Conceptual and cognitive abilities are proven to be largely shaped by practice, whether in formal or informal settings.

[124] This applies to both the listener and the speaker in a conversation, interview, teaching or research situation. In these situations, we often see an imbalance in the power or value given to written language in relation to spoken language as well as is given to certain delivery mechanisms – accents (as in Model-C accents have power), dialects (Afrikaaps is seen as *gangsta* and is an unrecognised carrier of ideas), groups of languages (English, German, French and Spanish have power).

confidence in the value of one's experience and abilities to translate this into interesting stories and / or factual information. Then, how one shares these stories or titbits depends on and where it is being shared and who with. At family gatherings or in situations where listeners have shared a 'common' experience, the stories and titbits will almost always, also in my experience, have incomplete thoughts and unspoken words that others either fill in or complete in their construction of meaning – it resonates meaning beyond the words spoken. For District Six ex-residents, the additional complication running interference in the memory recall process is the erasure of much of the landscape that defined the place and people's experiences in it. The streets, buildings (houses, schools, places of worship, shops, factories, bioscopes, cultural venues, amongst others), wash houses, fish market and pavement grocers, kerbstones, and bollards, are all reference points as well as memory triggers. According to Halbwachs who bears this out:

> …it is the spatial image alone that, by reason of its stability, gives us an illusion of not having changed through time and of retrieving the past in the present. But that's how memory is defined (Halbwachs, 1950b, p. 15).

The book, *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and Method* (Gee, 1999, p. 12), provides a useful framing, presenting a dialectical relationship, in effect, between speaking, writing and the construction of 'reality'.

1. *The meaning and value of aspects of the material world:* Gee describes a scenario of entering 'a plain, square room', speaking and acting like, for example, someone about to run a meeting, where this changes his perspective to, 'where I sit becomes the "front" of the room'. We see this play out often in how people engage in spaces that they are comfortable in and its opposite where people are completely overwhelmed or lack confidence in certain spaces. The role of Museum site-walks through spaces that have specific meanings for ex-residents and from which people have been displaced, is a way in which the *in-situ* vantage point provides a renewed perspective of their place in the world – a sense of belonging is rebirthed.

2. *Activities:* Gee stresses the importance here of how particular forms of expression are inextricably linked to specific actions: 'We talk and act in one way and we are engaged in formally opening a committee meeting: we

talk and act in another way and we are engaged in "chit-chat" before the official start of the meeting'.

3. *Identities and relationships:* Here Gee alerts us to how particular forms of expression lead to specific expectations about the roles we perform in certain situations. 'I talk and act in one way one moment and I am speaking and acting as "chair" of the committee; the next moment I speak and talk in a different way and I am speaking and acting as one peer/colleague speaking to another'. For this research project I have shifted, in my expression and therefore in my identity and relationships with Ruth and Farahnaaz, from a researcher, to a colleague and then to a teacher /educator where appropriate. In the early part of the process, I introduced the project in very formal ways, expressing the importance and weight of the project; during the conversations I used colloquial expressions as was natural and comfortable for the purpose of allowing the conversation to flow. In both Ruth and Farahnaaz's cases, when they spoke in English and formally, they were often teaching me something about District Six and this relationship changed to a more casual one, marked by a shift to the local Afrikaans spoken between friends.

4. *Politics (the distribution of social goods):* Gee expresses the dominant ways in which society perceives men and women differently in relation to their intensity of expression where, when a man speaks while visibly angry in a formal situation like a 'committee meeting' he is perceived as "standing his ground on principle," but a visibly angry female is "hysterical." In a similar vein, I can get away with being forceful and persistent as a researcher in seeking answers from women factory workers.

5. *Connections:* Gee articulates how, when we talk (in meetings) we often make connections between seemingly disparate things to situate ourselves in a discussion and establish a sense of continuity.

6. *Semiotics (what and how different symbol systems and different forms of knowledge "count"):* Finally, he conveys how we often talk and act in ways that privileges the special knowledge and language of, his example, lawyers over "everyday language" or over "non-lawyerly academic language" in a

> scenario of our committee discussions. In this research project and in the work of the Museum generally, I had to be conscious of the privileging of the knowledge and language of the researcher or academic in my conversations with Ruth and Farahnaaz. So often academic jargon can be used to mesmerize and convey the untested idea of superior knowledge over lived experience expressed instinctively – missing important and valuable wisdoms and insights from the ground.

Much of my practice and engagement with former residents has grown into the above framing, over my years of teaching, and community activism. Specifically, I have been conscious about these effects on 'reality' in my interpretations of the various engagements with Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon for this thesis. This is pertinent to the impact of various in-situ conversations I had with Ruth and Farahnaaz on how we make sense of the apartheid past. The material world of the one-on-one interviews differed considerably from that of the walking conversations through the demolished sites of District Six or the re-imagined parts where the Bloemhof Flats has been changed and renamed or from that of the workshops that included other former residents as well as various objects from their past. Each place generated a different set of echoes, energy, memory and meaning.

The other aspect that has been crucial is an understanding of the malleability and fragility of memory (Hatuka, 2016) that is explored in the epilogue to *Remembering, Forgetting and City Builders* (Yacobi & Fenster, 2016), particularly with regard to how political identity is used in the making of cities. The book deals with 'how urban spaces are designed, planned and experienced in relation to the politics of collective and personal memory construction.' Of particular significance to the work with memory that we do at the District Six Museum and that I grapple with in this thesis, is how "communities construct their 'past memories' within their current daily life and future aspirations." The overall thrust confirms the almost daily struggles we have as citizens and in the memorial practices of the museum with how 'the very acts of planning and urban design are rooted in the existing structures of hegemonic power.'

In the epilogue, Hatuka alerts us to the ideas of writers on political identities, whose work I have not reviewed myself for this thesis, but who have influenced my own political perspectives over the years: Eric Hobsbawm who with Terence Ranger (1983) explored the political uses of tradition in the construction of collective identity and Benedict Anderson (1983) who was pivotal in the way in which his ideas provided a way for anti-racist activists to

understand apartheid communities as 'imagined communities' which 'are constructed as public memories to give concrete affirmation to otherwise abstract ideals.' As with Hatuka, I also believe that 'the contribution of these scholars, and others, is critical to thought on the interlinked relations between memory and politics.' (Hatuka, 2016, p. 194)

The fragile strands of memory, that we must tease out and then make sense of in conversations with former residents of District Six, is eloquently spoken about by writer Joyce Carol Oates in an extract from a talk she presented on her memoir, *The Lost Landscape,* as part of a Politics and Prose bookstore event:

> When memory is cast back decades, it is likely to be imprecise as a torn net, haphazardly cast that may drag in what's irrelevant as well as miss what is crucial. Our lives are enormous waves breaking on the shore, retreating and leaving only a few scattered things behind for us to contemplate before the astonishing fact of a single day in our lives, we are rendered speechless, if we are honest. Yet, as we are human and our species greatest achievement is speech, we are never speechless for long.[125](Oats, 2015)

6.1.3 Co-constructing meanings

To illustrate how much of the conversation with Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon resulted in a co-construction of meaning, the below extracts from the transcript of interviews with Farahnaaz helps:

a) In a discussion about the impact of the building of the N2 Highway in the 1960s

MS[126] From this map where the streets don't really exist (anymore) and it's not very clear, but I know the highway was built like that [pointing out the direction on the map]. From this map you don't see the highway. This becomes Woodstock and that remains District Six [indicating this on the map]. So, when you used to go to the factory to work, did people talk about it as Woodstock or District Six?

FG[127] District Six, and a lot of children that lived in Woodstock that's before ... we said they all come to Holy Cross and a lot of them came and worked at Ensign.

[125]*Joyce Carol Oats, transcribed from a YouTube video, talking about memoir and reading this extract from the afterword of her book, The lost Landscape.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxKokE7Rjm8

[126] MS – Mandy Sanger (interviewer)
[127] FG – Farahnaaz Gilfelleon (former resident of District Six and clothing factory worker.

FG If you see Woodstock now, today, that's how District Six looked that time. And that lady, that's why I said Aunt Sammy that lived in Chapel Street, that stoep houses ...reg op in *daai (that)* Salt River High school. *My ma se vriend* (*My mother's friend)…*[loops back to an earlier point in the conversation].

In this example it becomes clear that I am trying to focus on the impact of urban planning and the changing landscape, on people's memories of place. I have an expectation that Farahnaaz Gilfelleon's stories of place will be triggered by the photograph, an aerial view of a section of District Six that was cut-off by the building of the N2 Highway in the 1960s and renamed Woodstock[128]. Farahnaaz, however, is triggered to talk about different things, tangential things, as she is reminded of and reminds me of, an earlier conversation when she mentioned her Auntie Sammy and I could not make head or tail of what she was talking about. In this situation, I must constantly remind myself that this is about Farahnaaz's recollections, feelings, emotions, and interpretations and I must let the conversation continue in this vein. Her point seems to be that the architecture of District Six extends beyond Woodstock into Salt River and, I sense that, what matters to her are the connections between these places (the houses and *stoeps*) that also represent the sites of the factories she worked at.

b) In a discussion about factory working conditions: training or no training? Papers or not?

In the recorded interview about working life at the Ensign factory where Jean van Niekerk, a District Six returnee, was the supervisor of Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, the following discussion ensues:

FG: So, six months being on the job at Ensign they opened a learning centre at Dermar Fashions. The factories can send their new girls so they can learn how to operate a machine. So, I said to Jean, '…am I going to the training school now?' For lack of a better word she said *'fok ek het klaar vir jou geleer. Vir wat wil djy nog training skool*

[128] News coverage of the renaming of Zonnebloem, District Six in December 2019 in response to a campaign by the District Six Museum. https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/back-on-the-map-mthethwa-approves-renaming-of-zonnebloem-back-to-district-six-20191217; Also, in response to this campaign the City of Cape Town under the leadership of Dan Plato as Mayor and in partnership with the District Six Working Committee, under the leadership of Shahied Ajam (recently deceased), inserted a separate campaign to rename Kaisergracht Street, Hanover Street. This was celebrated with much fanfare by the City on 24 September 2019. The Museum opposed this on the grounds that Kaisergracht Street was not Hanover Street, remnants of which exist running through the campus of Cape Peninsula University of Technology (the former apartheid institution for 'whites only' – The Peninsula Technicon) https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/opinion/open-letter-to-mayor-on-proper-renaming-of-hanover-street-32285681

toe gaan.' Just like that. *'Djy kom onne my hande uit.'*[129] So she didn't send me to the training school because I already knew what was going on. Because I'm already pushing production.

MS And when you think about it now, do you think you would have benefited more by going to the training?

FG Not with the training they gave me? Isn't the same because when I went to Manhattan clothing factory and I was curious to work another machine then I taught myself how to go and sit on a double closer. …

MS But now my question to you is do you now, if you think about it now? You know Farahnaaz, today its 2019 and [if] you think back, do you think you would have benefited more by going to the learning centre and maybe doing a training programme there and getting a certificate?

FG Maybe, I couldn't speak a lot on that. Maybe it would have been better but at the time it didn't make [sense]– because you [I] can already operate a machine. They show you just how… There's different things on a garment that people have to – they have to train to do that. Maybe, but what I know now today, I did all learn that at Ensign and at Manhattan.

MS And on the job.

FG Yes.

MS So you value a lot of the learning you got on the job? But, in terms of promotion and being able to start your own business, being more independent, if you had the paper do you think it would have helped you?

Silence…next subject.

As in the previous example, the discussion I hoped to nudge forward doesn't quite go to where I wanted it to go – to a more assertive discussion from Farahnaaz about an issue that is quite openly discussed in public or at family gatherings by apartheid era workers. In the front of my mind are the many times Farahnaaz has stood up in workshops with high school learners or

[129] *'fok ek het klaar vir jou geleer. Vir wat wil djy nog training skool toe gaan.' 'Djy kom onne my hande uit.'* Translation: 'Fock, I have already taught you. Why do you still want to go to training school?' 'You come from my hands.'

peers in the Seven Steps Members' Club of the museum and asserted that many people during apartheid were forced to leave school to go and work early or, as in her case, because she was 'ougat'[130]. She would then go on to say that they learnt valuable skills and gained useful knowledge from 'real life' experience but just do not have 'the papers' to show for it. She would also allude to the situation where young 'white' South Africans would walk into top jobs because they would have 'the papers' but not the practical experience or real knowledge needed to manage the job.

This was initially in response to a point in the workshop where I would share stories to illustrate the adverse effects of Apartheid laws on black people. I often shared stories from personal experience, about my own family members who were forcibly removed from Claremont and Newlands, particularly, my uncle Cliffie (my mother's brother) who was a civil engineer and who was then disadvantaged when the Job Reservation Act of 1926 was more firmly policed in 'coloured' communities in the 1950s onwards. I would then add the stories of other 'qualified' people who were not classified as 'white' and therefore constrained in or prevented from practicing their livelihoods in South Africa: Richard Rive, the former teacher and writer who went on to get his Ph.D. at Oxford University; a family friend Ralph Hendrikse, who was unable to advance in his medical profession at the University of Cape Town (UCT), then left Cape Town for the UK where he eventually headed a university department of Tropical Paediatrics[131], after a stint in Nigeria as an academic and senior consultant paediatrician[132]. Basil D'Oliviera, Precious McKenzie, Abdullah Ibrahim, Alex and Blanche Laguma and Dulcie September, amongst others, are also stories we share in these *'Re-imagining the City'* workshops.

Initially Farahnaaz was reactive but, later, her input on this issue became an important part of the District Six story that she shared with learners. Her point was always that if she had been allowed to get formal qualifications then she would have been able to receive more recognition for her knowledge and skills. It should be noted here that my point in the workshops with

[130] 'ougat': translation– mature before her time / precocious.
[131] This is the story of Professor Ralph Hendrikse that I grew up with when my father and mother reminisced about all their good Livingston High school friends, or fellow St Matthews (Harfield) and St. Saviours (Claremont) church members, or drama, cricket, and football club friends who either 'passed as white' or who left the country because of apartheid restrictions to their professional growth. Some were described as opportunist collaborators with Apartheid like family acquaintance Carter Ebrahim who went on to become the leader of the Labour Party (ironically, family hero Ralph Hendrikse's brother Allan's political home) while others were fondly remembered as courageous anti-apartheid artists like Albert Adams.
[132] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Hendrickse

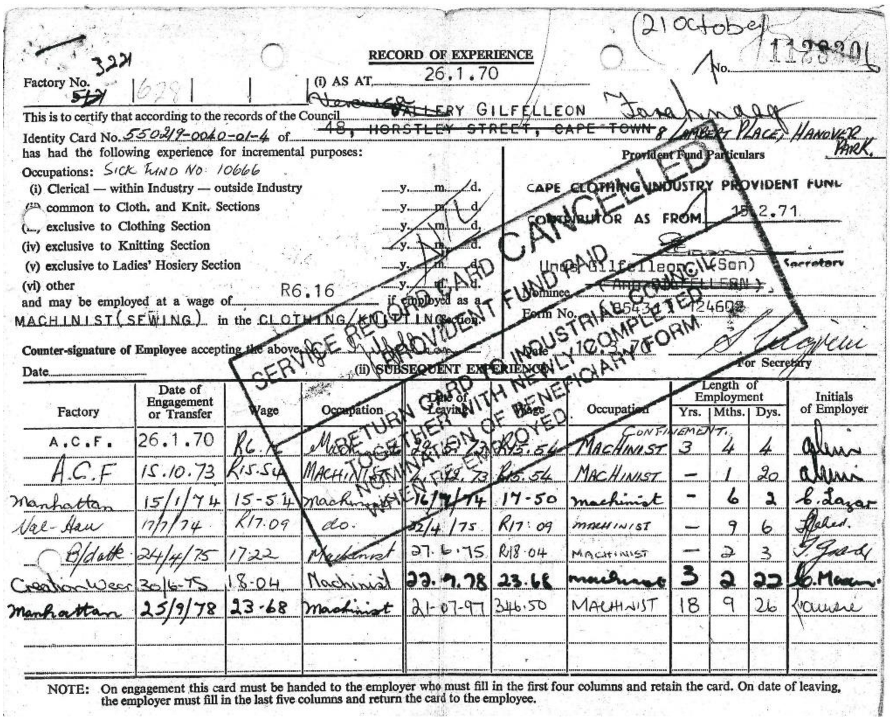
school learners is not to glorify people with qualifications but to counteract the ideas that are quite dominant in our school workshop group discussions about the roots of inequality in South Africa – the ideas that dominate are paraphrased here: *'…all white people are qualified; Indians have businesses or are Doctors and Dentists; coloureds are teachers, factory girls and artisans; and black people are domestic workers, labourers and sometimes nurses'*. Many learners under the guidance of parents and teachers, no doubt, harbour the idea that qualified black people are a gift of affirmative action in the post-apartheid period. This forms part of a deeply held, if simplistic belief that all opportunities today are for black people who were unqualified during apartheid.

The recorded discussion is a typical example of how the 'formality' of the interview (however much it was conducted in a relaxed tone) changes the nature of the response to the same subject in a setting where Farahnaaz is passionate about driving home her point. My observation is that her instincts are sharper, and she is more assertive with school learners and District Six community peers.

c) The problem with memory – fragility, cognitive dissonance, and trauma

Some issues with a lapse in memory are minor and have little impact while others, if filled in with fabrications, can have a huge impact within families and when it becomes part of creating public archives. The bigger issues about memory, erasure, forgetting and reconstitution of our personal pasts are related to the ability of the brain to recall pasts into old age, experiences of unspoken trauma that may spark a cognitive dissonance response in individuals when put into uncomfortable positions in relation to a past event or memory, and the stage of identity formation where people naturally tend to shed aspects of their past selves in order to move on as newly imagined selves, if possible. The scope and length of this thesis does not allow me to explore these elements in much depth except to note that I have observed, in interviews and informal engagements, with both Farahnaaz and Ruth, various manifestations of the unreliability of memory. I was not prepared to investigate the opaque areas of personal memory without the professional counselling skills and knowledge at my disposal. Psychologists like Elizabeth Loftus have done extensive work in this field (Loftus, 1980, 1988) that is not part of the core objectives of this research project. In the work of the Museum with oral history, this problem with memory was always partially solved by the multi-modal ways of working with former residents of District Six and beyond as well as by providing many discursive spaces for the collective contestation that comes with 'recalling community'(Rassool & Proselendis, 2001a).

Worth noting, however, is the importance of triangulating the information gathered from memories brought to light in interviews with the available material evidence about it. Both Ruth and Farahnaaz were encouraged to collect documentary evidence for the main events and moments in their life history. Farahnaaz kept original copies of her pregnancy, her child's medical records, her own school portraits, and her work records. This was useful in helping her to construct her personal timeline and to verify basic biographical facts. To illustrate, in the interview (20 April 2019), Farahnaaz indicates that she turned 14 years old in the year she started work at Ensign (p16 of the transcript). This means that the decision of hers to leave school, as she remembers, was made at the age of 13 years old. Her own personal archive records show, however, that she started work at African Clothing Factory (Ensign) on 26th January 1970 (see her Clothing Industry work experience record below). As she was born on 19th February 1955 this means she turned 15 years old.


RECORD OF EXPERIENCE

(21 October) No. 1128201

Factory No. 3221 1628

(i) AS AT 26.1.70

This is to certify that according to the records of the Council ~~Veronica~~ ~~MALLERY~~ GILFELLEON Farahnaaz

Identity Card No. 550219-0040-01-4 of ~~48, HORSTLEY STREET, CAPE TOWN~~ 8 Lambert Place, Hanover Park.

has had the following experience for incremental purposes:

Occupations: SICK FUND NO 10666

(i) Clerical — within Industry — outside Industry ....y....m....d.

(ii) common to Cloth. and Knit. Sections ....y....m....d.

(iii) exclusive to Clothing Section ....y....m....d.

(iv) exclusive to Knitting Section ....y....m....d.

(v) exclusive to Ladies' Hosiery Section ....y....m....d.

(vi) other ....y....m....d.

and may be employed at a wage of R6.16 if employed as a MACHINIST (SEWING) in the CLOTHING/KNITTING Section.

Counter-signature of Employee accepting the above

Date

Provident Fund Particulars

CAPE CLOTHING INDUSTRY PROVIDENT FUND

CONTRIBUTOR AS FROM 15.2.71

Secretary

Nominee Unus Gilfelleon (Son) ~~(ANDREW GILFELLEON)~~

Form No. 854311 124602

Date 10.3.70

For Secretary

CANCELLED

SERVICE RECORD CARD

PROVIDENT FUND PAID

RETURN CARD TO INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL TOGETHER WITH NEWLY COMPLETED NOMINATION OF BENEFICIARY FORM WHEN RE-EMPLOYED.

(ii) SUBSEQUENT EXPERIENCE

Factory	Date of Engagement or Transfer	Wage	Occupation	Date of Leaving	Wage	Occupation	Length of Employment Yrs.	Mths.	Dys.	Initials of Employer
A.C.F.	26.1.70	R6.16	Machinist	29.5.73	R15.54	MACHINIST (CONFINEMENT)	3	4	4	[illegible]
A.C.F	15.10.73	R15.54	MACHINIST	4.12.73	R15.54	MACHINIST	–	1	20	[illegible]
Manhattan	15/1/74	15-54	machinist	16/7/74	17-50	machinist	–	6	2	C. Lazar
Val-Hau	17/7/74	R17.09	do.	22/4/75	R17:09	MACHINIST	–	9	6	[illegible]
B/dalk	24/4/75	17.22	Machinist	27.6.75	R18.04	MACHINIST	–	2	3	[illegible]
Creation Wear	30/6-75	18-04	Machinist	22.9.78	23.68	machinist	3	2	22	C. Ma[illegible]
Manhattan	25/9/78	23-68	Machinist	21-07-97	346.50	MACHINIST	18	9	26	[illegible]

NOTE: On engagement this card must be handed to the employer who must fill in the first four columns and retain the card. On date of leaving, the employer must fill in the last five columns and return the card to the employee.

6.2 COMMUNITY: FAMILY, IDENTITY, CULTURE

In teasing out meanings with Ruth and Farahnaaz for this section, the dominant narratives about District Six as a displaced 'coloured' community was rather enveloping. A quick google search

of District Six brings up a mainly racially described community that scholars, tourists, or local visitors are casually presented with as confirmed, agreed upon and normalized:

Condenast Traveller describes District Six as a **'mixed-race'** community[133]; *Atlas Obscura* describes it as "a bohemian, mixed neighbourhood in every sense of the word. It was crowded with a **multiracial blend** of working-class people, Jews, Muslims, and Christians alike, many of whom were descended from formerly enslaved people and immigrants."[134]; *The Lonely Planet* sees it as 'the once lively **multiracial** area that was destroyed during apartheid in the 1960s and 1970s'[135]; *SA-Venues* points out that the museum is 'A memorial to the forced removal of 60 000 residents **of various races** from District Six, a former inner-city residential area during apartheid.'[136] *City Sightseeing* encourages visitors to the Museum to learn about 'this once colourful hub' and then later clarifies this as 'the once lively *multi-racial area* that was forcefully removed during apartheid in the 1960s and 1970s.'[137]

The *Cape Town Pass* website stands out as referencing the Museum's preferred description of the District Six community as 'a thriving mixed community of freed slaves, merchants, artisans, labourers and immigrants'[138] where race is not foregrounded in the labelling of people and the diversity that made the place is acknowledged as deriving from class and multiple geographical locations.

This idea of coloured is, regularly used to describe a 'race' of people that is of mixed heritage where this implies, in its simplest 'Trevor Noah[139]' form, the mixing of a *pure* white person with a *pure* black person to produce, what has travelled across centuries of disputed human knowledge, a 'bastardised' person – the mulatto, mixed-breed, coloured. Despite all the scientific evidence that race does not exist as a biological entity, this idea of 'pure' and mixed blood people persists. It continues to live in society, enmeshed with fixed ideas about distinct cultural practices that fail to hold up when deeply scrutinised. In popular public discourse, most reference to the identity of the people of District Six sees this as a fixed construct even while acknowledging the multiple geographic regions of the world from which its ancestry is drawn. This stable idea of identity inevitably groups all the different European strands into the

[133] https://www.cntraveler.com/activities/cape-town/district-six-museum
[134] https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/district-six-museum
[135] https://www.lonelyplanet.com/south-africa/cape-town/attractions/district-six-museum/a/poi-sig/1144322/355612
[136] https://www.sa-venues.com/attractionswc/district-six-museum.php
[137] https://www.citysightseeing.co.za/en/cape-town/district-six-museum
[138] https://www.capetownpass.com/cape-town-attractions/district-six-museum.html
[139] A South African comedian plying his trade in the USA where he trades on this idea of being 'mixed race'.

singular white 'race'; the different South East Asian strands into the Cape Malay culture; and the various African strands into the singular black 'race'. In this frame, new emergent voices representing self-described indigenous groups struggle to find their place, as they do not see themselves or are not allowed to see themselves, as 'African', a term mostly used to define tribal identities held in place through colonialist and apartheid ideologically driven societies – as in 'the Xhosa people', 'the Zulu people', 'the Sotho people' and so on. In the struggle to prove racial or cultural purity, coloured is seen as a denigrating term by many of those who view themselves as the 'first nation' people, conjuring up images of small populations who have remained untainted by mixing because they track their heritage directly to the survivors of the genocide of indigenous Khoi / Khoe and San communities, erasing much of the history of *miscegenation*[140] in the intervening years. Then we have very vocal groups who have traced Khoisan[141] heritage directly and proudly to coloured communities, ignoring the cultural links to the Nguni speaking people of Southern Africa like the clicks used in spoken language or Hlubi music where the practice of using the bow to generate sound is like that found in Khoi music, as a start. In *Lenses on Cape Town Identities*, Patric Tariq Mellet quotes the Lebanese French writer Amin Maalouf from his book 'On Identity' who refuses to be narrowly defined and insists on acknowledging the multiple ancestries from which he is born:

> ….pressed and ordered by whom? Not just by fanatics and xenophobes of all kinds, but also by you and me, by each and all of us. And we do so precisely because of habits of thought and expression deeply rooted in us all; because of a narrow, exclusive, bigoted, simplistic attitude that reduces identity in all its many aspects to one single affiliation, and one that is proclaimed in anger….I feel like shouting aloud that this is how murders are made – it's a recipe for massacres!(Mellet, 2009)

The idea that sees the people of Cape Town, a port city, as being born out of a creolization process (Mellet, 2009; Weeder, 2006) – similar to the character of most coastal communities throughout the world – where cultures (language, religion, knowledge, music, art) mix and

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[140] A concept that presupposes the natural existence of pure races of people in order for the mixing of blood (distinct DNA) to create a new 'mixed-race' – all of which have been debunked by scientific study but which persists in same way that there are people who believe the earth is flat, cigarettes do not cause cancer and climate change is a hoax.

[141] A concept, quite widely used, that collapses the Khoi/Khoe and San groups into one Anthropological entity. As Patric Mellet puts it in his extensively researched blog -https://herri.org.za/1/patric-tariq-mellet: 'In the beginning of the 20th century a German zoologist dabbling in anthropology decided that there was a single Khoisan 'race' that was part human and part beast. This 'Khoisan' line of thinking was soon taken up by Isaac Schapera who also expounded an erroneous linguistic theory that found resonance with the racist theories of Leonard Schultz': Schultz L; Aus Namaland und Kalahari; Berlin (1907) / Read with – Olusoga D & Erichsen C W; The Kaiser's Holocaust – Germany's forgotten genocide and the colonial roots of Nazism; pg 205Faber & Faber; London (1988).

blend in many ways within specific boundaries that remain porous, has become, ironically, muted during our democracy. During the anti-apartheid struggle, creolization was the dominant way in which progressive anti-racist people contested the Apartheid ideology of racial purity, but also the Congress movement, notion of the four-nation thesis[142] – rejecting a race-science way of describing people.

Many historians and other writers have reflected on the identity of District Six in more complex ways – collectively shedding light on the complex history of a community in constant re-imagination, socially constructed in multiple layers from times predating the colonial farm Zonnebloem that displaced indigenous people and continuing into the present – a time of contestation over who qualifies to return, symbolically and physically, (Adhikari, 2009; Mellet, 2009; O'Connell, 2018a; Soudien, 2008b, 2019).

My approach to race rests on the idea that it is socially constructed and culturally kneaded into tangibly observed communities in society, ring-fenced geographically and sustained through economic and political policies. This goes beyond the idea of only skin, hair, and eye colour to an alignment with language, accent, religious practices, urban, peri-urban or rural idiosyncrasies. Many other variables, over time, shape and reshape people's ideas of 'a race' within the confines of how big or small one's world is. Class[143], on the one hand, locks people into, for example, racially defined experiences that seemingly affirm stereotypes like: coloureds are people who eat *gatsbies,* chip rolls and parcels; blacks are people who eat uncleaned tripe from illegally occupied township pavements; or whites are all rich. On the other hand, class has also allowed upper middle-class people and elites to live *post-racial* lives and to practice being 'colour blind', if non-racialism is their world view, because they have the access to resources to re-imagine their material world and construct community on, virtually, their own terms. We know, however, that for many from the elite ruling class, the idea of race provides numerous opportunities to either justify or foment inequality. A belief in race, ideas about genetic superiority and eugenics become a convenient, not conspiratorial, theory about humanity to remain in positions of privilege that ensure capital, resources and the profits generated from production remain accessible to a few.

[142] The Congress Movement was led by the African National Congress (ANC) and adopted an organisational method that segregated members along Apartheid racial lines: The ANC for 'Africans'; The Natal Indian Congress for 'Indians'; The Coloured People's Congress for 'coloureds'; Congress of Democrats for 'whites'.
[143] My understanding of class derives from the Marxist concept describing people's relationship to the means of production. There is a dialectictical relationship that plays out dynamically in society between class, race, gender, sexuality and the politics of representation.

It is difficult for South Africans to think about themselves outside of racial categories as the world we find ourselves in is still struggling to emerge as a non-racial society yet government practices and institutions, at all levels, still require racial classification in employment, education, crime and accident reporting, to mention a few. The argument is that these 'demographics' aid planning and governance for reversing the material legacies and ongoing negative impacts of apartheid. Noting the absurdity of the many, who were either actively supportive of apartheid or silent about race and racism during apartheid, now arguing for a *colour-blind* approach to governance,[144] however, the main critique from people on the left of the political spectrum goes to the fundamental impact of apartheid – inequality. The basic argument here is that inequality manifests geographically in South Africa where the Population Registration Act, 1950, the Group Areas Act, 1950, together with a myriad of racially specific laws rigorously policed and shaped society during apartheid (with foundations created during the colonial period), but still imprinted into the post-apartheid landscape and mentality.

6.2.1. 'Mixed' District Six

Farahnaaz Gilfelleon expresses the identity of her family in the well-known 'Cape Town' way of exceptionalism that has often come to mean, 'we are not like them' where 'them', often, represents blackness. She vehemently denies that this is how she perceives herself as she 'doesn't see colour'. The generalisation that 'coloured' people love talking about and showing photographs of their Scottish, Irish, English, Dutch, and other European grandparents while their *other side* is erased or remains un-investigated and hazy, is often proven to be the case when entering people's homes or hearing people's stories. Some people argue that this comes from 'a people' who were stripped of their identity and then pieced it together by foregrounding the European bits to present an essentialised version to the world that would allow them to pass as close to being 'white' as possible. There are many documented and storied cases of families being split up when those siblings, light-skinned enough to legally pass as 'white' during apartheid, reconstituted themselves as such to access the privileges this afforded them. I grew up with gossip about 'the Barwicks now living as white people but, wait till the black comes

[144] Organisations like the Freedom Front, Solidarity, Afriforum, veterans of the Cape Corp (the Cape Coloured wing of the apartheid army) are the most notable right wing identarian organisations referred to here. The Democratic Alliance is the most notable for its stance on colour-blindness, often cherry - picking various iterations of the anti-racism arguments of icons like, especially, Mandela, Tutu, Martin Luther King about judging people by the content of their character and not their skin colour out of context or to argue against initiatives that broaden access to socio-economic spoils.

out in the grand-kids – see what their white neighbours say then' and where any affectation would be scathingly dismissed as 'play white'. These stories make up much of the *'fitnah'*[145] in the coloured townships of the Cape Flats, often finding expression in the '*moppies'*[146] produced for carnival time (reaching its crescendo around '*Tweede Nuwe Jaar'*[147]) in working class '*klopse kamers'*. It lives in communities as a kind of Leonard Cohen 'everybody knows' thing. This is true for the township stories that swirled around the '*pinkies*'[148] and '*yellow-bones'* [149]of the '*Native Yards'*.

Farahnaaz is very dark-skinned, was born in District Six and grew up in Horstely Street, the site of the 1901 displacement of 'Africans', scapegoated during the bubonic plague, to Uitvlugt, Ndabeni and then Langa Township. At first glance, the assumption is that she is a descendent of this community whose family escaped the displacement. Her account of her mother having French siblings (surname: Renamé) and a Rhodesian father with Scottish and Indian ancestry, is usually met with scepticism. This scepticism is reinforced when there is no photographic record of the father or the French siblings and the many photographs[150] of family members show very dark-skinned people. As with Richard Rive[151] as well as Sylvia Vollenhoven's experiences (Vollenhoven, 2016) as articulated in their writing about growing up in a virulently racist society, life for Farahnaaz must have been littered with disparaging name-calling. She insists that this did not matter to her and that she 'never experienced racism' despite quoting the racist labels that friends teased her with like *'swart-bessie'* [152](the most benign of all) without insult. This is a common trope about District Six racism – 'it was just meant as a joke'; 'it was all just fun'; 'it was just how we were in District Six. We had a good sense of humour';

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[145] *Fitnah* is the term used for gossip in Muslim communities but adopted as part of popular Cape Flats-speak.
[146] *Moppies* are the fun, entertaining songs that are created each year by specific '*klopse kamers'* (Carnival troupes / club headquarters) and presented in competition. The words usually poke fun at current social or political issues using classic poetic devices like rhymes, irony, hyperbole, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, amongst others.
[147] Translation: Second New Year - a reference to the 2nd January, the day of the traditional City Carnival parade that has its roots in the celebration of the emancipation of enslaved people at the Cape. Many middle-class elements as well as progressive people active in liberation politics, boycotted the carnival during apartheid as it was viewed as serving the interests of the apartheid government. The expropriation of this cultural practice by the Apartheid Government racialised the culture associated with carnival enforcing segregation laws that then affirmed the self-fulfilling prophesy of the 'Coon' parade associated with working class coloured communities and the 'Cape Malays'.
[148] '*Pinkies'*: translation - a popular nickname given to fair skinned girls / women in the townships of South Africa.
[149] *yellow-bones':* translation – a more recent addition to SA township discourse borrowed from USA popular culture. It is a way to describe light-skinned blacks and, for many in celebrity culture, a prized identity.
[150] Refer to Farahnaaz's memory catalogue: **ADDENDUM 5.**
[151] Richard Rive (1930-1989) was a writer, scholar, literary critic, and teacher from Cape Town. He is best known for his second novel, 'Buckingham Palace', District Six, based on the place where he grew up and amongst 'those who read' for his short stories written in the late 1950s.
[152] *'swart-bessie': translation – black berry.* Currently this has taken on another layer of meaning with the idea of the Blackberry phone considered widely to be useless – as in Black people are useless!

are a few examples usually accompanied by, 'don't be so sensitive' when faced with disbelief at how oppressed communities can so easily turn towards oppressing those amongst us.

My scepticism about how Farahnaaz chooses to track her ancestry, based purely on what I see in her skin colour, reveals a basic 'race science' fallacy – a belief that common DNA is dominantly manifested in superficial biological characteristics like skin colour, hair texture and so forth. I am reminded of this by a piece in the Guardian newspaper, *why race science is on the rise again*:

> It was only towards the end of the 20th century that genetic data revealed that the human variation we see is not a matter of hard types but small and subtle gradations, each local community blending into the next. As much as 95% of the genetic difference in our species sits *within* the major population groups, not between them. Statistically, this means that, although I look nothing like the white British woman who lives upstairs, it's possible for me to have more in common genetically with her than with my Indian-born neighbour.[153](Saini, 2019)

Imagine the power of a deeply racist society to produce a visceral reaction to skin colour from one who was taught in a New Unity Movement high school biology class about the non-existence of race and the complexity of how DNA presents in the human body and who then goes on to specialise in teaching about the dangers of race science, eugenics and racism! In the absence of photographic evidence, Farahnaaz's narrative of her family roots might seem unbelievable but it is also not proof to the contrary, despite the weight of evidence of 'play-whitism' in South African oppressed communities.

Ruth's story is different in that she articulates her 'mixed-family' heritage as an act of healing and she continues to search for family members 'lost' during apartheid. Her story, scripted by herself, acknowledges all the hurt she and her siblings endured in District Six having to run the gauntlet of racist name-calling and low-level bullying because her father's Sotho ancestry was evident in the family surname of Phala, that she proudly reiterates when having to announce her name in public. This, for her, and for all the reasons grounded in the above-mentioned perspectives on how race and racism is foregrounded in South African reality, is an act of resistance and healing that she re-enacts each time she tells her story to school learners,

[153] From an extract of *Superior* written by Angela Saini*: The Return of Race Science* published by 4th Estate titled: *Why race science is on the rise again*. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/may/18/race-science-on-the-rise-angela-saini; Also, read an earlier article by Gavin Evans, *The unwelcome revival of 'race science'* in response to its popular reincarnation of 'white supremacy' in the Alt-right movement: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/02/the-unwelcome-revival-of-race-science

university students and visitors. Her family lived out, the last years of District Six, in the well-known Bloemhof Flats[154] (Pistorius et al., 2002, p. 44) and was exposed to a 'classical' culture in a family encouraged to learn to play music and participate in sport.

Ruth's family resembles that of many Cape Town working- and lower middle-class families disciplined in a church upbringing, with a strong matriarchal and home bound figure in the form a mother whose primary role was to marshal the domestic front with a large brood of ten, born between 1941 and 1958. In our recorded discussion she talked about this in a similar way to how I used to, when wondering about how it was possible, during difficult economic times and constrained opportunities, for my mother to stay at home and have six children! In reflecting on this, Ruth recalls "… my school friends always said, 'whenever we visit your house your mother is pregnant.'" Going on to describe her family situation, where there are just too many siblings to name, she tells the story of the birth of the twins in her family when she is in her last year at high school and alludes to the challenges she would have to face helping her mother with childcare. She goes from a feeling of exasperation towards her mother (her father is almost seen as a mere deliverer of the news without any responsibility for the pregnancy) to one of being 'heartsore' when her father announces the birth of twins – a girl and a boy:

> ... my sister, there was two years between her and my other sister - two years (counting on her fingers). Then me, three years between us. Then my brother – after him, the children were 11 months [apart] – so my mother was pregnant when I was in Grade 12 and then I said 'Ooh jinne, this woman is pregnant again and I'm so big (meaning age) already. My friend said [jokingly] 'but it's time for you to have children, you know.' But, at any rate, my mother booked in at the Peninsula Hospital and my father took her over. We waited and we waited because the boy said if mommy comes home now it will be a boy. It must be a boy. I said why? He said, you girls are ruling this house for far too long…My father came home ... my father looked at the boys and he said, 'It's a boy!' Ooh, and the boys were so excited it's a boy but then he looked at us and he said, '…and a girl!' So, it was twins and I was very heartsore because it was an extra baby to look after. I had to look after the babies and that twins was not an easy job, not at all.[155]

[154] The modernist Canterbury Square – Bloemhof Flats were built in the 1930s after slum clearance of Wells Square.
[155] We map out the details of her siblings in the attached 'Family tree' developed as part of Ruth's own life history construction.

Bloemhof Flats is remembered by many in District Six as famously/notoriously as the 'Coons', Seven Steps, and the special District Six lingo [156] that still lives on in the working-class coloured areas of the city, now being slowly codified as Afrikaaps. Stories derived from the Bloemhof Flats part of District Six, however, is recalled in a more muted way, some would say more erudite, than has become the stereotypical ways of representing District Six that we see in the work of Taliep Petersen and David Kramer which spawned, and continues to inspire, a plethora of 'Broadway style' stage plays, mostly musical and mostly 'performing coloured'- an essentialised version of the 'coloured' experience. The associations that stand out regarding Bloemhof Flats is more in line with stories of opera, classical readings and performances, sporting achievements in everything from football, cricket, chess, table tennis, weightlifting, wrestling (Olympic style) and boxing and academic achievements. Richard Rive[157] is notable as having struggled with the contradiction of being an anti-apartheid activist[158] with a progressive ideology about race and identity on the one hand, and yet, in his mannerisms and affectations, represented the *right-proper* colonial subject that we see when we travel in the footprints of the British Empire.

Ruth Phala Jeftha's family, like the Kadalies[159] and, also, the many aspirant middle-class families of District Six as well as the many intellectuals given the critical nod in the *Cape Radicals* (Soudien, 2019) as well as referenced in Bill Nasson's *History Matters* (2016), also reimagine themselves through adopting mannerisms, elocution and deportment representative of the English elites. What is quite clear is that there is no direct correlation between the

[156] Mohammed Adhikari and Kay McCormick have done, separately, extensive work on this. Others, like Richard Rive, Alex Laguma, Adam Small, the David Kramer & Taliep Petersen stable of entertainers and more recently, Heal the Hood's Emile X with Quinton 'Jitsvinger' Goliath, have used the 'District Six lingo' or more accurately, Afrikaaps in many of their creative productions.

[157] My knowledge of Rive is derived from the schooling milieu I grew up in. South Peninsula High School is my alma mater and one of the educational institutions he taught at. His reputation as an Oxford educated writer was presented as the foremost part of the SPHS legacy, mimicking much of what sustained the *learning culture* at prominent white English and Afrikaans schools – a strong heritage as represented by pedigreed scholars in their midst. We just did not have the statues and plaques back then to cement this heritage. His reputation for predatory behaviour towards schoolboys and his demeaning of the 'stupid' kids were giggled about but tolerated because of who he was. Through the stage productions of Basil Appollis and Sylvia Vollenhoven I have come to understand the deep woundedness he had to deal with as the only dark-skinned child in a family with a racist mother. Shaun Viljoen's 2013, Richard Rive: a partial Biography is worth noting for a more complex take on Rive.

[158] He was a prominent member in the non-racial South African Council on Sport (SACOS) movement and was also active in various anti-apartheid writers' networks as well as in the international boycott of Apartheid SA movement.

[159] Clements Kadalie, widely known as the founder of the Industrial Commercial Union (1919), born in Malawi, planted roots in District Six and died in the Eastern Cape in 1951. The Kadalies are a well-known District Six family with diverse political affiliations today (Rhoda Kadalie is an outspoken and fervent Zionist and Trump supporter from a family with strong history of resistance politics and liberation theology throughout the apartheid years). NB***Throughout my teaching life I have taught about Clements Kadalie and other political leaders that I have a familiarity with their histories not requiring a specific source for this information, for this thesis.

everyday performance of identity that people evolve into, over time (for whatever reason) and political aspirations. These two seemingly opposite identities, one socio-cultural and the other political co-exist dynamically within many stalwarts of the anti-colonial struggles – that I will not go into here for fear of digressing too far.

At the other end of the class spectrum, District Six is celebrated for its 'colourful' and vibrant culture – often code for the culture of the 'Cape Coloureds', an identity microwaved during apartheid and in alliance with the white Nationalist Party Government. Here, for example, Hanover Street's vibrancy has been memorialised in the writing of people as politically far apart as Alex Laguma and Adam Small. Richard Rive, also, captures working class District Six in his much celebrated 'Buckingham Palace' where the characters, colloquialisms and storylines all reflect the lives of the vagabonds, prostitutes, gentleman gangsters, the coons, store-owners, shopkeepers and hawkers he sought out, growing up in District Six. This aspect of District Six life and culture has great traction in the popular memory of District Six.

While maintaining a progressive critique of the 'apartheid collaborator'[160] or 'gangster *gamtaal*[161]' veneer that more middle-class elements in the District Six and broader Cape Town community (maybe even South African society) have characterised this culture as, it remains important to dig deeper into the complexities of the relationship between language, consciousness, and politics. Afrikaaps is best described as a progressive movement, inspired in equal parts by the work of: Achmat Davids[162] who, in his research, reclaimed Afrikaans as a language of the oppressed - the emancipated slaves who settled in the Bo-Kaap and District Six; Neville Alexander[163] who viewed language as consciousness and had always been a critical voice in the face of the demonisation of Afrikaans during the anti-apartheid struggles (especially the framing of the Soweto 'riots' that was sparked by the enforcement of Afrikaans

[160] As is the legacy of Adam Small in Cape Town left politics and, unfortunately, this politically shamed a powerful form of working-class expression that, I believe, drove many potential allies into the arms of the National Party and now is being re-played by ANC-DA politics.

[161] 'gam' is a derogatory term that is used, within the 'coloured' community to describe uncouth people and often just as a label for working class 'coloured' people who communicate in what is now called 'Afrikaaps' or Cape Flats Afrikaans slang. '*gamtaal*': translation- *gam* language (*taal*) is now a reference to Afrikaaps that includes many indigenous Khoe words that Sylvia Vollenhoven, June Bam (UCT historian) and Bradlox (indigenous Language teacher) have all referenced in their work.

[162] Achmat Davids was a prominent Bo-Kaap (Scotcheskloof) based historian who researched the Afrikaans of the emancipated enslaved people, many of whom arrived or became, Cape Muslims and its first written form in Arabic.

[163] Neville Alexander (1936-2012) was a former Robben Island political prisoner, teacher, academic, historian, linguist and Internationalist. During the final stages of the struggle against Apartheid he was involved with the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) and the Cape Action League, an alternative (on a much smaller scale), to the United Democratic Front (UDF) and during our democracy he headed the UCT based, PRAESA (Project for the study of Alternative Education in South Africa) until his death in 2012.

language subject teaching, as an anti-Afrikaans language movement); the poetry of Adam Small who celebrated the Cape Flats brogue (Small & Wissema, 1986); and the more recent *Afrikaaps movement* given much publicity around the expressive art of people in the hip hop, jazz and indigenous music scene. Writer Quenton Williams, succinctly illuminates this new movement in the influential expressive arts world in a 2016 article titled, 'Afrikaaps is an act of reclamation'(Williams, 2016):

> In recent years, Afrikaaps emerged as a new form of linguistic activism, going almost unnoticed in South Africa. Members of the movement such as Blaq Pearl, Bliksemstraal, Jethro Louw, Moenier Adams, Emile YX?, Shane Cooper, Quintin Jitsvinger and Kyle Shepherd are doing the deconstructive work usually reserved for Afrikaans sociolinguists immersed in the study of language, race and power.[164]

What is primarily significant about the Bloemhof Flats, however, is how it is remembered. For some it was a slum policed by gangsters. Ruth, with her husband Desmond chiming in, vehemently disagrees with this and provides her own characterisation:

> No, no. It was kwaai. Os het gehet[165] French doors opening …going to the stoep.[166] No, it was nice. Wat se slum! The gangs were respectful…not living here, from somewhere else. They would corner us, [but] come because they had friends here… they would stand, and they would sing on the corners. My mother sometimes went (over): 'Listen here, my children are studying! You can't make a noise tonight. Hulle (her brother and Abdullah Ebrahim, the famous jazz musician, who lived around her) het uitgehou. Hy't uitgehang by sy ma se huis.[167] Dollar Brand. My brother wrote a lot of music for him. They had a weightlifting club here. Tina's[168] father was also there.

On the one hand, the gangster association is an accurate one, sometimes acknowledged with shame or embarrassment and, on other occasions, remembered for what it was – sociologically part of the urban development of many cities where gangsters become centrally involved in the informal local economies (fronts for the laundering of the ill-gotten gains from theft,

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[164] From an article by Quenton Williams in the Mail and Guardian, https://mg.co.za/article/2016-12-15-00-afrikaaps-is-an-act-of-reclamation/

[165] '… *kwaai. Os het gehet*…': translation - It was great. We used to have…

[166] '…*stoep*.' Translation: veranda

[167] '*Hulle het uitgehou. Hy't uitgehang by sy ma se huis*': translation: They used to hang out. He would hang out at his mother's place.

[168] Tina Smith is being referred to here. She is the head of exhibitions at the District Six Museum. Her grandfather's family, on her mother's side - the Fransmans - lived in the Bloemhof Flats and was a well-known boxing personality.

prostitution, drugs, and illegal alcohol sales). For many others, some of whom have moved on from the nostalgia for District Six, the gangster association is relived as a traumatic memory of childhood bullying in a lawless and amoral slum. This account of District is often dismissed as a false memory, the account of people who were *'sturvy'*[169], or a fabricated narrative by those who collaborated with Apartheid. In documented evidence from the oral histories of varied people who reference the Globe gang and other gang members in their stories of District Six, it is a correct characterisation of some of the people who made up the District Six community. Joe Schaffers, a former resident of the Bloemhof Flats remembers[170], with fondness, the gangster 'friends' he grew up with, rolling joints[171] as a youngster at *Mams Tette* (the eponymous, well-known Shebeen Queen) for some pocket money. While seemingly not as vicious as the gangsters today, many of the gangs of Cape Town have roots in District Six and, with forced removals to the Cape Flats, survived into the more powerful and violent forms that grew to control many aspects of Cape Flats life, filling in the tattered fabric of broken communities. In the absence of democratic local governance and where the police mainly fulfilled a political function to police apartheid laws, gangs and gangsters became the *de facto* local government, providing families in need with everything from the most obvious, employment (as gangs do), luxury items for favours, they ran the protection rackets and the less obvious services like facilitating access to housing, social security, musical instruments, and cultural experiences. This is powerfully presented and reiterated in *The Brotherhoods: street gangs and state control in Cape Town* (Pinnock, 1982). For young males faced with unemployment, poor education and recreation facilities and displaced to barren landscapes without the social and cultural cohesion that existed, from most accounts, in places like District Six, the gangs on the Cape Flats provided a sense of belonging as well as rites of passage (Pinnock, 1997) into a particular idea of manhood – the patriarchal male as fighter, provider and protector.

Don Pinnock, (Pinnock, 1982, 1997), Elaine Salo (Salo, 2018) and other sociologists, historians, social workers as well as teachers at Cape Flats schools have written or spoken about the role of gangs in the City and their connections to the gangs of District Six. These

[169] *'Sturvy'*: translation - Snobbish

[170] This forms part of *Joe's story – 'The colour of my skin'* - that he shares with many visitors to the Museum as well as with other groups of visitors to the City.

[171] Joe Schaffers is a well-known sports and music personality on the local Cape Jazz circuit. He grew up in the Bloemhof Flats of District Six and often shares the story of 'rolling joints' (preparing marijuana or as it is locally known, 'dagga' smokes) for the local shebeen queen, *Mams Tette.* Despite this he has never been a smoker of tobacco or marijuana products nor a gang member. This is typical of many people on the Cape Flats and perfectly illustrates the dangers of stereotypes and lazy generalisations.

connections, however, are not mere replications (Salo, 2003, 2018) of District Six gang culture but the influence of the developing local culture in a place like Manenberg, for example, reshapes gang life from the gentleman gangsters to a more vicious manifestation. An added dimension is that Cape town gangster culture is often used synonymously as 'coloured' in the same way that the mafia in New York is linked in language, sensibility, and culture to American Italians. Apartheid apologists use this as well as the fact that District Six was a slum to justify the forced removals and destruction of District Six. Much like evictions and gentrification today, the excuse is about city improvement. The Sustainable Urban and Housing Development Research Unit (SUHDRU - Cape Technikon[172]) notes

6.2.2. Experience of abuse, violence

In my time working in education at the District Six Museum, I have encountered many views about the romanticism of District Six and how much of the negative aspects of the place has been filtered out in the process of presenting District Six to the world. This is true in many respects as is the case when nostalgia blurs into history in general processes of recalling back the past to deal with loss – of youth or as trauma. In the transition from Apartheid, we saw a resistance to the creation of a democracy built on the foundation of a genuine 'reconciliation with our past' – a reckoning that Museums like the District Six Museum, Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum and Robben Island Museum could contribute to. At moments, resistance to our recalling of memory with former residents, took on the form of heightened racism as well as good old-fashioned middle-class snobbery, about the 'coloureds' of District Six, the 'innate' violence and their ongoing gang associations through the *coon carnival* and *klopse kamers* (superficially dismissed as 'gang headquarters' for money laundering and drug distribution).

I confronted both Ruth and Farahnaaz with this idea of District Six and it was received in much the same way that many former residents, longing for return, have. The gangsters are remembered almost fondly as 'gentlemen gangsters' who dressed well and looked after the elderly and most vulnerable. My own mom and dad frequented the bioscopes of District Six to see the latest Audrey Hepburn movie but also banned and 'blue' movies (not by today's standards) and often came back with stories of encounters with 'nice' or handsome gangsters who were 'naughty' and provided entertainment as the singing corner boys. To what extent

[172] Cape Technikon was the name of the then *whites only* institution before it became the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) after the political transition in 1994.

these are innocent tropes that have become hegemonic in how people recall the recent past, requires more detailed and concentrated research but many of these accounts triangulate – have been confirmed in individual accounts of people with no connection or personal history with each other. The ways in which ideas, including false memories, get passed on, however, still require much scrutiny.

The only experience of abuse and violence that Ruth opens[173] about is the traumatic killing of her musically talented brother, Christian, a policeman, in Mitchell's Plain - a marked difference to her recall of life with so-called gangsters in District Six. There is an argument to be made about how the trauma of forced removals had the effect of diminishing the many other internal acts of violence that people may have experienced on the streets or in their homes. This thesis does not deal with this level of personal exploration of individual experience. I do not have the Psychological trauma counselling skills to deal with the fall-out.

Farahnaaz's account of what drove her to leave school when she was 14 years old reveals all the insecurities that working class and oppressed people carry within when making otherwise simple life decisions. The influence of those who have embraced the self-image of a flawed idea of 'clever' as is the case here with Farahnaaz's sister is devastating in young people's life-choices. Parents, and teachers play a big role in the idea that being clever is a natural rather than a nurtured quality and we have seen how, in the formative years of a child's life before the necessary remedial interventions are employed, their self-belief is disrupted as is indicated in this account by Farahnaaz:

> *'Hulle gat my slat oppie skool'.* My sister used to say that because she was clever! *Oe jinne, sy was slim!* She said, '*Hulle gat jou slat. Djy wat nie jou maths ken nie'*. … I only found out (later) …, when you go to high school …that is where they don't hit you. It's only at primary school (that they hit you). They only scold you [when] you (do) wrong but she was putting the fear into me…When I went and worked, *hulle se sy praat nonsens. Hulle slat nie meer kinnes in die high school nie. Hulle praat moet hulle.* [174]

[173] I do not make the assumption here that Ruth has experienced violence in the sense that this is commonly understood as. By indicating that she has not opened up about violence is merely signaling that sphere of violence has taken on quite a vast interpretation with the recognition of symbolic violence and structural violence.

[174] *'Hulle gat my slat oppie skool': translation* – They (teachers) are going to hit me at (high) school; *Oe jinne, sy was slim:* translation – 'Oh, gee, she (her sister) was clever'*; Hulle gat jou slat. Djy wat nie jou maths ken nie!':* translation – They will hit you… You that don't know your maths!; *'…hulle se sy praat nonsens':* translation – They say she (her sister) speaks nonsense; *Hulle slat nie meer kinnes in die high school nie. Hulle praat moet hulle:* translation – They don't hit kids anymore in high school. They speak to them.

I read this response by Farahnaaz for what it did not say and, maybe, even unable to articulate in sociological terms. The approach of sociologists like Bourdieu is helpful in making sense of Farahnaaz's seemingly knee-jerk reasoning behind her early departure from formal education. Seen through the frame of 'symbolic violence' in society as it relates to theories about the social reproduction of capital and the structural constraints that reproduce inequality (Bourdieu, 1989, 1996, 2015; Dirks & Eley, 1994; Fine, 2017; Portes, 1998; Silva, 2016) helps us to view working class lives in more empathetic ways. People are not just *'stupid'* but are up against major structural constraints in a society that deals out opportunities to some and roadblocks or 'invisible ceilings' to others. Farahnaaz's response to the circumstances she faces is not inevitable, however, and a thorough reading of Viktor Frankl (Frankl, 1959) and Paulo Freire's takes on agency is insightful.

Teaching and family culture during apartheid is often remembered nostalgically for how corporal punishment enabled discipline, focus and how it kept children on the right path to success. Any instance of crime, or perceived failure is met with, 'back in the day a good *klap*[175] would have solved the problem'. The many negative experiences of trauma and 'revolving door' crimes and misdemeanours are rarely factored in for a more balanced account of the impact of school, family, and community discipline violence in the discipline of wayward children. I suspect that Farahnaaz was one such wayward child from her own recall of being a 'stubborn' child always 'talking back' and digging her heels in when treated unfairly or not getting her way. I have no doubt that if she had the conceptual and writing abilities of Sylvia Vollenhoven (Vollenhoven, 2016) or Pat Fahrenfort (Fahrenfort, 2012) then her own story would be more layered than just:

> (I was) not naughty. Say, if you don't know your words – like for instance in history, Mr (indistinct)... would teach us the history, the dates and places and the names and the teachers this week for you…on the board. When he comes into class next week, he rubs all that off and he says [for example] 'Say… [the] five names of the castle?' And if you don't remember you get cuts on your hands. Katzenelenbogen, Oranje, Leerdam ... He would hit me every week until (I) can remember that ... in (my) sleep.... If you remember two names, you get two hidings ...Dates and places and things like that. He hit you every time.

[175] '*klap'*: translation - literally a smack with the hand across the face but also used to refer to a more extensive 'good hiding.'

This is truly a harrowing account, for me, of the process of teaching and learning that Farahnaaz recalls in almost an admiring way. She buys into the idea that knowledge is about memorising facts. This is affirmed by an oral history event we had at the Manenberg Public library in 2018 where she encounters one of her old primary school teachers who she introduces to me proudly as a good teacher who used to hit them when they did not learn fast enough – another flawed idea that being a successful learner is related to the speed with which you accumulate or 'bank' knowledge. As a life-long aspiring 'Freirean' educator, every fibre in my body is mobilised against this idea of a learning culture. Farahnaaz deserved more from a society that failed to recognise her curiosity for learning.

6.2.3. Class dynamics in NEUM schools during the 1960s – 80s

Trafalgar High School was quite a renowned academic school in District Six with a strong political reputation alongside Harold Cressy High School. It was also a school dominated by the Unity Movement (New Unity Movement – NUM, formerly NEUM) politics. From many accounts and from my own experience at a NEUM dominated school, South Peninsula High School (SP), this would have been quite intimidating for kids who did not have a strong sense of themselves as 'academic'. These schools prided themselves on a strong resistance politics as well as on a strong academic and scholarly culture. Zuleiga Adams recollection is insightful here. All her older sisters and mother were factory workers and members of 'the union'. This enabled them to pave the way for her, as she showed potential and was a good academic student, to go to Trafalgar High, transfer to an English class, get a union bursary to support her graduate studies at UCT and become the first teacher in the family. She recalled the prejudice that Afrikaans speaking kids experienced at these schools and that this created an invisible ceiling for learners in the Afrikaans stream. This, of course, requires a more in-depth study or a survey, at least, of learners from Afrikaans classes at Trafalgar High during the 1970s and where they ended up. The dominant impression, that I share from my experience of coloured schooling in the 1970s and then as a teacher in the late 1980s and 1990s, is that Afrikaans speaking learners in English language schools were encouraged to shift to an English medium instruction class if they showed great academic potential. This created a systemic barrier for Afrikaans speaking learners to get ahead academically and many were streamed into factory or other similar working-class life and often became labelled as 'drop-outs'. Many were able to break through the ceiling, but with little help from 'the system'.

Adhoc Junior Secondary in Walmer Estate was a school that was not recognised for its academic achievements and it is generally known that kids who were not considered 'academic' were streamed into these schools as preparation for a 'practical' role in life – factory, retail or domestic work. Reading between the lines it appears as if both Farahnaaz and her sister, Theresa, internalised this idea about who was eligible for acceptance to a school like Trafalgar and the role that Maths (and Science – code for academic vs practical schooling) played in streaming (sorting) kids through the system.

I continued to prod a bit deeper to try to figure out if there was any other pressure on, or inspiration for Farahnaaz to continue with her schooling as she insists, she loved school, especially reading. This comes out in her own scripted story that she shares with school groups who visit the Museum as well as in the narrative that she has developed along with the suitcase exhibition that toured community libraries in 2018 – 2019. In my conversations with Farahnaaz I have been quite honest with her, as a former English language teacher, about my doubts about her having a strong reading culture or, at least, that we disagree about the definition and nature of being a 'strong reader'. I indicated to her the different kinds of readers that we, as language teachers, identify and that being a 'good reader' or having a love for reading can take on many forms. Initially this part of our conversation (mainly unrecorded), revisited at various points in our relationship – in informal chats or in workshop situations – veered into sensitive territory. I was constantly mindful of how the many ways in which people choose to self-describe becomes engraved into our sense of identity, belonging and worth, and that I had to be careful about not allowing my need for clarity to infringe on Farahnaaz's sense of her worth. The idea of loving reading and being a good reader in my mind, is how she can assert her sense of belonging in a world beyond factory life where the dominant[176] image is one of 'illiterate' people who are incapable of engaging in complex intellectual activities.

It is important to note the role a sense of shame, associated with certain jobs in society, plays in the choices that people make in life. This is not fixed and changes as the norms and culture shifts and, also, differs according to how weak or strong people's senses of self and purpose are. Individual, family, school, religious institutions, community, and the wider socio-economic culture interact in dynamic ways to contribute to an individual's sense of worth. The historical moment and the socio-economic and political imperatives of the time also contribute

[176] By dominant I do not mean that this is an idea about factory workers that everyone in society holds. I do insist, however, that this is an idea that is promoted throughout the halls and institutions of power in society igniting and keeping these stereotypical ideas about factory workers shrouded in a veneer of common sense.

to the dominant ideas about the status of work life and the socio-cultural value this transfers onto individuals. Today, factory workers are invisibilised, deemed unessential, and in most places of the world, work as enslaved cheap labour. The idea that a factory worker deserves a decent, safe work environment, job security and a full package of benefits (retirement, medical-aid, sick leave, holidays) is seen as superfluous to economic growth and an unnecessary investment. Work in factories, on the assembly line, for people in the earlier part of the century evoked quite different sensibilities about status and people's place in the world. The rise of the manufacturing industry did not provide job security and benefits until unions were organised and fought to achieve these. Despite this, as is illustrated in Robert Tressell's *Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*, Jack London's *Iron Heel* and many other fictionalised accounts of working-class lives, workers were defined by their consciousness. Bertolt Brecht's poem, *a worker who reads* powerfully illustrates this drive to depict class-conscious workers as dignified and intellectual.

In a video[177] about home life in the 1950s USA, the description reads "A union worker at home and at work. His wife goes grocery shopping. They listen to the radio. He reads the newspaper. The middle class was being formed. Couples play bridge. Families go to church. The children go to school." The picture of factory workers as aspirational middle-class members of society is very much in alignment with Manufacturing Industry workers of the 1950s – 1970s, Cape Town. This is evident in the photographs of Cape Town black communities going about their business, '*dressed to the nines'* with fabulous hairstyles and on trend, in the Hollywood celebrity styles of the time that have been on display in recent years (Bennett, 2008; Frieslaar, 2011; Newbury, 2013; O'Connell, 2015, 2017)

It is also evident in my own experience as a member of an aspirational middle-class family. My own father [178] worked at *Continental China*, a plate (crockery) factory before he went on his own, first as a ticket writer and then forming a small signwriting and screen-printing business. My mom, Edith neé Abrahamse, started her working life, after leaving Livingstone High School with a Standard Eight, Junior Certificate (JC level) as a worker (office, I think) at

[177] King Rose Archives, Global Image Works, NJ, USA. Mid Century Home life -- The 50s
It is unfortunate that I am unable to find footage like this from South Africa but the idea of dignity and respectability that is portrayed here is reminiscent of many working-class families with middle class aspirations (not used pejoratively).

[178] My father, Tommy, later became a ticket writer and sign writer for *Pick n Pay*, then *Bradlows* before going on his own and opening a family signwriting business, working with my two eldest brothers, Russell and Bruce when they left school. Later my sister Peggy and my third eldest brother Robin also worked at *'Sanger Signs'*. My younger brother, Michael, and I, as with Zuleiga Adam's situation as the younger children coming of age in the 1970s, were able to access higher education.

Newspaper House, Cape Town. My father's brother, my uncle Cliffie, worked at the Emme clothing factory in the 1940s and into the 1980s. As workers they, however, had a different sensibility about that life to what is expressed in many of the working-class communities that were formed along strictly racial lines in contained dormitory towns – the townships of the Cape Flats – where I taught or engaged as a community activist. It can be argued that apartheid forced removals had a devastating impact on the intellectual life of workers, albeit uneven, who were unable to maintain links with the cultural and educational institutions that shaped people of my parents' generation. Throughout the country there are instances of black people, now in their 80s (roughly) from working class communities who, if still alive, exude a deeply knowledgeable presence – steeped in literature, art, and music. My father and mother introduced me to Shakespeare, Aime Cessaire, Leopold Senghor, Irving Stone, poetry, art and literature more broadly, while Greek, Inca, Aztec and Japanese mythology replaced bible study, Marxism, Nazism and Apartheid were the stuff of 'dinner talk and I carried the idea of them as intellectual influences in my life throughout my schooling and university encounters. I cannot recall thinking that this was odd until my high school years. It riled me that teachers at South Peninsula High School would constantly reference former students who became doctors, lawyers, and teachers, as being the successful people in society, urging us to see them as role models. A video[179] about social acceptability in Canada, 1957 reminds me a lot about the kinds of assumptions that were uppermost in teachers heads when seeing or 'not seeing' learners. An extract (transcribed by me) goes:

> This boy's name is Rod Hunter, an unusually popular adolescent. He's a three-letter athlete, he's intelligent and comes from a family with good income and high social prestige…Here's Ben, a boy whose background could be described as lower class, but his determination and social know-how have all brought him almost total acceptance…Then there's the middle case, Susie Somers. She belongs to the clique and has lots of friends. She doesn't enjoy quite the same popularity as Rod but, perhaps, because she is close rivals with her older sister and lacks a sense of security…

Many of these or similar views were expressed at a politically progressive school like South Peninsula High School, and especially came out in moments of stress like when teachers had

[179] Social Acceptability (1957) , a video from the past collated in a Youtube channel, *What Could Go Wrong?* Described as a channel for 'Silly clips from classic B-Horror, goofy educational shorts, and zany classic commercials…'

to deal with discipline[180] in the classroom. Comments like, 'she/he is so uncivilized', 'you bunch of low-class scum', 'you won't amount to much', 'change to maths standard because you are too stupid for higher grade', were common during my days at school, even though it goes down in history as a 'progressive school', which it was in many respects. The experience of marginalisation, prejudice, discrimination and class privilege was widespread and within communities struggling to build solidarity against an apartheid regime.

6.2.4. Dating, engagement, and marriage

Ruth and Desmond are never apart. When she speaks to visitors at the Museum or takes them on site walks through the remnants of District Six and the pockets of newly gentrified places, Desmond sits patiently on the bench in the Museum if he cycled into town or in his car if petrol is not a problem. This presents a picture of such devotion and, from all accounts, it has always been the case. The two even ended up working together, first at *Zeidemans* in the City and then at *Novaray* when the factory moved to Atlantis. However, Ruth shared the story of how they met and got married in a very dispassionate way, despite the lifelong fidelity of both to each other that grew as they worked together, made a family together, worshipped together, engaged in a life of running, cycling and hiking:

> We [Desmond and I] knew each other from church and we dated for eight years. I knew him even earlier - I always saw this young man when I came from school. He was working already. He would walk [past us] when he worked for the jewellers and then I would see him but, in church, we would sing in the same choir. I think we started dating when I lived in the Bloemhof Flats. We were dating when I worked at Zeideman, sometime after Kelner and Sons. He was always around.

She goes on further:

> So, then [when] he decided all my friends are getting married and he want[ed] me to marry him, then we got married in 1971 [after] I got engaged on my 26th birthday [19 June 1971]. The boss [Dorothy Zeideman] said 'I want to see this man' [because] 'My good girls can't just marry anybody ....' and she called him on [a] Saturday – she used to call him Denis *na* – [to find out] where he worked and what they paid him. [Desmond worked] at Rex Trueform and accepted her offer of more pay and so, when we decided to get married, she looked after us.

[180] On a few occasions myself and others were kicked out of class for objecting to this kind of treatment of classmates. It is one of the reasons that motivated students to support a Students' Representative Council (SRC). This met with resistance from a few teachers and the 'good' students who wanted to maintain the status-quo – the prefect system where teachers determine class monitors, head boy and head girl.

A different way of reading this would judge Dorothy Zeideman as an interfering and manipulative boss, but Ruth insisted she loved her 'girls' as family – fuel for today's social justice conscious people to dismiss as another example of how patriarchy operates in society, even when performed by a boss-lady. This is clearly a paternalistic relationship between the owner and her workers and is received innocently by Ruth despite it not translating into real wealth benefits or shares in the family business, for example.

In Farahnaaz's case, she often alludes to being *'ougat'* and partying with her friends during lunch breaks at clubs in the Woodstock area near the Ensign factory and over weekends. She rarely bares a thought for the father of her son, Yunis, except when explaining why she became Muslim and the challenges of getting *'papgeld'*[181] after they separate as a live-in couple. I do not enter this area of her life that I sense is very privately guarded. Unlike issues of race, class, and other aspects of identity, I am not as persistent when inquiring into Farahnaaz's personal life. That is a story for her to tell on her terms and in her time. The silence says a lot, but I do not think this is relevant to the material details of this thesis, except in how it reveals the layers of identity that people gathered as they grew into an apartheid adulthood.

6.2.5. Leaving District Six

Ruth left District Six to go and live in Kensington [182] with her in-laws. Her experience of forced removals is largely the experience of her mother and younger siblings who remained despite the threats, cuts in electricity and water that they endured while District Six was being demolished around them. Getting married and going to live on her own with her husband is described by her as an exciting and 'liberating' moment, coming, as she did, from a big family:

> It was nice because it was just the two of us and my mother decided to keep the one baby, the first child183. [She felt that] we can't come in and out [from Kensington to District Six] – although we just lived opposite the bus stop in 9th Street. She said 'No! Leave this child here' and every night I went up to go see the child [I still worked up the road] and then I was happy.

[181] *Papgeld:* translation – child support
[182] Kensington is an area about 9km outside of Cape Town along Voortrekker Road. It was designated for people classified as coloured during apartheid, accommodating people forcibly removed from the Bo-Kaap (an Apartheid Group Area for Cape Malays). An important point to note, people who were classified as Native or Bantu were forcibly removed from Kensington (Windermere) to Nyanga in the 1950s or were even refused a pass and sent off to the Ciskei or Transkei in the Eastern Cape.
[183] Jonathan

Ruth moved out of District Six after she married Desmond in 1971, before forced removals began to really take effect and before there was a general awareness about how the Apartheid Group Areas Act would traumatise the District Six community as well as communities, in similar situations, across the country. The young family lived in Kensington until Ruth's second pregnancy when they moved to Elsies River, near Ravensmead '*daar wa die Moora woon'*[184]. Her second child, Timothy, was born on Christmas eve, 1976 and Ruth described the situation she faced thus:

> We went to [work in] Atlantis after 1976… we left Atlantis when we [the Novaray factory] closed after many years. I'll tell you the date later on[185]. We were both jobless, so my mother said, 'Don't ever go and work together again. You can't be both [jobless]' and she supported us for a month or two. Then again…a friend phoned me ... the Herald was circulating, and she said to me … they're looking for a supervisor.

This is how Ruth lands up at Manhattans factory in Hopkins Street, Salt River as a supervisor and then later as a Manager.

Farahnaaz, similarly leaves District Six when she is young, still a teenager, and continues to meet up with friends who live in District Six into the 1980s, seemingly oblivious to the political upheaval that begins to occupy the newspaper headlines and community meetings organised to mobilise support against apartheid laws. We get a sense of this period of uncertainty in Richard Rive's novel, *Buckingham Palace,* for example, where the characters struggle for continuity while hearing rumours about the Group Areas Act before clarity is achieved. Several former residents of District Six continue to view the forced removals (1968 – 1980s) as an opportunity for betterment[186]while others feel the loss as if it were yesterday.

6.2.6. Forced Removals and loss of hope.

On a site walk where we ended up at the Bloemhof Flats in Constitution Street, Ruth indicates where her family lived. Pointing to a section of the *Flats*, 'That would have been Block C where Joe [Schaffers] lived'. In a nearby section is where Ruth's mom lived almost till the time

[184] *Daar wa die Moora woon:* translation - Over there where the 'Indians' live.
[185] See the details of Ruth's employment in her resume, part of her catalogue, **ADDENDUM 4**.
[186] Many people share their story of welcoming the open space of the Cape Flats, having inside flush toilets, and, for those fortunate, bigger homes for the nuclear family.

she passed away suddenly in 1981 at the age of 58 after 'they moved her by force to Mitchells Plain' with her youngest six children.

In the 'pavement conversation'[187] I enquired about the health of her mother from various angles as I was sceptical of the many accounts of how District Sixers 'died of broken hearts'. The science did not add up for me, but I do have a curiosity about the psychosomatic impact of trauma. Desmond, however, confirms the story about a 'perfectly' healthy mother-in-law who died suddenly after moving to Mitchell's Plain[188]. When I enquired about her mother's general health at 58 years old, having given birth to 11 children, Ruth's response was, "No, [it was] the move. My mother was like me *(she means healthy*) … The doctor said her heart failed her." When I continued to express doubt, Ruth cut in, "She stood in front of that house and she called us together and said, 'I don't know why you brought me here? This [Lentegeur] will never be home to me!' She never unpacked!"

Ruth goes on to explain the desolate situation of their surroundings when Mitchell's Plain was still, very much, barren and undeveloped, "Very quiet. Very raw, all bushes." Desmond remembers, "There was like a mountain in front of the flats, in front of their house, a mountain!". Without directly articulating their concerns about the Mitchell's Plain development, in political terms, Ruth and Desmond show that they have enough sense to realise that people were being dumped on the Cape Flats without much thought for their, safety, comfort, and welfare or for an appreciation of their feelings of injustice, loss and hopelessness. With apartheid urban planning, different environmental standards were applied to people classified as white, who were helped along by the institutionalized system of racial segregation[189] and various socio-economic incentives, to lay claim to the leafy suburbs and

[187] The District Six Oral History methodology often involves walking conversations through the streets and remnants of District Six. In some ways it is a reference to *The Practice of Everyday Life*,(DeCerteau, 1984) particularly the substance of Part 1: A very ordinary culture and Part 3: Spatial practices where knowing the city is about walking the city and where stories are spatial trajectories. Mainly it is a practice that emerged organically with a strong desire of displaced people to reconnect physically to the sites from which they were wrenched and to populate it with their stories as ephemeral markings.

[188] Mitchells Plain is about 28 km from the city of Cape Town. As in the case of Atlantis, Mitchell's Plain was marketed by the apartheid government as a 'model' development. However, it was developed in the 1970s as an extension of the Group Areas Act, 1950, specifically for people classified as coloured who were being forcibly removed from places like District Six.

[189] Various laws worked together to restrict economic and social opportunities, curtail movement through cities and enforce an oppressive political status quo, amongst other things. To name a few: The **Population Registration Act, No. 30 of 1950** required that everyone be racially classified, and this determined hierarchical access to resources and opportunity favouring people classified as white; The **Group Areas Act, No. 41 of 1950** determined where people could live based on their racial classification, resulting in massive urban displacement of black people; **Natives Laws Amendment Act of 1952 and Natives Act, No. 67 of 1952,** commonly known as the Pass Laws, controlled the movement of people who were classified natives and non-citizens. https://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/HIST/Apartheid%20Legislation%20in%20South%20Africa.htm

adequate municipal services at the foot of the Table Mountain and Hottentots Holland mountain ranges. For most of the rest, it was a case of having to make their new life in the racially segregated townships of the Cape Flats with poor to no infrastructure in the middle of uncleared stony or sandy landscapes, far away from jobs, churches, schools, clubs, and shops.

6.3 WORKING LIFE

All humans have multiple identities that coexist dynamically. Depending on circumstances, psychology and ideology, elements are either celebrated, accepted as normal or repressed. In my experience, in Cape Town society, I have noticed that people freely display their work life identity if it represents middle- and upper-class life that comes with the accoutrements of success like property, houses, cars, disposable income and so forth. Working in a factory, on the other hand is seen as a dead-end job where workers are treated as having to be lucky for at least being able to earn a wage. Their labour is seen as disposable in a society with high unemployment and a weak education system.

Ruth Jeftha lived with higher expectations but made the most of her situation by rising in the ranks to supervisor and then manager, eventually discovering that, where race intersects with class, as a 'colored' woman she was worth less in wages than a young white woman who she had to mentor. Farahnaaz Gilfelleon never appears to have any higher ambitions other than to be seen as someone who loves reading and when asked if she wanted to be something else in life, her response is always that her parents had expectations that she would become a nurse. The drive of Ruth towards what she sees as a higher calling and the seeming lack of drive to 'succeed' on the part of Farahnaaz, are not necessarily bad things and I make these comments without any value judgement – these are my observations about both Ruth and Farahnaaz that I have shared with both. Ruth with the support of her husband, Desmond, had a desire to open their own clothing design business when the clothing industry started contracting in the 1990s with huge job losses to China and other offshore cheap labour places, at that time. By 1998 they had started a small home-based factory – RJ Fashions and began kitting out a *Klopse Kamer* troupe, the Orient Community Entertainers. They were able to purchase a few industrial sewing machines from her former bosses at Manhattans Clothing Factory. The business side proved difficult as they were unable to survive in competition with the cheap labour production market created in countries like China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia, to name a few. In conversation, she explained that the business could not retain seamstresses and machinists at a

decent wage as people were not prepared to pay to cover the more expensive production costs for locally made products. We have seen over the last decade what concerted effort is required on the part of Government and Trade Unions to convince those individuals with economic capital to invest in South African labour and revive the local manufacturing industry.

According to Daniel Macedo in the introduction to the 30th anniversary publication of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

> Although some strands of postmodernism would dismiss Freire's detailed class analysis in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, it is an enormous mistake, if not academic dishonesty, to pretend that we now live in a classless world. (Freire, 2005)

The field of critical pedagogy that draws from the social movement that gave rise to, as well as, developed around, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* agitates for a rethinking of the relationship between teacher, student, and society and a deeper reflection on the dynamics involved at all levels. In South Africa, the relationship between class, race and gender is integrally connected in South African society, where super-exploitation was maintained through the Apartheid years by a myriad of racist laws and by laws that normalised exploitation of human beings, by stripping working people of their dignity.

6.3.1. Dreams and desires of a 'working girl'.

Despite spending most of their working lives on the factory floor and making the most out of the opportunities this offered at the time for a livelihood, personal growth and development, both Ruth and Farahnaaz start out early in their lives imagining themselves very differently. This would be true, both then and today, for most working-class people who find themselves with limited choices due to socio-economic circumstances. In my 15 years of teaching mainly the children of factory workers in areas like Sentinel, Hout Bay; Lavender Hill; Grassy Park; Rocklands, Mitchell's Plain, Athlone and Bo-Kaap, as well as my time working with trade unions as a community activist from Retreat-Steenberg, I never encountered a person who dreamed of a life as a factory worker. Many were passionate about the social or cultural aspects of factory life and many found dignity in the human relations established in the workplace as well as in the related institutional practices of civic engagement through churches, mosques, sports, schools, youth, and social clubs. If truth be told, it is hard and mind-numbing work for minimal wages that Marxism describes as 'wage slavery' in a capitalist system where the productive forces of society are developed within a framework of exploitation – not for the

common good but for the purposes of extracting a profit from the labour of workers. The big question here is to ask where all the often-stated enthusiasm to work for a boss comes from, despite dreams for something better – knowing intrinsically that there is something better. Marx and Engels provide some form of rational and objective explanation that falls within their materialist conception of history:

> The first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, [is that humans] must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed, this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life.[190]

Ruth comes from a family where all 11 siblings were taught classical music and one brother, Christian, seems to stand out in the many stories that she shares with visitors to the Museum. He became a classically trained composer-musician, played in jazz and *langarm*[191] bands, coached and performed with the Malay and Christmas choirs, often composing the original music. He was sadly murdered in Mitchell's Plain, serving the South African Police Services where he was able to practice his skills as a multi-instrumentalist and music teacher, alongside the regular role of a community policeman. This high culture aspiration in the family contrasts with how she viewed her factory life as stated to me in an interview:

> But being a factory worker at the time to me was a very menial job. Not for me. All my friends are educated and the jobs they had was so good. And I felt sort of small.
>
> ... same job, ordinary working girl but I tried to touch on every machine [to get to learn] what was going on. In knowing this man [Desmond][192] also, he'd tell me do this and do that. … So I went to work for Zeideman and I said to myself, 'Ruth, you have now gone on working in a clothing factory but is this where you want to be? Is this where you want to stay?' So, I set myself a goal... and I went to work for them.

[190] www. Marxists.org, from, *Karl Marx*, German Ideology: History: Fundamental Conditions
[191] Translation: direct – long arm; The *Langarm* bands were popular, from colonial times, at community ballroom dances and became popular in places like District Six with bands like the Ikey Gamba Band, May-Wedel Troubadours, Willie's Starlite Orchestra, Jimmy's Grand Six and The Bobby Hendricks Sound, to name a few. *Langarm* incorporated many styles of dance and music: jazz, the quadrille (Square Dances), military dance bands, the gospel sounds of the Christmas Choir bands, English country dancing, Cape Malay Bands and the *goema* rhythms of the *klopse* troupes.
[192]She married Desmond in 1971. He also worked in the clothing industry as a mechanic. Ruth learns from him about how to troubleshoot and, sometimes, fix machines on the job – saving her boss a lot of money and time.

6.3.2. Making the choice to go and work in a factory.

From school bench to the factory floor is the opening chapter of Pat Fahrenfort's memoir, *Spanner in the works: one women's journey from factory floor to corridors of power (2012).* It is a hard-hitting, yet humorous account of a life well lived, despite the many challenges posed by apartheid laws and a racial-capitalist system. Unlike the recollections of Farahnaaz Gilfelleon and Ruth Jeftha (Pat's contemporary), Pat's mother gives her no choice but to leave school to take up a job, at a printing factory, that her mother sets up with an Uncle Freddy. Having worked her way off the factory floor to complete her degrees, work at a University, take up a job in the Constitutional Assembly at a pivotal moment in our history and, eventually, work as a Deputy Director in the Ministry of Labour, Pat is able to look back at her early life in District Six and as a factory worker through a critical yet reflexive lens. There is a muted nostalgia about District Six, family and factory life, remembering her friends and fellow factory workers with dignity, humour and a recognition that her dreams ran contrary to remaining on the factory floor. In a letter to her friend Marel, dated 15 November 1968, she writes, "I am very happy today. I have handed in my notice. There has to be more to life than this."

Fahrenfort is brutally honest about her family circumstances and, her story is a compelling one:

> It was 1960 and the year I came of age. I was fifteen… *'As jy wil ougat wees, moet jy gaan werk,'*[193] my mother would say when my sisters and I wanted to dress up. My parents believed that when you began to fret about your appearance, you were old enough to work.
>
> And so, I was taken out of school to help stretch the domestic income. I found myself pushed into a world of grown-ups, the world of work…leaving District Six to move into a brand-new house on the Cape Flats had various financial implications. There were additional travelling expenses each day, as we all had to return to the city for work and school, and, during times of need, we could no longer rely on credit from Mr Fakier's corner shop. My mother also had to give up her job as a machinist in a clothing factory because she was pregnant. (Fahrenfort, 2012, p. 11)

Farahnaaz Gilfelleon remembers her decision to run away from enrolling at Trafalgar High School in District Six after completing her primary schooling at the Holy Cross Catholic School, then known by her birth name, Veronica. Her mother expected her to register at High School when she left home with her final primary school report card but she had other plans:

[193] *'As jy wil ougat wees, moet jy gaan werk,'*: translation: 'If you want to be grown-up, you must go and work'.

> So, I had to go to Trafalgar, put my name in and I had to take my report. '*Toe gat ek na Ensign clothing.* '[194] '*Toe gat werk ekke'*.[195]

She blames her older sister, Theresa, who attended the Adhoc Junior Secondary, Walmer Estate – "that's beyond – opposite Zonnebloem [Estate]"- for her decision. Her sister seemed to have teased her about not being good enough for high school because she was not good at mathematics. In the interview with Farahnaaz, her reaction to this and the fears she had about being beaten by high school teachers, was, seemingly on a whim, to walk across the newly built highway to the Ensign clothing factory where job seekers were known to wait in line for an opportunity to walk into a job, *"En toe's ek nervous. Os gat factory toe - hulle vat jong meisies aan."*[196] When I pressed her a bit more on her reasons for going to work at 14 years old[197] which did not gel with her constant refrain today about loving school, her curiosity for learning and especially reading, her response was, *"Ek willie gegat het nie* [to Trafalgar High School]. *Ek was sieker ougat…"*[198]

What needs to be noted here is the impact that someone like myself, in a position of power as a researcher and as the manager of education, a department that Farahnaaz works in as a volunteer storyteller, can have on disrupting ideas that have coagulated in the memory banks of someone who is at the start of exploring their memories of a recent and traumatic past. The first time she shared her story about leaving school at 14 years old it was with certainty and confidence. She had developed a narrative over the years that became part of her identity as someone who loved reading and learning. She is often seen sitting on her own reading newspapers or books from the City Library, a place she visits often on her way to the District Six Museum Homecoming Centre or on her way home via the bus terminus bordering the parade, both near the Museum and Homecoming Centre. This repeated act serves to etch this characteristic into her identity and the boundary between habit and desire becomes blurred. Reading and learning becomes routinised and lacking a purpose. At the same time, it serves as a self-fulfilling prophesy where Farahnaaz deepens her desire to read so I have never encountered a situation where she was reluctant to put in the necessary reading to prepare for workshops. She also makes it her business to join programmes and projects where research is

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[194] *'Toe gat ek na Ensign clothing'*: translation: "Then I went to Ensign Clothing. NB* African Clothing Factory (A.C.F) was popularly referred to as Ensign, included in its trading name.
[195] '*Toe gat werk ekke'*: translation - So, I went to go and work.
[196] '*En toe's ek nervous. Os gat factory toe - hulle vat jong meisies aan.':* translation: 'And so, I was nervous. We went to the factory – they were taking on young girls.'
[197] She was actually 15 years old according to the date she started working on her unemployment card.
[198] '*Ek willie gegat het nie.'*: translation: "I didn't want to go [to Trafalgar High School]. I was probably too big for my boots." NB* Promiscuous does not fit in this context!

required. One of the sessions I facilitated was a city walk for the visitor engagement team to collectively make sense of the privileged and marginalised stories of key sites like, the Slave Lodge, Church Square, De Groote Kerk and The Company Gardens. Farahnaaz was not satisfied to just hear information about these places and the silences of history, she wanted to explore and fastidiously read the details on the plaques or information panels and then follow-up reading books about South African history at the library on her way home.

Fahrenfort's account of being forced, by circumstances determined by her mother, to go and work at a factory at the age of 15, is markedly different to both accounts by Farahnaaz and Ruth, of going to stand in a long queue with a friend and then remembering, almost with pride, being *chosen* to work in the production line. There does not seem to be any grasp of the demeaning association this image has of a (white) man picking out workers from a line by merely judging them on their physical characteristics, in a country with a history of colonial as well as apartheid slavery.

Farahnaaz recalls the initial disappointment of her mother and indicates that there were expectations for her to occupy a *higher station* in life by her parents but, she insists, the choice was hers. Farahnaaz's memory is of parents who had hopes for her to become a nurse because she 'could handle pain and remove infected splinters from her body without crying' but she wanted to go and work after her primary school years. Her sense of herself as a reader extends to Mills & Boons or Barbara Cartland books, magazines, newspapers. She indicates, in the interview on the 20th April 2019, that she loved going with her mother, a domestic worker, to work as she could sit and read the books in the home of her mom's employer:

> '*Ja, soés ek dit nou sien, moet ek maar verre gegaanit*.'[199] She remembers this as the desire of her parents and the potential they saw in her. She remembers that her mother was upset and harboured dreams of her going, 'n bietjie hoer as 'n factory' because, in Farahnaaz's mind, "…haar familie, haar sisters is amal domestic workers en hie' gat ek nog factory toe. Ek was proud van my sister want sy hairdressing gaan niem.

There is a hint that she may not have qualified to get accepted[200] at Trafalgar High School because she was weak at Mathematics as she was constantly reminded by her older sister who was still in school because, as Farahnaaz noted, 'she was clever'. It is highly probable that her

[199] Translation: Yes, as I see it now, I should have gone further. But my mother and father always said, "you are going to be a nurse."
[200] Acceptance is used in two senses: 1) achieving the necessary pass mark for entrance to Trafalgar High School, known for its academic achievements and, 2) English and middle-class status or aspirations were known as the criteria for assimilation (informal interview with Zuleiga Adams, a former student of Trafalgar High).

mother, father and older siblings made the choice for her. The income would have been most welcome as the family was big, and the times were hard (1970s) with the mother dependent on char jobs and her father working as a chef in the hotel industry. I intentionally prodded her on this, sharing my own experience growing up in lower middle class-working class areas like Grassy Park and Retreat with stories of Harold Cressy, Trafalgar, South Peninsula (my alma mater) and Livingstone (school to my parents and four of my five siblings) High Schools that were all seen as schools for the black (coloured) middle class. As a way of establishing a non-judgemental atmosphere between myself, as a researcher and Farahnaaz as *the researched*[201], I also shared experiences as a teacher in working class schools (in places like Hout Bay, Lavender Hill, Grassy Park, Mitchell's Plain, Athlone, and Bo-Kaap), of parents who wilfully *sacrificed* the education of their *less successful* kid[202], the girl-child and often, a pattern emerged, of these being the darker skinned children. The fair skinned children would almost always have, what would usually be considered as failure, explained away as, 'S/he is just being lazy' or 'needing a flame under his/her bum'. The pressure to make this kind of *Sophie's Choice*[203] was almost always generated by the family's financial circumstances but framed by the hegemonic Christian National Education (CNE) philosophy that underpinned many teachers' practice as *a hidden curriculum*, even while they protested the unfairness of apartheid. My instinct is that Farahnaaz, particularly, was a casualty of this toxic mix of apartheid education philosophy and policies; school management and teachers' uncritical support for the streaming of learners based on a separation between manual and mental labour, valuing one above the other; and the family and community's complicity in a corrupt system of education that valued children differently based on superficial characteristics like skin colour, hair texture, language, accent, and gender.

[201] The research methodology I use is based on a critical theorising of the traditional relationship between researcher and researched, where the researcher enters this relationship from a position of privilege. My recognition of this does not wish it away, as long as the person *being researched remains* in this relationship as one without agency, traumatised by shame for things that people should own as part of the journey that shaped them.

[202] This was often determined by spurious criteria, based on a conservative pedagogy where mental and manual labour are delinked and a racist, sexist ideology determines the value of people. I often heard variations of: 's/he is more practical, not like my other one – he is very clever with the brain', as if there is no connection between the brain and practical work, when I tried to encourage parents to support their children's learning or tried to convince them not to take their children out of school.

[203] A reference to William Styron's disturbing 1979 novel, *Sophie's Choice*, in which Sophie lives with her guilt and shame about her complicity in the death of her daughter, Eva. When she arrived at Auschwitz, a camp doctor made her choose which of her two children would die immediately in the gas chamber and which would live as a prisoner in the concentration camp. Sophie chose to sacrifice her seven-year-old daughter.

Sylvia Vollenhoven, deals forthrightly with her experience of the prejudice and racism that permeated our schools in her book, *Keeper of the Kumm* (Vollenhoven, 2016). On occasion, it was heart-breaking to be reminded of the complicity of children, who take their lead from adults, especially teachers, in acts of racism. I went to primary school in the same neighbourhood as Vollenhoven. I attended Palmerston Primary in lower Wynberg after my older brother lost my application form for St. Augustine's Primary, where the *snobby kids* went. Many of the children who attended Palmerston were from an orphanage down the road and I witnessed the kind of prejudice and discrimination that Vollenhoven recounts, choosing at an early stage to 'side with the oppressed kids', often hanging out after school at the orphanage with one of my best friends then, Philmonica. We reconnected a few years back and reminisced about the 'sturvy'[204] children we went to school with confirming much of Vollenhoven's experience of teachers who favoured the light skinned, sleek haired learners. Unpacking Ruth Jeftha's life history and learning that her maiden surname is Phala, I indicated that the principal of Palmerston Primary when I attended from 1969 – 75, was a Mr Phala. This was her father's uncle and looking at Ruth's photographs of her parents, I was struck by the similarities – tall dark, handsome men who carried themselves with dignity. My Mr Phala prevented the worst excesses of racism and prejudice that Vollenhoven experienced, through his leadership and physical stature. Aunty Patsy Schilder, a cousin of my dad, who was married to jazz musician Tony Schilder, taught what was then known as the '*aanpassings klas'*[205], also contributed to an intolerance towards any form of racism or prejudice at the school.

6.3.3. Why Ensign?

Government policies during apartheid only guaranteed and encouraged compulsory education for people classified as 'white'. Child labour was not unusual in people's homes, on farms and in factories. The Junior Certificate (JC) and Matric certificates marked exit points for learners where a JC certificate (back then Std/ Grade 10 today) provided an opportunity to access a college education or go to trade school. A shift in the education system post 1994 caused an uproar as the first exit point was lowered to Grade 9 (old Std 7) and a Further Education and Training (FET) system now provided options to continue in an academic stream or enrol at an FET college. Learnerships were introduced as a replacement for the old apprenticeship model

[204] The derogatory (punching up) reference to snobbish, usually fair-skinned people or ones who appeared erudite, in a pretentious and arrogant sense, in the 'coloured' community. These characteristics were okay for 'white' people but not for people amongst us, seemed to be the assumption.
[205] '*aanpassings klas':* translation - the special needs class

through which most people learnt a trade. Ruth completed Matric and then went to work in the nearest factory in the District Six – City Centre zone. Farahnaaz landed up at the Ensign factory effectively ending her schooling at 14 years old. When asked about what attracted her away from schooling when she loved reading and had a curiosity to learn new things she is now not as clear about her choice as she thought she was at the time: "Ek wietie! Dit was sieker die naaste factory. Amal het daar gat werk en hulle ...wat youngsters aan gevat het of hulle kan sestien jaar ...ek het 14 daai jaar gewoord."[206]

This was a common perception when speaking randomly to District Sixers who became factory workers or who were from factory worker families. In one of our storytelling learning journeys, a participant Aloma Matthews, brought a neighbour of hers from Hanover Park who she was assisting to deal with an eviction. Shahieda Ismail, who started her work life at Ensign had a similar story to Farahnaaz. When I remarked on this the comment was, 'all the girls broke their virginity (started working life) at Ensign!" This idea of Ensign as a gateway into factory life is shared by almost everyone that I spoke to from District Six who worked in a factory or who came from families with factory workers. It is not surprising, therefore, that Farahnaaz would cotton onto the idea to go and find her first job at Ensign – it seems to have been part of the cultural milieu of working-class District Six.

6.3.4. Unions, conditions of service and politics

Farahnaaz recalls that, after just more than three years, she fell pregnant at 18 years old and went off (confinement) to have her baby boy, Yunis, at the Peninsula Maternity hospital, in District Six. When she returned to work, she was not happy with the wages and left after just a month and 20 days - a vivid memory because her mother was angry with her:

> So, I went away with a baby and I came back… when I went away the top wages was R12 [a day] and after that when I came back, they upped the wages to R15. I wasn't proud of that wages. I had to give all my money to my mother - so I asked the boss, our manager Mr Levine for an increase. He said, 'If I give you an increase, we have to give everybody something extra', so I only worked for a month and 20 days. So, I left. My mother was *kwaad*: '*Djy kan gebly-it tot Desember* [to resign]

[206] When constructing her work timeline and verifying this with her work records then she actually turned 15 in the year she started working at Ensign. Translation: I don't know! It was probably the nearest factory. Everyone got a job there and they …took on youngsters or they had to be sixteen years…I turned 14 that year.

> *dan in Januarie maand 'n job gesoek'.* [Her response] *Ek gattie werk vir daai min geld nie,*[207] so I stayed home and the next day I went to Manhattan clothing factory.

I wanted to have a deeper understanding of this situation she describes, as today, workers tend to hold onto low paying jobs in a world where the speculative global economy has resulted in deregulation of the productive forces, jobless growth and casualisation. These, and other neoliberal economic policies, have driven down wages. This is the net effect of an increasing cost of living and wage increases that do not keep pace – especially in the manufacturing and service industries. We spent some time, in conversation about this, talking about my experience in the trade union movement with workers' demands for a decent living and her experience of needing a decent living wage. For her this meant being able to give her mother a portion, support the growing costs of a baby needing care while she is away at work and having enough left over for her personal needs. Low wages mattered so much to her that she would rather not work, reflecting a major change in her attitude from when she first walked away from school into factory life, not really thinking about wages or the responsibility that goes with earning a living. She goes deeply into the impact of low wages on her daily living expenses with a clear picture of what 'counting every penny' means for a young, single mother as is illustrated here by an extract, a continuation of an earlier discussion:

> No, I went back after my confinement. But then I saw the wages is now R50 [a week] and I couldn't – [calculating aloud] – *'Soe, as my ma R10 kry; ek moet travelling fare [kry]; ek kry nie non-support [child-support] nie, soe ek kannie*…[in addition] my mother still worked so couldn't look after my child, *'soe ek moet vir Aunty Honey betaal, ek moet taxi fare geld kry'*. It's a lot of stuff so, I stayed home. *Toe kyk [ek] maar agter die huis dan koep my ma vir die kind melk. Januarie maand, toe gee my ma haar werk op. Toe bly sy by die huis en ek gat werk weer - Manhattan toe*![208]

As expressed to me by many former factory workers and former District Six residents during informal chats as well as in sit-down discussions with Mogamat Benjamin, Zuleiga Adams and

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[207] ' …*kwaad*: '*Djy kan gebly-it tot Desember dan in Januarie maand 'n job gesoek'. Ek gattie werk vir daai min geld nie,*: translation - …angry: "You could have waited till December [to resign] then looked for a job in January. [Her response] 'I'm not going to work for that little money'…

[208] *'Soe, as my ma R10 kry; ek moet travelling fare [kry]; ek kry nie non-support [child-support] nie, soe ek kannie…':* translation – So, my mother will get R10; I need travelling fare; I don't get child-support, so I can't [work for this low wage] …

'soe ek moet vir Aunty Honey betaal, ek moet taxi fare geld kry': translation – so I have to pay Aunty Honey [to look after my child]; I need taxi fare…

Toe kyk [ek] maar agter die huis dan koep my ma vir die kind melk. Januarie maand, toe gee my ma haar werk op. Toe bly sy by die huis en ek gat werk weer - Manhattan toe!: translation – I then chose to look after the house and, in exchange, my mother bought milk for the child. In the month of January, my mother gave up her work, stayed at home and I went out to work at Manhattan!

Pat Fahrenfort, amongst others, 'life was difficult in those days but there were always jobs!' This is voiced by Farahnaaz in our conversation in relation to our discussion about her post-birth return to work where she did not feel pressured to work at a lower rate than what she earned when on maternity leave: "If you leave on a Tuesday, the Wednesday you get a job. It was very easy. You just walk into a job."

Although both Ruth and Farahnaaz speak about their working life with fondness. They seem to relish that they were 'chosen' ones – especially proud when it was the actual boss or a top manager. On deeper interrogation – insisting on more details or revisiting initial responses to ask for more details or clarity, their real feelings and perspectives about their situation emerges. Ruth explained how she landed up waiting in line for a job at a factory, straight of school, "I came to this place after my mother read the advert in the paper, put on my best dress and when I got here [Kelner and Sons, in Barrack Street] there was such a lot of women and young girls standing looking for this job.' Her account of being chosen by the boss as she waited, all dressed up to present herself in a professional manner, in a long line outside a factory, is a favourable slant on what could be considered an undignified way to have to apply for a job, but it was the accepted job-market culture. This unregulated relationship between employer and employee defines much of the post-apartheid economic landscape where long lines of men wait for hours, days, weeks, and months along the main thoroughfares in the city to be picked up with no guarantee of a contract – a piecemeal existence in a society we label a democracy. There is a myriad of stories I have experienced[209] of working-class people, in the apartheid past, presenting themselves with dignity on route to and from factory jobs, 'white' households (being in-service) as domestic labour, and as workers in retail. These were the times, as described by many former district sixers in discussion sessions, when people had a positive self-esteem despite what the more middle-class elements may have thought about their factory jobs. Farahnaaz remembers the easy jobs that came her way and expresses this as a favourable memory - being a 'chosen' one, in a sense:

> …Valhau yes, it's a factory where they make underwear, pyjamas, everything. I worked there also for a year and a few months and then I went and worked at

[209] I've gathered layers of variations of this story from family members, my time in community and union advice offices, volunteering in various unions and formally represented as a shop steward in the COSATU worker education programmes of the 1990s, amongst other experiences with work and workers. Even teachers, during apartheid, experienced this situation of walking into a school, knocking on the Secretary or Principal's door and walking into a teaching job, earning a pittance and without job-security. This was the case for me in my first five years of teaching and it provided the material conditions to mobilise teachers along the lines of skilled industrial workers.

> Creation Wear down the road because we were a CMT[210] factory working also for Manhattan. And then the boss sold his factory.... They [the new owners] bought the factory over … for three months and the factory had to close because they couldn't manage it. So, my manager that took me on when I left Ensign to come to Manhattan…said, 'You're coming back to Manhattan. You're going to Mr Becker.' He took me back and a few of the people that worked at Creation Wear and that's where I stood until I retired.

On a road trip to Simonstown Museum for a programme on childhood memories of street games, I was accompanied by Ruth Jeftha, her husband Desmond and five other District Six ex-residents, two of whom, it turned out, worked at Ensign clothing factory. Patience Watlington[211], straight out of high school, went to work at Ensign with her older sister for a few months, but then left to pursue nursing successfully. Shariefa Ismail also worked for a few months at Ensign. All recounted how they landed up in a clothing factory, how easy it was to get jobs back then and spoke about the centrality of clothing factories to family and community life. The popular perception of many others spoken to informally seems to reiterate this totally – it is very much part of the cultural milieu of working-class cape flats communities.

Patience Watlington's story bears this out for me, to a certain extent, with the traces of many similar accounts alive in in my consciousness:

> I left Trafalgar High School after Standard 9 (Grade 11). My mother had sent me to the shop that day when I decided to look for work. I landed up in the queue at Ensign Clothing Factory. Some of my relatives worked there and people came to me to ask, 'Do you belong to that Watlington?' I replied that I did not, and they employed me that day. My mom was waiting for me when I came home that day for my lunch break to tell her. She wasn't impressed. I worked there for six months. (Smith & *Huis Kombuis* project participants, 2016, p. 123)[212]

[210] CMT – Cut, Make and Trim. These factories formed part of a network producing the 'unskilled' work for bigger factories to package, market and distribute.

[211]Patience Watlington's story (p121-123) is part of the Museum's *Huis Kombuis: food and memory cookbook* that was published in 2016. She now lives in Sevenoaks Road Woodstock.

[212] This is a snapshot of the kind of information we can collect in partnership with SACTWU and the Young COSATU workers' forum, with a larger cohort of former factory workers and incorporating a quantative component to the research process, i.e. asking the same set questions to a large scale group and measuring the outcomes.

6.4 CONTEXT: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND UNION INSIGHTS

6.4.1. Pushing up production, the pressure of factory work and complicity

During this part of the conversation, I tried to explore how 'learning on the job' translated into a professional benefit for Farahnaaz, as it did with Ruth, who eventually went on to become a supervisor and then a manager in charge of quality assurance for the CMTs linked to the bigger Manhattan clothing factory. I asked Farahnaaz about the kind of job she was doing after eighteen years of working in a clothing factory. Thinking that her response would be like most of her other responses – never quite cutting through her surface experiences - I was quite surprised at how coherently she interpreted the power relations between those who sit in the office, earning more than those who are pressured to 'push up the production' (increase profit margins). She described, in detail, how assembly line workers were brought in line by the supervisor or manager – a role not too dissimilar to the *mandoor* who was the overseer, in the interests of the slave-masters. The picture she paints of the work situation she finds herself in, after eighteen years, is visually striking and almost cinematic to me, the listener, in the sense of the Charlie Chaplin films[213] that depict the life of the downtrodden and oppressed in soul destroying, repetitive and piecemeal jobs.

She had now moved on from being a machinist to what they called, 'an all-rounder' and then proceeded to illustrate how this was merely a name change to suck more profit out of the workers on the assembly line. She may not have used these words or phrases that I have acquired from reading and speaking to others, including family members, about worker exploitation and wage slavery, but the description of her experience due to the new pressures she faced in the late 1980s and 1990s, as labour unrest swirls around in the country and political consciousness grows across communities, is suggestive of just that – the class contradictions and conflict at the point of production. An extract from her description of the introduction of a new, work culture into the production line:

> Then there came another system, the JIT system[214]. They wanted me to operate three machines. You would operate a plain machine, a double closer and a binder.

[213] *Modern Times*, *The Tramp*, *The Gold Rush*, come to mind but Chaplin was well known for his depiction of the undignified exploitation of workers as industrialization and greed takes root.
[214] JIT - *Just in Time* process. A typical online learning description of the JIT system:
BENEFITS: Reduction in inventory, improved quality, reduced space requirement, shorter lead times, lower production costs, increased productivity, increased machine utilization, greater flexibility.https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/operations-management-an/9781118122679/ch7-sec035.html

> [indicating with hand gestures the supervisor commands] 'Do that piece of that, do that on that garment. Do that piece on that.' Where they should have had three people they took one person to do that and you had to produce 60 an hour…60 garments an hour, whereas (before) a person would only do one operation then you pass it on to the other one [person]. Now, you have to do three people's work! Your work, and two other people's work before you can pass that garment on [along the assembly line].

The JIT system was in line with the turn in South African manufacturing that started happening in the 1980s and that is then accelerated when we gain democracy in the 1990s – a turn towards deregulation, lower production costs (saving on labour costs), jobless growth with production going overseas to cheaper, non-unionised markets, particularly aided and abetted by the rise in Chinese manufacturing that is estimated to have displaced 19000 jobs in the 1990s to maximise profits. CMT – Cut, Make and Trim - factories formed part of a network of smaller decentralised workplaces that rapidly manufactured clothing products for bigger factories like Manhattans, to quality assure, package, market and distribute. CMTs were, essentially, the 'sweatshops' and these were the jobs that were eventually exported to China and South East Asian countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, amongst others, in the 1990s. Unemployment between 1995 – 2002 rose from 15% - 31% (Makgetla, 2004, p. 265). The decentralisaton of factories also aimed to demobilise the rising militancy of clothing factory workers who transformed their 'sweetheart' Garment Workers' Union into the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU) in 1989 and affiliated to COSATU.

On separate occasions I went on a walk about with Ruth and Farahnaaz in the areas where the factories they worked at were located[215]. The cultural impact of the JIT system is quite evident. Manhattans, in Hopkins Street, Salt River where Ruth worked as a supervisor and then manager, and where Farahnaaz worked as a machinist, is now home to 'lean and mean' *creative* clothing companies that produce 'high quality designer goods efficiently and effectively'. What this corporate-speak basically translates into is that manufacturing operations are small scale in terms of the number of jobs needed, production is aimed at a global market able to pay for

Just-in-time (JIT) manufacturing, also known as just-in-time production or the Toyota Production System (TPS), was first developed and perfected within the Toyota manufacturing plants by Taiichi Ohno, is a methodology aimed primarily at reducing cycle times of various activities within production system as well as response times from suppliers and to customers. JIT is a common inventory management technique and type of lean methodology designed to increase efficiency, cut costs and decrease waste by receiving goods only as they are needed. Its origin and development was in Japan, largely in the 1960s and 1970s. https://www.knowledgehut.com/tutorials/project-management/just-in-time-jit-manufacturing

[215] This is mapped out in the two catalogues **(ADDENDA 4 & 5)** as well as in the Chapter Five.

goods in Dollars, Euros and Pound Sterling, and that this focus on a demand from a narrow but wealthy market maximises profit. All the talk about efficiency hides the selfishness and greed that benefits a few and impoverishes the many, under the guise of global competitiveness. This ideology dominates business thinking and permeates the internet, encouraging downscaling and a plethora of loft style or minimalist manufacturing *communities*[216] that, in turn fuels much of the gentrification we see in cities around the world. This includes the gentrification of working-class knowledge and skills with a *maker culture* trending amongst those who can afford to outfit their properties with the latest technology in carpentry, welding, mechanics, textile production, clothes design, food production, amongst other operations that used to provide jobs for thousands of people. This trend is, no doubt, justified by employers because of increased 'unreasonable' demands from unionised workers for better working conditions, a more equitable share in the profits of labour and greater benefits to enable a decent quality of life now and in retirement – demands for a dignified life, basically.

Farahnaaz emphasise this point and alludes to how labour cost saving is absorbed into more managerialism – timekeeping and closer monitoring of each aspect of production absorbs some of the costs saved on labour:

> It [harder work, increased production] never came with a promotion. They work the system - it's almost like you're doing too little for the money they pay you. You had to do extra. Then they put pressure on you. Then they have a timekeeper that come and time you. (acting out the supervisor or manager) 'How many minutes did it take you to do that? How much minutes to do that…and to do that.' And they time you. And then the supervisor will say you have to do so much in an hour. That's three operations. But sometimes your cotton runs out on your bobbin – you have to wind the bobbin, put the bobbin (back) in - all takes time. They put pressure on the people.

Her observation that workers in this period from the late 1980s did not have a choice but to continue to work harder in low paying jobs is in marked contrast to her attitude when she started out working at the Ensign factory in District Six straight out of primary school, able to walk out of one job straight into another:

> People go to work with a lot of pressure, but they haven't got a choice they have to go and work. So, we were working the hardest. We were working … harder than the people that sit in the office … We were working.. harder. But we were paid less. But okay, we survived."

[216] Networks of consumer driven, and well-resourced individuals involved in trendy, flexible, nomadic artisanal production projects. Coffee, almost always, is paired with carpentry, welding, luxury clothes lines.

Survival was clearly a matter of being compliant to keep one's job. The Garment Workers' Union (GWU) leadership in the early 1980s was still closely aligned with the interests of the industry bosses and, in fact, was managed by the industry. They operated like the Medical Aid and Insurance Schemes do. Their role, whether inadvertent or conscious, was to ensure that clothing workers received benefits that kept them satisfied enough to remain tied to the industry in the face of limited alternative options. While Ruth hardly comments on factory politics or union matters, Farahnaaz recalls her experience with quite a lot of detail. The vantage points they held during their working lives obviously contributes to this. When pressed on this, Ruth remarked that she was on good terms with all the shop stewards as a supervisor and always accommodated union meetings, participating fully in the Union driven Spring Queen pageants, for instance. When it came to the later, more confrontational actions of the members after the transition to COSATU affiliation, she acknowledges that she was bound by her management position to record the names of striking workers based on the labour relations agreement of 'No work, no pay'. This she did reluctantly because she had a good motherly relationship with workers on her floor.

Farahnaaz, as a machinist, viewed the conditions of work very differently, relating to the shift in the political climate in the union from when GWU was a submissive apartheid era union to the time when talk about worker rights as human rights provided much of the energy that drove the growth of political unionism in the 1980s and 1990s:

> [Back then] and you couldn't answer your supervisor… You just had to do your work. It's not like now. It was still apartheid. It's only when people open up their mouths afterwards, when the new government came in … they know their rights. [Back then] You knew your rights, but… you could do nothing…It's your job yes! … They [GWU] were [like] a family but it was Mr Petersen that ran the union. So afterwards when they moved out and COSATU comes about… the whole thing changed…

As an example of this transformed culture, she refers to the assistance she got from the 'new' union to get child maintenance money from the father of her child. She names Trevor Manuel [217] as the lawyer of the union who, she says, had a small office in the basement of Industria

[217] A note on the problem with memory: From the outset, as part of the pre-interview phase of this research project, I made it quite clear that the interview and post-interview discussions would aim to clarify information and certain facts. This I did openly and the extent to which people hold onto their perspectives even in the face of evidence is clear. I disputed this memory with Farahnaaz who, remains adamant that Trevor Manuel was a lawyer or legal assistant for the Garment Workers' Union. I insisted she was confusing him with one of the other Ministers in the South African Government like Ebrahim Patel, the former Secretary General of the South African Clothing

House (GWU and now SACTWU Headquarters in Victoria Road, Salt River). I insisted that she was mistaken as Trevor Manual was not involved with SACTWU 'bread and butter' union issues nor was he a lawyer. The main point here is that the post-apartheid government, the African National Congress (ANC) led Government of National Unity at the time, provided her with some hope for the possibility to lead a decent life, as was their campaign promise.

After a lengthy unpacking of the production process in factories that Farahnaaz was part of, I mentioned that there was a radio station music programme for factory workers in the 1970s and 1980s. I did not specify the name of the programme or radio station but, because of the focus of our discussion – the factory production line - her immediate response was, 'Good Hope' to verify this memory of mine. She then went on further to state that, "Nigel Pierce[218] *het op osse nerves gewerk*!" We then had a moment of *collective memory construction* where I am not too sure that Nigel Pierce would have been around at that time, but Farahnaaz insists that the Nigel Pierce *Push up Production* show, made the workers angry: "… we get cross … we're tired already because we're pushing production the whole morning then afterwards, … I think one of the buyers [comes on air over the radio and] they say:[219] 'Manhattan and Dermar! Rex Trueform![220] Just push that production!' *Die ding*[221] *kan nie sy bek hou nie!*"[222]

She goes on further to touch on the purpose of the radio show and to wonder about the commercial relationship between Good Hope radio station and the clothing industry bosses:

> They wanted to motivate you (us) so that you (we) can work nice - you work nice with this music…push production, production, production…*daai radio*

and Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU). I was quite familiar with the Garment Works' Union and the progressive push to transform it into the Clothing Workers' Union (CLOWU) under the leadership of people like Zubeida Jaffer, now a noted journalist, and then transform it to SACTWU. I eventually confirmed my dispute with Trevor Manuel who was never involved in any official capacity with the union, before or after SACTWU was formed and joined the ANC aligned COSATU. This remains an unresolved dispute.

[218] Nigel Pierce was a popular Good Hope Radio DJ but my memory of him is mainly from the 90s radio scene – post 'Push up Production'. The name of the DJ is not fundamental to the point being made about the collaboration between Good Hope Radio Station, the Garment Industry and the Garment Workers' Union to speed up production.

(Nigel Pierce) *'het op osse nerves gewerk!'*: translation - …worked on our [production line workers] nerves!

[219] This plays out on the radio that is set up all around the factory and tuned in to the *Push Up Production* show.

[220] These are all well-known Woodstock and Salt River factories whose workers are encouraged to work harder.

[221] *'Die ding*': translation - That thing… This is a reference to the voice on the radio (Nigel Pierce) and is seen as affectionately derogatory as is the case with the use of many derogatory words remembered nostalgically in many accounts of the past by District Sixers.

[222] *'...kan nie sy bek hou nie!':* translation - That thing can't shut his mouth, hey! This is used as a rhetorical statement to suggest that Nigel Pierce should just shut up because the workers are tired and don't need his egging on.

> *announcers* was *gecurse innie*[223] factory and the workers...push up production...they don't see us… I don't know if the factory pay(s) them to put that on the radio.

6.4.2. Factories and community life: the normalising of racist tropes…or not?

In my encounters with clothing workers during this time[224], I recall that many were both frustrated, as represented by Farahnaaz here, and welcoming of the fun, intimate and light aspects of the show that ran during the graveyard session of the production day (after lunch). The disc jockey (DJ) would intersperse chants of *push up production* with shout-outs (messages) from workers, supervisors, and managers; achievement, anniversary, birthday, engagement, and other announcements; challenges from one factory to another; competitions and music favourites that got workers occasionally dancing in the factory aisles. From many accounts, the factories became raucous with teasing, often racist, sexist, and demeaning on many levels, but remembered fondly as workers just having fun: "this is how we spoke to each other. No harm done and everyone laughed together. This is how we showed affection!' In the same vein, many people on the Cape Flats would talk about domestic violence as, '*Hulle slat die liefde in'*[225] suggesting that there is no need for a fuss because *'ons mense'* [226]are resilient – they can take it."[227] Without going into too much detail here, the point is that the derogatory banter in factories was (and still remains) very much part of an accepted or tolerated culture, held in place by complicity and refreshed by propaganda platforms directly and indirectly linked to the Apartheid Government's ideology of racism and white supremacy. Growing up in Cape Town came with the constant refrain of hateful phrases comfortably spoken aloud, causing hurt and denial. I list this here to bring it out into the light. Many other words and phrases like this are also dismissed as innocent but to list it all would fill up a book:

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[223] '*daai radio announcers* was *gecurse innie factory':* translation – those radio announcers were cursed / disliked in the factory.

[224] Throughout the late 1970s (at high school) and the 1980s (at university and teaching) I was part of broad-based community activism that engaged people across various sectors (schools, universities, workplaces, churches, mosques, sport fields, arts and culture workshops) in political education, street and community level activation. Clothing workers were all around us in working class communities. Almost all my students at schools in Hout Bay; Rocklands, Mitchell's Plain; Lavender Hill, Grassy Park, Athlone and Bo-Kaap, were from families with connections to clothing and textile or municipal and fisheries workers.

[225] '*Hulle slat die liefde in':* translation – They hit the love in. The basic deep-seated idea here is that spousal abuse is an act of love.

[226] *'ons mense':* translation – our people. This is a common way in which people reference their belonging to a particular community – in this case the reference is to a 'coloured' or factory worker community.

[227] I have constructed these statements from the many variations heard in conversations growing up in Retreat, teaching in many communities and used in workshops I facilitated on the *Language of Apartheid: context matters but so do the memories of hurt.*

- *'so dronk soos 'n kleurling onderwyse'*: *As drunk as a coloured teacher.* I cannot remember if this was taught as an Afrikaans idiom in my primary school or if the teacher pointed it out in a textbook as a problem. The latter makes more sense as I only had teachers who were classified as coloured because of apartheid education policies.
- *'Wat die wit man sê is die waarheid.': What the white man says is the truth.* This was often used to stop children and, people generally, from challenging the apartheid ideology and system. In the 1980s heyday of grassroots mobilisation, fearful parents would drag their children out of meetings with these words or it would be used as a weapon to challenge submissive people to get involved in the anti-apartheid struggle.
- *'dom darkie': stupid black person.* This phrase continues to be used in the workplace and was used in the days when 'Africans' were only allowed to be labourers in the building industry, for example. Coloured workers were given preference in the Cape Province in acquiring skilled jobs as bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, foreman, and so forth, requiring labourers to work *under* them. With the language barriers strong (Xhosa and Afrikaans), this phrase became an act of asserting petty power over others.
- *'kaffirtjie'*: the diminutive of a derogatory word used by racists to demean 'Africans' and dark-skinned people generally. The equivalent of 'nigger' in the USA. The word derives from the Arabic word meaning 'non-believer'.
- *'goffel': Slut.* A derogatory word used to describe who people think of as a 'loose' woman. Young people today widely use USA generated words in popular culture today.
- 'skelm / suinig jood': Sly / cheating Jew. This is a common anti-semitic gibe that was commonly used to describe shop and factory owners behind their backs.

This idea of benign offensiveness is underlined here by a quotation in the introductory panel to the exhibition, *Kewpie: Daughter of District Six*[228]*:*

> They were sometimes known as *'moffies'*, which can be an offensive term, but in District Six its use was not necessarily derogatory. However, many people objected to being called *'moffie'*, preferring *'queer'*. Kewpie herself recalled that 'we weren't called as gays, we were called as moffies then. But it was beautifully said. Not abruptly.'

[228] An exhibition that opened in September 2018 at the District Six Museum Homecoming Centre, co-curated by the Museum and GALA (Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action). The Kewpie Photographic Collection, of approximately 700 prints and negatives, spans the period between 1950 to the early 1980s.

The exhibition sparked important discussions about the normalisation of derogatory labels during the public education programmes in 2018 and early 2019 at the District Six Museum Homecoming Centre. The important aspect was that these discussions were not shut down and were engaged in respectfully with a diverse group of people participating.

Mohamed Adhikari makes an argument for how "…jokes, especially the more enduring and widely known ones, provide an accurate indicator of the values and attitudes prevalent in the societies in which they circulate."(Adhikari, 2006, p. 142). For this reason, it is important to confront 'internalised white supremacist' ideas head-on and in public discourse.

The frustration of factory workers to the imposition of the *Push up Production* show on them during working hours signalled a growing consciousness amongst some workers about the role that the radio played in distracting them from their problems, keeping them entertained and happy with minimal benefits accrued to them from the profits generated by more production. Factories, as with churches, sports clubs, schools, and university campuses, were considered *terrains or sites of struggle* – places fertile for mobilising people against the Apartheid system. Progressive students were able to engage workers from their communities in discussions about this and other ways in which the Apartheid government-maintained control over our lives. The mass media's role in the socialization process during Apartheid was regulated strictly by specific laws aimed at limiting freedom of speech for those whose ideas deviated from numerous racist and sexist tropes. Apartheid was serviced by an ideology of racial purity, white supremacy and tribalism as well as policed by a complex and efficient structure of Government institutions that restricted the great majority of peoples' freedom of expression and access to resources from the cradle to the grave. Government agencies like the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) provided various platforms for the dissemination of apartheid propaganda and, particularly, promoted the race ideology myth of *separate but equal* race groups, justifying the Government's belief in the superiority of people classified as *white*.

Mohammed Adhikari writes extensively (Adhikari, 2006, 2009) about the 'reification of racial identities in South Africa', what I describe as the microwaving of identities in communities defined racially by the Population Registration Act, 1950, locked into spaces prescribed by the Group Areas Act, 1950 and maintained by various other policies limiting freedom of movement, criminalising personal, cultural, and social relationships across the *colour line*, and providing a strictly *policed* education, religious and media system. He also brings to the foreground the sensitivities about engaging with the topic of Coloured identity or colouredness

in South Africa, where he notes that "until fairly recently, academic analyses of coloured identity in southern Africa were few and far between…less than two decades ago, treating colouredness as social reality was frowned upon, if not taboo, in 'progressive' circles in South Africa."(Adhikari, 2009, p. xxx). In the opening paragraph of *`God Made the White Man, God Made the Black Man...': Popular Racial Stereotyping of Coloured People in Apartheid South Africa,* he asserts the idea that "The Coloured people…a marginal minority, were particularly vulnerable to negative stereotyping within a popular mindset increasingly informed by racist and segregationist assumptions."(Adhikari, 2006, p. 142). My preoccupation in this research thesis has been, not so much on colouredness, but on digging a bit more deeply into working class manifestations of local culture. The difference, for me, is in the mindset. When I 'see' Ruth Jeftha or Farahnaaz Gilfelleon I first see fellow human beings, then women and then their working-class layer that is expressed in language that has become ring-fenced as coloured. The approach of language as a frontline identity is problematic for me, in the same way that skin colour is, as it skews the many other ways in which we can and should 'see' people. More importantly, many of the colloquialisms that is synonymous with District Six were common colloquialisms before the Group Areas Act forced removals disrupted this shared communication in later generations born into newly constructed communities. We see how the young people today who are able to go to schools that have become catchment areas for a 'racially' diverse community are developing common ways of colloquial communication with lots of code shifting.

In the case of the Good Hope Radio *Push up Production* show, its unstated intentions were to domesticate, placate and distract workers from facing up to the unfair labour practices of their factory bosses by winning over their *hearts and minds*. In the 1980s, this went together with a range of propagandistic public programmes that promoted *eiersoortigheid*[229] and formed part of an extensive strategy to promote South Africa as the only democratic and peaceful country in Africa. For many in the non-racial, non-sexist anti-apartheid movement, especially those of us aligned to the South African Congress of Sports (SACOS), a boycott movement grew after the 1976 students' uprising, later fuelled by the murder of Steve Biko in 1979, that encompassed a refusal to co-operate in any activity associated with Apartheid Government

[229] '*Eiersoortigheid'*: is an apartheid / nazi mentality born out of the colonial idea of the superior European subject. It is a practiced belief in the inherent cultural, economic, political, and biological separateness of communities defined racially by the Population Registration Act, 1950 and constructed within the boundaries prescribed by the Group Areas Act, 1950.. More specifically it refers to the idea of essentialised communities that is expressed colloquially as 'our people' or 'us and them' or 'they'. 'Each to his own' is another way of expressing this sentiment as well as 'sticking to your own kind'. It is tribalism.

agencies and initiatives (directly or indirectly). This included the Eoan Cultural Group, the *Come Play* events organised by the SA Defence Force in the townships, multi-racial sports, and cultural events like football at Hartleyvale, rugby at Newlands, shows at Nico Malan Theatre, amongst many others. The boycott movement took root and organised effective alternative structures and events within a strong political framework of resistance. Most notable was the SA Schools' Sports Association (SASSA) that organised efficient and effective sporting competitions for learners from primary to high school, across the country but most effectively in the Western Cape, Boland, and Natal. Teachers, parents, and learners were involved in a *sport for all* movement guided by the slogan, 'No normal sport in an abnormal society!' that rendered the apartheid structures superfluous and the individuals who participated in these as quislings and collaborators. The boycott of the Coon Carnival and the Garment Workers' Union 'Spring Queen' Festival had a minimal impact with many community activists choosing what was known as an 'entryist' position – a political strategy to subvert the racist, sexist and Government aligned elements by influencing the grassroots-based leadership to support activities of the anti-apartheid movement like school boycotts, worker strikes, and other actions aimed at making the country ungovernable.

The role of the mass media in socialising people to become complicit in their own oppression was a central part of driving the movement to create an alternative grassroots media to support protesting students, striking workers, and organised communities.[230] This, we realised was done in cahoots with what was perceived to have developed into a *sweetheart union*[231] – the powerful Garment Workers' Union (GWU). Good Hope Radio Station and the Garment Workers' Union collaborated with the garment industry bosses to increase production during a period of heightened political awareness and a nascent class consciousness across industries to create a feel-good culture on the factory floor and in people's homes and cars.

[230] This became part of political education programmes and informed a wider political rhetoric that was dominant in the 'resistance media' produced 'illegally' on school Roneo machines or printed by *Allie's Press* and *Sanger Signs* or that could also be found on the pages of the monthly *Grassroots* and *Saamstaan* newspapers. This rhetoric gained currency because it resonated with people's untenable working and living conditions.
[231] These were unions which had a 'well-managed' relationship with factory and industry bosses by keeping the peace between antagonistic interest groups – primarily serving the interests of the employer.

6.5 FRAGILITY OF MEMORY - ERASURE - GAPS AND DEALING WITH SHAME

> When people talk about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a little, exaggerate, become confused, get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths…the guiding principle for [life histories] could be that all autobiographical memory is true. It is up to the interpreter to discover in which sense, where, and for what purpose.[232](Perks et al., 1998)

This section picks up on some of the issues related to identity that I started out exploring in the part of this chapter above, headed, *Community: Family, identity, culture*. The major absences of memory relate to issues that could be interpreted as 'shameful'- beneath dignity when presented to a public. These could range from silences about immediate family members perceived as 'unsuccessful' in life to experiences within the family linked to relationships with, for example, gangs, apartheid collaboration or even cultural activities that are not acceptable in general society as 'high art'. Memory recall, however, is a complex process of unpacking and repacking incoherent snippets from our past, recalibrating these to reveal more layers. Gaps, therefore, in the stories we tell about ourselves to others, can be just that – gaps in our ability to recall memories from our past without an intention to deceive or mislead. Ruth and Farahnaaz have not shared much about the lives of their children (Ruth has two sons and Farahnaaz, one son – all, obviously, adults now). I am reluctant to make assumptions about why this is the case and lean more to the idea that this is guided by the emphases of my discussion questions and probes for insights.

Ruth and Farahnaaz are both reluctant to talk about themselves in relation to issues they consider to be political, where political is seen to be a declaration of party-political affiliation today. Ruth is related to the well-known Kadalie 'political' District Six family and would have been old enough in the 1960s to understand the political issues evident at the time in District Six. An encounter with Farouk Gilfelleon, way before I met Farahnaaz, in his Hanover Park home where I assisted a high school student's oral history research for the Albert Luthuli Oral History Award revealed a deep understanding of the relationship between apartheid, identity and capitalism. He identified with Black Consciousness and became Muslim for similar politically spiritual reasons to the boxer, Mohammed Ali that inspired his resistance to the Vietnam war. Farouk was a captain in the Pennsylvanians *Klopse Kamer*, a well-known troupe

[232]As quoted by *Joan Sangster* in her chapter 'Telling our stories: Feminist debates and the use of oral history' in *Perks and Thompson (eds),* 1998, the Oral History Reader, p87.

captured quite extensively in the book, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town: Past to present* (Martin, 1999). The Pennsylvanians are owned by Richard 'Pot' Stemmet, whose family hails from District Six, alleged to be the top dog in the *Hard Livings* gang with the Hanover Park *Klopse Kamer* serving as a front for the gang headquarters – so the story goes. In my dealings with 'Pot' and Farahnaaz's brother Farouk, I observed that they were both politically astute in their analysis of the apartheid years and are proud about being 'part of the liberation movement'. They used the Hanover Park base for music education and job creation in the run-up to the annual Minstrel Carnival. Their base was also used for the Garment Industry supported SACTWU Spring Queen festival (performance outfit design and production) and continue to serve as a community kitchen when there is a need. They support many of the community members' needs – enough to have their possible gang connections overlooked or, at best, seen as a positive influence in an economically depressed community, victims of forced removals from District Six, Claremont, and other places.

Growing up in a 'politically conscious' Cape Town family, two big community events were collaborationist programmes used by the Apartheid government to domesticate the oppressed and to sow division in the resistance to oppression. Both these festivals were celebrated as part of apartheid 'coloured' identity and culture. Apartheid symbols like the flag, were boldly displayed by the *voorlopers*[233], or made up the colours of the uniforms, especially during the annual march of 'coon' troupes through the city and working-class neighbourhoods on the Cape Flats. Here residents showed support by *gooi'ing a tafel*[234] for their favoured group as they performed their new *moppies* or showcased their new talent in the form of lead singer, usually a person gifted in performing 'exact copies' of the latest Shirley Bassey, Frank Sinatra, Evis, Engelbert Humberdink, the O'Jays, Diana Ross or Temptations hit. I came to recognise these as popular community events but understood the contradiction of oppressed communities supporting events with their oppressors as *false consciousness*[235].

[233] '*Voorlopers'*: translation – Front walkers literally but in practice the extravagantly costumed performers that led the Minstrel troupes through the streets or into the stadiums. They ranged from cute and talented children to elderly drag queens still strutting their stuff.
[234] '*gooi'ing a tafel* ': Translation: the decorated presentation of a table of refreshments – usually watermelon slices but sometimes samosas and small cakes like *tweegevrietjies* (two-faced) *Hertzoggies* (named after a Boer general who became Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1924 to 1939).
[235] A Marxist concept that describes the mentality of oppressed people who do not perceive the true nature of their oppressive social or economic situation.

The popular use of the pejorative *'coon'* in the title of the annual *klopse* carnival and the capitulation by women factory workers to the idea of being paraded as objects for the factory owners and union bosses, further entrenched my political opposition to these cultural practices. When I started teaching at working class schools on the Cape Flats (Sentinel, Hout Bay; Mitchell's Plain; Lavender Hill; Grassy Park, Athlone and Bo-Kaap) the grassroots support for these events overwhelmed me but also forced me to get off my New Unity Movement milieu [236]perch and look at the participants through more complex eyes. This was a difficult transition for me but was a continuation of my resistance to Cape Town middle class politics started when I disappointed my teachers by going to a 'bush' college[237] – the University of the Western Cape (UWC). In the same way that my UWC experience represented a high point in my anti-apartheid education – a grounded experience and praxis 'in-community' – my engagement with learners involved in *klopse kamers* were insightful. In self-describing as 'coons', for example, I came to realise that the historical resonances of the word that disturbed me were mostly absent from the consciousness of *'coon'* carnival participants. They were not using it to describe others and appeared not to have any idea about the racist undertones, or the etymology of the word - that 'coon was a shortened form for raccoon, a weasley animal, used mostly in the USA to demean black people in a similar way to the use of *'hotnot'*, *'kaffir'*, *'gollywog'* and *'nigger'* – words that did ring with insult for them. They had no idea that the word 'coon' suggested an acceptance of a 'master-slave' relationship with 'white' South Africans where the enslaved were willing participants in a subservient role. Together with learners from more politically conscious families, who preferred the use of the original *'klopse'* to describe the carnival as well as its participants, these contradictions provided wonderful opportunities for me as a language teacher to teach literacy as political consciousness (Darder, 2017; Freire, 2005; Kopish, 2014).

[236] Refer to my unpacking of this New Unity Movement milieu in Section 6.2 of this thesis and, alluded to throughout, where appropriate.

[237] The University of the Western Cape (UWC) and other universities and Technikons throughout South Africa that were created for specifically designated apartheid race groups, were considered by members of the New Unity Movement and the Teachers' League of South Africa to be a 'bush' college. This was part of the boycott strategy employed against institutions of the Apartheid government seen as designed for producing inferior citizens and also potential collaborationists like members of the Coloured House of Representatives whose headquarters were located in the UWC precinct. UWC was created for people classified coloured, University of Durban-Westville (UDW) for people classified Indian, for example. History proves otherwise, however. It is interesting to note that the University of Cape Town (UCT) was a whites only university where 'non-whites' were required to apply for a special permit to attend and only given if they were accepted into a study stream not offered at 'their' designated institution. As a result, many black students studied courses like Comparative Government and Law (CAGL) or did Fine Arts and Drama, not offered at Bush. The boycott did not extend to white university classes, but students were boycott-breakers if they participated in campus social, cultural and sporting activities and used these facilities. Students were encouraged to participate community sports and cultural activities.

Ruth and Farahnaaz were both involved, as factory workers, in the annual Spring Queen festival when every clothing factory organised local competitions in similar vein to our school athletic competitions, starting with interhouse to district and then finally to the more seriously contested provincial and national competitions. From many accounts, these early rounds were frenzied, ungovernable and highly entertaining events reminiscent of subversive drag queen shows. One year in the '90s, I was persuaded by a University friend from Silvertown, Athlone to accompany him as a judge in one of the local factory in-house competitions. I had always known about these but never attended one and, what an eye-opener. As teachers, we were still considered, at the time, to be honest, fair and upstanding citizens – stalwarts in the community - and therefore qualified to be on a panel of judges, together with well-known entertainers and the necessary expert on women's beauty and fashion – the lead judge, usually a popular member of the Cape Town queer community. As with the word *'coon'*, *'moffie'* and *'slams'*[238] were other words I was squeamish about and these flowed freely off the tongues of audience members and competitors alike, veering from the seemingly unoffensive usage when judgements went in a positive way, to the more intentionally pejorative when judgements were unfavourable to the crowd or individual participant. Then, all judges became cheating *'moffies'*. These were not events for the feint hearted and represented the same kind of rebellious energy I imagine was generated by 'emancipated' slaves at midnight on the 31st November – 1st December 1837 when they took to the streets of the city, no longer bound by a curfew, and lit fires along the mountain – going *'bos'*[239] to mark their relative freedom. This rebellious energy marks the early rounds of the Spring Queen Festival where the normal rules of beauty pageants are subverted. Competitors in the beauty stakes varied from young to old, skinny to obese, and disrupted most traditional ideas about beauty. Peter Alegi notes elements of this in his study of black garment workers participation in beauty pageants as popular culture from the 1970s – 2005: "…factory women purposefully transformed a seemingly banal and patriarchal beauty pageant into a cultural production for self-empowerment and trade union solidarity." (Alegi, 2008, p. 31)

[238] *'slams':* Translation – the derogatory word to describe Muslims by others but also used extensively in Cape Town Muslim communities to describe non-observant, 'uneducated' or 'bad' Muslims.
[239] The colloquial word *'bos'* is used to describe the innocent and sometime intentional rebelliousness of oppressed people. This might refer to students going crazy as soon as they step out of a classroom during a break or the shenanigans of working-class people who take over the beaches on the two days of the year when this is possible or cultural – Boxing Day and New Year.

Siona O'Connell's work on the Spring Queen pageant produced, a journal article, a documentary, and an exhibition[240] - 'The Staging Of The Glittering Proletariat' - that together explored how an archive 'can be examined for insights into the past and present lives of those oppressed by apartheid'(O'Connell, 2017, p.168). Her concern, particularly, is with looking beyond the spectacle into the individual interior lives of the women involved, searching for valuable ways to better understand oppressed lives in the frame of 'an effective critical history' that 'creates room for the previously silenced archives' to generate 'a new writing of the history of South Africa'. For O'Connell, the Spring Queen pageant archive is not just about possibilities for 'presenting alternate histories' but, more importantly, an opportunity to 'theorize such histories' in the frame of 'an effective critical history unearthed through excavation and interpretation'.

> Crucially, I believe that these "new archives" of disavowed bodies will challenge our long-held ideas of the meanings of life and death, of pasts and futures. To do so the archive must look beyond itself, escape its gatekeeper, and locate those texts, experiences, and sounds that belong to the bodies so recently deemed inferior.(O'Connell, 2017, p. 175)

Earlier, she argues that we need to rethink the archive as more than just a 'storeroom':

> …it is in looking to the lived realities of the oppressed that the archive will be able to redeem itself and become a constantly shifting text – at times elusive and ambiguous, but within these uncertainties a reminder that there are multiple pasts, presents, and points of view. (O'Connell, 2017, p. 174)

Today, the Spring Queen pageant has become a lot more professional and, in my view, less subversive. It has followed a similar pattern to the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival where Events Management companies or similar structures have taken over most of the high level curatorial and preparatory work. It now also showcases the products of the government, garment industry and South African Clothing Workers' Union (SACTWU) in a drive to re-energise the local manufacturing industry by promoting a 'buy local' campaign. However, it continues to provide opportunities for workers themselves to make sense of the contradictions of the world they live in, their relationship to ideas of emancipation, racism, patriarchy, and wage slavery. SACTWU has an ongoing research project (Kriel & Eppell, 2009; SACTWU, 2008) that provides space for workers in the clothing industry to share their stories. This has great potential to go beyond

[240] *'The Staging of the Glittering Proletariat'* had a run at the Centre for African Studies Gallery at the University of Cape Town until the September 25, 2012. It then travelled to the District Six Museum, Homecoming Centre, Cape Town.

being just a platform for union leadership (local, provincial, and national level) and to become part of 'an effective critical history' by including the lived experiences of as wide a spectrum of individual workers as well as workers as participants in crucial political and cultural events.

6.6 DISTRICT SIX NOSTALGIA AND THE SEARCH FOR DIGNITY

District Six nostalgia dominates popular discourse about the place during apartheid. It has provided many people who have been proverbially battered, bruised and sometimes shattered by their experiences during apartheid, with opportunities to look back at a traumatic past in a way that allows them to live in the present with heart-warming memories that produce warmth and comfort (Zhou, Wildschut, Sedikides, Chen, et al., 2012). For many this is enough and is the basis for being stuck in a romantic past of copycat Hollywood stars; the gentleman gangsters and naughty youngsters in their circles; the solidarity of that shared cup of sugar with the neighbour 'in need'; being one happy family – tolerant of all differences in a diverse neighbourhood; highly talented singers, musicians and dramatic theatre or street performers; smooth sailing family gatherings and community rituals; amongst other highly savoured experiences from the past.

Nostalgia about a love for reading during her primary school years by Farahnaaz, initially played out as a 'false memory' to me because I could not reconcile myself with how someone could love reading as much as she said she did but then run away from schools renowned for its reading culture. According to a series of studies, about nostalgia as a resource to respond to 'self-discontinuity and a source of self-continuity' researchers tested the regulatory role of nostalgia (Sedikides et al., 2015). In one study they concluded that 'self-discontinuity, especially when stemming from negative life events, was associated with higher proneness to nostalgia.' In a second study they concluded that 'only negative self-discontinuity evoked heightened nostalgia.' Overall, their findings 'elucidate the restorative properties of nostalgia for the self-system.' In conversations with Farahnaaz and Ruth both admit to regrets in life. Farahnaaz admits to regrets about not continuing school having dropped out at the end of her primary education to go and work at the Ensign Clothing factory at the age of 14 going on 15 years old. Her nostalgia about defiantly reading everything she could get her hands on all the time is, in a sense, a resource that restores her self-worth and 'self-continuity'. In Ruth's case, she acknowledges that she imagined herself as being more than a 'factory girl'. Her nostalgia for a past where she was chosen by factory bosses to advance in her factory status to sought

after supervisor and then manageress, helps her to reconcile with the disappointment of realising that inexperienced 'white' people always earned more and advanced faster on the back of her mentoring role. Ruth's self-assurance grows with her digging into her past though a positive lens. She finds this to be restorative.

The main thrust of this research project and the conversations, across various modalities, with Ruth and Farahnaaz, was to open understandings about memory, place, and politics from the vantage points of working-class people. A major part of these encounters involved ordinary[241] people making sense of the everyday aspects of their lives through the newspaper clippings, photographs, certificates, posters, household objects and other tangibles that they may have misplaced, kept private, yet treasured, even when scattered all over the show.

A deeper and more widespread dig into these private archives, stored in shoeboxes, between pages of old notebooks and tattered albums or scattered in the draws and cupboards of many working-class homes, for example, promises to reveal far more complex community histories than we see from more accredited ethnographic studies on marginalised communities. These almost always affirm the grand narratives and stereotypes that pass for authentic anthropological studies. In a study of the popular *Movie Snaps* photography studio, Siona O'Connell examines her own family's archive, and is further drawn into aspects of people's lives, often dismissed as 'banal or mundane', to expose an interior life far more resonant than initially imagined.

> These innocuous objects speak of a common experience across divides including race, gender, religion, and class, the memories of which, now, however evoke completely different responses, according to the dictates of racial legislation and lines of history.(O'Connell, 2018b, p. 191)

O'Connell goes on further to unpack the way in which photographs from local family archives from studios like *Movie Snaps* that served the streets, contribute to countervailing narratives about communities where, at a simplistic glance, identities and histories are essentialised and seen to be immutable:

> The photograph has the ability to "fix the past"—it freezes a moment in time and space, but also it has the chance to remedy it, to put together that which has been broken. It has the ability to resist a particular discourse of oppression, justice, and

[241] I use 'ordinary' here to refer to members of the public who do not hold leadership positions in organisations, institutions, or as public figures. I do not, in any way, cast aspersions about the value of a person through the use of this term.

> freedom and, in so doing, compels us to renegotiate relationships between the viewer and the viewed. (O'Connell, 2018a, p. 192)

For O'Connell, this ties into her idea of 'an impossible return' to a past that no longer exists because of an injustice like forced removals and the weight of the present.. To some extent, photographs and other objects from recent pasts help to mitigate the pain of loss. Some might argue that this is true under 'normal circumstances' where the passing of time creates a distance and even a sense of loss because of a longing for the time of our youth. In 1688, Johannes Hofer, gave an account of his investigation into what, at that point, he came to understand as a medical sickness amongst young people who 'suffer' from a longing for home. He is credited with coining the term *nostalgia* to describe *this disease* (Hofer, 1688)

Photographs collected by ordinary people provide tremendous solace to those with direct connections to its subject and, literally, gives us, the viewer, a different picture or view of communities we think we know from knowledge extracted from more dominant and authorised socio-political discourse. The Van Kalker Collection (Bennett, 2008), part of which is in the District Six Museum archive, revealed many truths about, especially, working class people in Cape Town who found dignity in performing respectability in front of the camera, often at the urging of Van Kalker himself who was noted for taking lots of time to pose people or lighten their skin tone if this is how they wished to be seen by others. Most important to me, however, is that this archive reveals the presence of 'Africans' in a city that, despite its liberal pretensions, fastidiously implemented the laws of apartheid, particularly the pernicious Pass Laws[242], displacing thousands of people to the Eastern Cape Bantustans of the Transkei and Ciskei.

[242] These were primarily administered from the Langa Pass Office where hundreds of people were regularly taken in huge trucks and dumped in the Ciskei or Transkei for Pass Law infringements, or jailed.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

This research project, in both scope and depth, is not meant to be conclusive but provides two life-history portfolios as case studies for the next level of research with a bigger cohort of clothing workers. The findings in Chapter Six opens a whole new series of questions and dilemmas that require further investigation creating the need to go back to the main sources of information (District Six Museum archive and processes, Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon), design new tools and workshop activities to generate more complex and layered ways of seeing the past (individually and collectively) as is central to the Museum's *Digging Deeper* methodology. The intention was to do an initial writing up of the findings and, together with Chapter Four: Conversations and Chapter Five: Elements of Life History, present these in a series of two workshops to (1) receive final feedback from Ruth and Farahnaaz ; and (2) create a platform for Ruth, Farahnaaz and myself to present their stories and our interpretations to Museum curatorial and research staff members, other participants in the research project, former clothing factory workers from District Six who expressed an interest in taking this oral history project forward and the youth interns who helped in the process of listening. This process was, however, first put-on hold by the unfortunate death of Paul Grendon[243] in September 2019, who was assisting me with the site-specific photographic documentation for the project. It was then postponed further by the death of Mogamat Benjamin, a key contributor to our oral history campaign and a former clothing worker. The findings and this conclusion, therefore, do not benefit from the important insights and knowledge that would have been generated at these workshops. This thesis will, however, form the basis for involving a wider

[243] We had to delay the documentation of site walks with Ruth and Farahnaaz as well as involving the many other former clothing workers keen to participate from their homes, as well, when Paul underwent a double hip replacement surgery in June 2019. As he was preparing to come out of his convalescence in September, we started scheduling Spring walks and photoshoots (always a good memory trigger when in-situ). Just as he got off his crutches he succumbed to a lung abscess that took us all by surprise and threw me completely off-course, personally – as he was a dear and close friend and collaborator in many projects.

layer of former clothing workers from District Six in the Museum's oral history intensive campaign over the next three years (2021 – 2023).

For the research that went into producing this thesis, I examined various sources of information through a particular framework that analysed the discourse, power relations between researcher and participants as well as the aspects of the two participant's lives that they wished to construct from their memories of District Six, factory life, forced removals and the aftermath. These sources ranged from transcripts of recorded interviews that I conducted in 2018-19, my memories of unstructured discussions with both Ruth and Farahnaaz, workshop notes and annotations attached to photographs from personal archives, from the District Six Museum archive or nostalgic images from magazines and the internet. The interviews and discussions were conducted as one on one interviews, in groups with other District Sixers or on walks to sites of significance in their lives that they wanted to share and remember more deeply. Most significantly, these findings were explored both formally and informally with Ruth and Farahnaaz's participation in post-interview sessions.

The collections and documentation part of this research process was not an extractive exercise for my benefit and the elements that have been collated and interpreted in Part Two of this thesis have largely been guided by the extent to which Ruth and Farahnaaz chose to interrogate their own lives and then share information, artefacts, personal photographs, and recollections or close to fully formed memories with me. This was also, it has been noted previously, influenced by their individual abilities of expression, my listening and noticing abilities, all our prejudices, belief systems, personal and political goals that meet gently or crash in an alignment of purpose. The common purpose that has remained intact throughout this process is that this thesis development must add to the Museum's archive and be of value to visiting researchers, community activists and former residents of District Six involved in the ongoing work of the Museum as well as to primary and high school learners who visit the museum to fulfil their curriculum need. This will be determined in the years to come but every effort will be made to ensure that it does not gather dust.

Importantly, Ruth Jeftha and Farahnaaz Gilfelleon, both have **starter life-history catalogues**, to build on for themselves, as well as feedback from me in the form of my interpretations of their archive of memories that they can choose to accept or not. I have tried to capture all of these with empathy and through a process of listening that spans active, passive, and a listening that comes from me absence - excluding myself from processes that produced some of the

memory snapshots in workshops with Khadija Tracey Heeger or suitcase memory box development processes with UCT Fine Arts student, Kirstie Pietersen. I was only tangentially involved with other Museum memory projects that Ruth and Farahnaaz benefitted from like the *Huis Kombuis* food and memory project involving seamstresses, the Peninsula Maternity Hospital memory project and the various memory and memorial project activities of the Seven Steps Members' Club. These museum memory methodology projects that Ruth and Farahnaaz were involved in required a listening and noticing on my part that recognises the many intangible ways in which the knowledge, culture and practice imbued in the District Six Museum milieu has contributed to my sense making in this thesis.

The memory catalogue tool in a workshop situation has proven to be quite effective in helping people to focus the way they start to dig into their past – collecting snippets and fragments irrespective of how banal, irrelevant, or significant these may seem to others. It was a particularly useful tool for people not ordinarily involved in formal research, writing and presentation work as was the case with Ruth and Farahnaaz and many others from marginalised groups who experience various forms of *invisible ceilings* or *hurdles* as they try to get ahead in society with dignity. The standard oral history research project rests on the quality of the questionnaire, competence of the oral historian to skilfully conduct oral history interviews, take valuable field notes as judged necessary and on the abilities of the participant in the research to adequately articulate her/his answers to questions. This was not a standard oral history research project and went rather beyond it in many respects. In situations where users of the memory catalogue tool were still not able to write down their raw state memories (illiteracy, a dislike of writing or a lack of confidence) as preparation for presentation of their stories or for the sit-down recorded interviews, non-oral historian peers, family members, friends or youth learning to become grassroots community historians, amongst others, were able to assist in the excavation process.

It was challenging, for me as a person steeped in political and civic organisation, to look beyond the obvious ways in which people engage in politics as it relates to the big issues of the day: a prerequisite understanding of governance structures, people, policies and laws that facilitate environments for wealth accumulation and poverty; economic systems that generate wealth streams and inequality; Identity, language, categories and themes in political discourse that define how and therefore, who in society gets to participate in a politics that dishes out servings of power, privilege and marginalisation.

This research project has affirmed three things for me:

1. We do not know, what we do not know! When we encourage participation in research projects or in socio-political endeavours such as memorialisation campaigns by people usually excluded by virtue of their positions in society as 'non-experts', then it adds value by widening and deepening the project or campaign's field of vision. Focus is a subjective mechanism and the more perspectives, lenses, and palettes we utilise collectively in confronting challenging socio-political situations the more insights we gather and the more effective it is in the long run. It helps us to avoid the pitfall of stereotypes, over-generalisation, and binary thinking when complex thinking best reflects the lived reality of most people. For example, the inclusion of only people who occupied leadership positions in the liberation struggle or who have a 'significant political legacy' in the memorialisation of the apartheid experience, valorises individuals and organisations more than it helps us to understand the society that oppressed us, in a way that enables a deeper learning from history.
2. People from marginalised groups in society have agency, possess useful knowledge, and present valuable insights about their apartheid experience! This should not need to be stated but, the idea that oppressed communities need a saviour or to be 'given voice' remains quite prevalent in society and even in social justice thinking. Restitution of dignity is a form of social justice and people with power and privilege across society fail to see that the silence or non-participation of people from marginalised groups is not, necessarily, a reflection of voice-lessness. It is often a reflection of an unfair system that drives society. The result is a mismatch in the supporting social structures between those being seen and heard (the privileged), even when they do not make much of an effort and those who are not being seen and heard because of location, language, culture, accessibility, and privileged forms of discourse that favour the few. We have to also be mindful, however, of situations that visibly restrict the voices of oppressed groups as did the laws of apartheid, many of which have an afterlife in city bylaws or that have been reframed to subtly favour those with economic power and political position.
3. The agency in marginalised communities that we encounter as researchers or political activists may not always, or completely, gel with us in content, form, culture, and place. This is healthy and generative. Crucially this sets up a dynamic where participants in research projects contribute in far more meaningful ways to creative problem-solving situations and possibilities in a socially mediated process.

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ADDENDA: INDEX