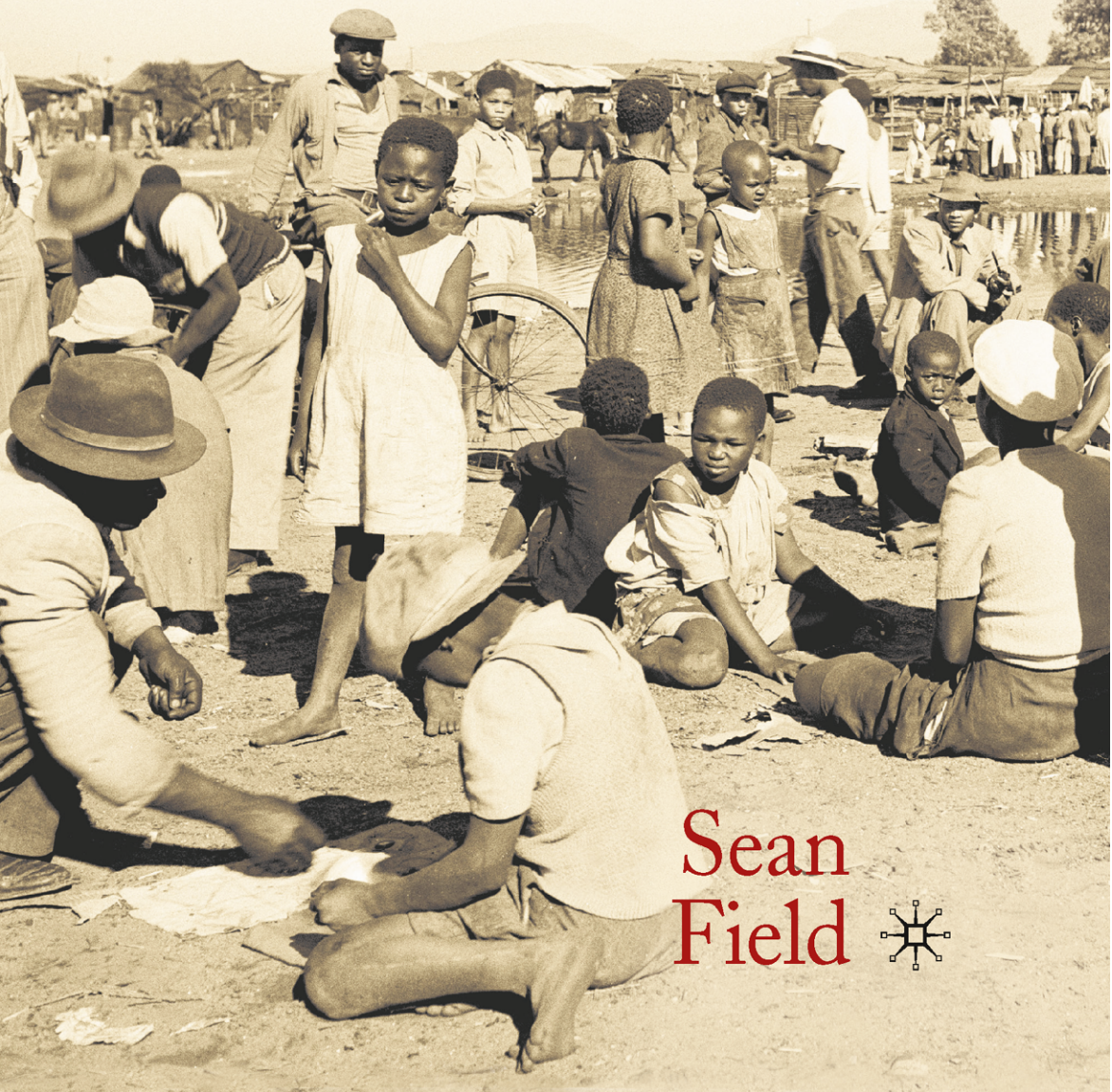
PALGRAVE *Studies in Oral History*

Oral History, Community, and Displacement

IMAGINING MEMORIES IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA



Sean Field

PALGRAVE *Studies in Oral History*

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Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Sean Field

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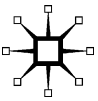

ORAL HISTORY, COMMUNITY, AND DISPLACEMENT

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This book is dedicated to Vincent Kolbe and to all the interviewees

Contents

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Illustrations

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Turning to my time at Essex University, I need to thank all my academic teachers. I am indebted to Paul Thompson for supervising my doctorate and for providing umpteen references to a financially desperate foreign student living in England. Catherine Hall and Ian Craib were astute co-supervisors. Sharmala Naaidoo, Aletta Norval, David Howarth, and Nazeema Mohammed were supportive South African friends abroad. To students in Paul Thompson's oral history class of 1991–1992, thanks very much for the wonderfully lively discussions and a special mention to Helen Hannick, Steve Hussey, Junko Sakai, Daisy Perelmutter, and Karen O'Reilly.

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Series Editors' Foreword

Oral History, Community, and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa brings together eleven essays by South African oral historian Sean Field. Some are original to this volume; others have been published previously, but in books and journals not easily available to an international readership. Aided by what Field refers to as "Framing Notes" introducing each of the volume's three sections, the essays, taken together, demonstrate the evolution of his thinking on a number of key issues in oral history: the complex ways traumatic social changes inflect memories of the past; how imagination and memory, pictures in "the mind's eye," shape oral history narratives; the role of emotion, both the narrator's and the interviewer's, in an interview; the fluidity of identity and agency as they operate in an individual's life and life history; and the multiple meanings of community. Field brings insights from psychoanalytic theory to bear upon the interview process, even as his work uses the language of the humanities to decode what happens when one person asks another to talk about his or her past.

For all their broad significance, these essays are deeply grounded in the South African context; specifically, the Cape Town experience. They focus particularly on the displacements of the apartheid era and on the efforts to create a unified nation since the post-apartheid transition to democracy in the 1990s. The wounds of apartheid, as well as a sense of loss and longing, are evident in many of the interviews Field cites, and his own analysis addresses these issues with both sensitivity and rigor. Especially perceptive are his insights into the limits of South Africa's most well-known effort at an oral history, the Human Rights Victim hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Field avers that fundamental inequalities aren't healed by "telling the truth;" indeed, he notes that these public confessions were circumscribed by a political setting. An anti-apartheid activist in the 1980s and 1990s, Field also understands well the shifting politics of memory in South Africa and elsewhere: he concludes this provocative collection with a passionate argument for oral historians to continue as intellectual activists in ongoing struggles for social justice and human rights.

There is indeed much to ponder in these essays. *Oral History, Community, and Displacement* joins two other recent volumes in Palgrave's Studies in Oral History that make fresh contributions to the broad spectrum of ideas informing oral history practice: *Place, Writing, and Voice in Oral History,* edited by Shelley Trower (2011);

and *Oral History and Photography*, edited by Alexander Freund and Alistair Thomson (2011). In addition, books in the series bring topically oriented oral history out of the archives and into the hands of students, educators, scholars, and the reading public. These volumes are based extensively on interviews and present them in ways that aid readers to appreciate more fully their historical significance and cultural meaning.

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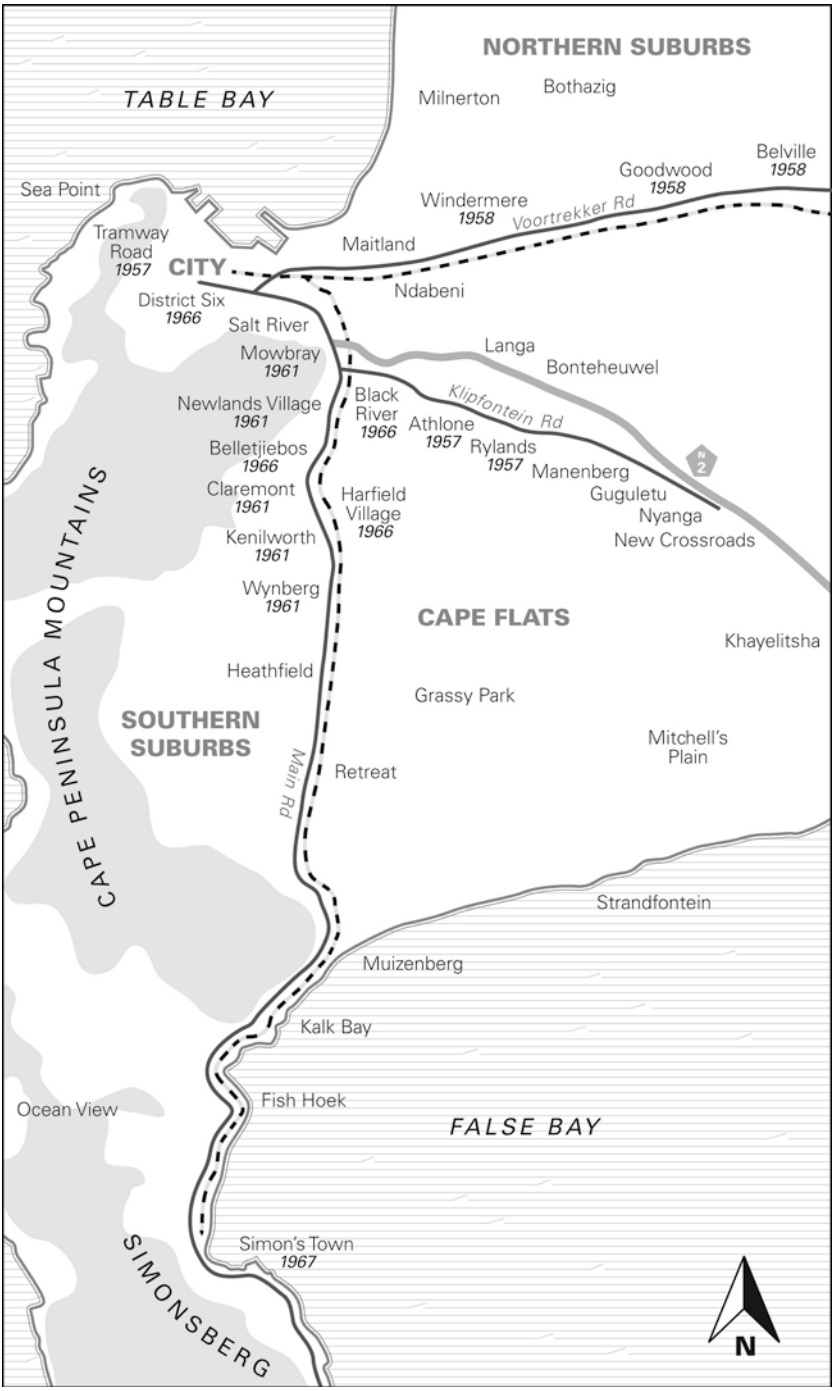

Map of Cape Town with dates of forced removals

INTRODUCTION

Imagining Memories

Oral Histories of Place and Displacement in Post-Apartheid Cape Town

> Dispossession and exclusion lie at the heart of apartheid.[1]
>
> —Lauren Platsky and Cheryl Walker, *The Surplus People*

> As with any city that has been truly lived in, loved and at times suffered, it is a space coloured by memory, ambivalences, disaffections and obsessions. But this is what is meant by a city *imagined*.[2]
>
> —Stephen Watson, *A City Imagined*

> Of course I remember the knock at the door, my grandmother, she looked after me. And I was next to her and two uniformed gentlemen . . . one of them just said, "Is Mr. Solomons here?" She did not say anything. She just burst out into tears.[3]
>
> —quoted in Sue Valentine and Siviwe Minyi, "The Knock at the Door"

Apartheid displaced people. Apartheid killed people. Apartheid impoverished people. Apartheid assaulted their self-esteem through systemic racism and other forms of painful discrimination. This list of ways the apartheid system hurt people is infinite. These repetitions of the similar and not so similar hurts make the point that emotion and feeling, especially different forms and degrees of pain, need to be engaged with throughout analyses of the South African past. Histories of apartheid that exclude emotions, especially the feelings of people who suffered the oppressive

effects and affects of that system, are not only incomplete but raise troubling intellectual questions about the production of historical knowledge. Prior to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) activities from 1995 to 2000, there were widespread public silences about the emotional dimensions of life, especially black lives, under apartheid and preapartheid political systems.[4] However, the TRC only focused on the period from 1960 to 1994; and many silences were only partially broken through the widely publicized TRC human rights victim hearings. Apartheid is now "past," but the emotional traces of past discriminations still reside in and between people. They beg the question: in the post-apartheid period, has enough been done for those who suffered human rights abuses?

For this book, the question is specifically posed around the victims and survivors of forced removals. In contrast to the TRC victim hearings, post-apartheid land restitution has been an administrative and legal process. Land restitution and the TRC are significant post-apartheid processes that I briefly discuss, but they are not my primary foci. Rather, I focus on people's senses of community and place in Cape Town and their experiences before, during, and after forced displacement. Moreover, by recording and interpreting oral histories, I explore ways to historicize the emotional dimensions of how people remember, forget, and silence their memories of forced displacement. I analyze the specific forms of pain and potential trauma[5] of forced displacement and how this impacts on sense of self,[6] subjectivity, and identity.

Pause for a moment. Imagine the community and surrounding landscape you grew up in, that surrounded you throughout your formative childhood years. What if you and your family were forcibly removed because you did not comply with an externally imposed racial identity category, which decreed that you could no longer live in the spaces and interact with the people you regarded as your community?[7] Imagine then your experience of a part of yourself being "amputated." How would your life change after the moment of amputation? How would you remember your life before amputation?

Amputation is a brutal metaphor, but it is one of the words that victims of forced displacement across the globe use to describe displacement experiences and legacies. These metaphors are attempts to create a narrative frame for social experiences laden with emotions. For many victims of displacement, their experiences *feel as if* there were an amputation of their self from the places and people they identify with. Through "feels as if," there are creative possibilities for victims and survivors to engage in memory work and to tell stories.[8]

My ambiguous intellectual aim is to develop antiessentialist arguments about the construction of self and identity, but to also assert the fragile subjectivity of real selves under an oppressive regime. Stephen Frosh and others argue that while the self is fragmented, discontinuous, shifting and "not 'essential,' it may be real: just because something is constructed, with difficulty and mishap along the way, it does not mean that it does not exist."[9] Paul Gilroy correctly warns against both ethnic absolutism and crude social constructionist approaches. He argues that "the aura of authentic ethnicity supplies a special form of comfort in a situation where the very history of black experience is undermined."[10] Beneath this belief in authentic ethnicities, and the

crass imposition of apartheid's racial categories, lies the hybrid composition of all cultural identities that were constantly in flux through peoples' lived relationships across times and spaces. Therefore, oral history research of how memory, self, and identity were imagined under apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, its benefits and costs, needs to be approached with sustained sensitivity and empathy.

I argue that how people utilize memory *and* imagination is not only of significance for memory studies, oral historians, and other researchers, but is fundamental to how people contain their feelings about themselves and compose their pasts into a cohesive sense of self. Forms of imaginative composition are constitutive of how people recall, forget, and conceal mental traces into what are commonly called "memories." Therefore, how the self is consciously and unconsciously framed through *imagining memories* is central to my analysis of the historical and emotional impact of apartheid forced displacement and its ongoing legacies in the post-apartheid present.

Dialogues about Memory: Snapshots of South African Oral History[11]

> History is always in transit, even if periods, places, or professions sometimes achieve relative stabilization. This is the very meaning of historicity.[12]
>
> —Dominick LaCapra, *History in Transit*

When President De Klerk made his February 2, 1990, speech, declaring the legalization of banned anti-apartheid liberation organizations, it signaled the beginning of an unstable political transition, which continued until the first democratic South African elections on April 27, 1994. One of De Klerk's justifications for his decision was the collapse of Soviet bloc countries in Eastern Europe. What occurred in South Africa was linked to political transitions in postauthoritarian societies across Europe, Africa, and Latin America, and gave rise to what Jay Winter described as "the generation of memory."[13] This generation has been shaped by a "witnessing fever"[14] that has propelled an ongoing boom in oral history, testimony, and other memory initiatives across the globe. Concurrently, since 1990, the digital technological revolution has made it easier to record, disseminate, and archive memories. Both political and technological revolutions, as well as the growing field of trauma studies, have questioned our fundamental assumptions about temporality and therefore about history and memory.[15]

The pioneering oral history works of Alessandro Portelli, Paul Thompson, Michael Frisch, Alistair Thomson, and others need to be read within this context. They conceptualized oral history as "a method that creates its own documents, documents that are by definition explicit dialogues about memory."[16] And through these dialogues:

> Oral history approaches truth as much when it departs from "facts" as when it records them carefully, because the errors and even the lies reveal, under scrutiny,

> the creative processes of memory, imagination, symbolism and interpretation that endow events with cultural significance.[17]

This watershed conceptualization of oral history research was subsequently accepted by many scholars across the globe.[18] If it is accepted that oral history research texts are produced through dialogues about memory, these texts or stories are not objects waiting to be discovered by historians. The conditions of possibility that allow for the negotiation of dialogues about memory in and beyond interviews are fundamentally open-ended. It is precisely that oral histories are not recovered, but are co-created through intersubjective dialogues, that requires theorizing. If one accepts this conception, then researchers do not collect oral histories. Oral history texts are created, not collected like artifacts. But if the oral history texts have been through archival processes, then the term "oral history collections" is apt. I support the drive to develop concepts applicable to the specific South African context, but the recurring South African exceptionalism limits our intellectual capacity to take useful ideas from beyond our borders seriously.

For example, many South African historians still view oral history as a supplement to historical research, which draws primarily on written sources, but occasionally turns offstage to drag in interviewees to provide vibrant color to the serious business of history. Many archivists continue to define the role of oral history as "filling in the gaps of the archive" (here read "the archive of written sources"); therefore oral history research will never influence or contradict the primacy of the written word. Many qualitative researchers across academic disciplines still motivate their oral history projects with missionary zeal as recording the "voices of the voiceless," as if "ordinary people" do not speak out. Post-apartheid scholars across disciplines, especially those who use the notion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, prioritize African oral history research, but define it as the collection of authentic meanings of indigenous peoples, who it is believed have access to "pure" but buried truths. Similarly, within the South African heritage sector there is a tendency to conflate oral history (and oral traditions), lived practices in which people talk and exchange stories about the past in their daily lives, with oral history as research practice. These practices are linked, but there are distinctions between oral history as lived and as research practice.[19] Bearing in mind these general criticisms, what follows are historical snapshots of South African oral history.

The initial growth of oral history in the late 1970s was partly connected with the reemergence of the anti-apartheid resistance movement and the formation of the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand.[20] Oral history's links to the movement of community, trade unions, and other political organizations in the mid-1970s and throughout the 1980s provided a more relevant political edge than is usually the case for academic research.[21] In addition, the arrival of cheap portable tape recorders, which were critical to the development of oral history in Europe in the 1970s, enabled a similar trend in South Africa. Then, in the 1980s, university-based projects emerged such as the Natal Worker History Project at the University of Natal (Durban), the Western Cape Oral History Project at University of Cape

Town, and the People's History Project at the University of the Western Cape (Cape Town).

South African oral historians were from the onset determined to break what were then termed "the silences" created by the political oppression of the apartheid system and racial capitalism. Oral historians at the time were intent on presenting a so-called "view" or "views from below." The oral history method was also used in several subfields of South African historiography. In rural historiography, for example, oral history was central to the work of Peter Delius and Tim Keegan.[22] In the development of women's and gender histories, the work of Belinda Bozzoli, Isabel Hofmeyr, Debra James, and several others was crucial.[23] The related work on working-class women produced studies such as Suzanne Gordon's life stories of domestic workers.[24] Oral histories about forced removals and the splintering of urban communities saw notable academic contributions from Bill Nasson, Shamil Jeppie, Crain Soudien, Philip Bonner, and others.[25] But there were important critiques, such as Windsor Leroke's analysis of the dominance of white researchers, and the tendency not to reflect on power relations between researchers and the researched.[26]

Oral history was also central to the popular utilization of people's history as a cultural tool of struggle.[27] But oral historians in the 1970s and 1980s were influenced by romantic notions about playing a key role in liberating oppressed communities.[28] This trend was less evident with the sophisticated approaches of Bozzoli and others in the History Workshop. Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool made similar criticisms of the History Workshop but did so in a sweeping manner. More significant was their assertion that the History Workshop from the 1970s to the 1990s tended to

> collapse oral interviews into this historical realist narrative. Oral history becomes a source, not a complex of historical narratives whose form is not fixed . . . Oral history has been less conversational narrative and more dramatic monologue which binds, affirms, and entrenches the collective memory of this history.[29]

But the History Workshop conference on the TRC in 1999 marked a shift towards analyzing post-apartheid memory issues. Drawing from this conference, Debbie Posel and Graeme Simpson's anthology on the TRC contained a range of approaches about victim accounts from the careful dissection of the TRC Report by Posel through to Lars Buur's insightful analysis of the theatrical "stages" in which the TRC operations were performed.[30] It also confirmed that oral history methodology does not belong solely to historians or to a particular paradigm. For example, the History Workshop embraced scholars from several disciplines, such as Bozzoli and Posel from sociology, Hofmeyr from African literature, and others. The interdisciplinary embrace of oral history has incorporated a wealth of insights, most notably, for example, Hofmeyr (and Portelli), who drew heavily from literary theory. Oral history is a dynamic method and its potential uses by researchers from various disciplines or paradigms are its strength.

While Minkley and Rassool tended to typecast the History Workshop, their critique of Charles van Onselen's magnum opus about Kas Maine was incisive.[31]

Kas Maine is one of the most significant South African oral historical works. In *Kas Maine,* readers are lavished with an impressive historical synthesis and dense descriptions of how one life history reveals a multiplicity of relationships over several decades.[32] However, although *Kas Maine* appeared in 1996, Van Onselen paid astonishingly little attention to international literature and debates on memory and narrative during the 1980s and 1990s.[33]

Although some South African oral historians explored the role of myth-making within specific studies,[34] more broadly South African oral historians tended to ignore the role of myths, fantasies, dreams, and other subjective impulses that influence culture, politics, and history. Hofmeyr—a former member of the History Workshop—argued that

> fundamental questions about memory and narrative—are seldom addressed. There has consequently been little attention paid to questions of recollection and memory despite the fact that in every interview one is dealing with what people remember rather than with what happened. There is of course a complex correspondence between the two but it is by no means a relationship of direct reflection. Any understanding of these issues in turn requires at least some attention to questions of memory and its intellectual and cultural constitution.[35]

Hofmeyr also argued that South African oral historians tend to view orality in pure terms, as if the spoken word is untouched by written texts and lends an air of authenticity to historical work.[36] Conversely, her landmark book demonstrated that orality and styles of speaking influence how many writers construct dialogue between characters and narrative flow in written literature, and she showed that the boundaries between oral and written texts are not only shifting, but porous.[37]

Are these critiques by Hofmeyr, Minkley, Rassool, Caroline Hamilton, and others "postmodernist?"[38] This blanket characterization of often conflicting strands of poststructural and postcolonial thinking is misguided. It is also unhelpful to cast the debates discussed here as postmodernism versus empiricism. Rather, an intellectual openness to different ways of engaging with oral histories is central to thinking through the implications of "dialogues about memory" and widens the scope of history to include many sites where knowledge of the past is produced within and beyond universities and archives.

In the post-TRC period, a boom in projects, centers, and institutes using oral history methodology has occurred. In Cape Town, there is the Centre for Popular Memory at the University of Cape Town (UCT),[39] the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, the Human Rights Media Centre, and many more. The revival of the History Workshop organization at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1999 was significant. At KwaZulu Natal University, the Simonlondo Centre for Memory-Work has played a leading role in combining oral history methodology and the memory-box technique.[40] Various regional associations were also launched, such as the Orange Free State Oral History Association, the Eastern Cape Oral History Association, and the KwaZulu Natal Oral History Association. These regional formations were linked

to the launch of the Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) in partnership with the National Archives in 2006. There are more oral history initiatives conducted through various museums, such as the District Six Museum, Robben Island Museum, Apartheid Museum, KwaMashu Museum, and many others.[41] In addition, there is a national growth of oral history training in high schools as a result of the Department of Education's prioritization of oral history in the curriculum.[42]

Another post-apartheid trend is the appearance of many superb biographies of political leaders that to varying degrees use oral history or life story interviews.[43] While these "struggle biographies" have historical value, it is troubling how many biographies of nationalist political leaders, compared to the few dealing with oral testimonies of the not-famous, have been published since 1994. Using a different approach, but making extensive use of oral history, the South African Democratic Trust (SADET) is developing volumes on anti-apartheid political struggles, commencing with the 1960s.[44] The turn to oral history methods in post-apartheid South Africa, especially since 2000, is laudable in its intention to record and archive the stories of people who suffered and struggled through the apartheid era. However, what roles are South African oral historians playing in relation to the new nation-state, and is oral history being politically appropriated to service nation-building?[45]

It is apt to recall Pierre Nora's question about the oral history dialogue: "Whose will to remember do they ultimately reflect—that of the interviewer or the interviewed?"[46] For the idealistic oral historian, the answer is probably "the interviewee." For unsympathetic critics of oral history, the answer is probably "the interviewers and their institutions." But for oral historians shaped by the paradigmatic shifts wrought by memory studies, the answer depends on "the social production of memory,"[47] and in particular on the knowledge/power relations that shape each oral history project. The answer might be that "it's a shared authority,"[48] but certainly, whoever has more or less power in the dialogue, it is always the dialogue that provides the answer to the question.

Visual Traces: Is Oral History Logocentric?

With Portelli in mind, I frequently provoke my oral history students by saying: "Researchers are ignorant people." My aim is to make students think about their relationship to interviewees and about how our ignorance or lack of answers to questions drives us to do research. For example, historians tend to ask: What happened in a particular event or past period and why did it happen? Oral historians tend to ask: How and what do people remember of the specific past moments they experienced? And oral historians also frequently ask: What is the significance of the differences between what happened in the past and what people remember happened in that past? The oral history works of Alessandro Portelli, Luisa Passerini, Michael Frisch, Alistair Thomson, and others are pioneering contributions to these questions.[49] They have deepened an understanding of how storytellers are not only driven by a desire to be recognized, but how they forge meanings through remembering. These contributions opened up new

ways to interpret oral histories, not merely as another research source, but as a means to understand the intersections between memory and history. In spite of this, have oral historians sufficiently responded to the specific poststructural criticism of oral history as being guilty of logocentricism,[50] that is, of giving primacy to words over images? Significantly, there is a growing international range of oral historians turning to images to produce fascinating intellectual engagements with spoken words.[51] In the South African context, note, for example, Thabo Manetsi and Renate Meyer's oral histories of artists, entitled "The Language of the Eyes,"[52] and also Marijke du Toit's combined used of oral history and photography to represent "photo-voices" in exhibitions.[53]

More specifically for this book, I argue that the appropriate response to the logocentric criticism lies, in part, in understanding the reconstructions of memory, language, and narrative genres as Portelli and others have done; in part, it involves interrogating how visual traces and emotions are framed as memories through people's imagination and movements within physical, social, and cultural landscapes.

Oral history has moved beyond its innocence. But anxieties over the fluidity of memory and a sense within fieldwork dialogues that the storyteller might have remembered more, or might have said more had the right questions been asked or approached with greater subtlety, lingers on. Or might the storyteller have said more or said it differently, if another language was used or if the researcher were from a different social or cultural background? Memory is never exhausted; the interview dialogue is always an incomplete negotiation through forms of difference. A fruitful way to explore the incompleteness of "dialogues about memory" is to explore and analyze the workings of mental images and emotions.

When the interviewer asks a question and this question (or any other mnemonic device) evokes a memory in the interviewee, what does this memory consist of? Can it even be called a memory? In rudimentary terms, it might consist of words and sentences, and particular emotions. However, what frequently although not necessarily precedes language construction is the flickering of mental images in the mind of the interviewee. Without going into the complexities of unconscious effects, the traces of memory most immediately available to sighted people are their mental imagery of past experiences. As Walter Benjamin observes, "Most memories that we search for come to us as visual images. Even the free-floating *memoire involontaire* are still in large isolated, though enigmatically present, visual images."[54]

I am not suggesting that this mental imagery constitutes unreconstructed evidence of past events. But greater attention to these visual traces of memory can orient and refine interview questions towards helping the interviewees to describe the pictures they have remembered in their mind's-eye. However, these visual traces of memory are framed from the vantage point of the individual, and although we see outwardly, we cannot see ourselves directly, unless we are reflected back through the eyes of others. Moments of recognition, misrecognition, or mutual recognition that shape daily intersubjective relationships also happen in fieldwork and interview dialogues.[55] Throughout the delicate unfolding of dialogues, oral historians need to keep in mind storytellers' imaginative abilities to visually recreate and verbally convey their past and present worlds.

When the notion of "living memory" is bandied about, I wonder what is actually being referred to. Is it in fact the visual collage of remembered images, potentially interwoven in a web of emotional associations? This inner world requires memory-work to make it intelligible to the person doing the recall and involves framing images through verbal descriptions and narrative devices to enable communication to external audiences.[56]

Imaginative remembrance and storytelling also provide containment for a multitude of memories—at times contradictory, at times potentially overwhelming in their emotional impact. The contestations of memory are both over the form and content that is to be retained and/or recreated from our pasts. Memory traces are not fixed, but their contours (or inner scripts), inscribed in early childhood intersubjective relationships, form repetitive unconscious patterns that influence our conscious maps and the ways we remember, forget, and silence the past.[57]

Oral historians are not ignorant of these frames of analysis or of the logocentric critique. But I think more can be done. Oral historians are well placed to elucidate how mental images and emotions are processed through memory-work and storytelling. These usually occur between interviewer and interviewee, which provides present space (here and now) for storytellers to construct or perform their mental imagery, emotions, and thoughts about the past (then and there) into oral forms. Evoking and conveying verbal pictures is at the dialogic heart of the oral history enterprise. But does this focus privilege the visual as more significant than the oral or written?

I think not. Rather, what is being argued is that historians and cognate researchers will learn more by approaching written, oral, and visual traces with equal scepticism, curiosity, and appropriate analysis. The interviewees' powers of imagination and creativity in making and interpreting their oral histories from memory traces must be privileged. From the interviewers' perspective, a capacity for attuned listening and empathy must be privileged. By empathy from within the oral historian, I mean the capacity to imagine what it might have been like for the storyteller at specific points in time and space in the past (and present). Moreover, the way historians write up oral history research requires a synthetic construction of multiple sources that involves repeated acts of historical imagination and critical thinking.

These are not new insights, but I am arguing for the centrality of creativity, empathy, and historical imagination from the beginning to the end of the research process, including the imaginative powers of the readers of historical writing and users of other mediums of representation. Our approaches to the past are, paradoxically, not about a past before our time but about a past brought into being in our time.

Imagining Memories

Dialogues about memory place storytellers and researchers within the same constitutive focus, which provides fertile grounds for analysis and for producing new ideas. In this context, the practice of *imagining memories* involves the framing (or exclusion) of visual traces, emotions, and words through memory work and storytelling and, in the

process, involves the co-creation of oral histories. The potential then exists for these oral histories to locate people's lives in different imaginings of historicity, not merely slotting popular memories or stories into the pre-given Grand March of History or the formation of state archives or other physical archives.

This book therefore poses the following central questions: How does imagining memories create and frame the telling of stories within oral history dialogues? And given this conceptualization of oral history methodology, what history (or histories) can be constructed through the memories and stories of individuals and communities who experienced forced displacement in Cape Town? How do people remember and imagine the place-based communities from which they were socially and spatially torn, but to which they remain emotionally attached? How do people create and use imaginative frames to hold themselves, engage each other, and bear the emotional legacies of forced displacement?

I draw from archival sources and South African and international secondary literature, but principally this book is based on oral history research conducted during my doctoral fieldwork (1992–1995) and postdoctoral work (1996–2010). I track the diverse threads of people's memories of apartheid community displacement and post-apartheid developments involving memorialization, heritage, and public history, and I discuss the 2008 refugee crisis and Rwandan refugees in Cape Town. The book presents brief histories of particular Cape Town communities such as Windermere, Kensington, Guguletu, Langa, and District Six. I also engage with the politics of representing memory within these communities and the city of Cape Town.

In broader historical terms, prior to apartheid, communities across South Africa were already marked by the racist influences of colonial and segregationist periods of government. Under Dutch colonialism from 1652 to 1806 and then British colonialism from 1806 to 1910, there were frequent forced displacements of indigenous inhabitants through colonial territorial expansion. With the onset of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and its Native Land Act of 1913, millions of black Africans were displaced. This exclusion was reinforced by the implementation of pass laws by segregationist governments (1910–1948) and meant that the movement of black Africans between rural and urban areas was heavily regulated.

In 1948, the National Party won the national elections by evoking white South Africans' racist fears of large numbers of black Africans entering white-controlled cities. It was then that the apartheid vision of separation, control, and domination was taken to a systematic level. The Population Registration Act (classifying all "racial groups") and the Group Areas Act (racially zoning all spaces) of 1950 were central legal pillars of the apartheid state. The latter forcibly displaced people classified "African," "coloured,"[58] "Asian" and small pockets of "white" residents. (Under the post-apartheid restitution process, over 3.5 million people will become "beneficiaries," but this figure is considerably less than those actually affected by these policies.) More specifically, the racist engineering implemented through the Group Areas Act dramatically reshaped the social landscape of South Africa's most cosmopolitan pre-apartheid urban area, the city of Cape Town.

These forced displacements obliterated the human right to choose where one could live. But the subjectivities produced through these power relations were also driven by popular acts of resistance, creativity, and resilience by subjugated individuals and communities. Researching community histories must address the desires, needs, and wants, and the range of emotions such as pain, sadness, and anger of people who lived in these communities. The interweaving of remembering and imagining of the apartheid past is littered with hooks or triggers for people's emotions. However, in interpreting these evocative memories of place, I move beyond the romantic notion of people having "roots" and think about the ways in which people are mobile and move across the racially bounded spaces imposed by the Group Area Act. Both the staying-in and moving-through spaces are fundamental. The "moving memories" referred to in chapters 2 and 3 include remembered images of places and emotional expressions presented through oral storytelling. These memories provide significant clues about the impact of forced displacement on people's lives.

The forms of loss endured over time are a dominant theme of forced displacements. This book argues that senses of loss are pervasive and their effects exist through and beyond peoples' construction of memories. Displaced people not only lost much materially and emotionally, but their sense of self and identity were potentially ruptured through an aggressive, racist social dislocation. Forced displacement was experienced by most as an attack on their sense of belonging to people, times, and places (them, then, and there).

This sense of belonging is an emotional attachment to maternal-like spaces where people internalized the familiar others, objects, and surroundings of growing up at home and in the community, which are symbolically framed through imagining memories. At times, home and community are imagined as "the world," *as if* that "world" were the only place a person could be safe and secure. Imagination then not only creates new images, ideas, and actions, but it significantly creates *frameworks* to hold people's perceptions, their conceptions of themselves, and their memories. People need these imaginative frameworks if they are to derive meaning through remembering. Understandings or constructions of "home," "community" and "city" are imaginative frames that people create to maintain links to others. This conception is a central thread running through this book.

Both how people construct emotional ties to "place" (including landscape and community activities) and the sense of connectedness or disconnectedness between people are critical research issues. The book explores what happens when forced displacement shatters these links and holding frameworks. What is more, because victims were not removed together, but were dispersed across different racialized urban and rural zones and dumped with others removed from various communities, the removal resulted in a social fragmentation of relationships to neighbors, friends, and families. Displacement frequently shattered people's preremoval imagined sense of a "whole" community. As a means to cope with this devastating impact, people use their imagination to repair fragmented frames and sustain communities-in-memory through nostalgic constructions of their prior communities. These memory forms are

explored in chapters 1 through 5 and provide ways for people to sustain their lives and their families in the spaces to which they were displaced.

The social and psychic landscape described so far offers ways to interpret and contextualize people's stories about the long-lasting emotional impacts of forced displacement. However, as Elaine Scarry argues, "to acknowledge the radical subjectivity of pain is to acknowledge the simple and absolute incompatibility of pain and the world."[59] She is pointing to the difficulties people have with articulating private pain to public audiences, even if the audience is only an oral history interviewer. Scarry is also indicating the limits and at times the failure of language to frame pain and trauma for both the victims and their audiences. In chapters 7 and 8, I argue that more can be understood about these phenomena by attention to what people imagine and perceive through their senses within the various landscapes they inhabit and through attention to the ways painful memories are seared onto body and mind.

It is tempting to conceptualize all experiences of forced displacement as traumatic. However, I take the view that this leads to essentialist constructions of displacement and equates painful with traumatic experiences. While most or many victims have experienced the impact of racist forced removals as traumatic, this is not necessarily the case for everyone (see chapters 8 to 10). Event-centered trauma theories are problematic.[60] The individual's family and cultural history prior to violent historical events shapes whether the psychosocial impact of that violence is experienced and subsequently manifested as traumatic. It is also important to think critically about whether "collective trauma"[61] or "cultural trauma"[62] notions are useful or applicable in the South African context. I argue that a historically specific, emotionally nuanced understanding, conceptually sharpened with psychoanalytic thinking, is required.

Psychoanalysis has been invaluable to me, but not as an imposed theoretical paradigm. Peter Gay has argued that for historians, psychoanalysis should be "a style of thinking."[63] And Jacqueline Rose reminds us that—stripped of unrealistic expectations—psychoanalysis is what it says it is: a form of analysis.[64] By using this style of thinking, I aim to contribute to "creating a mutually informative and challenging exchange between psychoanalysis and historiography as a process of inquiry, especially one that renders history more self-reflexive and self-critical in its approach to problems."[65]

I am upholding the psychoanalytic conception of the self as fundamentally divided and contradictory, consisting of both conscious and unconscious elements and oscillating between fragmentation and cohesion over time. Such a conception deepens understanding of the intersubjective elements of memory work that are at heart of oral history interviewing and analysis. I contend that imagining memories is a form of memory-work that draws from peoples' multiple senses of changing social landscapes, which they use to create an album of self-images that may or may not constitute a cohesive sense of self at different points in time.

To summarize: Imagining words and images about the past in the present helps us to constitute narrative frames for memories and containers for our emotions and images of ourselves through others. This style of thinking offers a lens through which to analyze the impact of the emotional violence of racially defined forced displacement

on people's sense of self and identity, and on their emotional attachments to family, place, and community.

Survivors of apartheid forced removals are usually unable to return for decades, or never are able to return to their original communities. In those few cases where displaced communities are able to return, such as with the District Six community, the community they return to will not be the community that existed prior to displacement, nor in all likelihood will it be the community they imaginatively remembered over decades. Whether people return to those spaces or not, new notions of community will continuously be shaped and reshaped. In what ways, then, do displaced peoples cope with social and emotional legacies and also sustain "respectable" lives and regenerate new communities for themselves and their descendants? I explore these questions in chapters 9 and 10.

Inevitably, this book will pose more questions than it can answer. Yet it does explore the power of displacement and its effects, and it highlights the fact that the ways in which people imagine memories reveal their creativity, resilience, and agency. Agency is expressed through how people make decisions to cope under oppressive regimes and resist them. And significantly, agency is also reflected through how people imagine the past, present, and future. Furthermore, as other oral historians have done, I will demonstrate that oral history is best practiced by acknowledging that researchers continue to learn from interviewees and informants, whose knowledge has historically been either marginalized from, appropriated by, or insufficiently unacknowledged within the academy, archives, and other public institutions.

Chapters and Notes

There is a conceptual logic to the clustering of chapters. The Framing Notes that open parts I, II and III comment on the context of writing these articles and how my thinking has evolved from 1990 to 2011. There is a conceptual shift between the chapters in Part I and Part II. The chapters in Part I are largely applying the conceptual insights of Portelli and other oral history pioneers within the South African context. The chapters in Part II go further by analyzing the paradoxical elements of imagining memories. Part III focuses on the recent past and present in South Africa and argues that because of apartheid legacies and politics of disappointment and memory during post-apartheid transition, these issues are still contested, and thus there are no redemptive closures or neat intellectual conclusions to the book.

Chapter 1 applies key insights of Portelli's to the life history interviews I conducted with former residents of the Windermere community. The chapter starts with a history of Windermere from the 1920s to the 1960s, which also sets the scene for the Windermere stories in chapters 2, 3 and 4. I provide brief life-story vignettes of four individuals from across the cultural spectrum of this community. Through these stories, I explore interviewees' memories of cultural difference, hybridity, and identity formation. I argue that careful attention to the signals of agency or lack of agency is needed in listening to these stories. This yields complex material in which

aspects of memory and identity can be interpreted; for example, how people survived under apartheid, before and after forced removals. This chapter adopts a postpositivist approach but also argues that by thinking though the memory turn in oral history, we should not lose sight of the concept of experience.

Chapter 2 explores the fragile identities of people classified "coloured" under apartheid, who were then and are still the majority in the city of Cape Town, but who consist of diverse cultures that were lumped under a single racial label by colonial and then by apartheid regimes. This chapter argues that all identities are fragile, hybrid, and ambiguously constructed, which is particularly salient to understanding coloured identities in Cape Town. This chapter is drawn from oral history interviews with coloured former residents of the Windermere community. Generations of coloured residents experienced profound emotional losses as a result of forced removals during apartheid. In analyzing their stories, I discuss myth-making and the meanings of silences. These memories and emotions of interviewees are carried forward to the present, where fears about cultural "others" and the future are repeatedly influencing their political thinking and choices.

In contrast, Chapter 3 arises out of interviews conducted with African residents from Windermere. It changes focus to explore how their contemporary community experiences in 1993 were being shaped by an unstable political transition, which also made doing fieldwork dangerous. This context produced a mythical reconstruction across many interviews, in which the "violent present" dominated but was contrasted to a so-called "peaceful past." The "peaceful past" notion has strong links to a nostalgic, singular-voiced, happy-family construction of the past Windermere community. This community was predominantly a shantytown, with high levels of common-law crime (general violence) and frequent clashes between residents and government officials, especially around pass law raids in the 1950s. Echoing the work of Hofmeyr, I consider the gendered dimensions to these myth-laden memories. This chapter also considers how people utilized memories to cope with the vicissitudes of life under apartheid and the unstable political transition.

Chapter 4 illuminates the life stories of two men who were childhood friends. One of the men was classified "coloured" by the state, but claimed that he felt "African" because of the African children he grew up with in pre-apartheid Windermere. The other man was classified "African" but always felt more "coloured" and only began to realize what it meant to be African when he was circumcised and when he was removed from culturally diverse Windermere to the black African community of Langa. Both men harbored dreams that were thwarted by the apartheid state, consequently they experienced various disappointments. They also internalized masculine myths that had contradictory functions. On the one hand, the myths helped them manage the contradictions of their hybrid cultural identities under apartheid; on the other hand, these myths set punitive standards, which they used to judge themselves and which exacerbated their feelings of disappointment.

Chapter 5 begins the next cluster of articles (Part II), which explicitly deals with the imaginative framing of memories of space. The chapter provides a short history of how two communities in Cape Town were transformed by apartheid social

engineering. I focus on how residents of these communities remember apartheid and how their memories are shaped by traces of loss and by their resilience. The first study is of the black African community of Langa, which absorbed various forced removals from elsewhere; the second contrasting study is of the multicultural, predominantly coloured community of District Six, which was physically erased by forced removals.

Sites of memory in Langa and District Six elicit memories saturated with pain, sadness, and anger. In the post-apartheid period, land restitution and the building of local museums in both Langa and District Six are significant examples of community heritage. I discuss the pragmatic but valuable contributions of oral history to these museums. I also reflect on the challenges facing these local museums. By comparing how different Capetonians are "imagining communities," Chapter 5 attempts to stimulate open-ended thinking about the representation of memories in the present and to move beyond the closed concepts inherited from apartheid.

Chapter 6 focuses on several sites of memory in Langa, the oldest black African community in Cape Town. But the "will to remember" (as Pierre Nora puts it) in working-class communities such as Langa is shaped by contestations over the scarcity of housing, jobs, and basic infrastructure. These contestations are exacerbated by an underfunded South African heritage sector. I present a selection of oral histories of significant sites, and that includes people's childhood and family memories, experiences of migrant workers, and memories of the pass law office. I discuss the dilemmas of public representation to residents, visitors, and future generations of the Langa community. I argue that conservation strategies must think beyond the policy binary between "intangible" and "tangible cultural heritage," and I suggest a hybrid approach to sites of memory that interweaves site stories, recorded through sound and audiovisual oral history interviews.

For Chapter 7, I draw from interviews conducted from 2005 to 2007 by the staff of the Centre for Popular Memory (CPM). Over two hundred short (15- to 20-minute) oral histories of people who live and work on arterial roads in Cape Town were videotaped. A central motivation for this project was an attempt to move beyond the racially bounded spaces that urban historical accounts tend to focus on, including my own work. How we thought about and wrote about these community histories replicated the racial ghettos of the apartheid past. This project, in contrast, set out to record oral histories on streets that run along the edges or that cut across these still racialized spaces of the city. It explored what culturally diverse practices and boundary blurring and what ongoing racialized views were being navigated on these streets.

I argue that oral historians need to move beyond nebulous debates about audiotaped versus videotaped interviews and adopt a flexible approach to choosing recording methods for different projects. For example, for oral history projects that aim to have a public impact, especially on younger audiences, audiovisual interviews produced as film documentaries are especially useful. Chapter 7 also argues that these audiovisual recordings provide evocative evidence of embodied memory work and "moving places" as a conceptualization of the movements of people and memories.

Chapter 8 emerges from recording the oral histories of Rwandan refugees in Cape Town. Read through the lens of displacement, the victims of apartheid removals and the African refugees who have entered South African cities since 1994 share similar experiences of being torn from their homes and communities. This chapter explores refugee journeys, fears, lack of trust, and their lives within the racialized spaces of the post-apartheid city. I also discuss Rwandan refugee experiences during the South African xenophobic crisis of 2008.

I then interpret refugees' eyewitness accounts of the violence they saw or imagined, and explore how ways of being seen could determine one's life or death during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Psychoanalytic thinking is used to understand how the effects of violence disable the symbolic functioning of imagination and memory. I argue that flashbacks and other involuntary visual traces are associated with unbearable emotions and indicate compelling evidence of trauma in the mind's eye.

Moving on to Part III, Chapter 9 turns to look at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). I critique the TRC's claim that it was "healing the nation." The TRC's interwoven curative and spiritual conceptions of healing articulated the redemptive promise of the new nationalist political order. Consequently, psychoanalytic and oral history insights into trauma and memory were either simplified or ignored. This chapter briefly draws on oral history interviews with survivors of displacement. I argue that oral historians should not represent themselves as healers, but can make pragmatic contributions to the regeneration of agency among survivors and their descendants. I illustrate ways of containing survivors' emotions and the importance of disseminating oral histories across diverse and divided communities. I argue that "closure" in a complete sense, while desirable for victims and survivors, is a mythical goal.

Finally, Chapter 10 acknowledges that the political achievements of post-apartheid South Africa need to be cherished, but I conclude with disappointment. The survivors of past and present violence in South Africa struggle to confront their unfulfilled imaginings of a post-apartheid democracy. For example, one of the largest post-apartheid omissions was the lack of public spaces for victims of forced removals to tell their stories.[66] In addition, although the AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) pandemic is outside the ambit of this book, I acknowledge the millions of HIV-positive South Africans and the post-apartheid state's catastrophic mismanagement of the pandemic. I argue that the post-apartheid state is dominated by narcissistic nationalist discourses, in which the painful legacies of the past and present are politically and psychically displaced to another time and place or blamed on others. I end with a plea for researchers to do further critical research on the memories and disappointments of survivors of forced displacement, and of their descendants, who live today with the socioeconomic and *emotional remains* of the apartheid past.

PART I

Communities and Identities under Apartheid

Framing Notes I: Entangled Histories

> If one grants that meanings are constructed through exclusions, one must acknowledge and take responsibility for the exclusions involved in one's own project. Such a reflexive, self-critical approach makes apparent the particularistic status of any historical knowledge and the historian's active role as a producer of knowledge.[1]
>
> —Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*

The framing notes introduce each cluster of chapters and track my thinking from the 1980s through to the 2010s. I interweave three elements: first, the dramatic shifts from apartheid to post-apartheid contexts; second, the intellectual influence of Alessandro Portelli, Paul Thompson, and others; and third, my personal and political history, which straddles the academy and various Cape Town communities. My approach to doing historical research has been shaped by the notion of "producing histories,"[2] and, more specifically, by the implications of producing oral histories about the apartheid era. I aim to render explicit my "entanglements"[3] in apartheid history and the challenges of writing under the post-apartheid rubric. Revealing fragments of my life history is an ethical imperative given that, throughout the book, I interpret the subjectivities of others. Although historians are seldom self-reflexive, there are notable exceptions, such as Ronald Fraser[4] and Carolyn Steedman.[5] As Elizabeth Tonkin argues, "however carefully and critically they reconstruct, the historians also have been formed by memory."[6] The challenge for oral historians is to understand why we are drawn to recording other people's stories, and how our desires and stories shape us and the research we engage in.[7]

I was born in a white family in District Six of Cape Town in 1961, but my first childhood memories are of the working-class area of Maitland, where we lived from 1962 to 1969. Maitland borders directly on the Kensington community, where I

later did oral history research. My father worked as a foreman for the local city council and my mother was a housewife. Neither of them completed their schooling; in fact, my mother only had one year of secondary high (8th grade) during the Depression years of the early 1930s. They were hard-working people, constantly squabbling and anxious about money and job security. Yet we all directly benefited from the apartheid welfare state, which promised pathways to middle-class life for the white working class. My parents accrued some lower middle class trappings when we moved into Bothazig in 1969 (an area specifically set up by the then Minister for Community Development, P. W. Botha). But their working-class mentality persisted throughout, and their parental obsessions and moods pervaded the childhoods of my sister, my brother, and me. Branded on my mind is the memory of being repeatedly told: "Sean, you must study harder so that you can go to university, so that you get better qualifications, so that you can get a better job, so that you can be better off than we are." These were my parents' unfulfilled desires, which I internalized and which still fuel a propensity to push myself across various limits.

Throughout my childhood, I hardly ever saw my father writing, and when he did write, it was with acute anxiety. I assumed that my father's and brother's problems with writing were normal. It was only during adulthood that my mother told me that both my brother and father have severe dyslexia. Attaching the word "dyslexia" to these experiences made sense and raised this question: In a family where all of us to varying degrees have problems with writing, why do I desire to be a writer? In a family where the spoken word dominated, I tended to listen and tried to mark out my separate sense of self through writing. I have always been an unnatural writer and yet I have become an academic. Prior to that, my desire to study at university was strongly encouraged by my parents.

For me to gain entry to university was a major accomplishment in their eyes, but my subject and political choices perplexed them. My initial studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT) began in 1982 and continued until 1990. These studies coincided with the late apartheid years, when anti-apartheid struggles and state repression reached a violent climax and the apartheid system was sliding into sociopolitical crisis. During my undergraduate years, from 1982 to 1984, my involvement in anti-apartheid politics was through a student structure called the Wages Commission. This structure provided logistical and educational support to the then embryonic anti-apartheid trade unions that lacked material resources. My primary activity was to organize kombis (minivans) from UCT's carpool to transport workers and union shop stewards from factory gates to union offices for meetings, and then to take them home late at night. My fellow comrades jokingly referred to me as "the chauffeur of the working class."

With these travels I crisscrossed the Cape Flats and visited various coloured and African working-class communities that most white South Africans at that time rarely if ever entered. These experiences had an indelible influence on me. From an abstract interest in Marxism, I began approaching Marxism as a lived theory that I was witnessing firsthand in these spatial and narrative travels across Cape Town.

While I was driving, appreciative workers would talk to me about their lives in factories and communities; as dialogues developed, I asked questions about the details of their lives and aspirations.

By late 1984, in the midst of a protracted strike by retail workers, my undergraduate studies were grinding to a halt. I went to my history research supervisor, Martin Nichol, and told him I was giving up my studies because I was disillusioned with university life and political struggles meant more to me. Exasperated, he urged me to complete my degree. I asked, "But what about the research project which is due next week?" He told me to forget the original topic and write about the "workers' strike you are so obsessed with."

"What about sources?" I asked. He suggested I write about what workers were telling me, and that I could call it "oral history." I cobbled a project together in a week, got a pass mark, and completed my first degree. More significantly, I was converted to oral history, and my passion for talking to people had been given some academic legitimacy.

In my honours and master's studies that followed, I dabbled in forms of oral history interviewing, with no methodological training whatsoever. In 1988, I did anthropological-style fieldwork and interviews while living in a coloured group area. I stayed with two families—one in Sunderland Road and the other in 13th Avenue in the Kensington/Factreton area. As a white person, I was breaking apartheid law to be resident there. But this risk was minor in comparison to the repression that activists across Cape Town and broader South Africa were experiencing then. This was in the midst of a State of Emergency.

In 1988, I was recruited into the underground structures of the ANC (African National Congress). Being a student doing fieldwork was a useful cover story, as I was simultaneously working for the ANC under the training supervision of an operative of the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (or MK), the armed wing of the ANC. My role was logistical support such as courier work and setting up safe houses. In early 1989, my MK colleague was captured and I narrowly escaped detection. To this day, I remain indebted to her. If she had revealed names while in security police detention—and she was tortured—several others and I could have spent years in jail. Actually, she was released far sooner than expected because of events that began in 1990.

For months during my master's degree fieldwork in 1988, I had been listening to residents chat about issues, tell nostalgic stories, and provide idealized descriptions about the history of their community. I sensed that there must be value to these passionately told stories, but much of the positivist or empiricist academic literature was instructing me to ignore this nostalgia. Then, while still living in Kensington, I read Portelli's seminal article, "What Makes Oral History Different" for the first time.[8] This was not a revelatory moment. Rather, my first reading was confusing and ambivalent. Portelli befuddled me, but I was hooked. He gave me permission to trust an intuitive sense, a sense that what people were saying about their pasts had social and intellectual value and could not be discarded. I had no idea how to integrate Portelli's ideas into the master's dissertation, but the Portelli seed, albeit confusing, was planted.

I handed in my master's dissertation two weeks before F. W. De Klerk's February 2, 1990 speech that began the post-apartheid transition to democracy. Then in mid-January 1991, I left South Africa—for the first time—to avoid repeated army camp call-ups. This was a strange time, as ANC combatants were legally being allowed to return to South Africa but white male South Africans were still being conscripted and compelled to do camps. On January 16, 1991, the day before I was due to report for a three-month army camp, I instead flew to London. This was my first, bewildering experience of life outside of South Africa. My first residence turned out to be a bedsit in Brixton Hill. The cultural diversity of Brixton and its Afro-Caribbean influences were enthralling. In October 1991, I moved to Colchester and started doctoral studies with Paul Thompson at the University of Essex.

It was Paul Thompson who then reintroduced me to Portelli and to Luisa Passerini, Ron Grele, Michael Frisch, and the seminal collection, *The Myths We Live By.*[9] Reading these studies and debating these issues with other students from across the globe exposed me to new texts and stories. The Essex experience also involved my first discussions with South African students in exile, many of whom were there to study with Harold Wolpe, whom I met in 1991, only a few weeks before his return to South Africa after two decades in exile. Gone was my hope of Wolpe being a co-supervisor, because he was returning to South Africa. But I learned more by being conceptually introduced to other paradigms (rarely mentioned in South African universities then) such as postmodernism, poststructuralism and post-Marxism. I attended Ernesto Laclau and Aletta Norval's discourse analysis course, which expanded my conceptual horizons. Being a foreign student in a provincial English town was awkward at times, but my Essex years were an amazing series of intellectual and cross-cultural experiences that I remember with excitement.

I then conducted my PhD fieldwork in Cape Town in 1992 and 1993, while South Africa was wracked with transitional violence. I went back to England in 1993, and in early 1995 I returned to South Africa to write up the thesis. While writing the final chapters, I watched the beginning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) Human Rights Victims Hearings on television. It is hard to imagine what it must have been like for victims giving testimony at the TRC. What was being revealed was not new to me, but to see these testimonies narrated on national media was extraordinary. With the TRC still underway, I submitted my doctoral thesis, in March 1996.

Stepping outside of the above chronology for a moment, I need to ask: What do my life stories mean? Mentally, I find it difficult to integrate my two years as South African Defence Force (SADF) conscript in 1980 and 1981 (thankfully in a noncombatant administrative role). Yet the SADF experience had a profoundly radicalizing impact on me. After that were four years (1983–1987) as a student and youth activist in the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front (UDF), and then my year-long stint as an ANC underground operative in 1988 and 1989. By writing these life stories, am I trying to remove my "white guilt?" I think not. Throughout my university days, I could not identify with fellow students who ruminated about their white guilt. Growing up in working-class Maitland and Bothazig, which are vastly different to the

leafy, white middle-class suburbs close to UCT, did not evoke feelings of guilt then. Yet now I do feel shame as I live in middle-class suburbia, while racialized poverty is still widespread. Am I then claiming to be different from other white South Africans through a combination of my political activism and family background?

The suffocating conservatism and racism of the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town under apartheid still saturate my childhood memories. Through psychoanalytic psychotherapy, I have realized that my political activism and academic career have been driven in part by the fantasy of trying to break from my past and remove the emotional weight it is invested with. But a part of me still feels like an inferior boy from Bothazig. No matter how many academic milestones I reach—this book might be another—I still feel out of place in the hyperintellectual world of the academy. Acts of working through, via talking and writing, bring greater understanding, but cannot meet the original fantasy of erasing the emotional complications of my past. By reflecting back on the historical contradictions of my subjectivity, I feel a paradoxical sense of pride in what that boy from Bothazig has achieved. Perhaps this is my version of what Sarah Nuttall refers to as "the politics of narcissism."[10] I think we need to face our differing forms of narcissism, both healthy and unhealthy. But the professional narcissism that worries me is: Have I reimagined myself by doing oral histories with "black others?" My short answer is a contorted yes/no. The tension that flows from this equivocation permeates all the research and writing in this book.

Gendered differences are commented on in several chapters, but it is through the "disappointed men" of Chapter 4 that I discuss masculine subjectivities in detail. The life stories of these two men were deeply evocative for me. One of the men's stories of physical abuse at the hands of his war veteran father especially reminded me of my soldier father and the physical abuse that he suffered as a child. And, as I will later discuss, my father was also a disappointed man and, although he never abused me, his moods and absences left their mark on me.

In terms of oral historiography, chapters 1 to 4 are partly my attempt to apply Portelli's analysis to memory, myth, and storytelling in the South African context. Of course Portelli is not individually responsible for what Alistair Thomson refers to as a key "paradigm shift" in oral history.[11] But Portelli's work beautifully captures the framework that was emerging across the writing of several oral historians from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the principal idea being that memories are not objects waiting to be retrieved, but a process of meaning-making and construction. My early writing in these chapters tried to represent the importance of working-class memories as mediation between how people remembered past experiences and how these are conveyed in narrative forms. For example, nostalgia is an imaginative process of finding words to make sense of memories laden with uncomfortable feelings evoked in the present but linked to what has been lost from the past. In the footsteps of Portelli, generations of oral historians have learned to listen to how interviewees remember and narrate the past, whether or not it is factually accurate, and to consider how memories and myths have influenced people's actions and sense of agency.[12]

Nostalgic longing and memory invention, especially as expressed by particular generations of coloured and African workers in Cape Town, are key themes in several

chapters—a longing for a time in memory when no violence or racism is remembered, or rather, it is erased. Political divisions also surfaced in these memories and stories, divisions between interviewees who desperately desired a nonracial democracy and those who feared what democracy might mean for them. The memories, perceptions, and aspirations of African and coloured working-class interviewees from Windermere, Kensington, and Factreton are explored across chapters 1 to 4.

The past-in-the-present remains central to the oral history enterprise. Throughout this book, my starting point for analysis is located within the moment of remembering and narration. For example, many interviewees prior to democracy would air their offensive, even racist, views. I suspect that if I conducted these interviews today, these racist sentiments would not be spoken on tape or camera. The mind-set of the period 1990 to 1994 is reflected in these chapters. In particular, the racism between African and coloured workers provides vivid evidence of how the apartheid state succeeded in reinforcing racially constructed divisions between the working classes of the city. The 1992 to 1993 interviews reflect how interviewees were wracked with the anxieties of a country on edge of civil war. Would the transition to democracy succeed peacefully, or would the country descend into violent anarchy? These early chapters also reflect my generalized, event-specific conception of trauma, which differs sharply from how pain, loss, and potential trauma are conceptualized in the latter chapters of the book.

I also acknowledge the influence of Paul Gilroy's work, *The Black Atlantic,*[13] on these chapters, which fueled my determination to critique essentialist ideas of race. My attraction to Gilroy's work partly involved his emphasis on the transnational movements of peoples, cultures, and ideas crisscrossing the Atlantic. This fitted well with the culturally diverse history of Cape Town as an Atlantic and Indian Ocean port city. Unfortunately, Gilroy's warnings about the dangers of cultural essentialism and the reification of "race" have not been heeded in post-apartheid South Africa. Racial and cultural essentialism dominate contemporary state and popular politics. But before I deal with contemporary themes, here are chapters 1 through 4, which are based on interviews conducted in the unstable years of 1992 and 1993 and written during the Mandela years from 1994 to 1999. These chapters reflect the interviewees' and my own anxieties about an uncertain, at times violent, transition, and they reflect the idealism of an embryonic democracy.

CHAPTER 1

Remembering Experience, Interpreting Memory

Life Stories from Windermere

Apartheid is a traumatic mark on the social landscape of twentieth-century South Africa. In recording the oral histories of that era, it is crucial that the memories of the people who experienced the minutiae of social and community life under apartheid should not be lost or erased in old or new forms of grandiose history writing. As Alessandro Portelli has argued, "A spectre is haunting the halls of the academy: the spectre of oral history."[1]

The interviewees referred to in this paper come from a rare living generation who experienced years of segregationist, apartheid, and now post-apartheid government.[2] Their ages range from the early sixties to the early nineties, with the majority being in their seventies. Windermere/Kensington was the birthplace of some interviewees, but for most of them this was a site they arrived at from the rural areas of the Western, Eastern, and the Northern Cape.

For a few interviewees it was also a place in which they found residence as they were pushed out from the inner-city suburbs of Cape Town. Windermere was the proverbial halfway station between the rural and the urban.[3] For a time, especially from the 1920s to the 1940s, people could keep one foot in urban jobs and lifestyles, while simultaneously keeping the other foot in a semirural squatter community of small farm plots with cows, goats, chickens, bush, and rivers. For many African residents, it was possible to keep in touch with their rural homes in the Eastern Cape.[4] It was also a place where most interviewees were young and a time when their dreams were cultivated. Nevertheless, it was to become a time, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, when dreams were crushed under the combined violence of poverty and apartheid.

Figure 1.1 Windermere flooding, circa 1950s. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

The destruction of the culturally mixed Windermere/Kensington community during the period of 1958 to 1963, and the development of the so-called "model coloured townships" of Kensington and Factreton, are tragic examples of apartheid's social engineering. Coloured, African, and white group identities had already been given legal shape by the turn of the century. However, cultural identities and relationships are not lived as discrete legal entities. Life stories from Windermere are testimony to the porous social and cultural boundaries among residents classified into separate identities and to their interweaving struggles over jobs, homes, and resources.

This chapter begins with an overview of the Windermere story from the 1920s to the 1960s. This is followed by brief life stories of two African and two coloured interviewees. Through these life stories, interviewees' memories of cultural difference, hybridity, and identity formation are explored. The final section argues that in listening to (or reading) the agency or lack of agency reflected in the telling of life stories, there are complex clues about experience, memory, and identity that can be interpreted.

Moreover, life stories provide insights into how people developed their survival strategies and their ways of living with the emotional wounds inflicted by apartheid.

The Windermere Story

The Windermere/Kensington community originated from farmlands on the urban periphery of Cape Town in the first decades of the last century. Today the area is located between the Cape Town suburbs of Maitland and Goodwood, with the N1 highway forming its northern boundary and Voortrekker Road forming the southern boundary. The area at this time consisted of a few scattered brick buildings and many more iron shanties. People squatted in the Windermere area beyond 6th Avenue in order to avoid municipal laws and taxes.[5] During this period, most of these squatters were coloured, with several whites and Africans. Most people came from rural areas in search of work. According to oral accounts, it is clear that the major African influx from the rural areas of Transkei and Ciskei did not begin until the 1930s and accelerated in the 1940s. At its peak in the 1950s, the Windermere/Kensington area was estimated to contain in excess of thirty thousand residents. During the 1950s, Africans were approximately 55 to 60 percent of the population, coloured people were 40 to 45 percent, and whites were 2 to 4 percent in the Windermere/Kensington area.[6] This area was notorious for its poor sanitary conditions, overcrowding, unscrupulous landowners, and high incidence of disease, especially tuberculosis.[7] Despite these poverty-stricken and squalid conditions, there was a vibrant cultural milieu of *shebeens* (informal bars), dance halls, gangs, brothels, and even a sand racetrack where people gambled on the horses on Sunday afternoons.[8]

Windermere was incorporated under the jurisdiction of the Cape Town City Council in 1943. During the period 1943 to 1958, the Council and the Native Administration Department used sections under the 1934 Slums Act and the pass laws to begin clearing Africans out of the area. These initial measures seemed to have little effect on the stream of African newcomers to Windermere. During the 1950s approximately 12,000 African men (so-called "bachelors") were forcibly removed to single-sex hostels in Langa.[9] But it was only when the area was racially zoned a "coloured area" in 1958 that dramatic changes occurred. In the 1960 to 1963 period, approximately 2,500 African families were removed to Nyanga West, which was later to become Guguletu.[10] It is therefore possible to estimate that in excess of 20,000 African people, including "bachelors," were removed from the area. Also during this period, approximately 800 white people were removed to areas zoned for whites in Maitland, Brooklyn, and Ruyterwacht. Because Windermere/Kensington was zoned as a coloured area, most coloured residents were rehoused in a section of Windermere for economic and sub-economic housing renamed Factreton.[11] The rest of the area previously known as Windermere is today incorporated within the "model coloured community" of Kensington (Second to 13th Avenue).

By the late 1960s, the apartheid state had completed the classification and removal process of former Windermere and Kensington residents. The popular

memory of removals, dispersal, and dumping of people into apartheid-designed ethnic ghettos left an indelible legacy, with violent effects, within the social fabric of Cape Town. By 1993, when the fieldwork for this study was being conducted, Guguletu was going through violent upheavals, whereas the Factreton area was politically quiet. Also, African National Congress (ANC) structures in Guguletu were comparatively well developed, whereas the ANC branch in Factreton had limited support and weak organizational structures. Factreton had become a relatively settled coloured township by this time. However, Factreton also experienced ongoing gang wars and related common law violence. The apartheid state's intention of creating a politically conservative "coloured village" had essentially been realized. Residents in Guguletu, in contrast, were continuously waging struggles over socio-political issues. Many comparisons can be drawn here. For example, the Factreton tenants of council houses were permitted to buy their houses in the mid-1980s, while by 1993 their former Windermere neighbours in Guguletu were still fighting for the right to own the houses for which they had been paying rent for over thirty years.

Finally, the destruction of Windermere was not simply "slum clearance" but a racist plan to separate and exclude coloured and African former residents of Windermere from each other. It was supported by the differential access to jobs created by the application of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy in the Western Cape region, which accentuated the sense of cultural difference between African and coloured people. This policy, together with other apartheid laws such as the Group Areas Act, and the years of differential treatment meted out by the apartheid state, fostered mistrust and misperceptions between the coloured and African residents of the Cape Flats. But for all these racist interventions, the interactions and identifications across cultural boundaries continued within the minutiae of people's lives.

Life Stories from Windermere

The stories below are neither clinical sets of personal details nor chronological life histories. Instead, I have molded a collage of vignettes from particular memories taken from each oral interview. The power relations of selecting and editing stories are in my favor. As far possible, I have provided a series of stories that I hope will trigger images, thoughts, and feelings in the reader.

A linear narrative was usually absent from these interviews. However, through this fragmented mixture of images from a personal past, several social patterns are evident. Powerful impressions of the ethnic or "racial" Other were a dominant theme. The diverse ways in which people survived through formal occupations, informal activities, and illegal means of increasing personal and household incomes were also reflected. Interwoven in these activities were experiences of gender difference. In most instances, it is difficult to unfasten gender from culture, and culture from gender. Most of the interviewees, consciously or unconsciously, used ethnic, "racial," and gendered terms, and in the process enunciated forms of difference. Although their discourse might seem dated and even problematic in our politically correct present, it is nevertheless

important that the readers/listeners of oral texts not judge interviewees, but try to understand and interpret why people speak and think in the way they do. How people remember, forget, or silence their pasts are central questions to the interpretation of memory. The Windermere community and time might be past, but for these interviewees there are constant reminders of those days.

Mrs. C. S., born 1922, Swellendam; resident in Windermere 1950–1993 (classified coloured)[12]

After growing up on farms in the Swellendam area, Mrs. C. S. moved to a small farm in Brackenfell on the outskirts of Cape Town in 1945. In 1950 she moved to Windermere and has lived in the area ever since. Mrs. C. S. grew up on and worked on a white-owned farm, where her coloured parents were also employees. In the following story, she narrates how as a young girl she questioned the racism within rural master/servant relationships. The white madam tells her that:[13]

> *"Julle is nie die selfde mense as wat ons is nie, ons het 'n wit vel en julle het 'n bruin vel."*
>
> *Toe sê ek, "Die bloed is dan die selfde bloed, daar's nie 'n wit bloed nie en 'n swart bloed nie of 'n bruin bloed nie."*
>
> *Toe sê sy vir my, "Jy 's te slim. Jy moet wag tot die ou baas die aand kom, dan moet jy vir die baas vra."*
>
> *Toe sê ek vir die ou baas, "Ek kan dit nie glo nie . . . dan kan jy sien van Jan van Riebeeck se tyd hy't gepaar met die bruines, die wittes saam met die bruines." En toe vat hy my na die garage toe, en toe gee hy my 'n pak, want hy wil nie die waarheid leer ken't nie.*
>
> ("You are not the same people as us, we have white skins and you have brown skins."
>
> So I said, "The blood is then the same, there's not a white blood and a black blood and a brown blood."
>
> So she said, "You're too clever, you must wait until the old boss comes tonight, then you must ask him."
>
> So I told the old boss and he wouldn't believe it . . . that you can see from Jan van Riebeeck's time, he mated with the browns, and the whites mated with the browns.[14] And so he took me to the garage and gave me a hiding, because he did not want to learn the truth.)

Mrs. C. S. expressed her belief in a common humanity that is all the same in "blood" (in a similar vein, see Mrs. F. M. below), but her rebellious expression of these beliefs is forcefully repressed by a gendered, racist *baasskap* (the master/servant system of domination), which begins with the madam and ends with the male *baas* (boss). Mrs. C. S. is unable to read or write, but throughout this interview I was impressed by her intelligence and storytelling abilities. As she remarked at one point, *"Dan is ek slim deur my gedagte"* (Then I am clever through my thoughts). Mrs. C. S. also spoke of her love for ballroom and jive dancing, which is how she met her husband,

who was a drummer in a band. She spoke with sadness later of when her husband changed jobs, and he and her own mother forbade her to continue dancing on her own. Mrs. C. S. lived in the infamous Timberyard.[15] Her husband, a black African, was a security guard for shops adjacent to the yard.

When African families were being removed from Windermere, Mrs. C. S.'s family was nearly removed, together with several other families with mixed marriages. But this was tragically avoided by her husband's sudden death in 1962, which meant the state allowed her to stay on in the area. This was little consolation for her, as she had four daughters and three sons.

> *Ek het swaar dae gehad na my man se gesterwe. Want ek was Ma. Ek was Pa. Ek was alles toe gewies. Hulle kon nie eers reg gewerk't nie.* (I had heavy days after my husband's death. Because I was mother. I was father. I was everything then. They [the children] couldn't even actually work.)

Mrs. C. S. had been a textile worker for seven years, but was retrenched as she had contracted an asthmatic reaction to the textile fibers. After that, she was a domestic worker for several white families until she retired. Although she now lives in a sub-economic brick house, Mrs. C. S. longs for the days when she was living in a tin shanty.

Mr. D. S., born 1927, Upington; resident in Windermere 1936–1993 (classified coloured)

Brought up by his grandparents on the sheep farms of the Northern Cape, Mr. D. S. then came to Windermere as a young child in 1936. He has been an active member of the Old Apostolic Church and of local ANC structures. During the 1960s, he was imprisoned for seven years for helping black Africans reclassify themselves as coloured as a way of avoiding forced removal from Windermere.

Mr. D. S. is married to his third wife, and now lives in an *afdakkie* (backyard informal construction) behind a church.[16] He has done various manual and laboring jobs through his working life. His current job is as a community assessor at the local Magistrates Court. He began his political involvement in the old Liberal Party of "Missus Ballinger" in the 1950s, and is bitter that so many coloured people supported the National Party. He recalls how these self-defeating conservative tendencies within the coloured community were prevalent in 1948.

> *Ooooh onse mense, hulle het ons land verkoop* aan *die oppressors van ons. Daardie stemdag het almal daai manne op Pinelands Development gehardloop na die pale toe, om te stem vir Malan, want hulle vrouens kan nie soe suffer nie, en soe het hulle toe gat stem en soe het die Nationale ingekom. En toe val die United Party en in een-en-vyftig toe vat Malan die stem weg van die nie blanke man.*
> (Ooooh, our people, they sold our land *to* our oppressors. That voting day [1948 elections] all the men on Pinelands Development ran to the polls to vote for Malan

> because their wives couldn't suffer like that.[17] And so they went and voted and so the Nationalists came in. So the United Party fell, and in fifty one [1951] Malan took the vote away from the nonwhite man.)

Implied in these words is not only Mr. D. S.'s anger at coloured people, but also a criticism of the dominant political views of the coloured community, as well as his commitment to eradicate poverty. Mr. D. S. is renowned in the area for fighting legal battles for residents over a number of issues ranging from housing eviction notices, to hire purchase problems, to divorce cases.[18] With only a few years of formal primary schooling, he prides himself on being a self-made street-level community "lawyer." As he has often told me over several years, *"Ondervinding is een van die grootste leermeesters* (Experience is one of the biggest teachers)." Mr. D. S. often made insightful points about the meaning of life and the importance of memory:

> *Memories, ja, wat nooit, wat nie kan weggaan nie. Die enigste tyd wat dit by jou sal weggaan, as jy onner die sand komberse gaan, dan sal dit natuurlik nou weg gaan. Maar soe lank jy leef is daar dinge wat vir jou herinner van daardie dae. Jy kom by plekke wat jy onthou, hier was ek nog 'n kind, hier't ek nog dit gedoen, daar het ek dat gedoen, hier't ek gehardloop en soe aan. Nog baie dinge wat jou vir aandagtelik maak, wat jy nie kan vergiet nie.*
> (Memories, yes, that never, that can't go away. The only time that it will leave you is when you are under the earth blankets, then it will naturally go away. But as long as you live there are things which remind you of those days. You come to places that you remember, here I was still a child, here I did this, there I did that, here I used to run, and so on. Still many things that make you thoughtful, which you cannot forget.)

These words show his intimate connection with the Kensington/Factreton community. His memories seem so alive precisely because he has been living in the area for 57 years, and he still lives with constant reminders of past events in his life.

Mrs. F. M., born 1910, Idutywa; resident in Windermere 1949–1960 (classified black African)

Mrs. F. M. left her birthplace in 1934 and moved into inner-city Buitenkant Street, Cape Town. She moved to Windermere in 1949. Between 1960 and 1969 she had various "sleep-in" jobs as a domestic worker for white families in Cape Town suburbs. From 1969 to 1976, she lived with a family in Guguletu. She has been on pension at an old age home in Nyanga since 1976.

Mrs. F. M.'s childhood was spent on "a small farm, just six houses. Around the *kraal* we put cattle and sheep and everything and the fields at the back, we had crops. So we were busy in the fields, eating what we like from the fields. We don't buy nothing, just buy sugar and tea." Throughout her life, Mrs. F. M. has had a strong interest in justice, and she said, "If I was a boy, I would turn out to be a policeman [*laughs*].

In those times there was no policewomen." Her regret about this gender exclusion is rooted in her fascination with legal issues, which began with her policeman father. She tells the intriguing story of how a white farmer's cattle yoke was stolen, and how she as a little girl was responsible for the capture of the thieves. She reported what she had seen: "I was playing with sticks. I am a child then, you see, ooh, poor me. They [the thieves] took the *mielies* (corn cobs) and they put this [the stolen cattle yoke] in the *mielies* . . . And my father said [to the police], 'Do you hear this? You must go there.' They went there, they ordered the people to take out *mielies*, and there lies the cattle yoke."

While living in the inner-city area of Cape Town, her after-work entertainment was to sit in on the Cape Town Magistrates Court cases. In contrast, her memories of Windermere are filled with depressing images of it being "crowded" with people and lots of "pigs, dams, and dirty water." She lived at number 51, the Timberyard. She spoke of how she was "miserable then" from living in *pondokkies* (tin shanties) and working long hours as a domestic worker. After her husband died in 1950, she

Figure 1.2 Windermere's *Mtsheko* section, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

had to bring up her only child: "I had to grow him up myself and when he was big I sent him to my mother."

She did not like Windermere because "most of our people were tribal, you know, and if you don't be drinking and doing that, it's not nice. . . . Then they start to fight with sticks and then stabbing too, you know, that's why I don't like drinking, they will fight over this drink. No." Although she expresses her disapproval of ethnic factionalism, her criticisms could also be seen as a rejection of particular activities amongst some African men. Instead, a strong sense of meaning and morality was developed through her devout Catholicism. The parental figures of Jesus and Mary provided guidance through messages in her dreams: "I used to be a dreamer, but now, I have got signs when I lie in the night. Sometimes there, here the hands say to me, Christ, I know what he told me." He tells her, "The devil is scattered all over." These religious icons provide her with an important sense of solace.

Mrs. F. M. also told a myth-laden story repeated by different interviewees across cultural divisions: "I believe a person is just like another person, you cut from this one, blood comes, you cut from this one, blood comes. You see, everybody is in the image of God. To say it's white, it's black is nothing, that's why I don't like apartheid." She expressed a belief in a common humanity which is rooted in "blood." A common "blood" is significantly beneath the differing skin colors of people, and is symbolically understood as beyond apartheid ideology.

Towards the end of the interview, Mrs. F. M. incorporated the experience of being in a life-story interview into her religious worldview: "It was like I was preaching in a crowd. Although there is only three [people at the interview], no audiences here, but it sounds like the house is full."[19] Mrs. F. M. died in 1997.

Mr. B. T., born 1948, Windermere; resident in Windermere 1948–1963 (classified black African)

Mr. B. T. spent his formative childhood and early adolescent years in Windermere. His parents were from a well-known family involved in the butchery business. "My father comes from Ndabeni . . . and he used to have a business in Ndabeni, and when people moved to Ndabeni, he got himself a business here in Langa. But he built himself a house in Kensington." He and his siblings were involved in small business enterprises such as a garage and butchery in Langa.

Mr. B. T. spoke about his family and his love for sport and business and for various aspects of culture. But he repeatedly returned to his memories of cross-cultural mixing in Kensington. "I attended coloured school from Sub A to Sub B [grades one and two], then they started this Bantu education. Then I had to move from a coloured school to go start Sub A at a black school." Many of his family's closest friends were classified coloured, and while he learnt to speak Xhosa at a young age, his brother's first language was English, not Xhosa. At a certain point he insightfully reflected:

> Ah, we grew up there with coloured people, Sothos and all and all the different kinds of people. As a result you can see now people who are from Kensington they're quite

> different from people from the rural areas or other places. You can see the difference because they grew up with coloureds, Sothos, Zulus and all the different kinds of people, you know. Ah, it was nice growing up there. Now, the whole issue started when we had to move from Kensington, the Group Areas Act started [1950].

His words seem nostalgic at times, and there is an appropriate feeling of loss that he evokes from a time that is past. And of course there is anger at the Group Areas Act, and the much-hated pass laws. There were perpetual pass law raids in Windermere. But moments later in the interview, Mr. B. T. returns to the issue that has special significance for him—cultural hybridity. I probed further to try to understand his conception of the difference between "Windermere people" and others. He explained it in the following terms:

> Coloured people are like this: you grew up with coloured people, they come to your place; they eat at your place, you eat at their place. And that's why you—you quarrel today, tomorrow it's [the quarrel is] over. And you sort of learn that forgiveness if somebody does something wrong to you. You know that in the end you must forgive him. Now when you grow up somewhere else—maybe in the rural areas or somewhere in the location, you know? It takes you a long time to forgive somebody's who's—who's done something wrong to you. That's the difference I was trying to point out. You see, the people from Kensington, they got that love, you know.

Although there are echoes of a mythological reconstruction of the Windermere days, Mr. B. T. is nevertheless identifying and grappling with his memories of a set of experiences that people from different cultural backgrounds and growing up in different spaces had. These intimate experiences of many cultures in Windermere had a direct impact on him and on at least two of his siblings who talked to me. So-called "pure cultural identities" were given legal and political primacy under the apartheid system, but for his family and for many other Windermere families, their experience of cultural hybridity, and their memories of it, continue to be evocative parts of their sense of identity in the present. In closing, Mr. B. T. remarked:

> I think a lot about Windermere. I do go there and go around and show people where you were born, show them the house. Another coloured fellow, who's a friend of mine at Kensington, said he could organize that I buy that house back. But, I said, "How can I buy the house back now?" The house, the whole place, has been subdivided into two plots.

He goes on to describe various practical reasons for not wanting to move back. Underlying these words were strong feelings about his childhood spaces, which are probably just as important in shaping his choice to not return to Kensington, if not more so. There are many who experienced forced removals who find it too difficult to face the emotionally laden apartheid past. If talking about the past with others evokes unsettling emotions, imagine what physically going back to a place that has

irrevocably changed would entail? Going back for most people also means returning with an aging body and with a life that has irrevocably changed. The choice to return or not to return is theirs. The task of researchers is to explore how and why people make the choices they make.

Remembering Experience, Interpreting Memory

Experience, in the broadest sense, is what happens to people as they engage in the daily events of their lives. For historians, especially oral historians, understanding these experiences is crucial to their enterprise of recording and interpreting forms of change over time. The 1960s to 1980s generation of oral historians in South Africa, England, and elsewhere tended to believe that when interviewees spoke, researchers were gaining direct access to historical experiences.[20] This formulation is problematic because people do not retain experiences, but rather construct memories out of experiences. And memories consist of a mixture of images, thoughts, and feelings, which are reconstructed and mediated in different ways. So when an oral historian poses questions to an interviewee, strictly speaking it is neither direct experiences nor pure memories of those experiences that are expressed and heard. Rather, the oral historian hears the words and sentences (and sees the performance) that the interviewee is using to describe the memories he or she has of past experiences.

To ignore lived experience because we cannot have direct access to it runs the risk of erasing people, their feelings, and their actions from history. On the other hand, using the notion of "lived experience" in reverential or uncritical ways runs the risk of essentializing people's struggles or of being blind to memory and language. Moving beyond the paradigmatic blinkers of both so-called empiricist and poststructural historians, how can oral historians more rigorously integrate empirical research tools, theoretical concepts, and forms of interrogation? Interpretively, we need to explore continuously how experience is mediated through the multiple prisms of memory; a starting point in this endeavor is to look at what happens between the interviewer and interviewee.

For oral historians, the telling of a life story provides possibilities for the recording, interpreting, and archiving of the way people lived within—and remembered—an array of social relations. More specifically, interviewees have the opportunity to talk about themselves, their childhood days, their parents, their school days, their family interactions, their jobs, their loves and much more. However, the research agenda and practices of the historian (and of his or her institution) contain a threat, Steedman says: "The telling of a life story is a *confirmation* of that self that stands there telling the story. History . . . might offer the chance of denying it."[21]

In contrast to this threat, Portelli comments, "We must bear in mind that the field situation is a dialogue, in which we are talking to people, not studying 'sources'; and that it is largely a learning situation, in which the narrator has the information which we lack."[22] We do research because we lack answers to specific or general questions. Remembering our lack and realizing that interviewees are doing us a favor by

telling their stories to us instills a more humble approach. But researchers need to balance this humility with confidence and competence. This humble confidence, combined with an empathetic listening that focuses on where the interviewee is "coming from" (and does not impose a research agenda), can create the space for interviewees to narrate their memories more freely.

Towards the end of a free-flowing and dynamic interview with Mrs. F. M., we were interrupted by a lunch call from a social worker. Mrs. F. M. preferred to continue the interview. She said, "I don't feel hungry because I have been using my mouth for something better . . . I must say myself, to say out and listen to people and be friendly with people, that's very nice. It's a cure for me too. And do pray for me, I'll pray for you." For a brief moment in this old woman's life, a different kind of need was met. Not the need for food, clothing, and shelter, but a need to be heard, to be seen, and to connect with others.

The interviewing space that is created by the interviewer–interviewee dialogue can help interviewees to explore, consciously and/or unconsciously, these needs of the self. In telling their stories, interviewees often "relive" a wide range of emotions, from pain, sadness, and anger through to happiness, joy, and excitement. A Mrs. S. D. described the interview experience as a "revival of memories." But in this "revival," interviewees often encounter the fragmentary and disorganized mixture of the images, thoughts and feelings that constitute memory. It is the especially fragmentary and dislocated nature of life under the apartheid regime that threatened the process of identity and self-development for oppressed communities.[23] Therefore "the tracing of unity of one's self thus becomes one of the powerful impulses behind the telling of one's life story,[24]" as Portelli notes.

In the process of telling their stories, interviewees make their own assessments and links between episodes, issues, and people in their past; as a result, patterns and continuities in memory emerge. Consciously and unconsciously, interviewees weave together a *bricolage* of storied fragments, as Isabel Hofmeyr observes.[25] Life stories are ultimately a mixture of continuous and discontinuous elements, but people need a reasonably coherent image of themselves and their pasts in order to function in the present. In those moments when interviewees search for words to describe their memories, they are also engaging in their personal form of interpretation; Michael White notes:

> Any act of interpretation requires the ascription of meaning. The text analogy proposes that this meaning is derived through "storying" of experience; that is the stories that persons have about their lives determine the meaning they ascribe to their experience. The plotting of experiences of events into stories or "self-narratives" . . . is necessary in order to make sense of their lives—to provide them with a sense of coherence and continuity—and is relied upon for the achievement of a sense of purpose.[26]

To talk about some aspect of one's past immediately invokes a degree of self-reflection. And in order to engage in self-reflection, the interviewee requires an uncritical, sensitive mirror. Oral historians who are only interested in documenting the past run

the risk of being blind to the emotionally sensitive needs and issues that the interviewee brings into the research encounter. The oral history encounter always happens in a past–present relationship, and the interviewee should be the star attraction in this "theatre of memory,"[27] as Raphael Samuel notes. For the interviewee then, "the first purpose is not to describe the past 'as it was', or even as it was experienced, but to confer to the past experience a certain meaning; a meaning which will contribute to the meaning of the present."[28]

Oral historians cannot witness past experiences, but they can observe the relationship between experience and memory when interviewees become absorbed in the intensity of narrating their memories. Interviewees sometimes seem to "relive" past events in front of the interviewer. After these moments of emotionally charged storytelling, many interviewees have remarked to me that it was as if they had reexperienced the events. This is of course not the case. But intense past experiences do leave profound and at times uncomfortable emotional traces from the past. Outside the interview situation, even more evocative examples exist of people visiting the places, spaces, and people of their past and being moved or overwhelmed by the intensity of their memories. For example, Mr. D. S. has lived in the Windermere area for more than fifty years and is surrounded by spatial reminders of his life stories. The fact that for many people *the experience of remembering* the past is significant to their lives in the present suggests that experience is a vital conceptual category.

So when the interviewee strays from the research questions, or deviates from the research agenda, oral historians patiently explore the motives and logic (or even lack of logic) of the interviewee's stories. What is referred to as "reminiscence therapy" in England gives elderly interviewees the opportunity to review and come to terms with their past.[29] I am not proposing that historians conduct therapy with interviewees. However, the more space given for the interviewees' choices and sense of self to come to the fore, especially in the early stages of the interview, the more detailed their responses are likely to be to questions later in the interview. Thus the experience of remembering the past can be emotionally meaningful on a personal level, and can also provide useful clues to interpreting social and popular memory.

For example, for coloured interviewees who were either young children or adolescents in the late 1940s in Cape Town, there is a particular event that stands out for them as a significant watershed. The year of the event is 1947. Not 1948, when the National Party was elected and the era of legislative apartheid commenced. In fact, for many of these same interviewees there is a silence or even avoidance of talking about 1948, although from the perspective of the historian of apartheid, 1948 is highly meaningful. What happened in 1947, which these interviewees feel is more meaningful? King George VI and his family, including the future Queen Elizabeth II, came to visit Cape Town.

Grand historical markers have meaning for historians and—at times—for the public at large, but this cannot be assumed to be always or generally true. People's periodization of their lives and how they invest feeling and meaning to particular events are of importance to the oral historian. As Portelli argued, "memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings. Thus the

specific utility of oral sources for the historian lies, not so much in their ability to preserve the past, as in the very changes wrought by memory."[30] For the oral historian, it is often a fruitless exercise to force people's memories into a crude true/false binary. Hermeneutically tracing how people forge their meanings through the broader lenses of social and cultural patterns reveals more about how people construct a sense of their own identity and the identity of others.

This also means going beyond individualistic notions of memory and unpacking "the conditions for remembering," as Sigmund Freud termed them.[31] Embedded in people's life stories are their memories of everyday choices and decisions, and the people or forces that intervened, influenced, or undermined their decisions or decision-making. To understand the logic or lack of logic that shapes people's decisions within specific historical contexts and under particular conditions of remembering in the present will help us move beyond the theoretical sophistry of the structure/agency debate that has dominated history, sociology, and many other academic disciplines. It is difficult to interpret life stories because of their fragmented experiences, the disorganized nature of memory, and the discursiveness of language. When interpreting life stories and popular memory, it is useful to focus on the fluctuations of agency and passivity, and on people's struggles to build, defend, and enhance their potency as decision-making agents. However, Olsen and Shopes have observed that

> as a person narrates a life story, and the account winds its way through the accumulated details of a life, [and] social categories are exploded: the subject becomes an actor in simultaneous, multiple roles that do not conform to easy generalizations.[32]

People do not live their lives according to theoretical concepts. The interface between the words that people use to make sense of their lives and the words of researchers can be intimately structured. The experience of remembering is a complex social act, shaped by interwoven needs and pressures of the self and by external audiences. The stories that are recorded by oral historians do not offer academia passive "empirical data" just waiting to be interpreted. The practice of interpretation and critique is not the sole preserve of academics. In the acts of storying experiences into memory, people critically reflect and interpret themselves, others, and the world. The ways in which people make interpretative sense of their lives, as demonstrated by the life stories we have presented here, offer compelling insights into memory, identity, and power relations. By facilitating an interview dialogue that allows the interviewee greater space for narrative agency in the present, oral historians will learn more about sociopolitical agency and passivity in the past.

CHAPTER 2

Fragile Identities

Memory, Emotion, and Coloured Residents of Windermere

People are not only social beings; they are also fundamentally emotional beings. There has been a tendency amongst academic authors to erase the traces of feeling and emotion from the analysis of coloured identities.[1] I will argue that as all identities are by definition hybrid and impure,[2] all identities are emotional and fragile. The fragility of all identities is ambiguously constructed through weakness and strength, continuity and discontinuity, difference and sameness, clarity and confusion. The analysis of hybrid identities is directly relevant to the contestation and understanding(s) of coloured identities in Cape Town. For example, many crude labels have been cast over coloured communities,[3] such as "mixed *masala*" (mixed spices), "emotional," "childlike" and "confused."[4] Although I won't explore the hurtful effects of labeling and stereotyping in this chapter, I will interpret particular emotional experiences and patterns of popular memory amongst coloured residents of a Cape Flats community. This paper is drawn from 23 oral history interviews with former (and current) residents of the Windermere community as of 1993. All the interviews for this paper were conducted in 1993, and unless otherwise stated, "the present" refers to when the interviews occurred.

Popular memories are central aspects of identity formation, but silences and the forgetting of past events are fundamental. Silences around past events are difficult to interpret, because they constitute an absence in the stories that people tell. However, the interviewer in South Africa needs to listen for silences, as they are often created by emotional legacies such as traumatic or painful events experienced by oppressed individuals and groups under the apartheid state. More specifically, the silences within

the popular memory of coloured communities need to be carefully analyzed and not simply labeled as "amnesia," which is another way of pathologizing and stereotyping coloured communities. Rather, for generations of coloured residents, feelings of loss evoked by experiences of forced removals during apartheid are highly significant. These memories and emotions are carried forward to the present, where fears about others and about the future influence the social and political choices these residents make. I will argue that although people who were classified "coloured" under apartheid were disempowered, they are nevertheless able to negotiate and reinterpret their mixed feelings and fragile identities in empowering ways. This is especially possible given the appropriate sociopolitical circumstances and economic opportunities for people to develop their life strategies.

The Story of Place: Memories and Feelings of Loss

> At the core of the struggle for home lies the struggle for the way the story of place is told. Between what is remembered and what is forgotten, the self takes its bearings home. The question is no longer who is to guard the guardians *of what,* but who's to tell the story, *what story?* Who can bear witness?[5]
>
> —Marina Warner, *Six Myths of Our Time*

The stories from Windermere cover a range of topics, but central themes are the struggle for home and the story of place. These are common themes for the communities of the Cape Flats.[6] What the story of place highlights is that popular memories cannot survive in isolation. People need to construct their memories into words, sentences, and stories, so that others can hear and respond. But before discussing the intricacies of memory and place, it is important to locate myself within this academic text. Since interviewees are being scrutinized through the "academic gaze," researchers have a methodological obligation to make themselves visible during the research process and within the completed academic text.

I write in an unsure way about the memories and emotions of others and about an unsettling past that we still live with in the present. However, to withdraw into silence or self-denial is unacceptable. I am a white male South African. This does not mean that because I am white I am really European and therefore my being African can be conveniently erased by some form of "ethnic absolutism."[7] I am white and African, and I was produced by apartheid South Africa. This is the uncomfortably hybrid, at times contradictory, location from which I write. Acknowledging this hybridity makes me feel fragile, but I have a responsibility to come to terms with the contradictions of having a hybrid identity and occupying a relative position of power as a white South African.

I cannot speak for the coloured interviewees quoted in this chapter. However, I will present a selection of their stories and interpret their words and stories. My analysis is an outsider's analysis, but it is an outsider's analysis informed and shaped in part by years of political and research work in coloured communities. It is also not that the

outsider cannot say anything about "the Other," but rather that all researchers, outsiders, and insiders must try to understand how their identities and research strategies are shaping informants' and interviewees' responses. Even when all the identities of the researcher and researched are identical, unequal power relations will exist. There is no power-free research nirvana to be reached.[8] In other words, the retention and telling of memories (in both research and nonresearch contexts) always occur within shifting power relationships. Access to opportunities to narrate one's memories and stories for audiences is shaped by position, resources, and power relations.

Memories are vital forms of social and cultural currency that are exchanged between individuals, groups, and generations. As Peter Coleman puts it, "Memory is much more than recall of past stimuli. It involves emotion, will and creativity in the reconstruction of the past to serve present needs."[9] Memories are also not a set of personal experiences trapped in an atomized individual world.[10] Even personal memories are forged through shared patterns of culture and language. The culturally accepted practices, rituals, and rules that are learned guide (or fail to guide) people in how to respond to, and make sense of, these memories. Furthermore, for memories to have social significance, they need to be conveyed to others in understandable storied forms, and in the process people are creating and maintaining sense of self and identity, David Lowenthal observes.[11] Paul Connerton, in *How Societies Remember,* notes:

> Groups provide individuals with frameworks within which their memories are localized and memories are localized by a kind of mapping. We situate what we recollect within the mental spaces provided by the group. . . . No collective memory can exist without reference to a socially specific spatial framework. That is to say, our images give us the illusion of not changing and of rediscovering the past in the present. We conserve our recollections by referencing them to the material milieu that surrounds us. . . . Our memories are located within the mental and material spaces of the group.[12]

The places and spaces in which people have played, worked, and lived over time are crucial to their development as individuals and as communities. For example, the areas or spaces that children turn into their stomping grounds are deeply symbolic to growing up and becoming a confident and secure adult. A sense of togetherness at home, in the street, and in the neighborhood is fundamental to creating a community identity. It is the sense of belonging that people develop through these experiences of people and places that is central to the construction of identity, Jeffrey Weeks notes.[13] The stories from Windermere simultaneously echo an assault on the senses and a personal sense of belonging to a particular place. Mrs. C. S. lived in the infamous shanty formation called "the Timberyard." She commented:

> *Ek sê maar elke dag, as ek nou `n sink huis in Windermere, wat daar nou sink huise gewies't, dan het ek soentoe getrek, na my ou dorp toe. Dit was baie lekker gewies. Dit was mis vloer huise gewies, nie soes die huise nie, ons moet maar mis gaan haal't, dan moet*

Figure 2.1 Cooking in Windermere, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

> *ons'e huise gesmeer. Ons plak pampiere in die sink huise. Ek maak dit mooi. Jy kan vuur gemaak't as dit koud is . . . soos Sun City is daai plek.*
> (I say every day, if I can now get a zinc house in Windermere, as there were zinc houses then, then I would move to there, to my old village. It was very nice there. It was dung floor houses, not like houses today. We used to fetch dung and we had to smear our houses. We plastered papers in the zinc houses. I make it beautiful. You could make a fire when it is cold . . . that place was like Sun City.)

She lived in a corrugated iron shanty throughout the 1950s, but since the early 1960s she has lived in a sub-economic brick dwelling in Factreton. Nevertheless, she longs for the time when she lived in the shanty. There are elements of nostalgia in her story, but her story is also about a longing for a time when she had some sense of control over the making of her own home. The autonomy she experienced in the past and her sense of losing it after forced removals are repeated themes in many

interviewees' life stories. The degrees of control and autonomy that people believe they have directly affects their sense of agency and potency within their immediate social world.

Another issue that affected interviewees' sense of autonomy was constantly rising prices. References to rising prices often have a timeless quality, which crosses the many recessions or changes in prices that interviewees have experienced. The price hikes of the 1980s and 1990s are bunched together in memory, and compared to the "cheap times" of the 1950s and 1960s.

> Oh very nice, we will never have that time again, never, everything was so cheap, get a lot of things for a, a *sikspens* [sixpence], nice things you can buy for a *sikspens*. Three pennies, stuff that you won't get today, oh, everything was cheap that time. [*Mrs. D. S.*]

The interviewees who are quoted in this paper were between 55 and 80 years old in 1993 when interviewed. In most cases they were currently living in working-class areas and had usually lived in similar or worse economic circumstances for most of their lives. Most of these interviewees told stories about rising prices, housing problems, unrepaired streets, inadequate community facilities, gang violence, and many other social issues. Other experiences, such as the forced removal of whites, Africans, and coloureds from the Windermere/Kensington area, were woven into their stories. Under the Group Areas Act, in 1958 this was declared a "coloured group area." Nevertheless, it took until 1963 before all African residents were removed to Langa and Guguletu or relocated to the so-called "homelands" the Ciskei or Transkei (see Chapter 3). In the process, Windermere was bulldozed to the ground. The Windermere/Kensington area was transformed from being a place with a culturally diverse set of community relationships to being the Kensington/Factreton area for "coloured residents" only. Because of a lack of housing, some coloured residents were removed to other parts of the Cape Flats. Those who remained were in most cases placed in the sub-economic housing project of Factreton. It was particularly the application of "the Group" (as the Group Areas Act was known) that was a watershed in their lives. Mrs. D. F. illustrates a common response.

> *Ooo ons was hartseer, dit het gelyk die hele wereld vergaan, want daai was mense van daar… Daai tyd ryk mense was nie verseer, of rob, pickpocket of doodmaak nie. Daai tyd was daar nie ligte nie hier in die pad nie maar ons kon geloop't in die aande. Almal ken vir jou en dit. Maar toe die Groep Areas in kom toe is dit n hele verandering, want die mense wat inkom is almal big shot, hulle kyk nie vir jou aan nie, almal het nou grand huise, hulle het grand karre, nie jy moet nou net vir jouself en soe en toe soe. Daai dae hier sal nooit weer nou terug kom nie.*
> (Oooh we were heartsore, it seemed the whole world was decaying. That time rich people were not hurt, or robbed, pickpocketed, or killed, there was none. That time there weren't lights here in this road and we could walk in the evenings. Everyone knew you and that. But when the Group Areas came in then whole world changed,

> because the people that came in were all big shot, they don't look at you, everyone have their grand houses, they have grand cars, no you mustn't keep just for yourself and so and then so on. Those days will never come back here again.)

When people were forcibly removed from areas like District Six, Tramway Road, Harfield (and many others) or, in the case of Windermere/Kensington, where the community was transformed by the forced removals of others, this was experienced as a radical blow to people's conception of their social worlds. As Mr. H. B. explains, "They were unsettled. Lots of people were disturbed by these people being moved away, they were being removed. . . . You feel disturbed that this must happen. You know, you see the bulldozer running through these places, running through it."

The impact of forced removals and social engineering is not simply about the loss of physical houses, property and land; it is also, significantly, about the loss of a sense of home and community. Losing a home and a community is about a loss of security, stability, autonomy, and even a sense of family, friendship, and self. Most of all, it hurts people to feel that such formative spaces, relationships, and people have been taken away from them or have been injured in some way. These are powerful feelings of loss, which are experienced as a deep source of hurt or pain. Coping with these uncomfortable emotions day-to-day over decades is a difficult task.

A central part of this difficulty is the limits of words and sentences, Jane Bennett notes: "Language can represent pain only in its failure to be language, its willingness to forgo sense, its readiness to risk incomprehensibility, implausibility."[14] Emotional pain, like physical pain, "has no voice, but when it last finds a voice, it begins to tell a story," Elaine Scarry writes.[15] There is no easy way to find the appropriate spaces and words to express painful emotions. Furthermore, constructing the connections between words and feelings is itself a difficult endeavor for most people, although there are variations across cultural and gender boundaries, as Lutz and Abu-Lughod observe.[16] Simply put, there is never a precise one-to-one relationship between words and emotions.[17] Therefore, the authenticity of emotions and people's interpretation of the words about emotions are open to doubt and uncertainty. As the survivors of forced removals continued the struggle to "voice their experiences and feelings verbally, so researchers' uncertain, discursive attempts to record and interpret these stories through different media continued. Listen to Mr. H. B.:

> *Daar was nie n ding soos apartheid nie. Kyk, die seerheid wat die gowerment kom bring het, die moeilikheid onder mekaar en die haat vandag is waar dit vir my onpliesierig voel het. Ek het nie nog nodig gesien vir daai, daarom is die wêreld vandag soe.*
> (There was never such a thing as apartheid. Look, the painfulness that the government brought, the difficulty between each other and the hate of today, is where it feels unpleasant for me. I have not seen the need for that, therefore the world is today is so.)

Coloured, African, and white interviewees' resorted to mythical reconstructions to deal with uncomfortable feelings of the past and present. Faced with the limits of

language, limited material resources, and the burden of considerable feelings, interviewees turned to myth-making, the myth here being that all was well in Windermere but then the evil of apartheid destroyed that "tranquility" and brought instability, pain, and hatred between people. The need to construct and reconstruct an imaginary inner place where the pain and hatred of the past and present cannot touch is fulfilled by myth. These are the myths that help people to keep on struggling for a better life, as Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson observe in *The Myths We Live By.*[18]

The memory of loss and losses, for this 55- to 80-year-old generation of coloured residents, is forged in relation to what was once had, experienced, and felt—what existed prior to that loss. Most interviewees repeatedly contrasted "that time," as opposed to the present time. The sense of community that was remembered from before the forced removals was probably a mixture of fact and fiction. However, what is significant is that interviewees live these myths as their truth.

Viewed from a rationalist perspective, myths will often seem irrational, unimportant, and even naive. Yet it is the internal logic and "truths" of these popular and personal myths that need to be sensitively unraveled and interpreted. This chapter argues that, given the harsh socioeconomic realities of the Cape Flats, myth-making is often driven by people's need to keep hope alive. But these mythical memory constructions are not enough, and people's sense of self and identity take a battering through various losses, betrayals, failures, and other disappointing experiences. The process of growing up and maturing is consequently unsettled and dislocated. These social circumstances make it difficult for a positive sense of self and identity to be created and sustained. Nevertheless, it is possible for people to reconstruct or reinterpret their sense of self and community through various activities.

The day-to-day gossip, folklore, urban legends, traditions, and other forms of oral storytelling are indelibly marked on the social relationships and emotional fabric of communities. Forced removals obviously shattered many of these relationships, and hence many memories and stories have already disappeared. The former residents of District Six, Windermere, Kensington, Harfield, and Simonstown (and many more areas) tended, as expected, to be elderly in 1993 when the study was conducted. Nevertheless, "the essential task of old age is the preservation of a coherent, consistent self in the face of loss and of threat of loss. Reminiscence has a valuable role to play in this defense," Coleman noted in *Aging and Reminiscence Process.*[19]

Whether reminiscence takes place through talking to friends and relatives, giving oral history interviews, or speaking to social workers, telling stories of the past can help elderly residents. Furthermore, if the listeners and interviewers are younger members of the community, there is potential for the strengthening of cross-generational relationships within communities. For example, Mr. A. S. expressed his need for greater knowledge about his parents and his family history, "Only one auntie and one uncle left. I want to trace, to get in touch with them, if I tell them exactly, or I can ask them, they know my father and mother's life before. Then I can get that history."

The interviewee's plea for more historical knowledge is also a request for assistance with the burdensome feelings he has been carrying for many years. The act of talking about both painful and pleasurable aspects of one's personal past, a past that

is always meshed within a collective past, can become a comforting process of self-review. By giving people the opportunity and space to speak about their experiences, it becomes possible to understand something about what their loss and related feelings involve. It is also possible to use these stories and understanding to develop sensitive development projects for the renewal of urban and rural communities.

Fragile Identities: Feelings of Fear

The cultural hybridity of coloured identities does not necessarily undermine people's ability to make choices and decisions for themselves. However, the explicit cultural hybridity of particular communities, such as people classified as coloured, is signified as problematic and disruptive by the dominant discourses of "whiteness" and "blackness."[20] These discourses present the myth of "pure" identities as the ideal object to be fulfilled. The simultaneous location between and within these essentialist discourses involves contradictory tensions, ambivalences, and struggle in order to reach confident answers appropriate for each person who was, or community that was, classified "coloured." When coloured people "measure" themselves by these discourses, it usually means that the emotional consequences of living hybrid identities can be confusing, complicated, and painful. As one informant said to his friend, "Jy's soe deurmekaar soes `n verkleurdemannetjie in 'n smartieboks" (You're as confused as a chameleon in a Smartie box [a box of different-coloured sweets]).

People's responses to their identity location and interpretations of their feelings need not be static or fixed. The admitting of mistakes, confusion, and weakness allows for the recognition of a fragile identity in the process of perpetual making and becoming. For if a state of mythical "completion" or "closure" is ever reached, the experience of lived identities as being constructed and reconstructed in an open-ended process of becoming is unthinkable.[21]

Who we think and feel we are—and what others think we are and how they relate to us—is shaped by a variety of dialogic power relations linked to conceptions of race and culture. Many of the coloured interviewees I spoke to expressed crude forms of racism towards Africans and a glowing admiration of whites. This was probably an attempt to impress me, as a white interviewer, but I think these views were believed by some interviewees. Although my relationship to the interviewees partly influenced their responses, especially exaggerated ones, I think that in most cases the broader power relations within South Africa had a more forceful impact on their consciousness. For example, the following interviewee said:

> *En 'n kaffir al dra hy n goue ring, bly hy nog steeds n aap. Daai's nou plein gepraat, nê? U gesê ek moet sommer plein praat… Kyk hulle sit soe bymekaar, dan praat hulle nog altyd soe hard aaneen. Hulle het niks, hulle sê het 'n culture, hulle het nie 'n culture nie hulle's rou. Hulle sê onse bruin mense is mixed masala, maar ons bruin mense staan aan die wit mense, as wat hulle aan die witmense, as wat hulle staan. Want onse culture en die culture en die witmense se culture is een.*

> (And a kaffir [black African person, derogative term], even if he wears a gold ring, still remains a monkey. That's now plain talking, hey? You said I must talk plain . . . Look they sit together, and they talk all the time so loud continuously. They have nothing, they say they have a culture, they don't have a culture, they're raw. They say us brown people are mixed *masala*, but we brown people stand closer to the white people, as what they are to the white people, as what they stand. Because our culture and the white people's culture is one). [*Mrs. D. E.*]

This crude racism contains several important themes. First, the "monkey" metaphor reflects the belief that whatever the social or class position of an African person, their "racial" identity will remain the overriding, and negative, feature to Mrs. D. E. Second, Africans do not have a culture because they are primitive (as in "raw" and "talking loudly"). Third, the defense against the attack of coloured people being "mixed masala" (the implication of which is that coloured people do not have a culture), is to emphasize a closer proximity to white culture, which therefore gives some coloured people a greater claim to having a culture. The central theme here is an apparent acceptance of the universal discourse of whiteness as constituting civilized and desirable culture. The above interviewee's racist statements are very similar to the origins of colonial racism that were constructed through a link between skin color and the heathen/savage image.[22]

In a similar vein, another interviewee said, "I know I am speaking on the whatsename [tape-recorder] but I can tell you one thing, I must be honest, it's as the old saying, you can take him [that is black Africans] out of the bush, but you will not take the bush out of him." [*Mr. K. N.*] The racial mythology here is rooted in constructions about the "primitive" Other who comes from the "bush."

Another interviewee said, "He was milkie [the milkman], he had a shanty, but it was beautiful inside. You know, you won't think it looks so nice inside. Some of them [that is black Africans] were okay, some of them were raw, you know? But some of them, like the cultured ones, you know, you could communicate with them." [*Mrs. A. M.*]

In this instance the African Other was split into those without culture (as in "raw") and those with culture, a culture that somehow measured up to the interviewee's standard of "civilized" communication. These myth-laden, racist interpretations of cultural difference were also influenced by language difference. As one interviewee put it, "Everything they say, they just something uh 'walla salla salla,' something like that, hey? So that's what the Africans talk. 'Salla salla salla de Klerk uh uh walla walla salla uh ha ha'!" [*Mrs. A. M.*] In a racist manner, this interviewee portrays African languages as being crude and primitive.

There were many passages in which other coloured interviewees expressed implicit or explicit racism towards Africans. For example, some interviewees portrayed "all" Africans as "unforgiving," "lazy," "merciless," and "dirty." The differentiating theme of the "primitive" African Other allowed these interviewees simultaneously to distance themselves from the African community and to lay claim to a closer, more "natural," cultural relationship with the white community. In their relationships with

both white and African people, coloured interviewees reflected an ambiguous mixture of fear and desire. As Stuart Hall argues, "Just as masculinity always constructs femininity as double—simultaneously madonna and whore—so racism constructs the black subject: noble savage and violent avenger and in the doubling, fear and desire double for one another across the structures of otherness."[23]

In other cases, interviewees spoke about their African neighbors in sensitive and considerate terms, but used a "racial" terminology that many would today regard as racist. "We had quite a few native people, but very nice. Very nice native people, you know? Very clean, tidy, not like some of them. . . . I got a native doctor and he says he can't speak, aya, Afrikaans. So I thought, oh now, I should have learned their language. I could have spoken their language with them." [*Mrs. E. C.*] This interviewee seems to be conscious of how the inability to speak each other's language inhibits a deeper understanding of others.

In contrast, a handful of interviewees initially denied the existence of large numbers of African residents in the area. When questioned about who lived next door, across the road and around the corner, they began to admit the existence of African residents. One interviewee said, *"Hulle het eintlik nie hier gewoon nie. Dis net kleurlinges en blankes wat hier gewoon het."* (They actually did not live here. It was just coloureds and whites that lived here.) [*Mrs. E. G.*]

I suspect that for these interviewees it was quite threatening to admit to having lived in a community dominated by Africans. The same could be said of the interviewees who exaggerated the presence of black African residents and who extensively drew on racial myths. On the one hand, the African Other is denied. On the other hand, the African Other is presented as an omnipotent, primitive, and violent force. In both cases (and the above examples), these responses suggest more about the storyteller than the people referred to. Interviewees who expressed these forms of "racial" Othering were grappling with a threatened, fearful sense of location and identity within the South African context. It seems that the fear and loss expressed by these interviewees, and the racial mythologies that they constructed around these feelings, are attempts at coming to terms with the ambivalent tensions of cultural hybridity. For example, Mrs. E. C.'s mother was a "German woman" and her father was a "St. Helena man."[24]

> It was very awful when apartheid came, although I don't know who I am, if I am European or coloured. But I used to feel heartsore for people like . . . that the coloured people used to live together with the whitey husbands and the coloured wives and then all of a sudden they had to part and they were thrown out, they mustn't live with Europeans anymore. . . . I think it must have been heartbroken for those children, because the other one can go to a European school, but the other one can't because he's coloured. But yes, it's their parents, it's their children. It was very heartsore for me. Very heartsore. [*Mrs. E. C.*]

The pain of living across apartheid's rigid categorization of either being "white" or "coloured" meant that interviewees like Mrs. E. C. had to confront continual uncertainty and complex decisions about their cultural location and identity. Furthermore,

it was common for coloured interviewees to talk about their white ancestry and to not talk about their African ancestry. In many cases the forgetting and silences around black African ancestry goes back so many generations that the current generation no longer has memories of this ancestry. It is difficult to fix when the silencing began, but exaggerated reports of white ancestry were repeatedly given by majority of the interviewees. These exaggerations are probably related to my white presence, but there is also little doubt that this phenomenon exists irrespective of the researcher's identity.

Is the coloured community therefore racist? I think not. For example, as Wilmot James argues, "to interpret the coloured vote as an act of racism has little basis in fact";[25] or as a local African National Congress (ANC) leader put it in 1996, "Coloureds are not so much racist as they fear non-racialism. The big unknowns for coloureds are non-racialism, freedom and equality."[26] However, racist and/or conservative political positions are taken within coloured communities, which need to be understood and responded to. As Mr. H. S. argues:

> If they [African people] can go on with their own people, like they kill them, I mean their own race, what will they do with me and you? I mean will they treat us better, see that's the question on everybody's mind. Cause, I mean they have had a raw deal all the time, but the thing is you can't trust them, the blacks. The problem is you can't talk their language, you don't know what they are talking about, what they are scheming against you. You must just be on the lookout all the time. But we hope things will come right.

The lack of knowledge created by multiple divisions such as culture, language and resources, combined with differential access to jobs and education under apartheid, created fertile grounds for mistrust and fear of the Other to grow. It is problematic to argue that coloured residents were either duped by apartheid ideology or that they were apathetic victims of false consciousness. Moreover, the fashionable "amnesia" label seems to be a variant of the "false consciousness" label of the 1980s.[27] Like a double-edged sword, the false consciousness/amnesia argument patronisingly represents coloured residents as people who cannot think or remember for themselves and it also allows progressive groups the convenience of not dealing with the conservatism that exists within coloured communities.

For example, it was common for the coloured population to be labeled as "fence-sitters" during the 1980s. However, coloured residents of the Cape Flats are not "fence-sitters." Coloured residents might be politically divided, but then what cultural community is not politically divided? Coloured residents on the Cape Flats have been making political decisions and choices for generations. The problem rather lies with the politically correct left.—"we" who cannot come to terms with the conservative political choices that coloured residents are making and "we" who have failed to explain why coloured residents are making those decisions.

It is crucial to stress that some of the 23 coloured interviewees did not express conservative or racist positions. Several coloured and African interviewees spoke

about their cross-cultural relationships as shared experiences of neighborliness and community. Mr. H. B. said:

> *Ek het maar swaar groot geword hier in Windermere. Ek mien die mense het gesurvive. Baie mense het hulle eie skape, koeie, varke, hoenders gehet. . . . Die mense is arm, maar hulle het lekker gelewe, lekker ook mekaar verstaan ook. Die Bantoe mense en ons en die Moeslem mense, almal het lekker saam gelewe. Daai tyd jy kan jou huis deur laat ope gestaan't, jy het nie nodig vir die beurman langs aan te sê, kyk na, want die mense het soe aan een gelewe in daai tyd. En die Bantoe mense en ons het lekker saam gelewe. Daar was no problem gewees'ie, daai tyd, nie soe't nou is ver dag is nie.*
> (I had a tough upbringing here in Windermere. I mean the people survived. Many people had their sheep, cows, pigs, chicken. . . . The people were poor, but they lived nicely, nicely understood each other as well. The Bantu people and us, and the Muslim people, everyone lived nicely together. That time you could leave your

Figure 2.2 Children playing near the *vlei* or lake. Windermere, Cape Town, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

> house door open, you did not have to tell your next door neighbor, because people lived like that, in that time. And the Bantu people and us lived nicely together, there was no problem, that time, not like it is today.)

While there are romantic sentiments in this story, this interviewee and several others are making statements about their community experiences in the 1950s, and more specifically, are describing their affirming personal experiences of interactions with their black African neighbors. In a more painful story, Mr. D. S. (a longstanding research guide, informant, and friend) gained possession of a baptismal certificate book while working as church scribe in the 1950s. From the late 1950s until 1969 he used this book to help African residents reclassify themselves as coloured. He helped African residents to negotiate the dangers of the apartheid bureaucracy, which meant they could avoid forced removal from Windermere to Guguletu or Langa. He was arrested and charged with more than 150 counts of fraud, to which was added, he noted:

> *Hulle't my aangeklaar vir invoering van terrorisme, om daardie deel gevind dat ek ek kan n kanaal gewies't vir die terrorisms. En die klagtes was toe aan bedrog en vervalsing… hulle't my toe skuldig bevind op tien klagtes en die anner klagte was almal verwerp.*
> (They charged me with importation of terrorism, because that aspect was found, that I could have been a channel for terrorism. The charges were fraud and falsification… they found me guilty of ten charges and the rest were scrapped.)

For the ten fraud charges and the charges under the Terrorism Act he spent seven years in prison. He says of his prison experiences:

> *Dit was baie dinge, ummm, baie grusaam, nê? Dit was nie maklik soos nou nie, dinge was baie grusaam. Die bewaardes was vir jou treurig, jy moet in jou spore trap of jy word geslaan en jy word aangekla.*
> (It was many things, ummm, very gruesome, you know? It was not easy like today, things were very gruesome. The warders were terrible, you had to watch your step or you were hit and charged.)

Telling these stories was an emotional experience for Mr. D.S.--he cried as he told them. While we had been political comrades and research co-workers for several years, it was only when a certain level of trust had been established that he was able to reveal these stories. When responding to intense emotions such as pain and loss, interviewers might heed Barbara Erskine's advice, "Grief is a reaction to loss and sometimes it is not only the presenting loss which the interviewer should be aware of. One may need to skillfully deal with the sharing of past loss that doesn't seem associated with the presenting story. Or perhaps allow the informant a graceful/grateful silence."[28]

Of the 23 interviews, it is significant that mainly male interviewees expressed feelings of sadness through crying. In part, our shared gender identity must have

influenced these emotional expressions. In contrast, the gender differences between female interviewees and me probably had an inhibiting effect.

I have selected quotations that highlight the extreme examples of racism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the major sacrifices that others like Mr. D. S. paid for their political beliefs and actions. There were many coloured interviewees who were situated in between these extremes and who expressed a mixture of positive commentary and racist remarks about black and white South Africans. There were also instances where interviewees were able to develop a humane worldview despite experiencing harsh living circumstances.

At least three interviewees referred to a common humanity rooted in "blood," including Mrs. C. S., whose story about being punished for proclaiming that there is no white or black or brown blood is told in Chapter 1. Significantly, a common "blood" is beneath the differing skin colours of people and symbolically is understood as beyond apartheid ideology. It is a mythology that helped Mrs. C. S. and others to construct a positive sense of humanity underlying the separations, exclusions, and brutalizing apartheid experiences. The story of Mrs. C. S. is about a young coloured female child facing an old white male *baas* in the past. Yet, when Mrs. C. S. tells her story, she is an old interviewee facing a young white male interviewer. She was expressing legitimate pain and anger at her oppressive experiences in the past, while simultaneously displaying a degree of understanding towards me, through telling the story. Mrs. C. S.'s courage in telling her pain-filled story also suggests a sense of hope. She was neither trapped in fear-driven "racial" Othering, nor was she captive to her legitimate anger.

However, Mrs. C. S., Mr. D. S., and a few others were in the minority. The majority of coloured interviews displayed a mixture of "racial" Othering, explicit racism, and implicit forms of racism. Coloured interviewees' past experiences of loss and their fears of reexperiencing loss and hurt under a black African majority government are important parts of an emerging explanation. Fear of transformation and rapid change and the possible recurrence of marginalization and discrimination are understandable. However, I would like to argue that these fears need to be interpreted differently. For example, these fears need not be crudely approached as a defensive protection of social and class privileges. In fact, these fears tend to be more pronounced amongst working-class coloured residents, who have less material and social advantages to protect than the middle class. "Fear" has multiple meanings, including strength, weakness, defensiveness, caution, and many others. The same could be said of "loss." Significantly, while both "loss" and "fear" can be debilitating, finding personal and collective ways to resolve, heal, live with, and move beyond these emotions can make a person or community stronger. Acknowledging and learning to manage the emotions embedded in our memories constructively is a crucial part of signifying fragile identities not as a weak, but as strong. As Zimitri Erasmus and others have argued, the struggle over the meanings and ways of living coloured identities—or any other identities—is never fixed, but is an ongoing process.[29]

Finally, there is a political need to counter political groups' that manipulate coloured communities' emotions, beliefs, and choices. A central question that emerged after the 1994 elections was: "Why did the National Party's *swartgevaar*

(black danger) propoganda towards coloured communities succeed in the Western Cape and not in the Northern Cape?" Research about the emotions rooted in shifting patterns of popular memory and their social and political implications within coloured and other communities is necessary. Comparative oral history and sociological approaches can teach us about how and why coloured residents make particular choices and decisions.[30]

Conclusion

This chapter has argued for the need to pay attention to the range of emotions that coloured residents of the Cape Flats have experienced in the past and continue to live with in the present. I have particularly focused on the significance of feelings of loss, hurt, and fear and how these emotions have shaped the nature of memory, myth-making, and identity. This discussion focused on a generation of coloured residents aged from 55 to 80 years old at the time of the research in 1993, from the Windermere community. The majority of interviewees resorted to conservative political choices and many expressed racist attitudes towards their image of a "primitive" African Other. In other cases, there were interviewees who expressed progressive political views. However, the role of myth-making was central to how all interviewees remembered the past. Myths were used to avoid or manage painful aspects of the past, and myths were used to deal with fears of the African community and of the changes happening in contemporary South Africa. This chapter also suggests that unresolved feelings of loss and fear seemed to be hampering confident decision-making. While the contestation around the meaning of coloured identities will continue, I have an open-ended sense that there are also fragile beliefs in South Africa that need to be defended. As Don Foster noted in 1993:

> If racism is an ideology we have one dominant principle in South Africa—non-racialism—to challenge and transform this land. I have argued that racism is a virulent set of changing mythologies; it is not going to be easy to wish it away. It will return in new guises, renewed rhetoric and altered masks. If there is merit in my argument that non-racialism consists of "fragile threads" then our task for the future should be clear. It will be to struggle, to argue, to analyze and to defend that which is precious, fragile and vulnerable.[31]

Finally, I am left with the loose ends of my own fragile thoughts and feelings. These feelings cannot be neatly explained or packaged in an academic work, but the process of critical self-reflection continues. More crucially, a self-reflection that is motivated by nonracial ideologies and antiracist practices can make small contributions to personal and collective struggles. Academics are also able to make productive use of privileged positions to speak through different media, so that the life stories of the poor and marginalized are disseminated to many audiences.

CHAPTER 3

From the "Peaceful Past" to the "Violent Present"

Memory, Myth, and Identity in Guguletu[1]

People do not face the present as an isolated and empty space, sandwiched between the past and future. Rather, "the present" is "itself historical: a complex series of interlocking histories whose interactions have to be re-constructed, not assumed."[2] "All present awareness," as David Lowenthal puts it, "is grounded in past perceptions and acts,"[3] or as Elizabeth Tonkin states, "All understandings of the past affect the present. Literate or illiterate we are our memories."[4] The telling of a life story is crafted from these memories of the past and is both present and presented in the present.

The comparisons that 18 African interviewees make, consciously and unconsciously, between "the past" and "the present" are the primary focus of this chapter.[5] I interpret the manner in which former residents of the Windermere community construct their memories as a specific way of coping with the violence of their contemporary community life in Guguletu. Windermere thrived from the 1930s until the 1950s, but was torn apart by apartheid laws between 1958 and 1963. The bulk of Windermere's African families were removed to Guguletu.

African interviewees' memories of the apartheid past reflect both their "good times" and "bad times." Their memories tend to be fraught with pain, anxiety, fear, and other conflicting emotions. Furthermore, the uncertainties of social transition and violent instability tend to make the present [i.e., the time when the interviews were conducted, July through August 1993] seem far more horrifying than anything experienced before.[6] In some cases there is a longing for a rural past; in others, for a youthful past of *shebeens* (informal bars), dance halls, and various cultural activities of Windermere of the 1940s and 1950s. This is neither trivial nostalgia nor popular

romanticism that can be dismissed with intellectual cynicism. Rather, the reconstruction and in some cases the denial or forgetting of social memories of the past serve a vital function of bolstering and defending an aging self, delicately located within a dangerous present.[7]

The different ways that interviewees value and relate to their memories suggest a positioning of the self to its own past and to the collective past within which it has developed. The different values that interviewees attribute to their memories, and the form, content, and selection of their narrated memories, contain significant clues about identity formation. This interpretative methodology is in contrast to the dominant empiricist uses of oral history in South Africa.[8] On one level, there is the physical and emotional loss of a community destroyed by apartheid. On another level, the mythical wholeness of the Windermere past reconstructed in memory provides a comforting discourse with which the uncertain present and future can be understood and faced. It is particularly through interacting with other "Windermere

Figure 3.1 Flooding in Windermere, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

people" or with attentive listeners that interviewees grasp opportunities to sustain a community-in-memory through the remembering and telling of stories about the Windermere past.[9] Additionally, institutional forms such as burial societies provide ongoing avenues for "Windermere people" in Guguletu to nurture their community-in-memory. The community that developed in a space called "Windermere" no longer exists. But through the discursive construction of myth and memory, the "Windermere people" nurture a community-in-memory as a fragile form of communal identity in the present.

From Windermere of the 1950s to Guguletu of the 1990s

A brief history of Windermere is provided in Chapter 1. Increasing numbers of Africans from the rural areas settled in Windermere from the 1930s to the 1950s. So-called African bachelors were removed to Langa during the 1950s, but the most dramatic changes to the community occurred after 1958, when Windermere was racially zoned a coloured area and African families were forcibly removed to Nyanga West, which later became Guguletu.

The removal of African people to Guguletu during the 1960–1963 period met with little popular resistance. In part, this had to do with a weak African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) presence in Windermere. However, a more forceful reason is that the state promised African residents of Windermere their own houses. For the thousands who were living in corrugated iron shanties in areas highly prone to floods, fires, poor sanitary conditions, and violence, a new house in a new community must have seemed very appealing. However, this was not to be. When they arrived in their new homes, they found, as an interviewee put it, "a concrete shell." No ceiling. No internal doors. No proper floor. No electricity. No hot water. No internal toilets. A powerful sense of disappointment, and in many cases anger, was felt by every interviewee. Justifiably, they felt tricked.

Since 1976, Guguletu has experienced school boycotts, mass protests, and repeated periods of violent struggles between residents, police, and army. From the 1980s, anti-apartheid civic and youth organizations became prominent. The levels of violence steadily increased in Guguletu, with ongoing political conflicts, taxi wars, rising unemployment, and waves of new arrivals from rural areas. Since the abolition of influx control in 1986, there has been considerable growth of new squatter camps in vacant lots on the perimeter of, and inside, Guguletu. Ironically, in the light of the experiences of former Windermere residents, there are now divisions between squatters and house occupants in Guguletu. Many interviewees drew parallels between the sight of Windermere of the 1950s and the squatter camps of the 1990s in and around Guguletu.

On the morning of Easter Sunday, April 10, 1993, Chris Hani was murdered. He was a tremendously popular leader during the anti-apartheid liberation struggle and, at the time of his murder by a member of an ultra-right group, he was

the Secretary-General of the South African Communist Party (SACP). His murder resulted in weeks of popular unrest in Guguletu and in many other African townships around South Africa. During late April to June 1993, army patrols had checkpoints at every entrance to Guguletu and my fieldwork ground to a halt. During the July–August 1993 period, I conducted most of the African interviews with the help of a black research assistant, who was a former ANC activist from Guguletu. As I moved around the streets of Guguletu, the angry glares of youths on street corners and the fresh scars of recent street battles were all around. An overwhelming sense of tension and fear of violence seemed to permeate all my discussions and interviews with residents.

As a white individual entering a war-torn black township, I was the one under observation. Appearing too well-dressed could attract unnecessary attention, and appearing too casually dressed could be seen as a sign of disrespect by interviewees. So I had to be aware of keeping a delicate balance at all times. Given the unstable sociopolitical circumstances, the presence of the research assistant offered minimal protection. However, his grasp of the isiXhosa language and customs, combined with a street knowledge of Guguletu, were very useful. Also, he could use my ANC membership to set up the interviews.[10] Nonetheless, Guguletu in 1993 was extremely tense. Although my status as a "white comrade" had afforded some protection in the 1980s, after Chris Hani's murder on April 10, 1993, it afforded none whatsoever.

Just before 5 p.m. on August 25, 1993, I conducted my last interview in Langa and was on my way (alone) to conduct a final interview in Guguletu. Inexplicably, I did not feel like doing another interview that day and went home. Perhaps it was end-of-fieldwork tiredness. Perhaps it was the sight of the smoldering ashes of burnt tires in the streets of Langa. So, instead of driving down the main road (called NY1) of Guguletu at 5 p.m., I went home. At 5 p.m., August 25, 1993, on that same day, a white American student named Amy Biehl was brutally murdered on NY1, Guguletu. For a few days thereafter, Guguletu witnessed a series of street battles. Guguletu was once again a war zone. All the residents I interviewed bore the emotional scars of these township wars. Most of them have experienced the trauma of friends, relatives, or children being imprisoned, shot, whipped or, in some cases, killed.

Moving Memories: From the "Peaceful Past" to the "Violent Present"

In this section, I explore how black African former residents from Windermere, who under apartheid suffered considerable hurts to their sense of self and identity, have forged their own personal meanings in uncertain times. The intention here is not a historical account of what did or did not happen in the apartheid past, but an interpretation of the ambiguous truths contained in the narration of meaningful memories. As Alessandro Portelli argues:

> The importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism and desire emerge. Therefore, there

> are no "false" oral sources…The diversity of oral history consists in the fact that "wrong" statements are still psychologically "true."[11]

The overwhelming majority of the 54 interviewees from my doctoral fieldwork (black, coloured, and white individuals) spoke of Windermere in glowing terms as a place of peace and togetherness, a place remembered as where young and old from different cultures lived happily together. For African interviewees, this romantic gloss on the Windermere past had a distinctly sharper and tenser edge to it, largely because of their frequent comparisons with contemporary violence in Guguletu. The following sequence of quotes from black African interviewees illustrates a series of past/present comparisons. A 92-year-old male (former gardener and security guard) compares levels of violence, cost of living, and an implied loss of neighborliness and community:

> We used to live in harmony. There was no *skollies* [hooligans], one could travel at anytime of the night without fear of being robbed or stabbed. Neighbours were very friendly to each other. Everything was cheap that time. If we could be allowed to go back we'll be the first to leave.

A 61-year-old female domestic worker and *shebeen* keeper makes similar references to peace and violence. She also expresses a sense of loss of what was possible when she was young:

> If they say we can move back to Windermere, oh, *ja*, I can move anytime. This place is a horrible place. I mean where we stay here now, what can we do? When we were young in Windermere we used to walk 'til midnight, but here in Guguletu, uh uh, you can't! We had a nice time in Windermere.

A 60-year-old female domestic worker makes similar peace/violence and cheap/expensive comparisons, but also evokes the sense of community that she shared in growing up with coloured people:

> We played with the coloured children there. Ah, it was nice there, the coloured people. No fighting, nothing. All just one person. No, we stay nicely with the coloured people there. Anytime they can say to us, "Go back to Kensington," I can be the first one! Ah, ha, ha, ha. Mmm it was not so heavy like here. Here's everything is dear, there my mother used to see donkey carts with greens, basket of greens. Five shillings a basket of greens.

One of the younger interviewees, a 52-year-old domestic worker who was born and raised in Windermere, emphasized the sadness caused by being forced to leave and the longing for the place and the coloured friends she had there:

> It was a sad story when everybody had to move out of Kensington. A sad story. Well those who were left behind were just lucky, because quite a few people are still there

Figure 3.2 Sunday socializing in Windermere, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

> that we grew up with in Kensington. So we had to move out of the place man, *hê* [hey]! Even if, even if you can come back . . . they say, you can come back. I can be number one.

A striking repetition in these quotes is the desire to be the "first one" to go back to the Windermere/Kensington area and, of course, to go back to the days that can never be recaptured or relived. The most powerful comparative message, interwoven with the peace/violence contrast between the Windermere of the 1950s and the Guguletu of the 1990s, is the perceived loss of community. As the above interviewee says:

> Now in these days, it's Guguletu where your neighbour is your enemy. Whereas in the olden days your neighbour was your sister. You can't ask your neighbour now please give me some sugar. No, she hasn't got it and the next thing the children fight, then the big people get involved. Now in the olden days if we used to fight

> with one another in our area [Windermere/Kensington], the big people just come and sort it out and take sticks[12] and give us there. "Now you fight!" [*She bangs the table with her hands.*]

In these passages, three related effects of apartheid are referred to: first, the damage to elder/youth relationships; second, the rupture of community and neighborhood networks; third, a deepening of the gap between politics and the private personal sphere. In a similar vein, Luisa Passerini has argued that Fascism "accentuated the gap between the political sphere and daily private life, thus creating wounds in the tissue of memory, which could not easily recompose what had been forcefully separated."[13] When social relations between people are ruptured, the relational spaces for containing and passing on social memories are also affected. In the above passages, we can hear interviewees making assessments about the painful effects of the social engineering of the apartheid system and the repression of anti-apartheid opposition. Furthermore, while all these interviewees were poor and lived under difficult conditions in Windermere, the limited material advances in their contemporary lives are overshadowed by the turbulent political and social conditions of township life through the 1970s to the 1990s. The romantic tone and longing for the Windermere past reflects a genuine desire for the pleasures and relative freedoms of being young in a vibrant semi-rural squatter community. As Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson have argued in a review of oral testimonies in community histories:

> The slum, for so many years a byword for poverty and deprivation, is transfigured into a warm and homely place, a little commonwealth where there was always a helping hand. The narrative of hard times becomes a record of courage and endurance. The characteristic note is elegiac, saying good-bye to what will never be seen again, an affectionate leave-taking . . . the slum recaptures the symbolic space of "the world we have lost." Many, maybe most of the facts will be true. It is the omissions and the shaping which makes these stories also myth.[14]

Yet this kind of myth is not a common-sense falsity or untruth; that is not the issue here. This myth-making is the creation of memories that help people to live their lives in difficult times. These are "the myths we live by,"[15] and they help to form the complete stories about a personal past that will always be incomplete. Furthermore, Aletta Norval notes, "Remembrance . . . points to the incompleteness of the present,[16] an incompleteness born of the unfulfilled needs, wants, and desires that interviewees have lived with in their struggle to survive. Many of the interviewees cried, many were on the verge of tears, and many withdrew into a silent numbness. Narrating one's life story is an emotional event. Myth-making, as an indelible element of storytelling, is about pushing the limits of vocabulary and culture in order to express and understand the emotions of a traumatic past and present. It is about putting into stories the diverse and fragmented mixture of emotions that are embedded in conscious and unconscious memory. As Homi Bhabha puts it, "Re-membering [sic]

is never a quiet act of introspection. It is a painful remembering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present."[17]

Myth-making in the process of memory recall and storytelling about the past has to be situated and interpreted within this emotionally charged social milieu. The minority of interviewees who did not paint a romantic gloss on the Windermere past tended to focus more on the harshness of the present. The following dialogue with Mr. A. B., a 70-year-old retired driver, reflects these patterns:

> ***S. F.:*** And when you are at these meetings [that is, burial society meetings] do you ever talk about the Windermere days?
> ***A. B.***: Not actually. We almost forget about the things of Windermere, Kensington.
> ***S. F.***: You almost forget?
> ***A. B.***: Mmm.
> ***S. F.***: Why?
> ***A. B.***: Ha, ah. What can I say? I, I don't know. There's a lot of problems here, that's why. You see?
> ***S. F.***: And that makes people forget?
> ***A. B.***: Yes, we've got no time for those old things now. We must look at this, what is happening now and these days.

With more resignation, the following interviewee (a 69-year-old male, a former food-worker) says:

> ***P. G.***: It was an easy life at Windermere and everything went up. *Ja*, but we gotta bigger houses here, but, although we gotta bigger houses, eh, we also struggling with the very bad things here.
> ***S. F.***: So you are saying that you wouldn't want to go back to Windermere?
> ***P. G.***: No, I wouldn't want to.
> ***S. F.***: Why not?
> ***P. G.***: [*Sighs*] Uh uh, no it's notta the same, we know *mos* [just], it, even Windermere is not the same now. Not black people there, everything's change now.

For the following interviewee there is anger and resentment at both the violence and poverty in contemporary Guguletu. However, these experiences of hardship are additions to the horrors he saw in Windermere of the 1950s. This 70-year-old male, a former railway worker, said:

> We don't talk about the Kensington *dingus, besigheid* [thing, business]. Because it was too bad there. Nobody like it, anymore now. To talk about that *besigheid,* because was struggle in Kensington. Everybody know, was all the people was struggle at Kensington. Sometimes you will come from work in docks, there, sometimes overtime late at night. We come home later past twelve, past one. Here come the, that

> fucken *dingus.* The band here. You know if you don't like this man, in midnight, I try to take a paraffin or petrol, we throw it over his house. Burn there. You know was *mos* a shack was too close together, no space, passage between. If you are, you burnt, this *hokkie* [shack] here, that next door be burnt, then another one next door. All over. Now must wait, how many people inside there? Then you count how, one, two, you know how many people was burn inside? Ah Kensington, that place was no good there. The white people never take care, not a fucken *dingus.*

There is searing hurt expressed in this story, in contrast to the comforting tones of the earlier stories about Windermere. Life was tough then, and life is tough now. My sense is that for all interviewees there is considerable pain associated with the Windermere past. For some, that pain is managed by reconstructing their memories. Memories of pain and hardship are suppressed (and repressed); happy memories are exaggerated and romanticized. Sigmund Freud argues that, "As the indifferent memories owe their preservation not to their own content but to an associative relation between their content and another which is repressed, they have some claim to be called screen memories."[18] In several instances, these romantic memory constructions of Guguletu interviewees are a form of screen memory, which conceal the displacement of significant memories laden with painful emotions.[19] In contrast, the anger and aggression of the above male interviewee towards all this hardship, past and present, is openly delivered.

Isabel Hofmeyr correctly argues that there is a gender division between male and female storytelling genres.[20] However, I find her argument that men are more likely to tell "true" historical accounts than women, who tend to use fictionalized narratives, less convincing.[21] Insofar as I could tell while I focused on the interviewees' reconstruction of memories to fulfill their present needs, both female and male interviewees reconstruct their memories in fictionalized forms. I would argue that the critical issue is not how much more or less men or women fictionalize their narratives, but that there are differing fictionalized images and patterns that men and women deploy in their storytelling. For example, women interviewees often draw on maternal images and spiritual dreams, whereas men often cast themselves as heroic fighters.

The different forms and degrees of pain experienced under apartheid must be dealt with, consciously or unconsciously, by both men and women. Moral judgments cannot be made about which or whose coping mechanisms are most appropriate. Rather, interpreting the "conditions for remembering"[22] and the narrative and social means people use to survive can provide clues about the construction of memory, myth, and identity.

Identities: Interpreting the Agony of Apartheid

Apartheid is "past." But the wounds and scars of apartheid live on in the new South Africa. The memories of the apartheid past, the impact of contemporary violence,

and the desires for the future are carried forward. As one interviewee, a 75-year-old male former undertaker explains:

> The future it looks bright, although my wish is that the killings stop. The killings maybe stop. This is bad. This is bad. This is bad. People should come together black and white man. This can be a happy country. If the people, can just come together and be one. No complaint. It's not necessary for one to complain, it's only that is apartheid it has done a lot of damage. Has done a lot of damage. If it was not for this apartheid, this is very, very, very good country, it's the South Africa, very good. But apartheid has done a lot of damage.

The narrated stories of all these interviewees bear the traces of apartheid's effects on individuals, social relations, and community life. Interviewees have constituted themselves as historical subjects through changing social relationships and discourses. However, retaining some sense of self-control within a system that was gradually destroying any sense of control and dignity was profoundly important to interviewees. For example, for the thousands of African shanty dwellers of Windermere, their corrugated iron dwellings became relatively permanent homes. Many interviewees longed for the relative comforts of the *pondokkies* (shanties) they built in comparison with the state-built houses in Guguletu. A sense of security, sameness, and continuity over time is a crucial element of identity formation. However, identity formation is also constituted by a sense of insecurity, difference, and discontinuity.

In external terms, the public persona is forged in a struggle to create and present a coherent and credible image of the self. Internally, identities are also a form of emotional organization of fragmentary feelings evoked by needs, wants, and desires. In order to deal with and fulfill these personal needs, people have to relate to and identify with aspects of the external world. It is within the personal dialogue between internal needs in relation to external demands of social relationships that identities are consciously and unconsciously negotiated. As Jeffrey Weeks argues:

> Identities are not neutral. Behind the quest for identity are different and often conflicting values. By saying who we are, we are also striving to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire. The problem is that these beliefs, needs and desires are often patently in conflict, not only between different communities but within individuals themselves.[23]

Consciously and unconsciously, identities allow people to deploy strategies for dealing with the conflicted demands of daily life. Identities are in this sense a shifting pattern of contradictory outcomes over time. This conflicted coexistence of conscious and unconscious patterns is reflected in the myth-making of memory recall. Ian Craib argues that "we create myths of and for ourselves. We build stories about ourselves and part of the material we use is our identification not only with real people, but with fantasies gained from fiction and politics and history."[24] This myth-making is an integral part of filling in the gaps and discontinuities of identity formation. The

individual subject internalizes myths with the unconscious desire of suturing his or her identity. However, the perpetual failure or incompletion of this operation is due to the ineradicable "lack of being" that the subject experiences.[25]

By drawing on collective myths and creating personal fantasies, people construct a fragile logical order between interwoven conscious and unconscious identity patterns. As Peter Gay puts it, "since the unconscious has no sense of order, it casually stores contradictory thoughts side by side; since it has no sense of time, infantile deposits are as fresh as yesterday's additions."[26] Identity formation is also about the need to belong[27] and the need for a story to give coherence and expression to this belonging. In the case of former Windermere residents, there are stories about ethnic belonging. As Gerhard Maré notes:

> An ethnic identity is similar to a story, a way of dealing with the present through a sense of identity that is rooted in the past . . . Whether they are "true" is not immediately at issue. What matters is that they are accepted as adequate to make sense of events and behavior. However, stories also refer to the manner in which people are called on to make sense of the world, especially the stories that are told about why people belong together, what makes them different from others, and what their collective histories are.[28]

When interviewees tell stories about feeling more at home in one place than in another, or about their community or lost community, a need for belonging is reflected. It is also reflected in their familiarity with certain locations and groups of people. As Maré puts it, "No matter its origin the emotional appeal of ethnicity stresses security and familiarity."[29] Many earlier interviewee quotes in this chapter contained a longing for the place and time of Windermere. Partly this is about the laying of personal claims to a space and social relations that the interviewee belonged in and identified with. Partly this is also a longing for a space and time before apartheid, a time when African, coloured, and white people lived in "harmony."[30] Although Windermere was by most accounts a vibrant ethnic and cultural mixture, it also created a complex set of identity constructions. The clear demarcation of cultural boundaries is crucial to ethnic identity constitution.[31] A previously quoted 52-year-old female domestic worker recalls a conversation with a relative:

> And we go to her place and when we taste *umqombuti* [traditional African beer], she says, "You know children, this is African tradition. If you children leave your tradition for wanting to be coloured, you will never make it in this world. You must always remember the African custom and African tradition." Now you see we couldn't talk Xhosa that time. We couldn't. We could only talk English and Afrikaans.

In this passage it is evident how the relative plays the role of storyteller and "ethnic broker."[32] The interviewee goes on to talk about her ambivalent feelings and struggles with being African, and then fixes the decisive point in the formation of her African

identity: "But that time [the initial years in Guguletu] it never sinked in, but when we got to Guguletu, it started sinking." For this interviewee, and three others who were born and raised in Windermere, the consolidation of their African identity only happened after their removal from Windermere. It was only in Guguletu that the interviewee learned how to speak isiXhosa. The blurring of linguistic boundaries among isiXhosa, English, and Afrikaans produced an ambiguous sense of ethnic belonging for these four interviewees. Two of these African interviewees spoke English with distinctive coloured accents.

For a male interviewee from this group, the decisive realization of his African identity, as opposed to being coloured, was when he went to an African circumcision ritual (see Chapter 4).[33] Many of the ambivalent feelings that these four interviewees had about their personal and cultural location can also be attributed to the rigid demarcation of ethnic boundaries under the apartheid system. In contrast, for interviewees who were born and raised in either the Ciskei or Transkei, Windermere seemed to constitute an historical halfway station between their past rural lives and their present urban life. For these interviewees, African customs and traditions appeared to be more firmly internalized.

For all interviewees, Windermere was (for either positive or negative reasons) a very significant phase in lives filled with physical, social, and emotional movement. The rural-to-urban movement especially required complex life strategies for survival. These life strategies were vital in organizing consciousness.[34] There were physical movements of African people from Windermere of the 1950s to Guguletu of the 1990s. But there were also movements of social memories between these places and times. Apartheid destroyed Windermere, but the memories of Windermere still speak to individuals from within themselves through dreams, fantasies, and feelings.

One interviewee spoke of her parents appearing in her nightly dreams to warn her of danger in Guguletu, and telling her not to go out the next day. Another interviewee spoke of the "spirits" warning her of the dangers in the community. These past images of Windermere, of parents, and of childhood interweave to form both a kind of solace to the individual and also a defensive communication about approaching danger. Underlying these images, I think, are layers of personal hurt, together with the fear of experiencing even more hurt. Throughout the fieldwork, I also sensed high levels of anxiety and stress.

Through regular interactions with each other in Guguletu, former Windermere residents have constant reminders of the "Windermere days" and interpolations of their identity as "Windermere people." I frequently found interviewees who could point out several other "Windermere people" next door, across the road and down the street. Established in Guguletu in the late 1960s, the Kensington Burial Society offered opportunities to recall the past. Burial societies originated from migrant worker networks, as a form of self-help and protection of rural cultural patterns.[35] Burial societies also "help distinguish 'genuine' community members from others; they provide community networks and support; and above all they provide assurances that death will be properly handled," Bozzoli notes.[36] Although anyone can join the Kensington Burial Society now, the core membership, are former Windermere

residents. At monthly organizational meetings, people talk about the "Windermere days." The former undertaker explains:

> You know people they always remind one another where they used to stay, because there is a burial society for Windermere people. If they were staying in Windermere they all come together, in the meetings here in this hall here. We know one another. We have got the burial society of Windermere. Like others in Retreat also have people, who used to stay in Retreat, they are reminding each other and they also build up a burial society. Whoever passed away they come here. We are doing collections and burying each other one another.

He later stressed that "remembering is so good because we are helping one another. That's why we are not forgetting one another, when we come together even here in Guguletu." The splintering and ultimate destruction of communities like Windermere through apartheid laws is countered by remembering the Windermere past as a unified whole. In the process, remembering becomes an act of reaffirming social ties with people. Remembering the Windermere past, a time before apartheid also becomes an act of solidarity against the separations and exclusions of apartheid. As David Lowenthal puts it,

> We need other people's memories to confirm our own and to give them endurance…In the process of knitting our own discontinuous recollections into narratives we revise personal components to fit the collectively remembered past.[37]

Memories filled with harmonious images of Windermere create a mythical wholeness of "our community" and "us" as a unified "one" for people. The active process of remembering in the present (as distinct from the memories themselves) simultaneously reflects an unfulfilled desire for community and the symbolic creation of a community-in-memory. Interviewees' reiteration of the term "Windermere people" affirms both their community-in-memory and their shared sense of communal identity. The fragility of this mythical wholeness is contrasted with the ethnic fractures and "racial" divisions of life under apartheid. An interviewee said, "We were sent away, we must come to Guguletu. They didn't want any black person around that coloureds must be themselves and so on. That is apartheid. That is definite, it is through apartheid."

Several African interviewees reflected anger, mistrust, and suspicion towards coloured people, whom they believe received a better deal under apartheid. In many other cases, love, friendship, and longing for their coloured friends of Windermere were expressed. In some cases, there were sighs of "shame," reflecting the infantilizing view of an adult looking down on the "child-like" coloured people. One of the most telling comparative paragraphs between coloured and black African people appears in Chapter 1, in an interview with Mr. B.T. I repeat part of it here:

> You sort of learn that way of forgiveness if somebody does something wrong to you. You know that at the end you must forgive him. Now when you grew up somewhere

> else, maybe in the rural areas or somewhere in the location [African township], you know? It takes a long time to forgive somebody who's done something wrong to you.

This interviewee is constructing two intriguing comparisons. First, that Africans who grew up in Windermere with coloureds are different from other African township dwellers. Second, that coloureds are more forgiving of people who have wronged them than Africans are. The interviewee is also romanticizing his experiences of living with coloured people in Windermere, and he seems too harsh and generalized in his criticism of Africans. A possible interpretation of his words is that because African people suffered more severely under apartheid than coloured people, Africans have more transgressions to feel angry about and hence are less likely to forgive them. But there is a fine line between forgiving and forgetting. The appearance of being more forgiving conceals patterns of forgetting and silencing. In a similar vein to the above interviewee, several African and coloured interviewees also claim that there was a particular "love" for one another in the Windermere community. This reference is probably rooted in a popular perception that a greater cultural tolerance existed between coloureds and Africans in Windermere of the 1950s. In contrast, all interviewees experienced the present time of the interview (that is, 1993) as a more divided, unforgiving, and intolerant time.

There is little doubt that many coloured and African people lived together happily, but the mixture of accurate observations and mythical truths were constantly woven around an unfulfilled desire for peace, tranquility, and stable community living in the Guguletu of 1993. This unfulfilled desire was unconsciously projected into the past, which was reconstructed in the form of harmonious and comforting memories of the Windermere community. As Luisa Passerini puts it, "Hopes, fears, and projections converge into shaping memory and its strategies."[38] The desire for peace and togetherness within a secure communal identity is partially met within a comforting discourse of Windermere, their community-in-memory.

Conclusion

The effects of the apartheid era continued in the lives of most South Africans I observed in my 1993 study. Oral history has an important political role in both documenting and interpreting the untold stories of the wounds of apartheid. Sadly, many stories will remain untold, and many emotional scars will remain unhealed, since ultimately people need to move forward in and from the present. The interviewees of this study were from a significant generation who experienced the before, during, and after of apartheid. By weaving a mixture of myth and memory about the Windermere of the past, they constituted a relatively stable sense of self and identity in contemporary Guguletu.

The Windermere past, however, was seldom peaceful, and the harmonious image of Windermere that many interviewees reconstructed was at odds with the violence that they experienced there. Several interviewees also felt an ambiguous sense

of ethnic belonging about their own sense of African identity, in relation to their coloured neighbors and friends. The identification of other "Windermere people" in Guguletu and the sharing of social memories simultaneously nurtures a sense of community-in-memory and communal identity. In contrast to the 1993 Guguletu community, which was repeatedly threatened by social and political violence, the community-in-memory was one significant bulwark for emotional survival used by this older generation of African people.

Finally, I am conscious of my desire to create a conclusive closure to this chapter. However, my desire to close these painful stories is precisely that—a desire to bring an end to the pain of apartheid. This is not possible, because as long as the emotional legacies of apartheid live on, consciously and unconsciously, there is going to be conflict and negotiation over memories and identities. The loose threads of my writing will have to remain for now, and I carry on with the knowledge that (as an interviewee put it) "everyone is under the benediction of doubting because you can't be sure what is going to take place."

CHAPTER 4

Disappointed Men

Masculine Myths and Hybrid Identities in Windermere

Masculine myths expose men to the possibility of failure and feelings of disappointment.[1] This chapter explores the significance of masculine myths in the memories of two men from the Windermere community. Their life stories are drawn from interviews I conducted in the course of my doctoral research. As described in previous chapters, Windermere was a mixed community on the periphery of Cape Town that began at the turn of the twentieth century and grew rapidly from the late 1930s until it was destroyed between 1958 and 1963. Black African residents who received permanent residence rights were removed to the townships of Langa and Guguletu, and those who remained were removed to the distant "homelands" of Ciskei or Transkei. Most coloured residents received housing in Factreton and Kensington, which by the late 1960s covered the spatial area once occupied by Windermere. Mr. G. B. (classified as "African") and Mr. A. O. (classified as "coloured") had been childhood friends in Windermere. In the aftermath of forced removals in 1963, they lived in separate, racially defined "group areas."

But these men had hybrid cultural and linguistic histories. Therefore, within the apartheid context of state-imposed "racial" identity labels, their struggle to construct a positive sense of masculine identity was hindered. While growing up in Windermere, their choices were restricted to the dominant masculine roles of "the gangster," "the sportsman" or "the working man." At various moments in their lives, they experienced degrees of disappointment when masculine myths of potency could not be attained through those roles.[2] Furthermore, during the telling of their life stories they

also experienced intense feelings of hurt, sadness, and anger. These feelings of disappointment relate to external social events under apartheid that thwarted them. They also relate to an inevitable failure to match up to the masculine myths they had internalized since childhood. These masculine myths were often forged around unfulfilled expectations and desires, but they had an important self-sustaining function under unstable sociopolitical and economic circumstances.

Childhood Stories

Mr. A. O. was born in 1937 in District Six, Cape Town. In 1940, he moved to 10th Avenue in Windermere. For the 28 years that he lived in Windermere, he and his family lived opposite the notorious iron-shanty formation called the Timberyard. His father was a violent man who worked as a laborer, and his mother was a housewife. His childhood friend, G. B., was born in 1940 in a house in 10th Avenue, Windermere. G.B. lived in Windermere until the age of 23, when his family was forcibly removed to Guguletu. His father owned the Ndabeni butchery and in the wake of removals from Ndabeni, this business was transferred to Langa. His mother was a housewife. In contrast to Mr. A. O.'s poverty-stricken circumstances, G. B. was a member of one of the few middle-class African families in the area. He had eight brothers and three sisters:

> And growing up in a coloured community, it never struck me that I wasn't coloured, especially at Volkskerk School. My father was well known. The principal, the teachers, everybody knew him, so I didn't get any different handling from, from the principal and the teachers. So I found everything the same as anybody, any other child. So that's why I, I grew up not being aware of the fact that I'm, I'm African. And Xhosa is, is still new to me because I can't read or write Xhosa . . . So growing up, starting from, from Volkskerk made life difficult. You know, in-between. You don't fit with the Africans. You don't fit with the coloureds. You live a normal life. But, you know or you don't fit into everything, you know? . . . it's with apartheid and whatnot, you were forced in-between. [*Mr. G. B.*]

Mr. G. B. learnt how to speak Afrikaans and English before he learnt how to speak isiXhosa. He talked about his sense of cultural ambivalence, created through living between and across the classifications coloured and African:

> When from, walk from school, then you get one or two silly children, silly boys like all boys. They say, "This one thinks he's coloured and he's black." The heh! So that's why I say you don't fit properly. The African children regarded you as, "He thinks he's coloured," you know? And then the coloureds who say, "What does you say?"

During his school days he excelled at sport, particularly rugby, and this is where he developed a positive sense of masculinity. He says, "And it turned out that I was very,

very gifted in rugby." In contrast, Mr. A. O. says, "How can I play sports, life was too fast, there was no time for sports. As I told you about fifteen minutes ago, your life was worth a cigarette." Mr. A. O. and Mr. G. B. lived in a part of Windermere where there was considerable cross-cultural interaction between African and coloured residents:

> Africans and coloureds, now nothing was wrong. You know my mother, when my father went to war, we lived in a shanty and we were surrounded by Africans, but my mother could take an ash tray and knock it against the wall, you can hear the *kierries* [walking sticks used as a weapon] going in the other side. "Mama, are you alright?" Fucking hit those guys. Learning my Xhosa, no, I grew up in very poor community, you know I used to bury African shit to get something in my stomach.[3] Listen, my Xhosa is fluent, I can speak Xhosa, you know? [*Mr. A. O.*]

Mr. A. O.'s life story is pockmarked with stories of violence and abuse, both inflicted upon him and inflicted by him on others:

> ***A. O.***: We used to sleep in the kitchen. In the front of the dressing table, still had a mattress . . . You actually sleep on the floor. My sisters used to sleep in the dining room, my parents in the bedroom. Sunday mornings my father worked for Imperial Cold Storage, he would wake up at four o'clock in the morning. You still sleeping, this guy wants to get through to the kitchen dresser, but you sleeping against it. So what does he do, take a jug of cold water, "Hey come on, wake up!" I used to curse my father. Even up to today, I can't, you know I just can't take it.
>
> ***S. F.***: A strict man?
>
> ***A. O.***: He was a hard bastard. When he came from war, he had a shell shock, you know. Used to carry furniture out of the house, hit my mother, until one day. I think I was about 16, 14 years of age, hit my mother down. I said, "Daddy, I am getting big now, I think you can't do it anymore, hit my mother like that." "Bastard," he says, "So you call yourself big! You want to stand up against me." He got hold of me, one sucker punch there I was laying next to my mother on the floor. Aaaag it wasn't easy, but, thank God, what I got today I struggled and worked for, you know, I have seen life. Human life was nothing for me.

His narration then jumped to his experiences as a gang member of the Black Diamond Legion.[4] Throughout the interview, without prompting, he would return to his experiences under his abusive father, but he would repeatedly break off these stories and jump to other Windermere stories.

In contrast, Mr. G. B. was never involved in the local gangs:

> You had to grow up being able to defend yourself. As a result, I did karate. I did wrestling. I did judo. So you had to unless you wanted to be victimized . . . It was actually the survival of the fittest. Not unless you gonna be mommy's boy and stay at home.

Figure 4.1 A haircut in Windermere, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

> You had to develop to defend yourself. It is interesting you know because so many survived, like myself. But you either had to join a gang or you had to defend yourself.

Most young men in Windermere had to confront this choice, which was also a choice between different forms of masculinity. Bob Connell has argued that there is no single or monolithic form of masculinity, and different forms of masculinity "do not name fixed types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships."[5] The "gangster" and "sportsman" were the salient masculine options in Windermere. Mr. G. B. constructs the former as "aggressive" and the latter as "defensive." Both these forms of masculinity laid claim to "respectability" and a potent way of surviving tough social circumstances. However, in this predominantly working-class squatter community, the dominant masculinity for young men was the heroic gangster." Mr. A. O. and Mr. G. B. faced a series of situations where they either took decisions or had decisions forced on them. Their "decisions" not only

impacted on their sense of masculinity, but also affected intertwining identities such as culture, "race," and ethnicity. One such watershed decision in their transition from adolescence to adulthood was the Xhosa male circumcision ritual.

Circumcision, Masculinity, and Ethnicity

Mr. G. B. described the circumcision ritual as lasting approximately six weeks and usually happening between the ages of 15 to 18 years. For Windermere men, the ritual usually happened in an adjacent bush area called "*Graafse bos.*"[6] Sandile Dikeni described the ritual:

> A foreskin is removed while the initiate watches. And when the blood flows, the initiate asserts his sexual identity by uttering the words of which every man is proud: "Ndiyindoda!" ["I am a man!"] The moment is unforgettable, because of blood. Blood is something we seldom forget; that is why blood rituals are so important.[7]

On return from circumcision the initiates wear a blanket and

> . . . wash thoroughly to get the lime out, the alkaline out of your skin . . . to get that balance, they put a lot of fat or vaseline or something then a person develops a beautiful complexion, you look changed, you know a person, you can see he's changed. There's a difference in what you were before, and what you are now, a person can straight away see. He is a man now, his circumcision, a sort of beautiful, nice complexion. [*Mr. G. B.*]

In this passage, the entry into adult masculinity becomes associated with a particular aesthetic. This is an image understood by others to be the mark of a man. But this ritual is not simply about circumcision:

> You are trained you know for the first week, you don't drink water, it's just to discipline you. For instance let me tell you right away, the difference between circumcised and the un-circumcised, boys or youngsters. When you get youngsters, he will straightaway, pull up his guard and fight. But when [he's] a man now, he will ask you, why are we doing this, you know you are prepared now for, you are doctrined, you are lectured for to be tomorrow's father, that's the difference, now between the boys and the men. The boys always get in fights and are undisciplined and doing wrongs. Where a man will think, you must think something over three, four times. [*Mr. G. B.*]

Here masculinity is associated with discipline and reason, whereas those who are uncircumcised fight without reasonable cause. Anne Mager concurs with Mr. G. B.'s description of circumcision:

> Circumcised bodies signaled a change in personality, manliness and identity. Circumcision signified masculine identity and male power, constructed over and

> against boys and women. It was a rite of passage that placed young men on the path to marriage, homestead, headship and fatherhood.[8]

The form of the Xhosa circumcision ritual gradually changed within the urban context. However, there is little doubt that what Mager describes as culturally significant in the rural context of the 1940s to 1960s was also pervasively in force in Windermere during the same period. These rituals were reinforced in Windermere by the "homeboy" networks that were maintained. Boys and men from the same area kept in touch with one another, providing one another with identity, support, and protection. As Mager argues, the Xhosa circumcision ritual was the "touchstone of Xhosa masculinity."[9] Or, as Mr. G. B. puts it, "I didn't know what it meant to be African until I went to the circumcision ritual."

In contrast, Mr. A. O. explains why he became immersed in African culture:

> Let me tell you another thing, why I went to the African culture, they even want to send me to the bush, to have myself circumcised, and my mother stopped me. She said, "Not a fuck further, you are still my child." You know my father was a drunkard, hit my mother . . . I was about ten years old. I don't know what make that man want to have a shit in the night or to have a pee, when he came to the toilet door, he found it close, so it might be somebody inside, he bang the door open, he found a small little boy myself, myself sitting on the toilet. What he do to me, that guy nearly killed me, he kicked myself blue and black, "What are you doing on the fucken toilet!" I had to run to an African, and he loved me so much, when I came there I was full of blood, I was wet with rain. He opened the door and he said to me, "Here my child," he put me next to his wife, "you go sleep there." And there's my wife [*points to her*], I hate coloured people, I didn't like them. Why must I run away from my own people, to get comfort from a African.

Mr. A. O. asserts that due to his abusive father he "fled" culturally, linguistically, and literally into African culture. Not only did his father abuse him, but he also failed him in the educative parental role that Mr. G. B. described as a central part of the African circumcision ritual. Mr. A. O.'s anger at his father is also directed at "coloured people." It is as if all "coloured people" and coloured identity have failed him because his father failed him. There is also a sense that his mother let him down on a personal level by blocking him from being circumcised: in gendered, cultural terms, she policed the boundary between the "African" and "coloured" identities. The decisive action of his mother also conforms to the matrifocal form of patriarchal relationships prevalent within working-class households in this community.[10] Mr. A. O. turned instead to gang rituals to fulfill his needs for affirmation and identity.

Whereas Mr. A. O.'s father failed him in an abusive manner, Mr. G. B. had a distant, semi-absent father. Seidler observes:

> Often there is an unspoken sense of disappointment and a yearning for contact that rarely seems to come. Boys in different generations have had to learn that

> their fathers had to work so that the family could survive. So it is that boys from diverse class and ethnic backgrounds have had to learn to expect very little from their fathers.[11]

Disappointed Men

Mr. G. B. and Mr. A. O. spent their formative years living across and through apartheid's boundary between "African" and "coloured." For the apartheid state, one of the central goals of the category "coloured" was to use it as a symbolic and literal dumping ground for the culturally hybrid people who did not quite "fit into" other pure apartheid classifications.[12] The lives of Mr. A. O. and Mr. G. B. make the painful consequences of drawing such a boundary explicit.

> ***G. B***: If you grew up in a coloured community, you end up being lost in-between. If I grew up in an African environment, I would have gone to an African school. I had the ability at school. I would have had a profession. I grew up and I knew I was coloured, most probably I would have been a teacher or a social worker where I [would] work amongst the community, be busy in the community. You can't be busy in the coloured community and entirely busy, not being coloured. Same as I can't read or write, so I wouldn't be able to do door-to-door work in the African community, you end up, it deprives you of a positiveness in your life.
> ***S. F***: How did you overcome that?
> ***G. B.***: That's I guess, well mostly, you know, because I was good at sport and I, became known, became like[d] and that's how I did it.

Caught in this "in-between" position, Mr. G. B. grew up questioning and doubting his masculinity and whether he was "man enough."[13] His sense of marginalization from both communities evoked uncertainty about his place in a masculine world where certainty and assertiveness are prized qualities. When he told his story, Mr. G. B. often constructed himself as loner who had difficulty with socializing with others, but he also repeatedly returned to heroic stories of being a gifted scrum-half. Michael Messner argues that,

> For the boy who seeks and fears attachments with others, the rule-bound structure of organised sports can promise to be a safe place in which to seek non-intimate attachments with others within a context that maintains clear boundaries, distance and separation.[14]

Mr. G. B. wanted to play rugby for "the Springboks" and, in his view if it had not been for apartheid he would have been chosen.[15] In a symbolic sense, he was *disappointed from* a position he felt he had earned, and in an emotional sense, he felt *disappointed.* In the one activity where he experienced a potent masculinity, he was

thwarted by the racist exclusions of the apartheid system. Apartheid also interfered in other areas of Mr. G. B.'s life:

> Well I married very late in life, everything of mine was late in life, I never had a positiveness in life. I married late, and of the marriage, I got two children . . . I got married late in life, only after my mother passed away, to maintain the house, otherwise I would have been kicked out of the house, if, if your parents die you can't occupy a house in the location. That used to be the law—you quickly had to get married.

There is both a hint of disappointment about having "married very late in life" and resentment at again being threatened with forced removal. Mr. A. O.'s sense of self and masculine identity was clearly hurt through his physically abusive father. As a working-class youth, A. O. had few social options and joined a gang. He described the masculine rituals, codes, and activities with a paradoxical mixture of pride and anguish. The desire for, and fear of attachment also seems evident here. Whereas Mr. G. B. constructed meaningful masculine relationships within organized sport, A. O. achieved this through the neo-military organization of gangs. In response to a request for final thoughts, Mr. A. O. said:

> Are you a man? *Pêl* [Pal]. I know the only time I feel like a man is when somebody draw a knife on me, and I can take out my own knife out of my pocket, and say okay *pêl,* come on! Then I am a man, because I know, I got two alternatives now, either you or me. But I have to out think you, very quickly, and the moment I get my knife into your body I am a great guy. When I go for the jugular vein first, kill you, not today. Anyway, thank you very much for the interview, I really enjoy it. You know at least it's a outlet for my feelings and emotions, I like that, because it's been sitting in me all these years, as a little boy, growing up in poverty, knowing now what I know, thank you very much.

In powerful words, Mr. A. O. reduced his sense of masculinity to the one-on-one knife fight. The symbolic framework of gang culture and traditions gave him a sense of potent masculinity. But this potency was often challenged and/or reinforced in dangerous, life-threatening situations. Mr. A. O. narrated several events where he claimed to have killed people and he was involved in a gang rape. These stories were narrated with a nostalgic framing of how "beautiful" life in Windermere was. It was as if the violence he inflicted on women and the emotions Mr. A. O. felt about these events were avoided through removing women—as real emotional actors—from his life story. While I have no doubt that these events happened, what is significant is how he drew on the mythology of the heroic but civilized gangster to service his sense of masculinity in the present. As John Rutherford puts it, "the solitary male hero is a nostalgic longing for 'the organized self' . . . What is an attempt to hold onto a sense of self is translated into an attempt to master others."[16]

In the first half of our interview, Mr. A. O. presented a macho image and was aggressive towards me when my questions seemed naive to him. At this stage in the

interview, anger was openly expressed at his father, poverty, and the apartheid system and there was clearly no problem (for him) in expressing these emotions. However, as the interview progressed, his attitude softened as other emotions surfaced. While the oral historian is not a psychotherapist, the interviewer needs to listen empathetically and reflect back to the interviewee that their emotions are appropriate to their life experiences. When I switched off the tape recorder, he asked me to replay parts of the interview. While listening to his own stories, he began crying profusely. Feelings of vulnerability and sadness were difficult for both interviewees to admit to. In Mr. A. O.'s case, when he openly revealed his feelings of hurt and sadness, he perceived this as a sign of weakness and unmanliness.[17] Seidler observes:

> As men grow up to deny their emotional needs, as they learn to live out myths that we have absorbed about "how men are supposed to be," we hardly appreciate the injuries we do to ourselves through being cut-off from our emotional lives. We learn to *present* ourselves as we are "supposed to be" and we learn to conceal any emotions that might bring this ideal into question.[18]

I maintained an appropriate composure during the interview situation, but while driving away I found myself overcome by sadness. Qualitative interviewers have a responsibility for their own feelings, and most crucially for the feelings their questions evoke in interviewees. I think it is essential to explore ways to interpret the feelings that people invest in their sense of self as an integral part of the discursive movements of memory, myth, and identity. The interpretations of the researcher are more likely to be "accurate" if they are both self-reflexive and open to listening for the emotions and emotional signals within themselves and the interviewee.

Throughout both interviews, these men used nostalgic forms of myth-making. As I have argued in the previous chapter, this form of myth-making tends to be shaped by defense mechanisms or the need to protect a fragile, aging self, struggling within the present. Rutherford notes:

> Nostalgia makes life narratable, representing what is hard to speak of…There is a specifically masculine form of nostalgia, which addresses the problems of men's historicity. Problems which are products of a transitional loss of cultural authority and a psychological feeling of loss… the function of nostalgia is to evade anxiety and the effect of predicaments within male subjectivity.[19]

The rigid "racialized" boundaries these men lived across triggered uncertainty and doubt over their sense of self and masculinity. Their hybrid cultural identities were not only anathema to apartheid ideology, but also seemed to contradict puritanical masculine myths about being "man enough." The myths of complete "purity" and "potency" are intimately related, and do not coexist easily with the diversity of cultural and linguistic hybridity. In contrast, myths constructed in the form of nostalgia provided a comfort zone split off from these agonizing tensions and the potentially distressing feelings related to disappointment. The comfort zone of masculine

nostalgia can also involve the "fulfillment" of omnipotent needs at a level of fantasy. The relationship between myths that have punitive consequences and myths that are comforting is best captured in Mr. A. O. s repeated shifts in his comments about life in Windermere as being either "not worth a cigarette" or "beautiful." In a similar vein, Mr. G. B. said:

> I was fortunate that I was the outgoing, outdoor living, type of person. You know, I was a home-loving child, I stayed in the house. When I started training, I saw that it was the survival of the fittest, I started training judo . . . Staying in Windermere was a pleasure, because number one a person can do what you feel like doing, if you feel like staying at Constantia [a very affluent suburb of Cape Town] you will stay there, if you can afford it . . . That's how South Africa is going to develop to be again. A man stays where he want to stay, he has a friend he feels like having. He will associate with people he feels like associating with.

Figure 4.2 Playing guitar in Windermere, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

In this final interview response from Mr. G. B., there is a contestation between "the home-loving child" and "the outdoor person." In addition, there are contrasting images of Windermere as "rough and unsafe" versus the Windermere "where you could do as you pleased." The past and the future are made more manageable through a masculine nostalgia for a world of free-thinking and freely associating men.

A significant emotional consequence of masculine myths rooted in restrictive social circumstances is that these men live with the inevitable disappointment of not fulfilling their own, and others', expectations of themselves. Irrespective of context, the myth of a complete and full masculinity will always be unattainable. However, the disappointment of these men was due both to the "failure" to meet omnipotent expectations of themselves *and* to effectively resist the disempowering practices inflicted upon them by the apartheid system. Although both men had been involved in anti-apartheid political organizations, this did not help them resolve these painful feelings and memories. In addition, their disappointment was constructed by the degrees of appropriate and inappropriate parenting they received during childhood. It was especially evident in Mr. A. O. 's life story that abusive or inappropriate parenting is itself a form of loss and disappointment that has to be managed throughout the stages of life.

It is important to note that although the working lives of Mr. G. B. and Mr. A. O. had difficult beginnings, they both have had successful careers in small business, and as of the time of the interviews, they lived in middle-class homes with relative economic security. It is precisely the mythical, totally masculine heroic figure of the gangster or the rugby player that has helped these men to negotiate their uncomfortable emotions and oppressive social contexts. The mythical roles that they reconstructed in memory from their experiences helped these men find a meaningful path in a world where they saw their own lives as either "not being worth a cigarette" or always "lacking in positive-ness." However, these mythical roles and nostalgic stories were only partly self-sustaining for these men, and in the process, an emotional cost was incurred. The cost of unresolved feelings and unacknowledged needs means that for all the success of their social and working lives, these men remain disappointed.

PART II

Post-Apartheid Imaginings, Sites, and Places

Framing Notes II: Oral History through the Mind's Eye

By definition, oral history research prioritizes spoken words and helps storytellers to narrate what the past felt like to them then and what they remember now. As Alessandro Portelli and other oral historians have argued, memory is not a passive storage site but a complex process driven by peoples' needs and meaning formation.[1] These meanings are not only represented by language but also through the narrator framing words, sentences, and stories around remembered images with associated feelings about the past. In the next cluster of chapters I argue that memory and imagination do not work in parallel but that the imaginative functions of the mind's eye are central to human remembrance, selection, organization, and how narrators express themselves through the spoken word. As Colin McGinn confirms, imagination through the mind's eye is "constitutive" of memory formation and "does not exist for purposes of fancy and distraction; it is bound up with the very essence of rational, reflective belief formation and hence of arriving at knowledge of the world."[2]

My personal association with visual memory and imagination began with listening to my father's repeated telling of his World War II stories. Of Irish descent, he was a British infantry foot soldier from late 1940 to early 1948. Most significantly, he experienced the D-Day landings and various frontline battles across France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany; he remained in active service in postwar Germany. Then, in search of work, he immigrated to South Africa in 1948, arriving one month prior to the infamous apartheid elections of May that year. After he married my Afrikaner mother, they lived in District Six from 1956 to 1962. Too young to remember District

Six, I grew up listening to my parents tell stories about family life in a row of houses called Lemmington Terrace. Fearing stigmatization, my racist parents deliberately reimagined the Terrace and our family stories into the neighboring white suburb of Vredehoek. I therefore grew up believing that I was born in Vredehoek. I was in my mid-twenties when I first heard from my older siblings that our Lemmington Terrace home was in fact on Upper Constitution Street in the culturally diverse community of District Six.

As a young child I had little comprehension of apartheid or racism, but I did spend many hours trying to imagine what it was like to be my father in the war. I sought out more information by reading war comics obsessively and repeatedly looked at a particular photographic book of World War II images of death and destruction. These are some of my earliest childhood memories beginning roughly at age five. Although my father avoided direct descriptions of violence, I visualized the war scenes and could feel the intensity of his unresolved emotions. I now know that this exchange was inappropriate: I was a premature listener and imaginer of my father's memories of violence. The lingering effects of this have played and continue to play a role in my academic research and teaching on violence, trauma, and memory.

My intellectual interest in visual memory and its bearing on oral history research of course came much later; it drew from the critiques of South African oral history by Ciraj Rassool, Gary Minkley, and Isabel Hofmeyr in the 1990s, which I outlined in the introduction to this book. These discussions of the late 1990s and early 2000s led me to read various writers such as Walter Benjamin, Pierre Nora, Dominick LaCapra, and others. It is not my intention to provide a poststructural reorientation of oral history here but to stimulate new ways of thinking about what we do as oral historians and how we might produce oral history theory that moves beyond the *logocentric*. It was with this broad framing that I have reflected on the mental imagery of memory and its relationship to oral history narration and interviewing techniques.

Through literature searches on visual memory, I have been amazed to discover that neuroscientists, psychologists, and philosophers have been debating the imaginative and visual functioning of the mind's eye for the past two decades.[3] Although these debates continue, there is consensus that the mind's eye is not a specific physical location in the brain, but an integrated neurological processing of sensory inputs that is not yet fully understood.[4] In a similar vein, oral historian Alexander Freund notes that "neuroscience helps us better understand how memory is formed . . . not as closed container of authentic, autonomous, individual memories of one's own experiences. Rather, memory is a complex social process that is in flux, even during the interviews we conduct."[5] The neuroscientific argument that the "mind's eye re-creates visual memories"[6] is of relevance to oral historians. Verena Alberti similarly argues:

> The narratives in oral history (and not only they) become especially pregnant . . . when events in time are immobilised in images which do inform us about reality. It is at this very moment that interviews teach us something more than a single version of the past. Not all of them present such possibilities, but when they do, may become rich starting points for analysis.[7]

Speaking and writing remain crucial to oral history research practice, but I wonder: What might oral history through the mind's eye entail? By linking existing strands of oral history practice and by thinking more deeply about the implications of the mind's eye for remembrance and narration, we will be better placed to interpret the meanings that narrators consciously and unconsciously convey. There are four dimensions of oral history practice that I elaborate in the following four chapters in response to the above question.

First, oral history through the mind's eye locates how memory works as an active operation, not simple retrieval, at the center of remembrance and narration. The most common example of the visual content of memory is "flashbulb memories." Although this notion is central to considerations of traumatic memories (see Chapter 8), it is problematic only to link flashbulb memories or "flashbacks" to violence and traumatic legacies. Rather, flashbulb memories and other visual memories can be a spark, that energetic spark of imagery, evoked by an interviewer's question or through the mnemonic triggers of daily life. These memories can also illuminate a vibrant moment, a burst of joy or excitement or other pleasant emotions. As the term implies, the image or images are by definition sudden and potentially unstable. Flashbulb images or other kinds of mental images of memory do not speak, but they are invested with feelings. How words are constructed around the raw material of human memory can be a private act through internal mental conversations, or can be expressed to an external Other. Either way, the unprocessed mental imagery and associated emotions about our individual pasts require us to make sense of, or to interpret, their meaning through language. How interviewees work to express the visual and emotional elements of their memories also requires oral historians and other researchers to take responsibility for the emotional states that are evoked within intersubjective dialogues, and to avoid reducing interviewees' feelings to semantics or discourse.[8]

Second, oral history through the mind's eye places empathy at the center of research practice. Empathic activity is better termed "empathic imagination," which can be used as a tool to historically visualize the interviewees within their stories at a past time and space. This visual definition of empathy gives substance to oral historians' claims to see interviewees not only in the physical and external sense but also to have imaginative or symbolic seeing of what is internal to their memories and sense of self. Empathic imagination through our mind's eye enables us to have and hold images in our minds of what interviewees tell us. What we imagine about the interviewee's stories will not be entirely accurate, or it might be based on our mistaken assumptions, but it does focus attention both on the temporal and the visual orientation of the journey that we are proposing the interviewees undertake by narrating their life stories to us.

Empathic imagination does not mean we can feel what interviewees feel or that a deliberate identification with interviewees is our aim. That would constitute a problematic blurring of personal boundaries and erasure of a necessary critical distance between interviewer and interviewee. Dominick LaCapra argues that, "Empathy is . . . a virtual but not a vicarious experience in that historian puts him- or herself

in the other's position without taking the other's place or becoming a substitute or surrogate for the other."[9] He also argues that historians need to work through their feelings of "empathic unsettlement" (see chapters 8 and 9). In postpositivist terms, as Valerie Yow and others have argued, taking intersubjective dialogues seriously will strengthen our objective conclusions.[10] How the researcher confronts these challenges is a matter of personal choice and project demands, but to ignore them is problematic. This is especially the case if one is interviewing people who endure forms of emotional suffering.

Third, it then follows that oral history through the mind's eye can potentially deepen our capacity to interpret the intersubjective dimensions of oral history dialogues. Generations of oral historians have emphasized the importance of how intersubjective interactions shape what is remembered and not remembered, what is said, how it is said, and what is not said. In my experience, interpreting these dimensions is difficult to do with precision, and therefore oral history analysis tends to primarily focus on narrative construction as it is represented through the audio or textual transcript in isolation from the intersubjective construction of that transcript. In order to interpret the intersubjective, the researcher has to rely on a sense of a mood in the room or a glimpse of a facial expression or body movement. These sensory fragments are rarely included in the published narrative as they often seem intellectually flimsy. However, the researcher's sensory fragments should not be discarded as they potentially contain valuable clues. These clues indicate evidence of the emotional states or moods within the narrator and between narrator and interviewer, which might lead us to explore new lines of inquiry and analysis. These clues also point to embodied memory work and the evidentiary value of audiovisual recordings of oral histories (see Chapter 7).

Fourth, a central assumption of this book is that there is more that can be remembered through the mind's eye, and more that might be narrated. There is an internal kaleidoscope of images, real and/or imagined, about the pasts that people have forgotten, or that they retain but which they struggle to directly access, or that they are not able to convey to particular interviewers. It might be that a critique of oral history's logocentricism applies more to the researcher and less to the interviewee. Interviewees' memories are not logocentric, because the raw material of human memory is saturated with visual imagery of the past and present. But interviewees primarily express their memories through the rules of language construction and what is perceived to be culturally or socially acceptable behavior. Therefore oral history interviewers constantly need to be exploring new ways to affirm the interviewee's mind's eye. The "remembered self" that many oral historians have referred to might be better understood by encouraging interviewees to describe mental images, conjure up images of the past and present, and to tell stories as a sequence of moving images. We can help interviewees to compose not just words and sentences, but in spoken words to frame a story that holds the links between their mental images and emotions.

Oral history through the mind's eye is a visually oriented perspective on the narrative composing/composure concept, pioneered by Graham Dawson, Alistair

Thomson, and others.[11] Furthermore, emotional composure has considerable similarity to what psychoanalytic psychotherapists refer to as "emotional containment."[12] A state of emotional containment created through narrative composition of emotionally laden memories might last for a fleeting moment in the interview or at times for much longer beyond the interview. On rare occasions, oral history dialogues might involve the interviewees' linking evocative parts of their past in a manner that previously forgotten memories become integrated, as part of a new sense of self-image or identity. Self-containment and self-integration are not guaranteed and are not the researcher's aim, but when they happen, these moments are evidence of the power of the mind's eye to bind image and emotion into narrative frames that contribute to self-cohesion. Or conversely, as in the stories of Rwandan refugees presented in Chapter 8, the terrifying threat of self-disintegration is evoked through "trauma" in the mind's eye.

In summary, oral history through the mind's eye will not be a useful perspective for all oral historians, but the following cluster of chapters demonstrates that it can be particularly beneficial to studies of space, place, environment, and landscapes, and to analysis of how memory works. Chapter 5 discusses how the imaginative framing of memories is central to the constitution of community identities in two iconic Cape Town communities: District Six and Langa. It also reflects on the presentation of oral histories in local museums in these communities. Chapter 6 remains in Langa and shows how memories are attached in clusters to particular physical spaces to become sites of memory. Chapter 7 follows how people live and work on the arterial roads that cross the racialized boundaries of Cape Town and that link many sites of memory. Chapter 7 interprets senses of place and typologies of movement and memory, which rely directly on the mind's eye. In the earlier chapters, I referred to "moving memories," but I now think that lacked a clear conceptualization of place. Therefore in Chapter 7, I interpret videotaped oral histories to make sense of "moving places." Chapter 8 then shifts focus to Rwandan refugees' eyewitness testimonies of war and genocide, and of xenophobia in post-apartheid Cape Town. I interpret their memories of violence, fears, and interviewees' repeated references to "others killed in my eyes." Here then, is the next cluster of chapters, which affirms the visual dexterity of the mind's eye to frame and reframe what it saw and felt into spoken words for oral historians and other audiences.

CHAPTER 5

Imagining Communities

Memory, Loss, and Resilience in Post-Apartheid Cape Town[1]

The South African city of Cape Town was forged through conflicts that reverberate in the memories and representations of its past in the present. The city center is squeezed geographically between Table Mountain on the south and the shoreline of Table Bay on the north. As a port it has been a place of arrival, interaction, and departure for travelers from across Africa and the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Dutch colonial settlement began in 1652 and was characterized by the displacement of local Khoi and San inhabitants.[2] English colonial occupation replaced the Dutch in 1806, and continued until 1910. During the twentieth century, Cape Town evolved from a small colonial outpost to South Africa's second-largest city with more than three million inhabitants. Although colonial influences are widespread—evident in architecture, language and culture—the contemporary landscape of Cape Town is profoundly scarred by apartheid government policies of 1948 to 1994, which systemically legalized white domination through the racial registration, separation, and control of all South Africans. These scars are visible in the sites of forced removals and racist reengineering of the entire city. Drawing upon oral history interviews, this chapter focuses on how residents of two Cape Town communities remember apartheid and how their memories are shaped by both loss and resilience.

The first study is of the black African community of Langa; the second, contrasting study is of the multicultural, predominantly coloured, community of District Six.[3] These communities include several sites of memory that evoke memories saturated with pain, sadness, and anger. Both Langa and District Six residents have shaped their memories to contain these emotional legacies and as they do, patterns of historical memory are revealed. In the wake of land restitution policies in the

post-apartheid period, local museums in both Langa and District Six have become significant venues for community regeneration. Oral histories are central to the exhibits in these museums and are the medium by which they are often conveyed.

This is not intended as another piece on the extensively researched District Six community nor an effort to address the lack of research on black African experiences in Cape Town. By comparing how different Capetonians are remembering *and* imagining communities of the past, I seek to stimulate open-ended thinking about the representation of memories in the present, and to move conceptual practice beyond the closed concepts and spaces inherited from apartheid.[4]

Remembering Langa

As the oldest African township in Cape Town, Langa is a place of fascinating memories about pre-apartheid and apartheid events. It is also home to rich histories of African churches and schools in Cape Town, and it has produced legendary sporting and musical icons.[5] The Langa story began with the forced relocation of residents from the black settlement of Ndabeni to the "new township" of Langa from 1927.[6] (Ndabeni had been set up in 1901 in response to racist fears of Africans bringing diseases into the city.) During the 1901 "scare," some Africans were removed from District Six to Ndabeni.

Therefore, some Langa residents were twice removed: from District Six to Ndabeni and again from Ndabeni to Langa. After the removal of people to Langa, Ndabeni was bulldozed and today the site is covered by an industrial zone.

The Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 controlled the movement of African people in and out of Cape Town. This law was an insidious predecessor of the apartheid Group Areas Act of 1950. The building of houses in Langa began in 1925 and the new township was officially launched in 1927. From 1927 to 1959, Langa was the only official housing area for black Africans in Cape Town, which pre-apartheid and apartheid governments identified as the "natural home" of "Cape Coloureds." Langa rapidly became overcrowded, especially after 1937, when it became illegal for black Africans to own land outside the rural "homelands," thereby forcing black property owners in from other city areas.[7] Overcrowding in Langa was further exacerbated during World War II by the influx of rural Africans into Cape Town, as the state temporarily relaxed pass-law measures to relieve labor shortages in manufacturing industries. The influx of Africans into Cape Town during the 1940s mostly went into squatter settlements like Windermere and Blouvlei (next to Retreat). Thousands of so-called "bachelors" from these squatter settlements were moved into the Langa Hostels for male migrants. Langa also had two barrack complexes, Main Barracks and North Barracks, which housed migrant workers, especially from the Eastern Cape. In addition, pockets of African people were removed from various suburbs of Cape Town before and after the onset of apartheid legislation in the 1950s. The newer housing projects of Nyanga and Guguletu only became available during the 1959 to 1962 period, by which time the housing situation in Langa had reached crisis proportions.[8]

With the onset of the apartheid state in 1948, pass laws were reinforced in 1952 and were expanded to include women in 1956. From then, all adult Africans were compelled to carry an identity book at all times. Popularly referred to as *"the dompass,"* this book was a central means through which the pass-law system imposed control over people's movements between rural and urban areas, and access to jobs and accommodation. As one resident of Langa recalls:

> So if you don't have your pass on you when you see the police, you go for your pocket. If you change clothes that morning and unfortunately your pass is not with you—you have got to run to save your life. Otherwise you're arrested and you got to pay a fine or go to jail. So everybody was sick of that. WE were sick. We were so fed up and sick and tired of living with this pass. [*Mr. I. Z.*][9]

Integral to the pass-law system were migrant labor structures, such as Langa's migrant hostels and barracks,which housed thousands of so-called bachelor male workers, in contrast to economic or sub-economic houses, where families lived.[10] The built remains of the pass-law system in Langa to this day bring back painful memories, which are explored further in Chapter 6. The harsh injustices of the pass-law system resulted in numerous episodes of resistance. One famous incident occurred on March 21, 1960, when Langa residents attempted to march in protest to the Langa police station. At 6 p.m., the police asked the crowd to "disperse in two or three minutes." But, as one resident recalls:

> That was impossible because there were more than twenty thousand people, how were we supposed to disperse . . . I strongly believe that we should have never listened to that white police Captain . . . the mistake was made to believe that we must go back and our leader, Philip Kgosana would come at six o'clock and then we would talk to our guys and they would give a report of decisions taken. We should never have believed that . . . they were smart, they tricked us and we fell for that. But when we realized that our leaders were locked up . . . that's when the trouble started, that's when people got shot and killed. [*Mr. C. M.*][11]

The crowd was positioned opposite a square—today known as Sobukwe Square—when the shooting began. These are visceral memories, but reconstructions do occur. Langa residents remember anywhere from 3 to more than 50 people being killed during the March 21, 1960 protests. Written sources are no more reliable and range from the apartheid government's commission statistic of 3 people through to a post-apartheid Member of Parliament's claim that 20 were killed.[12] Historical facts are important, but what is significant here is how these memories of resistance are traces of the "unimaginable taking place."[13] These collective acts of resistance seemed unimaginable to many individual witnesses because they constituted a significant challenge to the omnipotent apartheid state. But "unimaginable" also refers to the linguistic and psychological limits of narrating memories of a traumatic episode.

Thousands from across Cape Town then protested the events of March 21 by marching into Cape Town's city center on March 30, 1960 in what was to become famous as "The Langa March." I have frequently encountered residents who compressed their memories of these two protests into one, epic event. The memories of generations of Langa residents who experienced the 1930s to 1960s refer to various experiences of subjugation and resistance, which they have imaginatively reconstructed around sites of memory such as public spaces (like the pass office), physical objects (like the identity book), and collective actions (the Langa Marches).[14]

For the next generation, the student uprisings of 1976 represented the pivotal period of resistance. Langa High School students mobilized in alliance with students from the neighboring coloured community of Bontehuewel. Significantly, many of the African and coloured activists of 1976 were the descendents of people removed from Ndabeni to Langa in the 1920s, and, as will be discussed below, from District Six to Bonteheuwel in 1966. The 1976 clashes with police on Vanguard Drive, a boundary between Langa and Bonteheuwel, crossed the racialized spatial boundaries around these communities. Although there were moments of anti-apartheid resistance by youth activists in Langa during the 1980s, these were largely overshadowed by political struggles in other African and coloured areas of Cape Town.

Popular memories of several generations clustered around spatial sites within and across the boundaries of Langa to create a sense of place for Langa residents. A sense of place is an imaginative act that combines ongoing sensory inputs from the surrounding social and physical landscape with a person's internal world of selected and constructed memories. And for these memories to be sustained, "reference to a socially specific spatial framework" is necessary, Connerton notes.[15] The closed space called "Langa" provided the spatial framing. Collective memories of Langa were shaped by its functioning as a spatially bounded community because of its "racial zoning" and because of the surrounding coloured communities, and highways, rail lines, and industrial zones.

The apartheid government's belief that black Africans did not belong in urban Cape Town constituted the broader ideological frame for the uprooting of black Africans. (Residential pockets like Langa were established to meet labor market needs, however.) The systemic discriminations of the pass-law system created common localized experiences for Africans to be identified with, politically organized around, to give coherence to shared memories, and to exclude unshared memories.[16] In Chapter 6, I will discuss the particular popular meanings and conservation of sites of memory in Langa.

Remembering District Six

Langa itself did not face widespread forced removals, but rather absorbed Africans who were displaced through removals from other urban and rural areas. In contrast, District Six was physically, culturally, and emotionally shattered by apartheid forced removals.

In the period before 1948, South African governments implemented racial separation through job reservation and regulating accommodation, to varying degrees. In Cape Town, however, residential life remained culturally heterogeneous until the 1950s. From the city center all along the Southern Suburbs railway line, District Six, Woodstock, Observatory, Mowbray, Rondebosch, and other communities included white, coloured, and African residents. With the exception of isolated areas of cultural diversity, other South African cities were less culturally mixed and apartheid laws tended to reinforce preexisting racial divisions. But in Cape Town the laws ripped apart families, friends, and neighborhoods, and dispersed people to racially separate townships. District Six is the most well-known Cape Town example of these displacements.

District Six lies within walking distance of the city center and since the 1830s had provided low-cost housing to emancipated slaves, textile workers and other workers, sailors and passing travelers from the north and east of the globe.[17] Although its population was predominantly coloured, District Six was home to many white and African families and soldiers returning from the South African War and from both world wars.[18] It supported a diverse cultural life, including various music genres, dance bands, New Year's carnivals, shopping areas, cinemas, youth gangs, and groups of political intellectuals. By the late 1940s, District Six was deemed a "slum." At the same time, its proximity to the city center excited urban planners with its economic potential, and its cultural diversity was anathema to apartheid ideology.

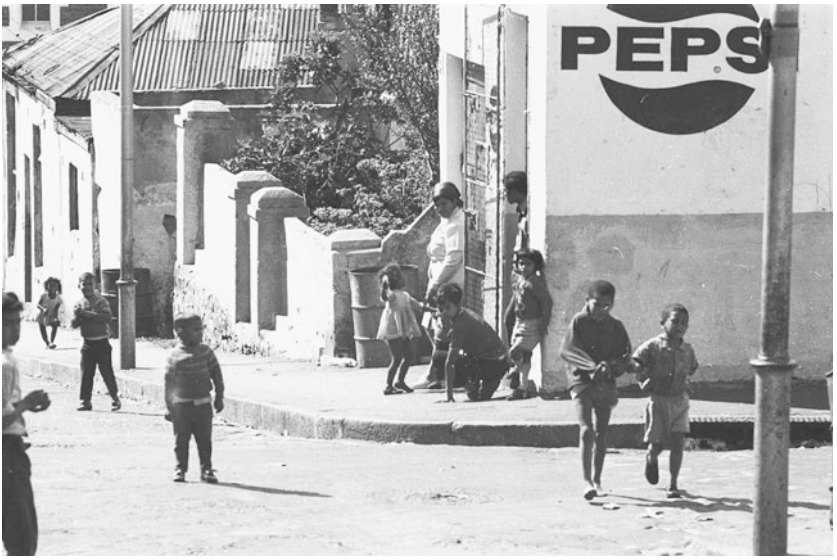

Figure 5.1 Neighborhood shop corner in District Six, c. early 1960s. Ruedi Collection, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town. Photograph by Jurg Ruedi.

Under the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Group Areas Board had powers to "racially zone" all spaces in South Africa according to the "group" classifications: "white," "coloured," "African" and "Asian." District Six was zoned a "white area" in 1966, and from 1968 to 1982 more than 60,000 people were forcibly removed from their homes; the vast majority of those homes were bulldozed down.[19] People classified "African" were relocated to the apartheid township of Guguletu; people classified "coloured" went to the townships of Bonteheuwel, Hanover Park, and Mitchells Plein.[20] As this former District Six resident said:

> Oh! Don't talk to me about that, please don't talk to me. I will cry. I will cry all over again. There's when the trouble started. When they chucked us out like that. When they chucked us out of Cape Town, my whole life became changed! There was change. Not just in me, but in all people. What they took away they can never give back to us again [*she weeps*]. [*Mrs. G. J.*][21]

The interviewee fears feeling her loss "all over again." But without prompting, she describes apartheid removals as, "changing people" and so her tears begin to flow. In the midst of this emotional expression, her sense of loss is echoed in the reflection that "what they took away they can never give back to us again." Today the restitution process offers the promise of return to District Six, as explained later in the chapter. But displacement was not solely about the removal of people from physical houses and spaces. It was also about the loss of emotionally and symbolically meaningful places, particularly "home" and "community." The impact of these losses is enormous and irreversible: these were the places where people played, worked, and lived, which were central to their development from children to adults. Within the familiar landscape of home, neighborhood and the city, people felt connected. As one resident recalled:

> *En as ons op onse stoepe staan en dan het ons die hele Table Mountain gesien. En as ons in die backyard stand en dan sien ons die hele docks. Soe lekker het ons gewoon. En ons wil nie uit nie, ons wil nie gemove het nie. Maar dis was really lekker gewees om in die Kaap te bly, homely en lekker bymekaar gebly.*
> (And if we stood on our verandas, then we could see the whole of Table Mountain. And if we stood in the backyard, we could see the whole of the docks. And it was really nice to live there. We did not want to move out. But it was really nice to stay in the Cape, homely and nice staying together.) [*Mrs A. P.*][22]

The memories of places recalled in interviews are often expressed in idealized terms. For example, another District Six resident recalls:

> There will never come another place like District Six. There were very good people and there were fair people . . . District Six was a nice place, it was a lovely place . . . *Ja* so was District Six! But it was a beautiful place. Here [Bonteheuwel] everybody's for themselves. They don't worry with nobody. It was a happy family that stayed in District Six. [*Mr. C. B.*][23]

Figure 5.2 A District Six view with city center in backdrop. Ruedi Collection, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town. Photograph by Jurg Ruedi.

The loss of home and community is palpable, and that loss is frequently expressed in the trope of the "happy family."[24] The collective sense of belonging in District Six is contrasted to the post-removals' racially closed townships where "everybody's for themselves." Narrators' mental images of the past yield clues about their conscious and unconscious struggles with forms of loss. For residents who experienced forced removals, memories of losses are forged in relation to what was once had, experienced, and felt to what existed prior the loss. Most interviewees compressed preremoval memories into an undifferentiated "that time," as opposed to the present. These memory strategies contribute to an exaggerated sense of community before forced removals.

The public myth goes as follows: Everything was fine before apartheid, during "the good peaceful times," but the evil of apartheid destroyed everything and then "the bad, violent times" commenced. To be sure, although these collective memories of District Six are myth-laden, they are also accurate assessments of change. For example, statistics show a rise in crime in the townships where people relocated to, beginning in the late 1970s, with most dramatic increases after 1990.[25] But how can we understand the psychological motives shaping these partly mythologized memories?

Linguistically, loss suggests absence. But this loss of home and community has an ongoing emotional presence. Interviewees' repeated enunciations of the words "home" and "community" are evidence of their working through feelings of loss. The actual loss of home and community may have been felt as a loss of personal security, stability and autonomy. Most of all, when the social worlds people grew up in are

Figure 5.3 District Six neighborhood scene. Ruedi Collection, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town. Photograph by Jurg Ruedi.

destroyed, it may be experienced *as if* the inner self is being fragmented or *as if* "all is lost."[26] In response, many protect themselves by psychologically splitting off parts of the self to create imaginary places framed by nostalgic memories. For these survivors, nostalgia protects the self from the pain, sadness, hatred and the losses inflicted by the apartheid system. This psychological manifestation is encountered in the interview as myth-laden memories of "home" and "community," which hold together an imagined "whole" self.[27] In earlier chapters I discussed how Windermere and Guguletu residents utilized these myths as coping mechanisms during violent times, but it is also crucial to stress how myths are internalized to integrate a self-image or sense of self.

The idealized past is not the only construct oral historians confront in interviews with former District Six residents. There is little sense of myth when some interviewees confront the social fragmentation inflicted by removals. As another resident of District Six noted:

> It was wrong what the white people did. These people did wrong. They had everything that a person's heart yearns for. And we had nothing but we were satisfied. They broke us up. They broke up the community. They took our happiness from us. The day they threw us out of Cape Town that was my whole life tumbling down. I don't know how my life continued. I couldn't see my life in this raw township far away from family. All the neighbours were strangers. That was the hardest part of my life. [*Mrs. G. J.*][28]

These effects of dislocation were exacerbated by racist discourses that justified and embodied apartheid's forced removals. Far removed from District Six, most former residents lived in poverty-stricken racialized ghettos, circumstances that produced bleak world-views. In this context, people wove together nostalgia and historical facts to create memories of solace that helped them bear both their emotional losses from the past and socioeconomic problems of the present. These reconstructed memories are evidence of people's resilience and their will to survive. They also reveal a resolve to imagine a better future, which results in popular memories that look backward *and* forward with ambiguity.

Imagining Communities in Post-Apartheid Cape Town

The remembered and imagined local communities are not separate from people's different senses of the city. Although city spaces in Cape Town were racially segregated under apartheid, over time cross-cultural, cross-generational, and other border-crossing relationships blurred these boundaries. Similarly, people's sense of the city cannot be stereotyped as "black" versus "white" or from "above" and "below." Rather, there is a kaleidoscope of popular and unpopular imaginings from a range of cultural, spatial, and temporal vantage points. Since 1994, apartheid laws have been removed, but post-apartheid Cape Town is "not simply a rainbow city of cultural diversity and exotic spice. It is also a space of social polarisation, ghettoization, and fortified shopping malls and suburban homes,"[29] Robbins observed.

Both Langa and District Six are historically significant, but how they are remembered, imagined, and represented is contested within the nonracial transformation—or lack thereof—of the post-apartheid city. Langa is imagined as the "proud elderly African" township of Cape Town. But as it has become a congested mixture of houses, flats (apartment buildings), hostels, barrack, and informal settlements of shanty dwellers, it has also come to be viewed as the poverty-stricken ghetto within which different generations and migrant groups compete for scarce resources. In contrast, District Six's multicultural past has led a range of people across the racialized, working-class and middle-class areas of Cape Town to make valid claims to its past. For many it has an iconic status, especially for coloured former residents. Today, with the exception of a few churches and a mosque, the familiar features of District Six are gone and rubble and weeds are all that remain.

The post-apartheid government created two legal processes to redress past abuses. The first was steered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which began its work in 1996 and wound up operations in 2000. Its scope was limited to identifying "horrendous abuses of human rights" committed between 1961 and 1994, with the reconciliatory aim of granting amnesty to perpetrators and redress to victims of human rights abuse.[30] The second process, still in operation in 2011, is the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, which enables survivors of forced removals to either return to their original land or receive alternative land or a symbolic financial compensation. The land restitution cases are handled

administratively and, unlike the TRC, which held public hearings, there are no public spaces where land claimants can tell their stories. Many have suggested that just such a public process is necessary.[31] Financial compensation for those who cannot return to their land or communities will provide material restitution, but it cannot alleviate people's emotional losses. Furthermore, those that can return to their land and houses might be reconnected to the "original spaces," but this also cannot undo the original loss.

Recognizing that "remembering well a shared injury is something which people cannot do by themselves, but must be shared by a group of diverse voices," oral and public historians have pragmatic contributions to make to regenerative forms of memory work.[32] First, recording people's narratives—in oral, visual, and written forms—in a sensitive and empathic manner can help people to feel they are heard and seen. Second, the dissemination of people's stories through books, radio, film, and audiovisual productions can help them gain public recognition and support. Third, memorialization in collaboration with local museums creates opportunities for people to share memories and make meaningful connections with each other.

Furthermore, instead of ignoring idealized images of a past community, oral historians need to empathize with its imaginative re-creation and to facilitate and guide that process in a forward-thinking fashion. *Imagining communities* provides coherence to communities that were fragmented and/or violated in the past. These imagined communities provide perceptual framing for individual and collective struggles, but they also exclude stories that do not fit anti-apartheid frames of reference. For example, "the community," speaking with a singular and united voice, was a crucial anti-apartheid political strategy, but post-apartheid oral historians need not replicate this.[33] Given that democracy allows a diversity of voices to seek expression, oral historians need to record shared *and* unshared memories and need to interpret how these have shaped moments of unity *and* disunity.

How have post-apartheid community museums responded to these challenges? In Langa, a group of residents, local councilors, and municipal officials launched the Langa Heritage Foundation in 2003. The pass-law office and court was renovated in the same year and in 2004 was opened as "The Langa Museum." The main museum space contains one exhibit of storyboards and benches where the court proceedings occurred. The storyboards consist of photographs and excerpts from oral history interviews that discussed pass laws and present other community stories. Because it was a site of apartheid repression and included the court and holding cells, the museum has an austere atmosphere. Its central appeal is to the older generation of Langa residents, who, together with tourists, are its main visitors. In consultation with teachers, the museum is planning programs to attract school students from Langa and from schools across Cape Town. Memorializing the witnesses of pass-law abuses is central to the museum, but the younger generations and newer residents from the informal settlements are future target groups.[34] The Langa Museum also commissioned a documentary film based on videotaped oral history interviews with Langa residents, which is shown at the museum.[35] Various

sites of memory across Langa, including the museum and pass-office site, are also publicly signified with concrete pillars, covered with colorful mosaics telling brief stories about each site. These pillars mark a heritage trail through the community. The Langa Museum has political support from city government but lacks sufficient financing.

In contrast, the District Six Museum is the leading community museum in South Africa. The "Hands-off-District-Six" campaign—a coalition of anti-apartheid groups, which stopped economic development on the District Six site during apartheid—was a significant forerunner to the formation of the museum. Former residents also played a central role in creating this museum and in materially and emotionally rebuilding the community. In 1995, a temporary exhibition about District Six was launched and planned to run for only two weeks. But it was such a popular success that it developed into a permanent museum, located in the Methodist church that had previously served District Six residents.

Oral history recordings, photographs, and objects are creatively displayed in permanent and temporary exhibitions.[36] The museum has different styles of presenting oral histories. For example, the "Nomvuyo's Room" exhibition presents a typical District Six bedroom and kitchen of the 1950s. Oral history recordings of a black African woman, Nomvuyo Ngcelwane, and of other residents relating memories of District Six are played through a radio. The exhibition also contains family photographs and other familiar objects, presented in dim lighting. This integrated presentation of sounds, images, and objects has a realistic atmosphere, giving the visitor a close approximation of what it felt like to live in a District Six home of the 1950s and 1960s. Because Nomvuyo's Room presents an African woman's story, it breaks the stereotypical framing of District Six's history as only a "coloured story."[37]

"Rod's Room," developed in collaboration with former resident and visual artist Roderick Saul, is in stylistic contrast. This room is presented with bright lighting. The family objects from Roderick Saul's past are not displayed in a natural setting, but are artistically molded into the walls and appear as fragments piercing into the room. The floor is relatively sparse and some photographs are displayed on the walls. The recording playing in the room is of Rod, recounting his memories of living in District Six and also reflecting on the meanings of his exhibition. Through the participation of both Nomvuyo Ngcelwane and Roderick Saul in these exhibits, the District Six Museum created "an opportunity for conventional scholar–informant relations to be overturned," allowing oral history interviewees to become coauthors of the public presentation of their stories.[38]

This community museum places considerable emphasis on engaging with and stimulating visitor experiences. Visitors are given opportunities to inscribe their names and stories onto memory cloths and diaries, and when opportunities arise during visits, former residents are interviewed onsite. As suggested earlier, people's sense of place frames an imaginative "holding together" of both themselves and of their community's identity. This is represented by former residents writing their names on

Figure 5.4 A corner scene on Horstley Street. Ruedi Collection, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town. Photograph by Jurg Ruedi.

the location of their former homes on a street map of District Six. The map is covered by transparent plastic sheeting and is located beneath the main entrance floor of the Museum. As one commentator noted:

> The map works as a mnemonic device, which both allows the recall of place but also puts the rememberer back into it, as they literally have put their names back into District Six by writing them on the map. It produces a re-identification . . . for each District Six starts from the epicenter of *their* home, *their* street, *their* place.[39]

From 1966 to 1995, former residents sustained a community-in-memory by imagining their community of the past, even when they had sporadic or no contact with each other. But since 1995, through the work of the Museum epitomized in the mnemonic map, each individual's name and place in District Six is reinscribed in the community's history. This is an emotive space and, as a museum education officer

said, "Every day at least one person cries here."[40] These tears are links to the past, but are evoked within the safe museum space of the present, where former residents disconnected through removals and dispersed across the city have the opportunity to reexperience an emotional connection to District Six and to each other. Put differently, it rekindles a pre-removals connectedness, which over time was sustained through memory *and* imagination. Moments of connection often happen through spontaneous meetings of former residents at museum exhibitions and through organized book launches, musical and memorial events, and public education programs. But the regeneration of a "community" is also fraught with contestation. Museum staff acknowledge a "community" that is

> both diverse and fractured but that simultaneously lays claim to a version of the concept that has more to do with the "imagined" coherence . . . than with the diverse and sometimes antagonistic polity that it actually represents. This is the uncompromising tightrope that the museum has chosen to walk in the interests of "community."[41]

The museum's central commitment is to the "community," but dialogues amongst residents and with academics and heritage professionals have triggered heated debates. For example, how should competing "voices" with differing versions or interpretations of the past be represented? What is the role of professionals in a community museum? Should the District Six Museum assume the role of "city museum"? The museum also attracts vast numbers of foreign visitors and is a member of an international network of "Site Museums of Conscience."[42] These audiences and dialogues have helped the museum to produce vibrant results, which might not match everyone's remembered or imagined community, but nonetheless provide space for the memories of loss and resilience to be expressed, recorded, archived, and represented. Most significantly, the museum provides an overarching framework to hold many viewpoints, memories, emotions, and imaginings of District Six.

For individuals reliant on the collective identity—"District Sixers" or "Langa People"—the imagined coherence of community or wholeness of self bolstered their resilience under apartheid. These imaginings have been affirmed through the work of these post-apartheid museums. But these are delicate, associative links between self and community and between the past and present, and they will endure future disappointments. The communities that people return to can never be the same as those they experienced in the past, nor can they be what people imagined over time. Certainly the idealized community images cannot be fulfilled. It is too early to tell how imagining communities assists or hinders "returnees" possible acceptance of their altered communities in the present. Nevertheless, the resilience showed during apartheid is evidence of peoples' capacity to adapt. The District Six Museum's ongoing oral history project is recording the stories of "returnees" and will in the long run have much to say about these questions. The museum also plans to have the original District Six area declared a national heritage site and as its director Bonita Bennett, stated, "It must be something that isn't static and limited. It must combine many elements—visual, oral and memory. People don't want a monument or statue."[43] As

of 2011, twenty-four families have returned to District Six and more than three thousand houses are still to be built in District Six.

Former Ndabeni residents in Langa are also waiting for houses to be built, but they will not be returning to the original Ndabeni area, as it was turned into an industrial zone. They will be moving to alternative land provided at the defunct Wingfield Aerodrome, approximately five kilometres from Langa. The Langa community as a whole is not connected through forced removal experiences in the way that the District Six community is. But the Langa Museum is committed to appealing to multiple groups, and how it represents *unshared* memories and interests of the "Capeborners" and rural newcomers will be challenging.[44] There is much to be learned from how the District Six Museum used its iconic status as a "diverse" community to appeal across cultural, generational, political, religious, and sexual distinctions. Nonetheless, Langa's status as the oldest African community in Cape Town provides that museum with vital political capital in attracting more visitors and more funding. The Langa and District Six Museums are beginning to forge links, which bodes well for building relationships across the different communities they represent.[45]

A persistent challenge for both museums is to transmit the lived memories of apartheid witnesses to the second, third, and coming generations. Recording the oral histories of living witnesses before they are too frail or they die is therefore urgent. Although I have emphasized the cohesive function of imagining communities for apartheid witnesses, the next generations will also need to imagine these communities in empathic ways, to understand the past they themselves did not experience and to ensure that communities are continued. In Cape Town today there are very few nonracialized sites such as the District Six Museum. Various city governments have developed programs to foster "A Home for All" the culturally diverse people of the city. Oral historians can play a constructive role in overcoming the social divisions of apartheid by recording and disseminating a range of people's stories through books, radio, film, exhibitions, memorials, and the Internet, across communities and generations. This opens possibilities for shared and unshared memories to be publicly recognized and to contribute to imagining the city and its communities as a place for *all.* But imagining a nonracial future must be tempered by acknowledging that "no one knows what the past will be made of next."[46] This creates opportunities for oral historians to be self-reflective and to engage in disquieting dialogues with historians and history.

CHAPTER 6

Sites of Memory in Langa

> Our interest in *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with a sense that memory has been torn—but torn in a such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists.[1]
>
> —Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*"

Using Pierre Nora's conceptualization of "sites of memory," this chapter illustrates ways of interweaving heritage conservation practices with people's lives, stories, and knowledge about sites in their communities. In South Africa, a historical break occurred at the onset of democracy in 1994. During the recent period of democracy there have been various responses to the legacies of the preceding periods of Dutch and English colonialism, segregation, and apartheid. These include the democratic nation-state endeavors to overcome these legacies with processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), land restitution, and socioeconomic transformation programs. How do historians, heritage practitioners, and memory workers respond to the past in the present? In Chapter 9, I will argue that when breaks occur as forms of trauma and leave posttraumatic legacies in people's memories, these cannot be closed off by redemptive reconstructions of history or cured by microhistories that promise healing through oral narration. These legacies are manifested as visual and emotional traces in memory. In the present chapter, drawing on oral histories, I explore how elder residents of Langa narrate the continuities and discontinuities of particular sites of memory.

My starting point here is to emphasize that there is an excess of memories in and around us.[2] This excess is created by the massive volume of sensory information we

consume and process through our ears, eyes, noses, tongues, and skins on a daily basis. From another perspective, this excess is created by the split between unconscious and conscious memory, which is central to the formation of human subjectivity. Just as people need to remember in order to function in psychological and social terms, they also have to forget memory traces to cope with the demands of the past, present, and future. The dialectic of remembering and forgetting is not only unavoidable: it is necessary to constructing and maintaining self. Therefore, it is a misleading binary to brand remembering as good and forgetting as bad. Rather, the notion of "memory work" compels us to consider how we work through the dialectic of remembering *and* forgetting (and silencing or denying) our memories.[3]

How are specific "sites of memory" distinguished from the potentially indiscriminate excess of memories? There must be what Nora calls a "will to remember."[4] Evidence of a popular and institutional will to remember is widespread in post-apartheid South Africa. For example, there is the rapid growth of many new post-apartheid museums and memorials. But more specifically, for oral history practice, this will to remember (or will to forget) is reflected in the selectivity of memory and narration. The selective character of memory needs to be approached not as a problem, but as the structuring principle of how people temporally and spatially work through their memories of the "then and there" of the past in the "here and now" of the present. These selections, while often unconscious, reveal the *agency* of people constructing memories and stories to meet their needs and desires. Sites of memory are not necessarily physical or spatial, however.

There are sites in three possible senses, "material, symbolic, and functional," Nora observes.[5] As the oldest black African community in Cape Town, Langa provides a wealth of examples. Sites of memory can be places, buildings, objects, institutions, and individuals or groups of people. The will to remember in working-class communities is often shaped by contestations over the scarcity of housing, jobs, and basic infrastructure. These contestations are exacerbated by an underfunded South African heritage sector and competing versions of how heritage forms should be publicly represented and for whose benefit. The politics of memory and its representation is therefore not merely about empirical reproduction but involves contestation over "the production of pasts," as Leslie Witz notes.[6]

In 2002 and 2003, the Langa Heritage Reference Group steered the research into an identification of potential heritage sites in Langa.[7] This process contributed to redressing the lack of formally designated heritage sites in black communities of Cape Town. One component was the pilot oral history project I conducted for the Reference Group.[8] This project recorded Langa residents' stories of specific sites.[9] The present chapter presents a selection of oral histories of significant sites and discusses nondidactic ways of representing them to residents, visitors, and future generations of the Langa community. I will argue that the conservation of sites of memory needs to move beyond the policy binary that compartmentalizes "intangible" and "tangible cultural heritage" and I suggest a hybrid approach to sites of memory that integrates oral histories about these sites. I prefer the term "sites of memory," and will only use the notion of "heritage sites" with reference to the formal process of developing and implementing

heritage conservation plans. By retaining this distinction, my aim is to illustrate the links and differences between "memory" and "heritage," and avoid collapsing "memory" into heritage forms, which often occurs within heritage policies (see the Heritage Resources Act of 2002). Through empathic listening to and public dissemination of peoples' stories, popular understandings and knowledge must be included in a sensitive approach that will strengthen heritage conservation of these sites.

Narrating Sites of Memory

A historical background of the creation and growth of Langa is given in Chapter 5.[10] It also needs to be noted that major political events dominate the memory and history of the community. For example, Langa captured the attention of the apartheid state and the white mass media with the Langa to Caledon Square March of 1960. This march included thousands of African residents from other parts of Cape Town. The police crackdown on the same day and the weeks after were part of broader state repression to erase anti-apartheid resistance movements. During this period, Langa was a Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) stronghold, although the African National Congress had a strong branch in the area. In 1976, Langa again received mass media attention, as it was the prime site of student resistance outside of Soweto. The police and student clashes on Vanguard Drive produced a generation of angry, generally Black Consciousness, student leaders. These clashes were also notable for the student alliances that were created between African youth in Langa and coloured youth in neighboring Bonteheuwel. While there were sporadic political clashes in Langa in the 1980s, the area was generally politically quieter in comparison to Guguletu, Nyanga, KTC, and Crossroads, where violent political clashes occurred throughout the 1980s.[11] But, as will be shown in this chapter, the placed-based memories of Langa are not only clustered around sites of anti-apartheid political resistance.

Oral history research about places and spaces has been underutilized in South Africa.[12] In the course of their daily lives, however, people frequently tell stories about their memories of experiences in places and spaces. While the spaces that people live, play, and work in might be taken for granted, over time, through particular events or regular use, specific spaces become the focal point for memories to cluster. These points in space bring to mind meanings for people and are narrated as place-based sites of memory. As the stories below show, the sensory information evoked by places is creatively woven into memory. Dolores Hayden writes that:

> It is place's very same assault on all ways of knowing (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste) that makes it powerful as a source of memory, as a weave where one strand ties another together.[13]

Spaces and places are also produced and shaped through power relations.[14] We need to understand the ways in which Langa residents turn specific spaces into sites of memory within a broader historical context of black South Africans being dispossessed

and a context of marginalization within the Western Cape region. This chapter prioritizes sites of memory that illustrate the impact of pass laws on individuals and families. I prioritized the stories of Langa residents who were beyond 60 years of age at the time of the interviews. An interviewee from the first wave of residents who came to Langa from Ndabeni in the period 1927 to 1936 described the early landscape:

> Those days where the police station is today, we used to have a forest there, pine trees, we used to go hunt squirrels with our sticks. It was quite an experience. We found a dam and swam. Whether it was a dirty dam or what, because there was no swimming pools there. [*Mr. Z. G.*][15]

This elderly storyteller and many others described mental images of Langa through "their eyes" of from when they were children between the ages of 5 and 12. Although

Figure 6.1 Soccer match in Langa, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

the adult reflections pinpoint the hardships of settling into these new surroundings, it is their childhood memories, filled with a sense of adventure, that are the most striking. Family houses were built in seven developmental phases, commencing with the first phase commonly referred to as the "old location" below Bhunga Avenue. An interviewee gave detailed descriptions of how families squeezed into small houses:

> So it's one bedroom, remember, 12 children. And the other part was a dining room—small part by the dining room, the same set-up: small kitchen . . . Some of us would sleep under the table on the floor, on mats and then with our parents, they would have, they had a double bed but there was a small bed for other children to have a sleep, to sleep on there. My eldest brother there was another bed in this room, a sofa and it would be pulled at night so as to make a bed . . . And then my sister and I would be sleeping in the bedroom with my parents with other children.[16]

These memories of congested domestic spaces link to relatively small pre-apartheid state-designed family houses, inadequate for meeting the needs of families. What is not explicit in the above story is the sense of discomfort this interviewee felt about talking about her family life. Intertwined with these happy and unhappy family stories were the ways in which many families helped extended family members and friends by allowing them to stay in their house or build "*afdakkies*" (iron shanties) in their backyards. As is common in working-class communities around the world, people made their overcrowded households into "homes."[17] The family home was for most the emotional center of childhood experiences, the place around which memories of childhood cluster.

But black family life (or the lack thereof) in twentieth-century Cape Town was profoundly shaped by the social engineering of the state. Most early house dwellers of Langa had been forcibly removed from other parts of Cape Town, and this generation of "Cape-borners" were strongly influenced by Anglophone schooling and the English sensibilities of the imperial imagination of pre-apartheid Cape Town. In contrast, thousands of migrant workers moving in and out of Langa from the rural areas introduced other life styles. For migrant workers, initial experiences of Langa were the *mbombela* (the train), "delousing," X-rays, and hostel life.

> They would be taken from the station—just few meters from the station—three yards from the station, we called them yards—they would go into X-ray. And from the X-ray they would be divided to actually come this way . . . the X-ray was just adjacent to the, to the market, the, the Langa hall . . . and then they would go down Bennie street or down Brinton street to, to the North Barracks or to the Main Barracks. [*Ms. B. N.*]

The reception depot was described as:

> In Harlem Avenue, it's a residence now . . . when my father was working there, there was 406 and the house next door was 405. That was the reception depot, 405.

Figure 6.2 Langa, Cape Town, railway station, c.1950s. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

> When they went there, some reception that was arranged by the City Council where they had to dip them . . . and this unpleasant thing they had to be dipped just in case they carried some vermin. [*Ms. M. N.*]

Migrant worker experiences of dipping closely resembled the dipping of sheep, and this connection to animals made their experiences all the more dehumanizing. As concerns accommodation, there were contrasting conditions between the migrant hostels in the Zones and the Main and North Barracks. The term "Zones" usually refers to the hostel areas on the Bonteheuwel side of Langa, especially the North East corner near the railway line.

> The Main Barracks. Wow! It was worse. It was far better in the Zones. Even there for instance the homeboys[18] stay together. Like my people were in [19]74, 78, 80

Figure 6.3 Migrant worker barracks in Langa, c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

> and 84, we knew those people were coming from our area. But the conditions were worse than those cause you stay in one big hall. There was bed up, there was bed below. The situation was worse because there was no form of privacy. Even though there was no privacy in that other place at least there were homes. For instance, my father he got a bed and I used to sleep just in front of his bed because that's where I slept with my brothers. It was better in the Zones, the toilets were inside, now I have to go some distance to the communal block toilets and the showers on the other side. [*Mr. S. M.*]

Migrant worker accommodation was strictly regimented, with rules and regulations created by the older men, and managed by the *sibanda* (elected headmen). A hierarchy between younger and older men existed, with specific tasks such as cooking reserved for younger men. The lack of connection to family was an ongoing agony

Figure 6.4 Langa, Cape Town, family flats c.1949–1952. Photograph by Bryan Heseltine.

faced by male migrants. Mr. C.,M. describes the experiences of so-called migrant "bachelors":

> The Flats is single-beds also . . . when your wife who has come up from Transkei. Can you imagine sleeping in the same bed with your wife there and being the envy of thirty people around you? It doesn't work does it? I mean really, maybe I should not talk like that because immediately I speak about such humiliation, it changes my feelings, I get emotional. It makes me want to go to politics because those were politics anyway. I mean this is how we were treated here. We were not even treated as third- and fourth-class citizens. We were treated like animals. That's why I feel strongly that we should write this history down and our children must never forget this is how we were treated.

Narrating memories is often distressing, but this narrator persists and draws an explicit link between emotions and motivation to engage in politics. During his efforts to put memories laced with painful emotions into words, there is evidence of discontinuity at the personal level of recall and narration. Only so much can be put into words, only so much can be emotionally tolerated or told to this particular listener. Nevertheless, his persistence reflects a will to remember and a strong desire

for this history to be transmitted across generations. Many post-apartheid township teachers refer to how younger generations, with no direct experience of apartheid, are beginning to doubt the severity of their parents' and grandparents' experiences under segregation and apartheid.[19] Moreover, the scepticism of younger generations suggests discontinuities in cross-generational memory. The impact of the migrant system certainly continues in the present lives of these men and their families:

> It was not nice because it create quite a lot of misunderstanding, it create some mistrust between one another as well and the children also . . . I see that kind of experience in the past and I see with other people as well because it, I found that if people went on retirement now, eh, to because of that kind of system, they can't cope to stay in the homes, some even quarrel with their families and leave there and come back and stay in the hostel. There's quite a lot of old men that staying alone in the hostel, they got wife at home [in the rural areas]. [*Mr. H. M.*]

Since 1994 (and in some cases before), these families were legally able to live together but could not due to ruptured family relationships. These family tragedies provide traces of *discontinuity in relationships and memories* that have had long-term effects on individuals, families, and communities. Men, women, and children coped with disrupted family life under apartheid through extended families and place-based clan networks, which provided forms of social support across rural and urban areas. Male migrants also turned to "homeboy" networks and "girlfriends" in township areas, which at times was a source of tension between migrant and nonmigrant residents of Langa. The pass-law system controlled the lives of migrant and nonmigrants in similar and dissimilar ways. But the site of memory that triggers shared memories across different groups within the community is the center of "native" or "Bantu" administration, the Pass Court and Office on Langa's Washington Avenue.

For elderly generations, who grew up with the constant burden of pass laws, the mere mention of "the pass office" kindles a vast array of memories. People remembered the irritating, time-wasting bureaucratic process of obtaining the *dompass*. The site also awakened memories of being arrested and continually harassed for passes in and outside of the racially bounded space of Langa. People had to annually renew passes at the pass office in Langa (or in Observatory). The pass office figured materially and symbolically in people's lives as a site of repression. As Ms. F. D. expressively put it:

> I remember the old office. It used to be packed with migrant workers and other residents who were trying to fix their passes up. There was a sign saying "Do not spit" in Xhosa and there was a fine, you would be fined five pounds. That was a human hellhole because on a daily basis you saw human misery there.

This office building also served as a magistrates' court where pass-law offenders went through the sham of a quick trial. Appearing before the magistrate was the culmination of arrest, questioning, and imprisonment. Significantly, right next to the Pass

Court and Office on the east side stands the Langa police station, where offenders were often held in the cells. Mr. S. Z. described the office/court as being:

> Whooo! It was terrible! It was not nice it was not nice to go to the pass office. Because now, even the boys who were issuing the passes, they will harass the people and tell people, you know who could not speak nice and all that. Whooo, it was never nice! See some of them will get arrested . . . no, no, no your pass is expired, take him to get locked. He's going to the magistrate's to talk there you're guilty or not guilty. That was the way. Guilty. That's the way.

Despite the apparent omnipotence of the apartheid state, there were several forms of popular resistance to the pass-law system. Two of the most legendary events were the Langa to Caledon Square March of March 21, 1960, and the Langa March of March 30, 1960, discussed in the previous chapter. The March 21st clash between marchers and the police did not occur near the pass office but opposite the "new flats," a space today known as Sobukwe Square. Ms. P. F. remembers that:

> The first people were in Cape Town and the last people were still here in Langa. Like in Nyanga they joined in. Oh people died because they said "okay" we will send the words, we will give you an answer when you get to the meeting at Langa. The answer was the bullet; all the Saracens [armored cars] were ready at the Flats where they started shooting. It was sad, it is still sad until now.

On the evening of March 21 at 6 p.m., the crowd gathered opposite the old flats to hear the police's response to their requests.

> We were standing here—it was five of us—I saw the cop, policeman taking aim and hit this guy here, the guy fell you know. It was so painful man, between his eyes. I mean his head was not splattered or splashed, you could just see the hole here and then blood coming down . . . then all hell broke lose, they started shooting. [*Mr. G. F.*]

In terms of memory construction, the narrator's mind telescopes in on the moment of graphic violence he witnessed in the midst of a crowd scene, which suddenly shifted from organized protest to mass chaos after this shooting occurred. This story and many others are examples of the experience of memory-recall being filled with vivid mental imagery and emotions, experienced *as if* "the past" is alive, ever present, inside the person. Paradoxically, these storytellers pursue historical continuity through story-telling but over time the distance between the past(s) once lived and the present is constantly widening.

For the next generation, the pivotal time of resistance was June 1976. During this period, a Langa student march to the police station gathered on Mendi Square (facing both the police station and Pass Court and Office) and students were shot.[20] A student activist, Xolile Fasi, was killed and has become one of Langa's local resistance

icons. The Pass Court and Office and the police station remain prominent symbols of racist state control in Langa across several generations of Langa residents.

In summary, the sequence that often happens is as follows: a mental image or images like scattered snapshots are triggered by mnemonic devices such as spatial features of sites or questions posed by the oral history interviewer. This moment of recall powerfully evokes the time, space, and event in the person. When this happens in the oral history interview, and if the interviewee feels sufficiently comfortable to tell his or her story, the interviewee creatively selects and splices words to convey the visual and emotional content of their memories into oral narratives about sites of memory. How then should these sites of memory be interpreted and represented to Langa residents and other public audiences?

Interpreting and Conserving Sites of Memory

The conceptual framework developed thus far, with reference to sites of memory in Langa, is that sites in the material sense are separate from people. But sites of memory are also functional as they are physically lived around and about, providing historical reference points that constitute key features of the community landscape of Langa. For example, in their daily lives residents still drive and walk around the Langa pass-law office. For younger generations, it is a reminder of the past, but probably is lacking in emotional resonance, whereas for older residents who directly experienced pass laws, it might take them on an emotionally moving journey within their own mental maps of the site. And sites of memory in the symbolic sense are also evident in oral historical narration. Interviewees describe their internal mental images of places in stories that repeatedly represent and symbolize emotional connections to specific sites. At times, sites of memory are even recalled *as if* these were embodied parts of the interviewees themselves. But sites of memory, especially at the level of the symbolic, are also shaped through disconnections and obstacles.

> I know that every black person has that wall inside. . . . This is the sad tragedy of South Africa that we cannot bring down the wall because we are too scared. I'm too scared just in case somebody steps on that part of me that is still very fragile. The saddest part is that we don't have these moments to talk to each other about it. We don't have the opportunities, these moments to talk to each other about it. We don't have opportunities to say, "Langa is a broken township." We should start an archive here. What happened to the theatre? We should bring it back. We can't do things on our own, you must do things together and put them up and let people enjoy them. [*Ms. F. D.*]

This is a statement about disconnections between people in Langa and more broadly between South Africans from different backgrounds. It also contains a plea to connect through remembrance and narration, and a plea to conserve and represent these memories and stories to various audiences. In addition to fearful walls in and between

people, heritage practice at a local level has been hampered by conceptual walls in the form of binaries between "intangible heritage" (for example, oral histories, performances, rituals) and "tangible heritage" (for example buildings, objects). These concepts have gained global currency through United Nations Education and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) policies, which have been widely used by South African heritage professionals since 1994. While these terms have value at a macro-policy level, to ensure the identification, listing and protection of intangible forms of heritage, these blunt concepts impose dichotomies in interpretive approaches to interconnected sites of memory and cultural heritage in local communities. As Harriet Deacon et al. argue:

> The definition of intangible heritage should become part of a holistic definition of heritage that includes both tangible and intangible forms . . . there is little reason to perpetuate the distinction between intangible heritage *per se* and intangible values associated with objects and places.[21]

In the previous section, I explored how narrating sites of memory can help us think beyond this binary. Another significant method of interpreting sites of memory is through empathy. Yet, empathy is not only a technique used by researchers, it is also central to understanding how sense of place is constructed. As Richard Rive wrote:

> A sense of place must also be a sense of people or a lack of people. If you attempt to destroy place you must also attempt to destroy a people. In literature a place . . . is a locale, a circumscribed area or stage on which something is to happen. To have a sense of place is to have an empathy and identification with that place, a mental attitude towards it, an appreciation of it.[22]

While empathy as a form of identification often involves positive associations and feelings, it does not necessitate liking or loving that place. Rather it refers to the imaginative shaping of sensory information about spaces into a sense of place, which might include mixed or contradictory feelings. Sense of place then, combines ongoing sensory inputs with the person's interior construction of memories, or as Alessandro Portelli puts it, "in memory, time becomes 'place': all the recollected past exists simultaneously in the space of the mind."[23] For these memories to be sustained and understood, people require external social or cultural frameworks. Empathy as a research tool then can help us understand how residents use their imagination to frame cultural or mental maps of sites, which informs how they express their narratives about sites of memory.[24]

Seen through these conceptual lenses, heritage conservation cannot only be about the taking care of buildings, objects, and sites. South African heritage practitioners need to integrate people's concerns, memories, and localized forms of popular knowledge into conservation work. In Langa, elderly generations have lived for

decades with the social and emotional legacies from their pre-apartheid and apartheid pasts. The painful breaks in cross-generational communication are very significant. For elderly residents the breaks in communication are a recurring source of pain, and for heritage practitioners they link directly to a central motivation to do heritage education across generations. Elderly Langa residents tell their life stories with the prospect of becoming "late" (in other words, dying). As friends and family also "pass away," these memories and stories are disappearing in the ultimate form of historical discontinuity. Elderly generations anxiously confront the dialectic of remembering and forgetting to maintain a sense of meaningful continuity with their pasts and the generations that follow them. Heritage practitioners then—as researchers, conservers and disseminators—need to assist in this urgent cross-generational memory work.[25]

The formal designation of sites of memory as "heritage sites" is an important first step, but the longer term conservation process involves ways to educate multiple, especially younger audiences, about the history of Langa. In order to engage in these forms of heritage conservation, community leaders and interested groups require the financial and technical support of professionals. This in turn requires community elders and heritage professionals to build trust across the frequently experienced mistrust between professionals and nonprofessionals. Through the Langa Heritage Reference Group, working in close consultation with Cape Town City Council (CCC) officials, there was a successful example of negotiating the power relations between community and institutional structures in an open manner. In many academic and government instances, however, it is generally assumed that professionals are the only ones with the power to interpret objects, stories and sites.[26] In their own words, images, and performances, people do make interpretations.[27] In a specific sense, professionals do not make the connections between people and sites, as these already exist in people's life stories and construction of sites of memory. But professionals do have to record, identify, affirm, and integrate these popular meanings, both connections and disconnections, in their heritage strategies. As Dolores Hayden notes:

> Place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders who have shared a common past, and at the same time the places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in the present.[28]

Oral history is the appropriate research method to record these memories, but oral history interviewers researching sites of memory need to learn how to ask both life story *and* more spatially oriented questions. The latter may make use of mnemonic devices such as photographs of, or objects relating to, sites when conducting interviews. Oral history research on these forms of memory would benefit from the frequent use of video cameras and from conducting on-site interviews—at times, walking interviews.

More broadly, oral history methodology in itself is neither a singular solution nor a cure to the divisions or traumatic legacies within or between communities. The recording and dissemination of oral histories about sites of memories needs to be integrated with other strategies, such as cultural mapping, conservation and audiovisual heritage planning, development projects, and community consultation. As a wider range of community voices is included in the identification and presentation of sites, there is greater potential for residents' participatory engagement in the conservation of these sites. But communities rarely speak with a singular voice.

How oral history and conservation work are combined needs to encompass these multiple, often competing, voices. In the context of limited heritage funding, the Langa Heritage Foundation faces the challenge of making the Langa Museum more attractive to younger generations and especially the newer generations moving into informal settlements and new housing projects on the spatial margins of Langa.[29] Oral history research can be used to record and disseminate different voices with conflicting versions and interpretations of past events. Most would agree that diverse community voices should not be silenced; however, when budgets are limited and priorities selected, in subtle and not so subtle ways, particular stories that do not fit the dominant community and/or government views might be ignored.[30] Nevertheless, the challenge of presenting contested views on-site through exhibitions opens conservation work to debate over sites and their meanings and is also more inclusive of different interest groups.

Oral history recordings of sites of memory can be communicated on-site or beyond the site. On-site, stories can be communicated through storyboards, audiovisual exhibitions, guided walking tours, and oral performances. Beyond the site, oral histories can be used in popular/public history books, community radio programs, a selection of stories on tape or CD, video documentaries, and Internet websites. By using audio and especially audiovisual means, the significance of popular memories can be more evocatively communicated to all visitors. Moreover, by publicly presenting and creatively splicing oral and visual sources, it is possible to help attract more local and foreign tourists into communities, which might increase income-generating opportunities in economically impoverished communities. However, the conservation and presentation of cultural heritage must resist the problematic tourist desire to consume and engage with the "exotic Other," which is partly shaping the rapid expansion of the foreign tourist market towards "destination" Cape Town, and more specifically attracts tourists to "experience Africa" through "township tours."[31]

The public presentation of sites in Langa also poses the challenge of how to memorialize traumatic and violent past events. An obvious example is the Pass Court and Office. All the interviewees for this project referred to it a site of painful memories, but not a single interviewee objected to it becoming a museum. There was unanimous agreement that these sites should become formal heritage sites and educational tools should be developed to educate younger generations. But in research terms, an acute sensitivity must be displayed while recording oral histories and collecting photographs and objects that might have an unsettling

emotional significance.[32] Furthermore, when publicly presenting these different forms or objects of memory, sensitivity needs to be displayed by museum curators and museum education officers.[33] When faced by the mnemonic triggers of sites of memory, audiences often lower their defensive walls to express feelings, and this necessitates that museum/site staff be trained in appropriate facilitation skills. In these vulnerable moments, heritage staff need to be prepared to listen sensitively and contain visitors' emotions.[34]

Appropriately conserved and publicly represented sites of memory such as the Langa Museum have the potential to educate a range of visitors about the experiences, memories, and place of black residents in Cape Town. In the process, the walls of fear that reinforce social boundaries around the racialized space of Langa will become more permeable and accessible. And as I will discuss in Chapter 9, through memory work and heritage strategies, spaces can be provided for people to express and process the emotional traces of memory in ways that might help them to live more constructively with these disruptive legacies.

Incomplete Work

There are no easy solutions to working through the limits of both oral history research and cultural heritage practice. I have used various conceptual tools, most significantly Nora's "sites of memory," to move beyond policy binaries that compartmentalize our understanding and approach to heritage conservation practices in local communities. In part, this is made possible by recording and validating the meaningful connections (and disconnections) between people and the sites of memory located within, between, and around them. This remains an incomplete work of conceptual thinking about heritage practice. More work is required on how to use oral history research specifically to contribute to conservation thinking and practice, and on how to create the meaningful representation of sites of memory to audiences coming from within and outside communities. Ms. F. D. tells this story about her mother; it took place after her mother voted in the 1994 elections:

> We lay on the floor, to look at them [her mother and friend] in the lounge. I think that desire was to see the face of freedom and I was looking at both of them and I was thinking, "Wow they're free" and I just wanted to ask them, "What does it feel like?" But they were not excited at all, as far as I was concerned. Then they sat here and they were silent for a long time, as they were absorbing the fact that they were now citizens of SA [South Africa]. And we were sitting here looking at the free citizens of SA.

In this historical moment of transition, as South Africa began to break from its oppressive past, this story illustrates a daughter's admiration for her mother and a profound cross-generational connection. It also demonstrates how the first democratic elections in South Africa, a national event of global significance, created clusters of

interconnected memories within a site of memory people call "home." Since 1994, the hopes that were raised by the first democratic elections have been fulfilled for some and disappointed others. As Nora puts it, "Anxiety turns everything into a trace, a possible indication, a hint of history that contaminates the innocence of all things."[35] Sites of memory are located within a fluid web of meanings, which signify that the past remains open to new insights and problems in the future.

CHAPTER 7

"There Your Memory Runs Like a Camera Back"

Moving Places and Audiovisual Oral Histories from Klipfontein Road

In 1991 Dan Sipe wrote: "Still, video seems to inhabit some sort of twilight zone: many oral historians at least tacitly accept its value and some even use it, but few deal with it or comment on it."[1] And in 2006 Michael Frisch observed: "Everyone recognizes that the core audio-video dimension of oral history is notoriously under-utilized."[2] Is this trend partly due to a widespread technophobia amongst oral historians?[3] And/or does the trend reflect negative assumptions about the academic value of audiovisual recording of oral histories? Although different recording devices have the potential to influence what is said and how it is said or not said in oral history dialogues, technological tools should not be one of the defining criteria of what constitutes oral history research practice. I am not advocating audiovisual recording of oral history as an alternative to audio forms. But I am arguing for an equal epistemological status—within oral history methodology and historiography—for both sound recording and audiovisual recording of interviews. Various writers have compared the strengths and limitations of using these differing recording technologies, but comparison is not my intention here.[4] Instead, in this chapter I describe and analyze the use of audiovisual oral histories[5] with a view to historicizing people's movements across racially constructed spaces and senses of place in post-apartheid Cape Town.

The historiography of twentieth-century Cape Town is extensive.[6] But urban historians, including myself, have primarily focused on racially bounded communities and far less on activities across racial–spatial boundaries. Therefore, from 2005 to 2007, the Centre for Popular Memory (CPM) conducted a project called "Street

Stories," which involved videotaping oral history interviews with over two hundred people who use three arterial roads: Main Road, Klipfontein Road, and Landsdowne Road. These streets cut across the still-visible apartheid residential racial zones. The Southern Suburbs Main Road partly follows the contours of the mountains linking the still mostly "white areas." In contrast, Klipfontein and Landsdowne roads both start on Main Road but then wind their way through the sprawling predominantly coloured and African communities of the Cape Flats.[7] In traveling these busy roads, CPM staff crossed racial boundaries drawn through spaces, moments, and lives. They recorded stories of traders, homeless people, commuters, and others on streets, where popular culture, memory, and socioeconomic dynamics converge. The project had two aims:

- First, we aimed to avoid the research tendency to historicize only racial ghettos, CPM staff set out to record and plot personal narratives relating to specific sites of memory on these streets and how people's lives have changed over time. Interviewees gave accounts, involving work and cultural activities, family situations, violent political events and forced displacements. The CPM's prior assumption that these streets were culturally diverse counterpoints to the erratic transformation of the racial demography in residential spaces of post-apartheid Cape Town was confirmed.
- Second, we aimed to think and do oral history research in ways that are not split by a dichotomy between listening and seeing or between sound interviews and audiovisual interviews. From the CPM's outset in 2001, our flexible policy has been to choose recording technologies to meet specific project priorities and fieldwork circumstances. For the "Street Stories" project, videotaped interviews were a logical strategy to adopt. CPM staff recorded and edited interviews, and produced six documentaries;[8] two were broadcast on national and community television and at film festivals.[9] In addition, a photographic book of video grabs and photos with oral history texts was produced, and video shorts about the lives of selected interviewees were placed on You-Tube.[10]

In post-apartheid South Africa, there has been a growth of historical film documentary making and a related increased use of audiovisual oral histories.[11] But amongst university-based historians, there remains an ongoing paucity of use and comment on audiovisual dimensions of oral history, which suggests that spoken and written words have intellectual primacy over images.[12] It may be argued that this slant is inevitable within the oral history enterprise, but a more productive response is to explore the use of audiovisual recording of oral history interviews, or to combine oral history and photography[13] in ways that can benefit oral history thinking.

Sipe argued twenty years ago that "the time has come for sustained systematic description, discussion, and analysis of how moving images can work as an integral dimension of oral history practice."[14] With the exception of Michael Frisch and Steven High,[15] it is doubtful that oral historians internationally have sufficiently responded to Sipe's argument, which remains pertinent, given the rapid pace of new technological developments. Technological innovations in sound and audiovisual recording, archiving and dissemination practices are not a threat to the oral history

enterprise, but open up intellectual possibilities for spoken words and moving images to forge new directions in and for oral history. I cannot discuss technological developments here, but I acknowledge Frisch's significant call for oral historians to develop a "post-documentary sensibility." More specifically, the CPM's "Street Stories" project demonstrates that the audiovisual recording of oral histories can produce valuable historical evidence. This chapter discusses how this evidence has helped us conceptualize people's mobility and senses of "moving places" across a city with several socioeconomic, political, and cultural divisions, which cannot be reduced to simple racial binaries of "white" versus "black" South Africa.[16]

Past and Present Cape Town

Cape Town is a place of brutal contrasts across landscape, memory, and history. The city was shaped around beautiful mountains and oceans by Dutch and English colonialists, who left a three-hundred-year legacy of racist exclusions and structural inequalities. It is also important to remember that the historical marginalization of black African residents in Cape Town was motivated by the essentialist idea that the city is "the natural home" of "Cape coloureds" (and their ancestors). The racist discourses that formed around this idea originated under colonialism and were enshrined in apartheid laws. With the onset of apartheid in 1948, an already segregated city with some culturally diverse suburbs[17] experienced the social engineering of the Group Areas Act.[18] This law racially zoned all residential and nonresidential spaces, and out of a city of approximately one million, over two hundred thousand people were forcibly removed between 1950 and 1982.[19] With the abolishment of the Group Areas Act and the pass-law system from 1985 to 1986, the city's population proliferated, especially across the Cape Flats, and the official population figure in 2010 reached 3.3 million.[20]

If you then take the vantage point of the present and stand on the Eastern slopes of iconic Table Mountain, you can look across the wide expanse of the Cape Flats. This term is a geographical reference to areas barely above sea level, sandy in soil, windswept and prone to flooding in wet Cape winters. But during apartheid, the term "Cape Flats" was reconstructed in popular imagination (and even now in popular memory) as a reference to racial ghettos or communities to which so-called "non-white" others—people classified either "coloured," "black African," or "Asian"—were displaced. For those who experienced displacement, the Cape Flats are the dumping grounds where they were scattered and made to feel like the human waste of apartheid. In contrast, the scenic spaces closer to the mountains and seas were declared "whites only."

Since democracy in 1994, Cape Town has experienced a difficult process of political and socioeconomic transformation to redress inequalities and bring about social justice for all. A partial transformation of post-apartheid urban spaces is occurring with the desegregation of some formerly white suburbs such as Muizenberg, Mowbray, and Maitland, where, for example, African immigrant communities have established a sizable presence. But these suburbs are the exception and not the general pattern. Statistics are lacking on current trends, but I would estimate that most

former "white group areas," especially upper-middle class ones, have less than one-quarter black or coloured residents, with percentages increasing in lower-middle class areas.[21] In addition, while people forcibly removed during apartheid are beginning to return or preparing to return to some areas such as District Six or Protea Village, these "returns" are happening at a slow pace, because of various financial or legal obstacles.[22] The city has also experienced rapid post-apartheid changes such as a property boom, as house prices in middle-class areas have soared, at times quadrupled, which especially hinders first time home-buyers. Concurrently, working-class informal settlements, dominated by black African residents, have mushroomed in unused spaces within inner urban areas or at the outer edges of the city.

Socioeconomic restructuring of Cape Town is also taking place within global economic structures as large cites and nation-states compete for investments and exports. For example, the drastic decline during the post-apartheid period of the clothing and textile manufacturing industries of Cape Town, which are unable to compete with Asian imports, has increased unemployment and led capital development to focus on other sectors such as tourism, hotels, and the film industry. Cape Town has successfully marketed itself as a global tourist destination, but economic benefits cluster around scenic locations and not along the roads on which we interviewed.

Cape Town business and government are geared to receiving local and foreign visitors, but divisions still fragment the city, such as persistent tensions between the coloured majority of the city and the increasing number of black city residents, especially because of the latter's internal migration from the Eastern Cape region. The environmental beauty of the city also cannot mask the stark disparities between wealthy and poor; the city ranks very high in the socioeconomic disparity index of unequal cities. For these reasons, city government has identified Klipfontein Road and Landsdowne Road as key corridors for enhancing economic development opportunities across race and class divisions. For example, if both city and national governments had had their preferred venue, the 2010 World Cup soccer stadium for Cape Town would have been built in Athlone on Klipfontein Road. However, the Green Point venue for the stadium was imposed by a FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) executive driven by a marketing imperative to sell the World Cup against the backdrop of Cape Town's scenic landscape of mountains and the sea. In spite of this, Klipfontein Road might still become a new city main road because it links the more affluent southern suburbs with the townships and informal settlements on the Cape Flats. The Centre for Popular Memory (CPM) also chose Klipfontein Road because it includes historical sites of anti-apartheid struggles. The street links the survivors of forced displacement, their children and the "new communities"[23] of the Cape Flats.

Street Stories from Klipfontein Road

Klipfontein Road is a 30-kilometre (18.6-mile) pathway that begins as Durban Road in Mowbray; moves into Rondebosch (both previously zoned "white areas"); then to

Figure 7.1 Klipfontein Road street corner. Photograph by Niklas Zimmer, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town.

Athlone, Bridgetown, Kewton, Silvertown, Manenburg (previously zoned "coloured areas"); and then to Guguletu, Nyanga, KTC, and Crossroads (previously zoned "African areas"). There is a constant movement of people and vehicles on Klipfontein Road, which might seem disjointed or discordant to human senses, but in other ways this street connects divided peoples in curious ways.

For most of the outdoor interviews, which were in uncontrolled environments, it proved to be technically challenging to get the appropriate lighting and sound, especially during the wet and windy Cape autumns and winters. Outdoor interviews tended to be shorter, but provided stunning visuals of peoples, spaces, and activities. Indoor interviews in residences or workplaces were visually less interesting and tended to suffer from the "talking heads" phenomenon. But these interviews, by appointment, tended to be longer, and there was more historical depth to the information interviewees narrated. Given that video cameras are becoming commonplace, most potential interviewees, when approached, readily agreed to be recorded; the rejection rate was low. I present a small selection of videotaped stories from interviews conducted at sites along the road, in three clusters:

- First, people who talked about their everyday work activities on the street.
- Second, people who live in the vicinity of the street in houses or flats (apartment houses), or those who live on the streets—that is, the homeless.
- Third, people who spoke about their memories of the violent events of 1976 and 1985, which occurred on or near Klipfontein Road.

A wide range of people's livelihoods depend on these streets. Historically prominent amongst these are the hawkers who sell fruit and vegetables and the fishmongers, who depend on Cape Town's fortune of bordering on two oceans (the warm Indian Ocean and the cold Atlantic Ocean).[24] They contrast with the newer street "professions," such as car guards (that is, people who protect parked cars). Mr. R. A. (a fishmonger for over 30 years) said:

> Born in this business, my grandfather, my father, used to sell at the old fish market in Hanover Street [in District Six]; we moved to Woodstock, we moved Kensington, and then Manenberg . . . wind, sand and rain we stand here, we do business for the people, food for the people.

On camera, his weather-beaten face is prominent, but also in the frame is the back of his truck, where he packs, displays, and sells his fish (mostly Cape *snoek*). Like many interviewees, he points to details around him, and his hands indicate the different places he has lived or frequented on Klipfontein Road or in the city.

Then there are the traders and hawkers. Mr. I. A. (who has named his stall "Housewife's paradise—every day you get a bargain") responded to questions about economic decline with, *"Daar's nie soes 'n ding soos kannie, daar's jy wil."* ("There is no such thing as can't, there's only you will"). When asked about his customers he said, "We try to put ourselves into their shoes, we are part of the community." The interior of his stall, filled with an assortment of sale items, forms the backdrop to him as he speaks about his working life. Another hawker, Mrs. C. A., is originally from the Cape rural areas but had to move to the city when her grandparents died. Homeless for a few years, she is now working at a fruit and vegetable stall called "Mr. No Joke Stall." When asked what she dreams of for her future she said, to start her own stall called "Mrs. No Smile Stall." This is said with a broad smile, which she repeatedly beamed at the camera.

Interviews with homeless people were a small minority of the total, yet it was striking how many people who now earn their living on Klipfontein Road were at another time homeless on the street. Family circumstances seemed most often to push them into becoming homeless, while potential opportunities to eke out money drew them to this particular road. As Mr. E. V., 24 years old, with a scarred face and restless movements, said:

> *Kan nie huise toe gaan nie, my ma is dood, en my pa het 'n anner vrou . . . ek word mos groot buitekant . . . my pa kannie agter my kyk nie . . . as hy gesuip is, dan will hy my moer . . . ek kan nie bly nie, ek moes weg loep, ek kyk my eie lewe hier buitekant, daar is mense wat ek ken.*
> (Can't go home, my mother is dead, my father has another wife . . . I grew up outside . . . my father can't look after me . . . when he is drunk, then he wants to hit me [makes hitting hand movements] . . . I couldn't stay, I had to walk away, I look after my own life here outside, there are people I know.)

Figure 7.2 A fruit and vegetable hawker. Photograph by Niklas Zimmer, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town.

Figure 7.3 Fruit and vegetable stall on Klipfontein Road. Photograph by Niklas Zimmer, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town.

A sense of home or homelessness is a central theme throughout most interviews.[25] Many of those who have homes now have grown up in families that suffered earlier forced displacement and were pushed out of older city suburbs, and forced into apartheid townships along streets such as Klipfontein Road.

> We were told to leave, no compassion, so people lost a lot, with this move, so of course people had to set up home in Bridgetown . . . I was five years old, when we moved from Cape Town, the court [a block of flats] we stayed, we were not used to living like this . . . even our parents, you could sense it as a child, everyone felt extremely insecure, what happened in Cape Town families, lived together, you find one was moved to Bridgetown, other one to Kew Town, and because the infrastructure was poor, it was not easy for people to get from Bridgetown. [*Mr. A. R.*]

For this interviewee's family to have been displaced, when he was at the vulnerable age of five, is critical. It is a transitional phase, when children need parents to be strong enough to provide secure guidance with their explorations in "finding their feet" in the world of preschool and early friendships. Instead, there may be parental feelings of insecurity, which echo anxieties that permeate the lives of those forcibly displaced and their descendents. People carry these memories and feelings of past insecurities onto the streets. But then, Klipfontein Road is no ordinary street, it is itself a creation of the Group Areas Act and forced removals.

Klipfontein Road runs through the predominantly "coloured" communities of Athlone and Manenburg, at which point it is diametrically split by the Cape Flats railway line. This railway track is one of the many "buffer zones" (these include highways, industrial areas, and even golf courses!) imposed by apartheid planners to ensure that different "racial groups" did not reside directly next to each other. As Klipfontein Road leaves Manenberg to cross the bridge over the railway, it enters the African areas of Guguletu, Nyanga, KTC, and ends in Crossroads. Mrs. N. M., a commuter on Klipfontein Road for over forty years, was reminded of her harassment under the despised apartheid pass-laws system:

> The police shout, "You got a pass? Where you born?" It was a bad time for us . . . At night, your eyes, your ears always listening, they knock, they knock not like other people . . . they chase us, they kill us, the police support the *witdoeke* [apartheid-aligned vigilantes] to beat us and kill us.

Mrs. N. M. was also one of thousands of people displaced when the *witdoeke* and police burnt large portions of KTC and Crossroads to ashes in 1986 because these residents did not wish to be relocated to the then new township of Khayelitsha. Khayelitsha today is Cape Town's largest suburb of over half a million, entirely black African residents, situated on the southeastern margins of the city. Mrs. N. M. avoided displacement to Khayelitsha in 1986 by finding accommodation in Guguletu, another site of anti-apartheid resistance, which I discussed in Chapter 3.

Although anti-apartheid resistance struggles would frequently start within and at times remain within racial ghettos, at other times people mobilized across racial–spatial boundaries to form alliances with other communities. A central site of state repression of anti-apartheid resistance was Athlone police station on Klipfontein Road. This station building remains a prominent feature on the road but the "new" police are undergoing a makeover. A policeman told the CPM in an interview in his office that: "Klipfontein runs through 22 townships, that was always a place for demonstrations, they would gather in Nyanga, Guguletu and come down to Athlone and gather by the stadium." Later, in reference to present policing he said, "To bring about change, you have to go the community, love the community, form partnerships with the community." These words were a far cry from the police talk of the apartheid era.

In 1976, the Soweto student riots in Johannesburg erupted and spread to Cape Town. As one school teacher put it, "Soweto sneezed and we caught a fever." The Cape Town epicenter of 1976 student–police clashes occurred on Vanguard Drive, which runs horizontally across KlipfonteinRoad, where clashes also occurred. Mr. S. G., a schoolteacher interviewed at his desk, said:

> As students we felt we should pledge our solidarity with students in Soweto, because their pain was ours, during the time the government was introducing Afrikaans as a medium of instruction . . . We marched to the Langa police station, and we were involved in a scuffle with the police. Then the first victim of '76 riots, Mxoliswa, died. I must tell you hell broke loose, we ran, I ran all the way on foot back [across

> Klipfontein Road]. I can still feel those birdshots [strokes his chin, in search of embedded birdshot], I had a lot of the birdshot.

The same teacher said, "I have a vivid picture, a vivid memory of the '76 riots because I was involved as a student, and also 1985, when I started to teach, I must say it was a hectic time." Without request, he referred directly to the visual content of his memories and simultaneously located himself in the watershed years, as a student in 1976 and as a teacher in 1985. Compared to 1976, the political violence of 1985 erupted on a far broader canvas in Cape Town and across other parts of South Africa.

Amongst many violent moments, one infamous incident in 1985 has etched its painful traces in the popular memory of the Athlone area. This was the "Trojan Horse shootings" on Thornton Road, which runs off Klipfontein Road. During the protests, school students from local schools would pelt state vehicles with stones. Then a truck with policemen concealed at the back drove by and opened fire on the students. Mr. G. A., who today runs a clothing stall on Klipfontein Road, said:

> That day they shot the boys, that evening, the whole community stood hand to hand, along the road and the police came along and they, the community were not going to move. . . . At the time it was kind of fun running away from the police but years later you matured and think about it, it's a heart sore, lives have been lost.

The solidarity displayed at the time by community members to express their shock and outrage at the police atrocity is significant. But the interviewee was also honestly reflecting on his lack of maturity then, and how his painful feelings only registered later when he grew up. Klipfontein and Thornton roads, for example, are not only paths for physical transportation but also provide people with a visualized mental route to locate the remembering of several events and to trace the changes they went through across life phases.

The various interview clips from the "Street Stories" project provide compelling evidence of how audiovisual oral history captures the storytelling performances of interviewees, as well as the changing moods of interview interactions and the locations in which they were filmed. Interviews on the actual road usually had a frenetic intensity created by the sounds of the street and the images of the immediate backdrop. In contrast, interviews in peoples' offices and homes, while always close to Klipfontein Road, often had a more formal, quieter mood. During both indoor (mainly seated) and outdoor (mainly standing) interviews, it is the movement of people's bodies that reveals something beyond the words spoken. As I was writing this chapter, I reread a sublime Luisa Passerini article, in which she observes:

> I have been thinking of memories transmitted without verbalisation such as those incorporated in gestures, images and objects; the transmission of how to look. . . . Finally, silence is essential in order to remind us that memory is not only word, it is the "embodied memory" enlivened by intersubjectivity.[26]

Reading Passerini made me realize that there never was an audio silence during the outdoor interviews. The silences during interviewee speech and bodily movements were filled in by street noise. But significantly, although the audience cannot hear the silences, they can possibly *see silences* both during interviews and later through viewing the camera footage. Perhaps oral historians need to both be listening and looking for silences. I suspect many oral historians do this unconsciously, but I think Passerini is prompting us to think more deeply about different ways to detect and interpret silences. What silences are revealed by embodied memory that are masked by human speech? And conversely, what silences are revealed by human speech that are masked by embodied memory? Surely then we need to be both listening *and* seeing if we are to better understand the silent interstices of human memory.

Moving Places: Integrating Sound, Image, and Word

Dan Sipe observed:

> By encouraging such a focus on image as part of integral historical evidence, visual oral history can lead historians away from the limited conception of moving images as merely an alternative form for evoking, communicating, or translating written history. Oral history can demonstrate the power of film and video as evidence while moving images provide a new level of evidence for oral history.[27]

The separation of "oral histories" and "video histories" is worrying.[28] By fostering this dichotomy, the evidentiary and conceptual benefits of integrating spoken words and moving images that Sipe refers to might be lost.[29] And Steven High argues that a separation of oral and video histories is especially detrimental to those researchers doing oral testimonies about place and place-based identities.[30] In approaching these issues, we need to consider how the audiovisual recording of oral histories challenge us to read/hear/see storytelling as containing "three far from identical forms of narrativity—the written word, the spoken word, and filmed word—that can be compared and contrasted for their historical implications."[31] The scope of that challenge is beyond my grasp here, but I do explore ways to integrate sound and image in conceptualizing place and movement. The innovative work of human geographers has been especially helpful. For example, Tim Cresswell argues:

> To think of place as an intersection—a particular configuration of happenings—is to think place in a constant sense of becoming through practice and practical knowledge. . . . This conception of practised place revises older ideas of place as the centre of authentic existence with its neatly circumscribed culture and identity. As an anti-essentialist idea it does not allow for easy correlation of place and culture. Simultaneously this open conception of place provides an antidote to the celebration of nomadic hybridity in which place all but disappears. Place as practice and

> practice as place always relies on the symbiosis of locatedness and motion rather than the valorisation of the other.[32]

Given this definition of place, how can people's senses of place and movements be interpreted from the audiovisual recordings of oral histories on Klipfontein Road? Through listening and watching these video clips, I have detected four types of movement: First, the movements of human travel on foot or in vehicles; second, the movements of an interviewee's embodied memory activity; third, the mental movements between remembered places "then and there" and the places of remembrance "here and now"; and fourth, the painful, at times, ruptured *e-motions* associated with memories of forced racist displacement from place to place.

With this typology in mind, I return to the "Street Stories" project on Klipfontein Road. It is vital to understand that audiovisual oral histories are not just oral history interviews with a camera. In addition to the technical challenges faced by the camera person, such as lighting, sound, and framing the interviewee, the interviewer needs to encourage the interviewee to engage with his or her surroundings. The less the interviewee is a talking head and rather an enlivened body and mind telling stories, the more compelling both the visual and oral narrative becomes. Yet when interviewees do engage their surroundings and shift their eyes to the spaces around them, it is still important for the interviewer to keep his or her eyes on the interviewee.[33] CPM staff complemented oral history interview footage by filming context shots of Cape Town's urban landscape. These context shots captured the auditory and visual senses of Cape Town streets as corridors of sociability for people from all walks of life, in which they congregate or through which they pass. Camera shots of people traveling on these streets or the panning shots across buildings and people all contributed to a visual and aural sense of atmosphere. Thus context shots created both a mood for the documentary and an audiovisual contextualization for viewers/listeners to engage with the oral history interviews in the film documentary.

The CPM's documentary was entitled *Soweto Sneezed and We Caught a Fever: Street Stories from Klipfontein Road.* Film editing and artistic direction involved blending context shots, clips of outdoor and indoor interviews, news, and archival footage. The documentaries were not scripted at the outset but the post-interview process of scripting required a skilled film editor with sensitivity to varied forms of oral testimonies conveyed on camera. The "Street Stories" film editor, Pascale Neuschäfer, notes that filmed oral histories compel us to respond on many levels:

> Firstly, the viewer is responding to sound, to the aural stimulus of voice (the semantic listening), as well as the external sounds of environment (the causal listening). Secondly, the viewer is responding to visual stimuli which range from the broader context of the environment to the visual identity of the interviewee. The visual identity can be divided into the external (how does the face corroborate the voice?), in terms of social signifiers, such as clothing, race, physical peculiarities (scars, tattoos et cetera) and the specificity of movement, gesture and expression. As the saying goes, "a picture speaks a thousand words." Finally, when the aural and visual stimuli

> are combined they create an emotional stimulus (not a sentimental one!) to which the viewer responds.[34]

These points indicate the range of interpretive choices that viewing and listening to the raw footage of filmed interviews provides, and also the choices available when engaging with the final cut of the historical film documentary. But can these various forms of information deliver the historical evidence needed to produce specific histories and answer particular intellectual questions? These are the questions that should be central to deciding whether to use sound and/or audiovisual recording for an oral history research project. Some historians will ask whether the "Street Stories" project delivered new evidence by using video cameras, when the less costly and less time-consuming audio recording might have sufficed.[35] Although digital video cameras are no longer expensive, skilled, labor-intensive film editing is costly. Nevertheless, the answer is yes, it was worth it. These filmed oral histories offered more information than audio recordings about the past and present Cape Town and provided a more complex understanding of how memories cluster around sites, and showed that people's movements along these roads shaped their senses of places. To develop this argument, Simon Schama critiques the logocentric assumption that

> print is deep, images are shallow . . . print argues and images passively illustrate. Now this particular blunder is a result, I suppose, of the self-reinforcing failure of all those graduate departments to educate students in iconography (the scholarship of the meaning of images) and iconology (the relationship of those memories to the cultures which produce and receive them). . . . Imagery, still or moving, does not just tell stories. It argues but it argues in a different way to print.

As a born and bred resident of Cape Town, I know that the iconography of the city dominates the way in which many outsiders and locals see and speak about it. Cape Town's beauty lulls many into forgetting the past and present pain within most residents. The optical attraction of the mountains, forests, and seas entices visitors and many locals to look there, and in the process to look away from the suffering within Cape Town, with the potential impact of numbing us into political inertia. The "Street Stories" documentaries produced a different iconography. These documentaries take audiences on a journey beyond the beautiful, reminding us of the sociopolitical realities across many sites of memory. They give audiences glimpses of what Steven High meant when he said: "Places are not simply points on a map, but exist in time as well. Memoryscapes make this fusion explicit."[36] For example, while speaking about the Trojan Horse shootings, Mr. G. A. seemed to be immersed in the memoryscape of Klipfontein and Thornton roads:

> Little boys picking up stones, and big men taking out guns at close range, practically where you are standing, shooting from the railway truck. And those houses where they fired on, for years that people didn't repair the house, the holes on the walls, the bullets, everybody went past and as we grew up and saw the holes, like a memory,

> looking at those holes that was young lives lost there and its quite sad . . . you look and we saw this memorial site, suddenly it just triggers a something, there your memory runs like a camera back, start getting little flashbacks.

This self-reflective and emotionally expressive interviewee is aware of his past and present surroundings. Perhaps he referred to the camera because there was one pointing at him? But his use of the camera as a metaphor of memory is apt, as he temporally tracks his memories from their past origins, through their changing significance and then arriving in the streets of the present. Memory flashbacks will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but his point that there are at times when a sequence of memory-images flicker and move in the human mind much like a movie is crucial. The presence of the past surrounded him within this familiar memoryscape where he sold factory reject clothes for a living and was being interviewed. While talking and crying he pointed to nearby Thornton Road, and his emotionally laden mental images of the shootings appeared to be too much to bear. The visceral memories of the shootings were flashing back in his mind and body here and now in front of the camera. This is a graphic example of embodied memory or, to put it differently, memory work as an embodied activity evident on film.

The facial expressions, body language, and movements of several of the "Street Stories" interviews strengthen the argument for on-site storytelling to continue in the places that people remember from direct experience. In the process, researchers can learn more about how people construct knowledge about themselves, their communities, and the places they have invested with meaning. Audiovisual oral histories for merely illustrative purposes have limited value. But if utilized for research and analysis of people in urban landscapes such as Klipfontein Road, involving several potential memoryscapes, this then provides ways to envision oral history as a means to analyze how people construct senses of place across changing times.

Over the past 20 years of doing research on communities and displaced peoples in Cape Town, I have continually grappled with the complex intersections between places/sites and displacement/mobility, between past and present. I remain convinced that attempts to understand the formation of community or place-based identities cannot be reduced to fixed belongings (or "roots") nor is it only about the celebration of travel and mobility, especially when the movement is forcibly imposed by oppressive regimes, wars, genocides, and involves the anguish of travel when there is no "home" to return to and there is no clear destination. Such is the plight of refugees (see Chapter 8).

For the "Street Stories" project, the bulk of the interviewees were South African citizens, either victims of apartheid displacements or descendents of victims. The stories of people racially classified and forcibly displaced out of inner-city suburbs and who now live and travel along Klipfontein Road frequently convey a sense of being "out of place."[37] These "out of place" feelings are probably even more pronounced for black African residents who lived through apartheid pass laws and were repeatedly told that they did not belong in Cape Town. "Feeling out-of-place" is repeatedly invoked in the present by parts of the city that look European, and by residential and nonresidential spaces where white and coloured faces are still dominant. Some

Figure 7.4 Street scene on Klipfontein Road. Photograph by Niklas Zimmer, Centre for Popular Memory Archive, University of Cape Town.

coloured residents, the tenuous majority in the city, express feelings of unease about the influx of black Africans. The political ideal of creating a culturally integrated post-apartheid city that is "a home for all" remains a major challenge. Yet for all the divisions, there are also historically entangled relationships between and across all cultures in the city. More specifically, on Klipfontein Road the intertwined lives of coloured and African working-class residents of the city are of central significance. This road is a culturally diverse public spine to the city.

Klipfontein Road involves mobile peoples and moving places. It is also a chain of sites of memory, a series of images reflecting social changes, or lack thereof, which people absorb as they stand at bus stops and taxi ranks, as they travel up and down the road, again and again. The "Street Stories" project framed various types of movements, but interviewees and researchers cannot make sense of these stories without understanding where and how people have attached themselves visually and emotionally to specific sites or places. For example, the racial ghettos forged by apartheid are still home for many. And yet, for many "the homes" they "lost" during apartheid are remembered as "home" as well. This is especially so for the older generations, who have traveled these roads for decades but mentally still travel back to the places they once knew before apartheid. Audiovisual oral history then opens up ways to understanding place-based memories and how people mentally map or locate their memories within the spaces they move across and along on this road. Klipfontein Road is a thin, taut thread that paradoxically divides and connects people, which runs down the middle of probably the most dominant post-apartheid memoryscape of the city: The Cape Flats.

Over time, people's senses absorb various stimuli from the public (and domestic) spaces they inhabit and in the process they internalize mental imagery and associated emotions from these external sources. Paula Hamilton is absolutely correct to argue for the need to develop an oral history of the senses.[38] If we begin to think through the senses, then the private/public binary is also revealed to be porous, like our skins and our eyes. The audiovisual recording of oral histories cannot capture all the senses, but it can provide ways to track differing movements. The term "moving places" frames and situates the different emotions and moods of interviewees within the atmosphere and imagery of specific landscapes. The term also aims to grasp how "places envelop people" and "places are in people." These places are created by peoples' memories of mobility, interactions, and emotional attachments, which are constituted through their imaginative framing of sensory information of changing spaces and times.

Sound recordings tend to stimulate the researcher's skills of historical imagination, but with audiovisual recordings, there is a wider sensory range with which to imaginatively engage. Intellectually spliced together, spoken words and moving images offer more potential evidence to work with in analyzing how moving places create memories in and between people. Thus it becomes possible, at least in part, for oral historians in this field of research to travel beyond the limits of logocentricism.

This chapter has contested the assumption that oral history research is best practiced—or should only be practiced—through sound recording. Most oral historians are understandably more familiar with sound recording, but this familiarity should not translate into perceiving these interviews as a purer or better form of oral history. Oral history interviews recorded solely with sound remain of central importance. And video cameras and new technologies should also not be treated with uncritical reverence. As I have argued, by embracing both sound and audiovisual technologies, we expand our recording and interpretive choices and open up more intellectual questions for oral history research, analysis, and debate.

The implications that audiovisual oral histories might have for the politics of oral history and voice is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Framing Notes III). But for oral historians who wish to use their methodology to bring about political change, I would suggest that, given the multimedia societies we now live in, the impulse to choose audiovisual oral history must become stronger. For our political or educational endeavors to be more effective, the public impact of oral history productions becomes a driving motive. Yes, print media, especially books and newspaper articles, will remain a crucial avenue for making political statements. But, most certainly in the South African context, audiovisual oral histories and the production of historical film documentaries have the potential to reach a far greater number of people and a wider generational and cultural diversity of audiences.

CHAPTER 8

"Others Killed in My Eyes"

Rwandan Refugee Testimonies from Cape Town

A sensitivity warning: this chapter contains oral histories of extreme violence. In 1994 approximately 850,000 Rwandans (mainly Tutsis and moderate Hutus) were murdered by extremist Hutu groups. During the genocide over 2 million Rwandans fled across the globe, and many found refuge in South African cities.[1] I visited Rwanda in 2003 and 2004,[2] which motivated me to do oral history interviews with refugees living in Cape Town.[3] This was a logical extension to my prior work on apartheid forced removals. The preceding chapters explored how people constructed sites of memory and moving places. In contrast, this chapter focuses on threats to memory, especially when the mental images of violence disrupt remembrance and oral narration. For example, the depth and distance of visual perception—and memories thereof—are compressed when interviewees said, "others killed in my eyes." At other moments, interviewees experienced flashback images of violence. Several authors have argued that this unstable imagery resists integration into memory.[4] If this interpretation is correct, what are the implications for both memory and oral history practice?

"The trauma question," as Luckhurst terms it in his book of the same title,[5] remains a perplexing problem for researchers across humanities disciplines. I aim to avoid approaching trauma as an external "infection" to the body. The biomedical history of the term "trauma" and, significantly, the fact that the phenomenon it refers to resists rational use in language are unresolved conceptual issues. This has led to debates around whether the term itself and also "trauma theories" should be used.[6] I return to these issues in the final chapters of this book, but here I focus on a specific impact of violence. I argue that traumatic traces not only reside as an "excess," outside of language, but are at times present as unframed images, laden with raw feelings that might complicate or shatter the symbolic functioning of imagination;

therefore, the ability to imaginatively hold images and words, which is central to meaning-making through remembrance, is in jeopardy. But trauma is neither meaningless nor unimaginable, although it might be experienced as if it were. More significantly, its elusive traces are manifest in the failure of imagining, remembering, and narration to integrate the self in a cohesive fashion. Past moments of disintegration and the fear of returning to that disaggregated emotional state are central to analyzing—but never fully grasping—what trauma is. The return of violent images from the genocide within the minds of Rwandan refugees while they navigate the challenges of how they are seen or not seen in post-apartheid spaces in Cape Town supplies evocative evidence of the limits to intellectual framing and the *imagining memories* argument.

Rwanda: A Brief Historical Background

Before the genocide, Hutus constituted approximately 89 percent of the population of Rwanda, Tutsis were 10 percent, and Twas were less than 1 percent. They shared the same language (*Kinyarawanda*) and followed similar religions and customs. When colonial territories were carved up at the Berlin conference of 1885, Rwanda was given to Germany. In 1926, the League of Nations gave trusteeship over Rwanda to Belgium. Due to the inept drawing of colonial boundaries around Rwanda and neighboring states, it is necessary to locate the genocide within the interlocking colonial and postcolonial histories of the Great Lakes region.[7] Under Belgian rule, the precolonial Tutsi kingdom was politically reinforced. Belgian colonists implemented identity cards to stipulate ethnicity. The measure to determine ethnicity was that those with ten or more cattle were Tutsi and those with fewer than ten cattle were Hutu, but views on the significance of cattle-ownership vary.[8] With the 1959 anticolonial uprisings, Belgian administrators shifted allegiance to Hutu political parties. At independence in 1962, Hutus dominated the organs of state but Tutsi/Hutu socioeconomic hierarchies were left intact in a context of overpopulation and a scarcity of arable and grazing land.

The First Independent Rwandan Republic from 1962 to 1972 and the Second Republic from 1972 to 1994 were both Hutu-dominated. In the 1970s and 1980s, President Habiyarimana steered a growing economy. But the crash of global coffee prices (Rwanda's main export) in 1989 was disastrous. The 1959 revolution—and the subsequent discrimination against Tutsis under the republics—triggered the fleeing of waves of predominantly Tutsi refugees into camps in Southern Uganda. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) emerged from these camps, and in 1990 they invaded North-East Rwanda, which started the civil war.

During the war and genocide, Tutsis were labeled as *inyenzi* (cockroaches) and "foreigners." A common chant was that the *inyenzi* should be thrown back into the river to return to Ethiopia. These potent myths were central to an ethnic absolutism articulated by Hutu Power propagandists, who emerged as a powerful faction within the ruling party during the civil war. Hutu Power utilized a racist colonial discourse

that identified Tutsis as the biblical descendents of whites: "By casting Hutu as "slow-witted" [and] Bantus and Tutsi as "quick-witted" Hamite invaders, Hamitism has contributed to the recurrent violence in Central Africa," Chris Taylor observed.[9] Hutu Power also exploited fears of a repeat of the Burundian genocide in 1972, in which Tutsi soldiers slaughtered 250,000 Hutus.[10]

On April 6, 1994, President Habiyarimana returned from peace talks with the RPF in Tanzania. As his plane approached Kigali Airport it was shot down. The subsequent rapid murder of moderate Hutu leaders suggests that the plane was shot down by Hutu Power extremists. Within hours, the extremists took control of the government and the genocide was implemented as a planned, conspiratorial operation.[11] A central tool for disseminating Hutu Power's ideas in the run-up to and during the genocide was the ethnocentric radio station: *Radio des Milles Collines* (One Thousand Hills Free Radio). But why did so many "ordinary" people participate in the killings? This question still casts the suspicious shadow over "all" Hutus as potential perpetrators.[12] Most of the refugees I interviewed are Hutu and were fearful of being accused of complicity in the genocide.

A Fieldwork Setting: Refugee Survival, Fears, and Xenophobia

> The war turned into another kind of war, because the question was no longer who is Tutsi or a Hutu, the question was to survive.[13]
>
> —*Mr. J. N.*

For most Rwandan refugees, the genocide was a terrifying chaos of armed conflict, killings, and rapes, through which thousands were displaced in multiple directions. Of those aiming south, some took route through Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and then South Africa; some came via the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Zambia, Zimbabwe, and then into South Africa; and others took variants of these journeys. Thousands spent years living in refugee camps in these countries. On road and on foot, most of the interviewees experienced further violence through criminal attacks while traveling. Some dreamt of South Africa being the land of gold but many were forewarned by stories that circulated back to the refugee camps. One refugee heard that "South African black people were really violent also really hurting foreigners and the South African white people did not like black people," which led him to ask, "How was I going to fit and make a living in South Africa?"[14] In comparing global patterns, South Africans "consistently emerge as the most hostile to immigration and to migrants."[15] Yet interviewees cited Cape Town's image as being "less violent" as a central motivation for choosing it as their destination.

Post-apartheid South African cities are marketed to global audiences as high-quality African tourist destinations. In the tourist-centered economy of Cape Town, tourists are welcome but refugees are not. Tourists arrive with foreign currency and stay for short periods, while refugees arrive with problems and stay for years. For the

usually impoverished refugees, accommodation in black working-class areas is more affordable, but these are the spaces where they are most likely to face xenophobia. African refugees arriving in Cape Town quickly learn how spaces are still shaped by apartheid legacies and the racial perceptions of South Africans. All the interviewees contrasted their visibility within black township areas with a sense of being invisible in predominantly white areas.[16] As Mr. J. N., a refugee, said, "I don't think they [that is, white South Africans] realize that we are from outside, they don't think we are different, they think we all look alike, but when a Xhosa person sees me, they will know, I don't look like them."[17] Although refugees might experience racist or xenophobic responses from white and coloured South Africans, this is a lesser threat than the reactions of some black working-class South Africans, who think foreigners are stealing their jobs, business, houses, and women. These perceptions are seemingly based on the erasure of links between apartheid racism and the current xenophobia.

Violent attacks on refugees reached crisis proportions in May 2008, when angry crowds in Johannesburg attacked African refugees: the official death count was over 60 and hundreds were injured. This triggered an exodus of African refugees in major South African cities, and local governments set up "security centres." By 2009, most of these centers had been closed and refugees "reintegrated" into local communities. However, refugee fears continue as attacks are still ongoing. As one refugee, Ms. C. B. put it, "I can tell you what I experience on a xenophobia is not what I experience in a war. It's better war than xenophobia."[18]

This is the context in which I set up interviews. I conducted eight interviews prior to the 2008 crisis and four in its aftermath. For understandable reasons, Rwandan refugees rarely consent to interviews. There is no singular Rwandan "community" for researchers to access. Refugee studies refer to "refugee networks."[19] What I confronted in Cape Town were several small Rwandan refugee networks, each containing fewer than twenty people. Some are dominated by young men, and others formed around fragmented families. These networks are loosely structured but some, around churches, are larger and more socially cohesive. Through repeated refusals by potential interviewees, I became aware of their fear of researchers. For example, Mr. C. K. said:

> If you go to Rwanda today and come back tomorrow, then some people they will never talk to you again, they say "You're a spy," that's why some people don't like to speak about our story. You, working for the government because that's our culture, that's how we are. Everyone is scary, I don't know what we can do to change, you lucky if you find anyone to talk to you. . . . They say, "You want to take my story, you go to the government, and the government come and pick me up," that's the problem. They don't believe you are professor doing research, no, no, they don't believe it, it's trust, we don't trust each other, from our country.[20]

The lack of trust between Rwandan refugees themselves and towards South Africans is pervasive. There are several reasons for this. First, a lack of trust related to experiences of displacement is very common for refugees around the world.[21] Second, Rwandan

refugees in South African cities have a vulnerable legal status—most are inside the country on temporary visas and some are illegal. Thirdly, most refugees work in very low-paying, casual forms of labor, often as car guards and cleaners, and are exposed to harsh socioeconomic circumstances. Fourth, living with the emotional legacies of the war and genocide often leads to refugees' emotional introversion and social withdrawal. And fifth, in the aftermath of the xenophobic crisis, although African refugees are mostly black, they primarily fear black South Africans. Yet many refugees speak of acts of kindness and support from black and white South Africans. My identities, as white South African male, triggered suspiciousness from some refugees but in many cases it seemed to be advantageous. For African refugees in South Africa, their primary question of others, unconsciously or consciously, is: "Can I trust you?"

In social and psychic terms these are vulnerable *and* resilient people. Many have rebuilt their lives post-war and post-genocide, but then have felt "destroyed" by the 2008 crisis. They live with multiple fears, including those generated by their daily struggles over basic necessities such as security, food, and shelter. The interviews I conducted before the 2008 crisis and those after revealed how close to the surface their memories of Rwandan violence were in the aftermath. In deciding what path to take in reconstructing their livelihoods, interviewees also grappled with inner conflicts that involved trying to find a safe place to sustain their own cultural identities.[22] For example, some interviewees have been in South Africa for more than a decade and regard it as a second home. But the heightened xenophobia during the 2008 crisis disrupted this sense of belonging and reevoked fears and anxieties. At times refugee fears have clear foci but, given their precarious lives and how they are treated by South Africans, the difference between what is fear and what is anxiety is difficult to decipher.[23]

In interviewing refugees, I often sensed that there was more to be said, but either the interviewee was too frightened to articulate these feelings or lacked the second language ability to describe more. Or was it that I was not asking the right questions or I was not the appropriate person to be interviewing this interviewee? Although they were often unanswerable at the time, I keep grappling with these questions. In some interviewing moments, in order to imagine the "unimaginable," as researchers we need to push ourselves through the limits of what is emotionally unbearable to us. Interviewing refugees has been an emotionally raw process. Given their vulnerabilities, should I have been doing oral history interviews with these refugees? This question constantly troubled me, especially during the refugee crisis of 2008. At times it was distressing for both parties, but in meaningful moments such as a look in their eyes, many people do realize and are appreciative that someone is bearing witness to their stories and suffering.

Eyewitness Testimonies: Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling Violence

Eyewitness testimonies of violence cannot be assumed to be more reliable than those that are not directly witnessed.[24] Given the points indicated at the outset to this

chapter, in interpreting these testimonies I wish to avoid using trauma as a foundational narrative that explains all. Moreover, trauma cannot be referred back to an original event, but rather it shapes the relationship between the violent past(s) and moment(s) of remembering in unpredictable ways.[25] Although there is a growing literature in the area, there is also a lack of conceptual understanding of the specific ways violence intersects with culture.[26]

Through life story interviews, I learned that the prewar/pre-genocide circumstances of rural and traditional cultural worlds provided an internal sense of coherence, place, and security for interviewees. Although this period was idealized by most interviewees, what is more significant is that they created "inner landscapes" from their senses of external cultural and physical environments, which shaped their senses of self and identity.[27] But the violence of "limit experiences"[28] during the genocide severely destabilized the culturally framed landscapes and traditions that existed before. Through times of upheaval and transition, new cultural forms are produced, which Raymond Williams referred to as "structures of feelings."[29] For example, there are hundreds of thousands of bodies that cannot be identified and given culturally appropriate individual burials in post-genocide Rwanda.[30] Nonetheless, interviewees frequently turned to prior cultural traditions to process their emotions. Female interviewee J. M. said,

> It was before 1994, I remember each and every time. I used to cry so much I used to get sick. My mother used to tell me to stop crying because in my culture we believe that, when someone is crying so much, actually it, actually can cause some one else's death, things like death. So *ja,* I remember that there, there was fighting, people were so scared.[31]

Her mother's advice placed a greater burden on her, as she struggled with the uncertainties of the war, the genocide, and its aftermath. And in a different example, Mr. J. N. said, "The cry of the man falls into his stomach. Men may cry but you must never show your tears outside."[32] Within post-genocide Rwanda, there has been growing acceptance for women and men to openly mourn their losses, but the above testimonies indicate how pre-genocide gendered cultural formations still have considerable influence. For refugees outside the country, however, opportunities for public remembering and mourning are severely limited. There is also research demonstrating that deliberate forgetting is a way of surviving posttraumatic effects.[33]

Bearing in mind these emergent cultural and memory patterns, I turn to stories from the genocide. On April 6, 1994, a mixture of fears and hopes for peace prevailed, but the president's assassination still came as a dramatic shock. Ms. J. N. reported:

> We saw the flames of the plane. My mom said, "That could be the President's plane." We switched on the radio and heard it was. . . . After two hours we heard screaming of people, that's how we remember that day.[34]

Mr. C. K. recalled:

> We were scared, our President is dead. Outside we see the people, everyone is killing. We don't know what to do, that was very bad . . . guys around here are killing Tutsi people. My Mum say, "We stay here if they come and kill us, we die, if they don't we live." We stay at home like that, never, never go outside . . . Once we inside the house, we heard the voice, "Here, here kill him, kill him," we see someone running, the people running, they catch him, I don't know.[35]

The interviewees witnessed death from different vantage points. In some cases the vantage point was distant, as in seeing the president's plane burn or hearing the screams. In these situations, the violence was not seen but heard. Yet hearing these sounds stimulated an imagining of that violence that might have been as terrifying as seeing these events. This is particularly the case for the above interviewees, who were children at the time. In the first few weeks, as instructed, many families tried to stay indoors, but people soon ventured out either to avoid capture or to get food and other necessities. In the confusion, there were many reasons to fear for one's life. Mr. J. C., although Hutu, was terrified because:

> Tutsis friends just come to my house, to hide and think my family can save them. There were three guys my family did manage to hide them and when they, the soldiers suspect that this family is hiding Tutsis . . . then that family, okay the mother and father of those ladies, they say, "We don't want to be killed." . . . "We are going outside, just to try and protect our children." One of my brothers come and put them in a car, they stop my brother and took the parents of the children and I heard that they threw them in the toilet of the primary school.[36]

He repeatedly, at unrelated interview moments, referred to their deaths by saying, "They threw them in the toilet." He did not see these killings but he imagines and re-imagines their deaths.[37]

In contrast, there were the examples of direct eyewitness testimony. The deliberate killing of United Nations soldiers during the first week of the genocide was an infamous event. This massacre had the desired effect that most foreign embassies and agencies withdrew their personnel from Rwanda, allowing genocidal killers greater freedom to implement plans. The following interviewee, Ms. J. M., was nine years old at the time:

> The worst part I remember is about the ten UN soldiers that actually died in the camp [the army camp where her family lived]. Actually I was there, they were killed . . . they shot them, they only killed the white ones. They left the black ones. When you are in that position you are not really thinking, you are traumatized, that was the only killing I saw.[38]

Her vantage point as eyewitness was immediate, but she was seemingly ignored by adult protagonists as a child witness to their actions. When asked for more details, her images and feelings seemed frozen in "not thinking" but being there, staring at these murders taking place before her. Alternatively, there were interviewees with mental snapshots of being in the midst of the frenetic movement of people propelled by fear. And as Mr. J. B. put it, "If we are not moving, we are dying."[39] Mr. J. N. said,

> So I saw the dead bodies but I never really see anybody being executed or killed in front of my eyes you know. That's one thing I struggled with . . . you could see the bodies were all over, when I was traveling from Kigali heading west the bodies were all over, the bodies.[40]

In the confusion of people moving in different directions, the *Interhamwe*[41] youth militias used roadblocks as a device to identify and capture victims. Killings at the roadblock were ubiquitous. Being able to "prove" your pure ethnicity and political affiliations was critical to surviving roadblock checks. Given the extremist obsession with ethnic purity they interpreted physical appearances—Tutsis were supposedly tall and slender, and Hutus were supposedly short and stocky—as crucial in determining who they would kill or not kill. While thousands were killed because their identity document indicated "Tutsi," many were killed because they "looked Tutsi." Three interviewees with mixed parentage and who "looked Tutsi" were caught in this dangerous position. Interviewee H. T.'s father was Hutu and his mother was Tutsi, and hence he would have been identified as Hutu (although he refused to define himself in these terms). Caught at a roadblock, beaten, stabbed and left for dead on a pile of bodies, he remembered

> memory of losing family, flashbacks, and women leapt in my eyes, women killed, the knife and gun in private parts. People dead still lying there after four days, their back has dogs eating their flesh. Over and over, others killed in my eyes. In my eyes . . . waiting to be killed. That smell, the hospital, being in the roadblock, everyone, someone had to die. People, they are taking people from the mountains and bring them there and kill them there, so you can see, those young guys taking women by force. Women raped by ten, eleven people. Some cut with machete here [on the chest] . . . He is there [referring to himself] for four days can you imagine the smell?[42]

The volatile images of "others killed in my eyes" impose an emotional intensity, as if his mind's eye collapsed a sense of visual depth and distance. It is *as if* in the moment of recalling these images, the temporal distance between "then and there" and "here and now" is obliterated. And in the way he narrates these memories, it is as if he is consumed by these images that are seemingly replaying on the internal surface of his eyes now.

Without direct prompting, most interviewees spoke of "seeing," "not seeing," "being seen" or being "seen as." I cannot unpack all the different dimensions of visual

perception and memories here. But there is an underlying emotional dimension that I will focus on: fear. For example, during the genocide, reliable information about family, friends, and the political situation was scarce, and this heightened the chaotic terror experienced. The local UN commander Romeo Dalliare described how "mass hysteria ran unchecked."[43] And across all the interviews I conducted, it was repeatedly evident how myriad fears—from childhood fears to war, to genocide, to criminal attacks while traveling, to xenophobia in South Africa—compounded and fed each other. Over time, Linda Green notes, this "experience of chronic fear wears down one's sensibility to it. The reutilization of fear undermines one's confidence in interpreting the world."[44] This indicates that the imaginative capacities of refugees to comprehend and process their visual perceptions and emotions into forms of memory were under acute stress. In the midst of all these fears, and potentially because of them, refugees experienced uncontrolled visual bursts in their minds, known as "flashbacks."

"Trauma" in the Mind's Eye: The Limits to *Imagining Memories*

For oral historians, events that are remembered but are not spoken of are usually referred to as "silences." But by encouraging interviewees, especially those who have experienced violence, to describe the mental images beneath these silences, more can be learned about trauma, memory, and testimony. Photographic analysis looks at how the photograph was taken and what exists outside the frame of the photograph; how can oral historians interpret the mental snapshots taken by the mind's eye? There is no one-to-one correlation between photographs and the mental images of memory, but there are lessons that oral historians can learn from visual historians. For example, Hayes and Bank note that "the visual, as distinct from the written or spoken word . . . is mediated to viewers in a different way to language by virtue of its direct sensory impact . . . its direct route to one of the senses."[45] Historical photographs are often "raw," both as "unprocessed" images and in the emotional responses they evoke, Edwards observes.[46] Similarly, before memories are constituted and oral narration occurs, there is the raw material of already mediated mental images, feelings, and words. But for visual perceptions and feelings to be constituted as memories, they need to be constructed through imaginative framing. Moreover, people's *inner landscapes* and senses of self therein provide the fundamental structures to hold and understand new sensory information constructed into memories. But what if the extreme sensory impact of atrocities violently exceeds the frames of reference that most individuals and groups used prior to these events?[47]

Given the past violence and recent violence experienced by Rwandan refugees, the classic definition of trauma as an event involving a rupture or wound to the inner/outer boundaries of the self seems insufficient. Susannah Radstone argues that we need to reconceptualize "the inside/outside world binary."[48] Traumatic ruptures occur because of the sensory onslaught produced by violent events, but that does

not help us to understand why individuals who have the same experiences might or might not thereafter display posttraumatic symptoms. This compels us to analyze what senses of self and what subjective histories shaped people prior to this violence. The coping mechanisms and inner resources people have vary from person to person, and therefore their capacities to deal with such violent occurrences also vary. These complexities lead Ulrich Baer to suggest that "trauma seems to result from the mind's inability to edit and place an event within a coherent mental, textual, or historical context."[49] In this conception, trauma might be triggered by specific events, but it is not the result of the force or quantity of external violence. Rather, it is the manner in which violence registers within the mental landscapes that might result in the imaginative capacities that frame emotional responses to social experiences to be compromised or potentially shattered. This has consequences for memory formation. The most compelling evidence of the limits to imagining memories is reflected in flashbacks. Levy and Lemma observe:

> In the aftermath of trauma, painful and disturbing images, thoughts, and feelings are often unable to be held in the mind in a way that distinguishes them from the actual reality of the event. They cannot be contained as memories. Instead these thoughts and images become concrete live flashbacks that typically intrude into consciousness as a literal re-experiencing of the event.[50]

Is the conscious mind strong enough to frame and hold these images and feelings of violence as forms of memory? This inability to imaginatively hold, place, and sequence emotionally laden images signals the corrosive impact of violence on the symbiotic relationship between imagination and memory, and the possibility of trauma. Luckhurst speculates:

> The visual intrusion reoccurs because linguistic and memorial machineries completely fail to integrate or process the traumatic image. Perhaps, then, it is in the image that psychic registration of trauma truly resides?[51]

This might be the case, but flashbacks and other mental images of violence cannot be explained in referential terms to the past context. It is potentially more useful to approach these images as emotional *associations* with past violence.[52] The irruptive and repetitive return of flashbacks into consciousness suggests that they are visual bursts propelled by emotions that demand attention and signification. These volatile images reappear because the emotional content they "represent" remains unbearable and unthinkable. Flashbacks of violence are not a failure to represent, but forceful psychic attempts to represent dreaded emotional content that exists outside of language and memory. As Jaqueline Rose suggests, "something arises in excess when there is something else you cannot bear to think about."[53] In clinical terms, the mind's unconscious and conscious defenses can repress, displace, or suppress such content, but flashbacks defy these defenses. In visual terms, the mind's eye has the capacity to creatively mediate images from prior visual perceptions and emotions. This also

involves a capacity to filter or disinvest the emotions attached to these images. But when there are unbearable emotional sources involved, such as trauma, the mind's eye *potentially* faces a crisis of filtering, framing, and loss of control. The formlessness of flashbacks, in the moments they occur, contradicts the notion of "image" as a framed entity. In psychoanalytic terms, more information about the person's prior childhood, family, and cultural experiences is required, in order to understand what these flashbacks of post-violent images represent to specific trauma survivors in the present.[54] In contrast to flashbacks, imagine the following example that an interviewee gave:

> My cousin was working in the hospital. I was with her in the residence and then she had a room at the campus, a small room there, I was with her there. Her name was Odette. And it was really as big trouble there. [I was] eight months pregnant when you hear the bomb comes to lie down on your tummy…Then they kick me and then get what you have. What if you are a girl? They start to rape them. But I was lucky I was not raped because I was pregnant. And then they come to rape my cousin in front of my eyes. With a gun they keep quiet. It was an image that I cannot get out of my head.[55]

This horrific image seems frozen in her mind's eye. As with the earlier interviewee, the visual perception of depth and distance are collapsed. Here the mind's eye remembers an image that is resistant to being erased or forgotten. In another horrific story, imagine what Ms. S. H. went through as a six-year-old during the genocide:

> I went in a cupboard, I was watching everything, they kill my mother and three sisters…I was inside that cupboard, I saw them, they didn't find me…I saw them, I was crying inside but the voice was not coming out. I was a stupid, I didn't have a mind…I wait until nine o'clock that night [*that is, she spent four hours in the cupboard*].[56]

Her experience of muteness and not having "a mind" suggests a disassociated state due to the extreme violence witnessed firsthand. She also repeatedly said, "I saw them" (the killers), but did not describe the details of what she saw, and I did not ask. She spoke freely in fluent English, at times in tears, and at other times in a numbed monotone. What she saw happening to her family then and what she now remembers is saturated with various emotions. With this interviewee and others, the "breakdown of symbolic functioning" produced by trauma is clearly evident.[57] When symbolic functioning breaks down so do our capacity to imagine "as if" scenarios, such as senses of time and space, and our ability to be able to emotionally distance ourselves from the violent event. Remembrance might also be momentarily "lost," because the person cannot psychically bear to mold these images and feelings into a stable frame or a narrative sequence of frames that can be thought or spoken.

There are different kinds of mental images of violence. These can be haphazardly jarring, piercing, or bursting, or alternatively floating or frozen or locked in

stasis. It is the involuntary movement or lack of movement of mental imagery that is significant. What makes these images terrifying is not only the violence experienced in the past but, more significantly, the fact that the experience of remembering these images and their related bearable and unbearable emotional content in these moments is *outside the person's control*. The mind's eye—usually appreciated for its creative capacities—becomes a fearful source, projecting images and feelings about violence that trauma survivors would prefer to leave behind them, but that return involuntarily and repeatedly.

At times, the intensity of these mental images might be minimal or reduced, but at other times such as the refugee crisis of 2008, the cumulative effects of past fears threaten to return. Refugees' ongoing exposure to xenophobic violence and threats of more violence translate into a terrifying collage of images and feelings. There is an extraordinary range of fears that potentially dominates the lives of most refugees in South Africa: anxiety, nervousness, panic, terror, unease, and many more. Underlying these forms of fear, there are also, perhaps, echoes of archaic childhood feelings such as "disintegration anxiety."[58] Repeated violence, its aftermaths, and the various fears that it reevokes from the past trigger a more basic threat: the threat of self-disintegration or fragmentation or implosion. These overwhelming fears can then culminate in what Maxwell Sucharov calls "the freezing of the victim in the non-dialogic space, thereby shattering his or her capacity to generate meaning."[59]

In order for victims and survivors of violence to work through the post-violence impact, they need safe dialogic spaces to imagine and link frames that will hold this visual/emotional content in their minds. It is this kind of dialogic process that might help an individual to feel more emotionally contained and, by composing words, sentences, and stories, to make sense of what he or she has framed as "memories." This might involve binding violent image and unbearable emotion together as an imagined thought; thinking the unthinkable and for a moment feeling a sense of self-cohesion. Is it then possible to repair the imaginative capacity to symbolize and to hold meanings? Oral history dialogues might facilitate such moments, but the limits of oral history must be acknowledged. The clinical treatment of survivors is of course a specialized long-term job for trauma counselors and psychotherapists (see Chapter 9).

Recording oral histories of violence involves listening to and seeing people whose lives are suffused with much pain, sadness, fear, and other emotions. This is difficult for both interviewee and interviewer. The fieldwork process with refugees, especially in the aftermath of the South African refugee crisis, left me feeling sore, sad, and guilty, feeling as if I failed the interviewees. When dealing with testimonies of violence, both parties might, at times, feel "helpless" or might feel like failures, because of the haunting weight of unframed feelings that circulate in these dialogues. There were intersubjective moments when I could not emotionally hold in my mind the intense mixture of images and feelings that interviewees were unable to hold in theirs. Acknowledging this made me realize that neither they nor I had failed. I helped them frame what they could manage, but there remains so much more to remember and to say. Like artists who represent violence, oral historians and other

researchers working with testimonies of violence need to develop the "capacity to tolerate intensities of experience of oscillation between knowing and not-knowing, coherence and fragmentation within themselves, in order to be able to represent such states externally," Michael Rustin observes.[60] Through an empathic vision, historical writers can imaginatively synthesize interviewees' stories, but an "excess," especially when painful feelings are involved, will resist historical frames of understanding, Jill Bennett notes.[61]

In concluding, I want to mention again the refugees in South Africa, for whom it is safer to forget or to seek "invisibility" and for whom it is risky to speak about their pasts. Oral historians know the importance of learning from interviewees, but we can learn also from the fears of those who refuse to be interviewed and those that are unable to express particular memories because of trauma. This argument is both depressing *and* hopeful if it is possible to hold onto the psychoanalytic idea that, as Roger Luckhurst writes, "if trauma is a crisis in representation, then this generates narrative *possibility* just as much as *impossibility*."[62] Although I have agreed with authors who argue that trauma as a concept cannot be applied in referential or foundational terms, I do not agree that avoiding the term "trauma" is wise.[63] For many but not all victims and survivors of violence, there are peculiar emotional and visual responses through the mind's eye that are best described as traces of trauma. What writing this chapter has taught me is that if oral historians are to better understand how violence affects memory and narrative, we must expand both our emotional vocabulary and our visual vocabulary (and of course, the interconnections and disconnections between these forms of expression). By integrating these vocabularies, we can make insightful contributions to the movements between the emotional traces and the visual traces that disrupt the imagining of memories but also leave open creative and regenerative possibilities.[64]

PART III

Conclusions without Closure

Framing Notes III: The Politics of Memory, Oral History, and Voice

> For memory is, by definition, a term which directs our attention not past but to *the past–present relation.* It is because "the past" has this living active existence in the present that it matters so much politically.[1]
>
> —Popular Memory Group, "Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method"

The Popular Memory Group's argument about the politics of memory influenced the thinking and naming of the Centre for Popular Memory (CPM) at the University of Cape Town in 2001. Since then the CPM (website, www.popularmemory.org.za) has achieved project successes with diverse community structures such as arts centers, schools, museums, radio and television stations, and partnerships with academic and archival institutions across the globe. But recently, my colleagues and I have been reflecting on the intellectual heritage that shaped the CPM. At its outset, the CPM was inspired by Alessandro Portelli, Luisa Passerini, Alistair Thomson, and a generation of socialist and progressive intellectuals who shaped international oral history from the 1960s to the 1990s. These trends also influenced a generation of South African oral historians: Belinda Bozzoli, Philip Bonner, Bill Nasson, and others. However, in the past decade, South African oral historians, including the CPM, have shifted energies towards training, capacity-building, and various post-apartheid research projects.

These altered priorities are important, but there are two tensions with political implications that concern me here. First, while popular memories have latent

political value, oral history methodology is not inherently political or radical. As Alexander Freund put it, "If we talk about oral history as a method, I think we can agree that it is a neutral tool than can be used for both, subversive tales and master narratives."[2] Second, as William Gumede and Leslie Dikeni note, "At issue is the question of how progressive intellectuals who fought in the liberation struggle should relate to a democratic government that has demanded absolute loyalty behind its nation-building project."[3] These two tensions overlap in the post-apartheid context and compel me to argue that South African oral historians need to reconsider their roles as public intellectuals. We need to interrogate how critical voices have become muted; and how this affects the politics of memory, oral history, and voice; and their appropriation by the master narratives of the post-apartheid nation-state.

In 2008, when Portelli gave a seminar at the District Six Museum in Cape Town, he was asked from the floor: "Has oral history become trendy and lost its critical and subversive edge?" He responded by suggesting that it was less that oral history had lost its subversive edge and rather that it has become "more respectable." These questions and the discussion led me to write a debate input for the International Oral History Association (IOHA) website (www.iohanet.org), which in turn led to an IOHA conference panel in Prague in 2010.

I argued that if oral history methodology has become respectable, that is a positive phenomenon insofar as it refers to its growing intellectual legitimacy, but it has negative implications if oral historians are less critical of discrimination and oppression that occurred in the past and is occurring present. If oral history is to do justice to its democratizing and anti-discriminatory ethics, as Verena Alberti put it, "we can be intellectual activists."[4] I concluded the IOHA debate input by arguing that

> reaching a state of "respectability" is fine. Provided we do not lose sight of the radical or democratic intentions that motivated so many of us to do oral history projects in the first place. Provided we continue to keep the dynamism of oral story-telling alive in how we disseminate stories and memories through multiple mediums. Provided we continually critique ourselves and strive to learn from each other. But most of all we need to remain open to learning from story-tellers, who remain our primary site(s) of inspiration. How we understand and draw from the creativity inherent in dialogues with story-tellers should motivate us to continue the process of conceptual reflection and debate on the stories they tell each other and us.[5]

There is also a larger question, given changing global and local contexts, of how oral historians can contribute to new forms of political thinking that move beyond promises of popular emancipation and redemption. Lyn Abrams has argued that the political roles of oral historians have shifted over the past three decades from their "activist-orientation" with a predominant socialist or feminist vision to the current advocacy and development roles that oral history plays.[6] However, redemptive notions still dominate in South African politics. Oral history advocacy (or intellectual activism) in post-apartheid South Africa has to face squarely the frustrating realities of what I have termed the "politics of disappointment" (see Chapter 10). In

a similar vein, Gumede and Dikeni argue that "the democratic state, even after all the human resources invested in it . . . has proved a disappointment in its failure to meet the demands of the most vulnerable in society."[7]

I now write as a disappointed South African, angered by what the African National Congress (ANC) became during the Thabo Mbeki years. I say that knowing full well that there have been enormous achievements in post-apartheid South Africa in which the ANC has been central. In 2004 I broke allegiance with the ANC. This is no simple matter of changing voting preferences, but, as former United Democratic Front (UDF) and ANC activist, it is a painful act that is akin to disowning one's parents or rather, separating from my political parents. I know that there are many others who feel similarly, some who have broken from the ANC and some who remain in the ANC, despite their disappointments, largely because there is no apparent political alternative.

The disappointments of the post-apartheid transition are directly linked to the ANC's morphing from liberation movement to a modern political party, where chauvinism and corruption are endemic. Various corruption revelations since the late 1990s, beginning with the arms scandal and then President Mbeki's mismanagement of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, are major examples. The politics of post-apartheid transition and memory are shaped by a toxic mixture of cultural essentialism and narcissism, which I discuss in Chapter 10. During the Mbeki years 1999–2008, critical debate was stifled and any view that did not fit the ANC's racialized framing of the "transformation agenda" was dismissed as "racist" or "unpatriotic." Under current president Jacob Zuma, democratic institutions are strong, but criticisms of the ANC (conceived of as identical to "the state") are still interpreted as "disloyalty." As Jonathan Jansen puts it, "our young democracy still finds it difficult to reconcile criticality and loyalty, South Africa pays a heavy price for such small-mindedness when it could otherwise be enriched by the municipality of voices on any subject."[8]

How then might a new politics of memory, oral history, and voice in post-apartheid South Africa be imagined? In the period since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), many oral history students have been drawn to oral history less for political reasons than because they wish to use oral history as a means to "heal" post-apartheid sufferings. In Chapter 9, I express my scepticism about using redemptive TRC approaches to trauma and healing, and I explore the problems with blurring these "healing" and "political" motivations within oral history projects. Whatever the political persuasion or style of approach adopted by oral historians, people's suffering has to be approached with acute sensitivity, and there is a central core to oral history practice that remains constant. The methodology provides dialogic spaces, inside and outside the interview, for oral historians to engage on multiple levels with the living agents of history. But to consider these possibilities anew, I think the foundational political myth of oral history, "giving voice to the voiceless," needs to be deconstructed.

In the contemporary South African context, this rhetorical phrase sounds patronizing. It also does little justice to the significant work oral historians across the

globe have done in interpreting a variety of voices and their constitution, especially the challenges that marginalized people face in expressing themselves. In my view, how civil society voices are silenced or undermined or appropriated should remain fundamental priorities for oral and public historians. That noted, I think that while oral historians do not dialogue with "voiceless" people, I have frequently encountered people who have come to believe they have no voice. In many instances, this is directly linked to individuals or groups *feeling as if* they are not worthy of recognition and validation. In other cases, marginalized people might retain the belief that they have a voice, but might be aware that they are not being heard by various powerful audiences. Notions of voice are directly related to senses of self, but not in an atomized way; they are dynamically constructed within intersubjective relationships across family, community, religious institutions, work and other sites. To feel then, as if you are voiceless is a painful emotional state, directly linked to senses of self-image and worth. Moreover, there is a distinction between private and public voice, as well as and links between them. Many marginalized communities have had their public voices silenced, but it is fundamental that oral historians be aware of the latent possibilities of transforming private voices (with their memories, ideas, and knowledge) into stronger public voices with agency and value to themselves and others.

For example, for oral historians to elicit stories in the post-apartheid context involves being sensitively aware that "the self that speaks" is consciously or unconsciously asking to be recognized. As Fiona Ross argues, "A sense of instability and unpredictability in the world is echoed in linguistic forms that have the power to destabilize one's sense of self and placement in the world."[9] What oral historians reflect can confirm or alter regarding what people think their value is refers not only to their memories but to the self-articulating voice that speaks and performs itself. There will be both successful and unsuccessful dialogues. In my view, neither curative healing nor automatic empowerment can be achieved in oral history dialogues. To promise either is to set up oral history for failure. When working with vulnerable groups or communities, there is an increased risk that the oral historian—or other researchers—might disappoint or evoke painful emotions in "human research subjects." This requires sharpened attention to research ethics, not for bureaucratic or institutional reasons, but for the sake of both the researched and researchers, with a view to improving how we learn from each other.

Oral historians also do not have the authority "to give voice." At best, as Michael Frisch argued, we might achieve a "shared authority."[10] We can contribute to enabling people's confidence in their articulation of privately held memories and views into publicly voiced expressions. Our capacity for empathic imagination and engagement, as I have signaled in prior chapters, unfolds through sensitive questioning, listening, and mirroring and has the potential to assign value to memories, stories, and voices. Intersubjective dialogues between researchers and storytellers and might change their understandings of past and present lives and might have a regenerative influence on storytellers. But in my view, the power of oral history is not in grand ideas about empowerment, but rather in engaging with people's complex subjective worlds

(without crossing personal or ethical boundaries) in ways that allow them to continue speaking for themselves. Narrators will always be constrained, to some degree, by the oral history dialogue, power relations, language, public myths, and cultural conventions; but through memory and narrative work, possibilities reside where people can articulate their desires, learn new ideas about themselves, and regenerate the motivation to empower themselves within and beyond these structures.

When all phases of research are completed, what then? In most cases, the oral historian's challenge is how to disengage respectfully and sensitively, without rupture. This is especially difficult after evocative interviews with people who continue to suffer in the present. Post-interview letters, visits, and gifts of appreciation are important acknowledgments. But as oral and public historians know, what is most important is for interviewees and narrators to see or hear themselves in books, exhibitions, radio, films, and various other public platforms. Even then, for individual researchers, the time to separate and move on to the next project is professionally appropriate but remains an emotionally difficult dimension of oral history work. Oral historians cannot always "be there" for people. This is one version of a rescue fantasy that many of us, including myself, have fallen prey to during research encounters with people who are suffering. But neither should oral historians dispense with sociopolitical aims, if we have these—aims to contribute to developmental change, social justice, and democracy.

I think that community institutions are better placed than university-based intellectuals to strive for these goals by utilizing participatory models of oral history and memory work. As discussed in chapters 5 and 9, the District Six Museum in Cape Town remains a shining example of how to provide longer-term support and spaces for social regeneration. The success of the museum, in part, involves regenerating self-worth and community identity, through reconnecting former residents with each other. This also involves placing people—their selves and their identities—on symbolic and literal maps of Cape Town. The District Six community and museum is a model of hope for many communities across South Africa. As Ciraj Rassool rightly puts it:

> In arguing that the social reconstruction of District Six needs to be informed by its history, the District Six Museum has created a space of reflection, annunciation and memorial that insists on the possibility of self representation in South African public culture. This will ensure that the process of reconstructing and re-membering District Six will not only occur through the work of experts.[11]

Finally, for South African oral historians to rethink potential contributions to post-apartheid politics of memory and oral history requires reflecting deeply on what constitutes the relationship and shifts between private voice and public voice for the most vulnerable in our society. This also means constant self-critique of how dialogues with diverse communities and the dissemination and archiving of their stories happen. I believe that oral historians must reengage in public intellectual advocacy and debates about democracy, poverty, and post-apartheid legacies. A withdrawal from

significant public debates into isolated academic or policy work is insufficient. My final chapter is therefore critical of how the ANC has reimagined the nation-state, and talks about its failures and disappointments. These post-apartheid trends compel those oral historians—inside and outside universities—who have a commitment to anti-discriminatory ethics and democracy, to speak to power, again and again.

CHAPTER 9

Beyond "Healing"

Oral History, Trauma, and Regeneration

All traumatic experiences are painful.[1] But not all painful experiences are traumatic. "Trauma" refers to the rupturing of an individual's sense of internal and external worlds, which leaves posttraumatic legacies such as dissociation, depression, and hypersensitivity.[2] Trauma may be caused by an event or by a context. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) offered "healing" to the survivors of "gross human rights abuse" under apartheid. While I acknowledge the challenges faced by the TRC, in this chapter I critique its conceptions and applications of "healing."[3] Following on from this argument, in the post-TRC context I ask: When they are faced with stories of human rights abuse, can oral historians also claim to heal?[4] I draw on examples from interviews I conducted with both South Africans and Rwandans who experienced historical trauma through the racist and ethnocentric violence perpetrated during apartheid and during the Rwandan genocide. "Historical trauma" refers to experiences and legacies of specific past events that puncture the psychic defenses of the self.[5] My focus is on memories of violent experiences from these historically distinctive but not unique episodes.[6] I argue for the importance of containing the emotions and moods of the oral history dialogue; empathically imagining the experiences of trauma survivors; and disseminating their stories to multiple audiences. Oral history will neither heal nor cure, but it offers subtle support to interviewees' efforts to recompose their sense of self and to regenerate agency.

"Healing" and the TRC

The South African TRC is probably the most well-known truth commission in the world. Since World War II there have been 16 "truth commissions" and another 21

"historical" type commissions in a wide range of countries, including Guatemala, Chile, Argentina, and Nepal.[7] The TRC emerged from a negotiated political compromise between the apartheid regime and liberation movements during the period 1990 to 1994. The TRC had the task of "establishing as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature and extent of the gross human rights violations which were committed during the period from March 1, 1960, to the cut-off date (May 10, 1994)."[8] The TRC began in December 1995, delivered its Final Report in 1998, and wound up operations by 2001.

The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No. 34 of 1995, which mandated the TRC, does not use the term "healing" at all, but refers to the "restoration of human and civil dignity."[9] The Government of National Unity expected the TRC to be a means to forge social cohesion in a post-apartheid context racked with sociopolitical divisions, violence, traumatized individuals and communities, economic recession, and widespread poverty. As then President Nelson Mandela said: "Only by knowing the truth can we hope to heal the terrible wounds of the past that are the legacy of apartheid. Only the truth can put the past to rest."[10]

Throughout most of its public proceedings, a TRC banner proclaimed: "The TRC: Healing the Nation." It had the difficult task of encouraging a range of conflicting audiences to participate in proceedings. The TRC took 21,298 written statements relating to 37,672 human rights violations, from which 2200 people gave oral testimony in public forums.[11] At the first victim hearing, the head of the TRC, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, said:

> We pray that all those people who have been injured in either body or spirit may receive healing through the work of this commission . . . We are charged to unearth the truth about our dark past. To lay the ghosts of that past, so that they will not return to haunt us and that we will hereby contribute to the healing of a traumatized and wounded people. For all of us in South Africa are a wounded people.[12]

Commentators within and outside the TRC repeatedly stated that "healing" would "lay to rest," "settle," or "bury" the past. But these conceptions ahistorically sever or manipulate the past–present relationship. As Mamphela Ramphele rationalized it, "A medical metaphor best captures what I perceive to be the issues facing us in relation to 'appeasing the past.' An abscess cannot heal properly unless it is thoroughly incised and cleaned out."[13]

Richard Wilson critiqued this biomedical conception because, he noted, "The TRC constructed a collectivist view of the nation as sick body, which could be ritually cured in the TRC hearings. . . . Individual psychological process cannot be reduced to national process."[14] The central means to this "healing" was the catharsis of victim testimonies; with extensive media broadcasting, the public were to vicariously share in the healing and identify with the "new South Africa."[15]

The victim hearings had a profound impact on the South African public, but the complex dynamics of testifying on this "stage" require careful analysis of both "front" and "backstage" operations of the TRC.[16] Although some victims who testified

claimed to have experienced healing, others felt exploited by the appropriation of their stories for political aims.[17] Similarly, Belinda Bozzoli argued, "In the very act of defining a public realm . . . a new silencing and seclusion began to emerge, through the silences of the hearing and the partial appropriation of what was said by a nationalist discourse."[18] Fiona Ross critiques the gendered silences and framing of women and men's testimonies in these forums.[19] While there was value in the cathartic release of emotions to an empathic TRC staff, the idea of cathartic healing suggests an oral purging of a sick body riddled with traumatic "secrets," and the belief that therapeutic processes can enable victims to "master the past."[20] The TRC was aware that there is "no quick fix to healing the nation"[21] but their catharsis model risked raising people's hopes of being completely "cured" through "forgiveness." These notions were explicit within the vocabulary of Archbishop Tutu:

> We have stared the beast of our dark past in the eye and we have survived the ordeal. And we are realizing that we can indeed transcend the conflict of the past, we can hold hands as we realize our common humanity. . . . Forgiveness will follow confession and healing will happen and so to contribute to national unity and reconciliation.[22]

Through these public statements, totalizing links between truth, healing, and reconciliation were repeatedly constructed and "the commission was depicted in popular imagination as a healing intervention," Ross observed.[23] The iconic stature of Archbishop Tutu and media coverage of his statements meant that the healing conception that gained public currency was infused with his spiritualist humanism and the redemptive promise of "The Rainbow Nation." But the TRC was characterized by different strands of thinking among staffers who distinguished between physiological, spiritual, and psychological healing and "understood healing as a process rather than an event. . . . The TRC could not deliver 'healing,' just as it could not deliver 'reconciliation.'" Wendy Orr observed.[24] Yet even the process-oriented TRC conceptions of healing utilized a simplified model of psychoanalysis, which assumed confession is the best approach.[25]

In fact, talking about feelings or traumatic memories is not always the best strategy; listeners need to respect a speaker's right to silence and need to try to understand the reasons for and the content of these silences.[26] The TRC also at times used "restoration" and "healing" interchangeably. "Restoration" suggests that survivors can be ahistorically returned to their pretraumatic state. The restorative conception plays into people's longing for "the good times" before the traumatic event(s) occurred, and it ignores oral history work on memory and nostalgia.

Although the TRC began with idealistic intentions, the Final Report revealed conceptual tensions by referring to four kinds of truth: factual or forensic; personal or narrative; social or dialogic; and healing or restorative. The Final Report triggered debate between historians and the TRC around what kind of history the TRC produced.[27] Some historians argued that the TRC constructed a "sanitized official history" that assumes that "the facts are self-explanatory, and when compiled will

provide a common past for all South Africans," Premesh Lalu and Brent Harris noted.[28] TRC staff counter-argued that it was not their mandate to do historical research but to report and make recommendations.[29] The reenacted narratives of the victim hearings were a profound TRC achievement.[30] But the Final Report concealed a blow to victim testimonies: legal positivism had won the epistemological battle and displaced victim testimonies to the intellectual margins.[31]

The TRC's chief database processor argued that at the outset, "We let people tell their story. By the end of 1997 it was a short questionnaire to direct the interview instead of letting people talk for themselves. . . . The questionnaire distorted the whole story."[32] For this reason, Richard Wilson argues that "oral history could have been made more central to the TRC's information system. This might lead to an account that preserved, rather then stripped out, the subjectivities of victims and a history that retained narrative and context and meaning."[33] In protecting its findings from political pressures from both previous and current nationalist parties, the TRC adopted positivism. The victim testimonies were assigned a marginalized conceptual status in the Final Report.[34] Worse was to follow. The government's delay in responding to the TRC's recommendations and the announcement in April 2003 that victims would receive a once-off payment of R30 000 provoked public anger. The controversy is ongoing and victim groups such as Khulumani are still lobbying for improved reparations[35]

For all its limitations, the TRC made major contributions. As Michael Ignatieff said, "All that a truth commission can achieve is to reduce the number of lies that can be circulated unchallenged in public discourse."[36] Evaluated by this modest measure, the TRC was a success. Since the TRC, it is difficult for racists and conservatives to question the occurrence of apartheid atrocities. Many survivors experienced public recognition and did establish considerable "truth" about what happened to them and their loved ones. In addition, post-TRC archives will be priceless to generations of historians.[37]

But risks remain: the assumption that the TRC has done its job and we can now leave the past behind. Survivors and perpetrators were expected to give full "disclosures," but the sanitized presentations by political parties, intent on reaching political closure, incensed the TRC.[38] The legal or political closure desired by lawyers and politicians is not equivalent to the ongoing struggles of trauma survivors to at least reach a symbolic emotional closure; emotional closure in a complete sense is not possible.

The term "closure" implies the ahistorical fantasy that it is possible to sever "bad" events or periods from people's lives. Rather, a central challenge faced by survivors is how to tolerate and integrate memories of traumatic events. Some survivors work through mourning their losses and adapting their lives,[39] so that "melancholia's continued and open relation to the past finally allows . . . new perspectives and new understandings of lost objects," David Eng and David Kazanjian note.[40] But many survivors may become stuck in states of depression, anxiety, or dissociation.

It is important to acknowledge that "healing" processes have given solace to many survivors and that the TRC was mandated with contributing to a "new" political

imaginary for a divided country. But the TRC's leadership tended to collapse distinctions between nation-building and the traumatic memories of individuals. They promised "curative" and "spiritual" forms of healing that took on a myth-making dimension. Oral historians have conceptualized "the myths we live by" as being both helpful and destructive to how people manage sociopolitical and emotional challenges.[41] In effect, the TRC attempted to suture the nation's wounds with public myths. This evoked unrealistic popular expectations, which may have depressing consequences when the disappointment of not being healed is confronted.[42]

Turning to the practice of oral history, I do not think oral historians should make claims to heal, especially when interviewing trauma survivors. The public impact of the TRC has opened up new research possibilities for oral historians but also challenges us to think "beyond healing." I therefore shift from the national scale of the TRC to offering thoughts about doing oral history interviews and the pragmatic contributions oral historians can make to how interviewees grapple with their emotional legacies.

Feelings in the Oral History Dialogue

Oral history research is not merely about information gathering. Since the late 1970s, pioneering oral historians have established the significance of storytelling and have acknowledged emotions and the intersubjective dynamics within oral history dialogues.[43] Alessandro Portelli argued that the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that "wrong" statements are still psychologically "true" and that this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts.[44] How might we approach these "truths" and the interconnected feelings expressed by interviewees in the oral history dialogue?

Anna Green criticizes oral history approaches that "are converging with cultural theorists writing on collective memory" for ignoring or minimizing individual memory and agency.[45] She argues that the ways in which individual narrators remember, and ways in which they understand emotion, are not reducible to passive elements of social structures or psychological templates or cultural scripts. I agree that individuals cannot be forced to fit into the psychological concepts deployed in these forms of analysis. But Green gives insufficient weight to the ways in which psychoanalytic thinking can serve as a helpful "sensitising theory"[46] for oral historians.

As discussed in previous chapters, interviewees select and splice their memories from disorganized clusters of words, images, and feelings, with unconscious traces, and these are mediated through language, culture and media, to frame a sense of self. These constructions leave elusive "psychological truths" on the edges of interviewees' and interviewers' comprehension, which can be interpreted in ways that do not erase the nuances of individual agency. This is especially relevant to historians of atrocities such as the Holocaust or apartheid or the Rwandan genocide. For example, Dominick LaCapra and Saul Friedlander use the psychoanalytic technique of

"working through" to argue for the importance of individual agency and interpretive engagement with the repercussions of the Holocaust.[47] Friedlander argues that

> The reintroduction of individual memory into the overall representation of the epoch also implies the use of direct or indirect expressions of contemporary individual experience. Working through means confronting *the individual voice* in a field dominated by political decisions and administrative decrees.[48]

Many oral historians have been working through dynamics of the intersubjective dialogue but I am suggesting that we need to keep trying to refine our interviewing and interpretive techniques with regard to historical trauma.[49] All oral history dialogues evoke feelings. In fact, oral historians have an ethical responsibility to respond appropriately to the emotions that their interventions evoke in the interviewee. But how could interviewers respond to the wide range of emotions that interviewees might express such as pain, sadness, anger, fear, anxiety, guilt or shame, and expressions of joy, happiness and excitement? I have no prescriptions, but I will illustrate some of my research experiences that might be helpful to others. Mrs G. J., a former District Six resident and survivor of the apartheid forced removals, said:

> Oh! I want to cry so much, all over again [*weeping*]…I cannot explain how it was when I moved out of Cape Town and I came to Manenberg. In those days I didn't know why they chuck us out. What did we do, that they chuck us out like this? We wasn't murderers, we wasn't robbers, like today.[50]

At times interviewees make their feelings explicit through their words, but at other times interviewers can read them from nonverbal cues such as body language and tone of voice. These techniques are widely used by oral historians, but one additional technique that I have found useful is sensing the mood. The term "mood" encapsulates the spatial sense of feelings that exists within the dialogue. A sense of mood refers to the intersubjective framing of the oral history dialogue, which includes the unconscious feelings of both members of the dialogue. The mood shapes what is said, how it is said, and what is not said. The moods of oral history dialogues are often fluid, shifting from those anxious opening exchanges to the ebbs and flows of stories filled with joy and elation, to the moments of pain and sadness.

Good timing is an elusive but critical aim. Sensing the shifting mood(s) of the dialogue is a useful guide to posing specific questions at the appropriate moment. In my experience, poorly timed questions sometimes do not have any impact, but when I interview trauma survivors who might be hypersensitively attuned, a mistimed question can severely unsettle the interviewee. For example, when interviewing displaced people, the probing question, "Where do you feel you belong?" if mistimed can be disruptive; but if posed when rapport is sufficiently established, it may reveal the complexities of memory, place, and identity. In this respect, the degrees of trust and mistrust between interviewer and interviewee are delicately threaded through the intersubjective dialogue. Deeper levels of trust are not necessary for all projects, but

are essential when interviewing people who have endured considerable suffering. I had the following dialogue with Ms. D. K.:

> ***Ms. D. K.***: So all your life you are angry and you build a wall inside, that place where if a white person humiliates you, when they hit the wall, you explode. It's something even today that when I look at that wall, it's a wall I can't take down yet because it has protected me for 53 years of my life. I have learned to fight because of that wall. It has been the point for me that when a white person reaches the line, then you tell him off, you tell him where to get off. It has a lot to do with trust. Can I trust a white person to see me as a human being? Then I can lower the wall. Maybe it's like that for white people too? I don't know, but I know every black person has that wall inside. It's like when you had a friend and they've broken your trust, it takes a long time for that to grow back. The person who broke that trust has to work very hard to make up for that. Do know what I mean?
>
> ***S. F.***: I know exactly what you mean.
>
> ***Ms. D. K.***: We say "white people" because the system, that system did it and all the horrors that came with it. Of course, we are still sitting on our sides too scared, to bring down the wall.[51]

Acutely aware that I am a white male, the interviewee insightfully reflects on her way of coping with the pain of apartheid and poses me a test: Did I really hear and understand her insights? This is a test of the trust between us. It seems that I pass, as she opens up even further.

Paradoxically, it is when revealing vulnerability or sadness that interviewees are probably beginning to trust interviewers. Trust is not only created through words, which frame the oral history dialogue, but also the mutual sighting of each other's identities.[52] Furthermore, the interviewee's conscious and unconscious perception of our presence and responses shapes the mood and levels of trust. These intersubjective elements require strategies for containing their and our feelings.

Some suggestions about responses to interviewee's feelings follow, but they need to be adapted to each specific research context and relationship. If the interviewee shows signs of tears or is crying but continues talking, then it is usually best to continue to listen to his or her stories and emotions. It's fundamental to remain still and give the interviewee your sustained nonjudgmental attention, to show that you are staying with them through these emotions. Interruption at this moment is often inappropriate. When the interviewee stops talking and there is a natural pause, I do two things: first, I sensitively acknowledge the interviewee's sadness and/or tears. Second, I offer the interviewee the option to pause or temporarily withdraw from the interview. By hearing this offer, the interviewee may regain some sense of control in a moment when feelings may be out of control. In my experience, interviewees usually opt to continue or to take a few minutes to compose themselves. If the interviewees remain unsettled after the interview, I remain behind awhile and continue listening to their stories until they feel more composed. On rare occasions I have suggested psychotherapy or counseling, but this is carefully articulated to avoid

stigmatizing the interviewee as "mentally ill," which is a common misperception of psychotherapy.

How could interviewers respond to their own emotions? In order to allow the interviewee unhindered interview space, interviewers need to maintain their own composure during the interview. If the interviewee's testimony has brought up difficult feelings for the interviewer in the course of the interview, it is helpful for the interviewer to establish an internal dialogue, aimed at acknowledging the emotions but delaying their expression. If this technique is insufficient, then it is important for the interviewers to reflect on their feelings and try to understand why they struggled to compose themselves within that specific interview. After leaving emotionally intense interviews, I suggest that interviewers express their emotions through talking to someone close, like a partner, family member, friend, or therapist. I have also found it useful to describe my emotions and the intersubjective context in writing.

After several interviews with trauma survivors, there is a risk of interviewer burnout. This may be reflected in moodiness, an inability to stay focused, depression, and feelings of hopelessness. In South Africa, the TRC and organizations such as the Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture are aware of these risks, but this is less evident at universities. Researchers tend to require appropriate training and supervision to help them process interviewees' and their own emotions during fieldwork on "distressing histories."[53]

In emotional moments, oral history interviewing resembles psychotherapy, and oral historians can learn from the experiences of psychotherapists. But they are primarily researchers recording and analyzing information and processes, and they are not trained to attend to the psychological problems of patients as are counselors and psychotherapists.[54] The oral historian's interaction with interviewees is often only one or a few sessions, whereas for therapists, especially in the case of long-term psychotherapy, the patient has contracted to work with the therapist over several months and often years.[55] The oral historian's approach to questioning tends to be more directed, whereas in psychoanalytic practice the analyst tends to reflect back the emotional content of the patient's words. Although there are differing approaches, over the past three decades, many in both professions have placed emphasis on interpreting the intersubjective dimension of dialogues and "learning from" the narrator.[56]

Empathy: Imagining the Indescribable

Popularly defined, empathy involves "putting yourself in another's shoes." For oral historians, the research motive is to imagine historically what it might have felt like to be this person, with his or her particular identities, in the past. This process provides clues to understanding the historical agency of both survivors and perpetrators of human rights abuse; that is, how and why the narrator did or did not act in particular ways in the past.[57]

Empathy, in one sense, is a visual simulation in the interviewer's mind of the interviewee's subjective constructions of memories of experiences. In another sense,

empathy is a creative strategy for interviewers to adapt their questions with the aid of historical imagination. In emotional moments it can help interviewers to attune themselves affectively to the interviewee's efforts to convey his or her emotions through oral narration. This empathic strategy allows the interviewee more latitude to lead the interviewer in new directions, potentially beyond his or her original research and conceptual focus.[58]

Using empathic imagination requires patient listening to what interviewees want to talk about and helps in eliciting responses from interviewees who have been traumatized, given that their experiences often go beyond the limits of comprehension.

As I have described in the previous chapter, while interviewing Rwandan refugees, I confronted their understandable fear of talking about memories of the genocide and their uncertain location as refugees in South Africa.[59] In this context, trust was very difficult to establish.[60] Yet, when interviewees talked openly, their emotions were graphically exposed. In 1994 the interviewee quoted below was captured at a roadblock, beaten, and stabbed:

> I was left dying, the money taken, my father say no he will not leave his son behind, he came back, pick me up. He was beaten and had to take the family away. I was collected like any other dead body to be buried on the mass grave in the cemetery. That's when one lady from the Red Cross identifies me. . . . She was there [at a mass grave] instructing people to put some disinfectant for the smell. She was a Tutsi by the way. She was forced to do that. She saved me. She saw the fingers moving and say, "This guy is alive." They [the *Interhamwe*] say "You shut up, you are next." She sneaked my body under the seat [of a minibus], that is how I survived.[61]

What might these experiences have been like? In these moments of bearing witness to extreme horror, there is a likelihood of the interviewer either cutting off from the emotional content or being overwhelmed by it. After hearing this part of the interviewee's story, I managed to retain my composure and allowed myself to experience "empathic unsettlement."[62] But this left me feeling raw and jagged inside.

Other examples of posttraumatic legacies and their impact on how interviewees narrate their stories include the repetition of identical stories in response to different questions. This suggests that interviewees are constantly replaying the event in their mind as way of processing unbearable experiences.[63] In contrast, some interviewees spoke in a monotone, with no feeling, when telling stories relating to painful content. In other cases, when interviewees have experienced severe pain they reach the limits of their vocabulary; at these moments, silences often occur.[64] To complicate matters even further, Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone observe that these manifestations of trauma "may be the product of fantasy, of things that did not happen as well as things that did."[65] In his work on the Holocaust, Dominick LaCapra argues that:

> Survivor testimony, including the interviewing process, is in certain ways a new, necessarily problematic genre-in-the-making with implications for oral history, particularly in the area of research. Historians have not yet worked out altogether

> acceptable ways of "using" testimonies, and their task is further complicated by the marked differences between the conditions and experiences of victims.[66]

Although these points require consideration, various oral historians have reflected on how trauma impacts on memory, storytelling, and the limits of linguistic expression and emotional tolerance.[67] The interpretive work of oral historians on interviewees' construction of myths, fantasies or forms of magical realism to convey the painfully indescribable is significant.[68] Lawrence Langer argues that often in Holocaust oral testimonies, "the crucial instants are those explaining not how one survived but how a member of the family died. On their deepest level, these life stories are really death stories, which include the death of the self, in ways we still need to interpret."[69] For oral historians working with survivors of extreme violence, sustained listening to the ways interviewees tell stories to shape memories laden with bearable and unbearable emotions remains a vital endeavor.

During the interview with the Rwandan refugee whose horrific near-death experiences and accounts of butchered bodies are included in Chapter 8 and earlier in this chapter, I managed to hold myself together. But after the interview, he said to me, "What's tearing me apart now is that the Home Affairs Department [in South Africa] will not allow my four-year-old daughter to join us in South Africa." We spoke about this and then parted. Soon after, I tried to process his stories and his inability to have contact with his daughter. I wondered what it would be like if I was separated from my own daughter like this? I imagined his feelings of "tearing apart," and that broke my composure. I cried and cried. After surviving the assault of his genocide stories, in this private post-interview moment, I reached the emotional limits of what I could imagine with his story of separation from his daughter.

To sustain empathic listening to stories of extreme trauma, sensitive introspection of one's feelings during and after the interview is essential. Denying your feelings or having a misplaced sense of interviewer machismo undermines an interviewer's capacity to listen and negotiate how "the oral historian works on the border between normal judgment and highly charged fantasy," as Karl Figlio describes it.[70] Working through these experiences helped me to identify my fantasy of "healing" people with oral history; accepting this motive as fantasy has taught me a personal and professional lesson.

Agency and Regeneration

If oral historians cannot "heal" interviewees, how can we help?[71] Within the intersubjective space of the interview, interviewers can mirror the interviewee's past actions and sense of self; and through creatively composing their narratives, interviewees can achieve or rekindle a sense of self-composure.[72] With trauma survivors, this involves bearing witness to their mourning various forms of loss, absence, and pain. But given that there is no "cure" or "closure," silences and uncomfortable emotions will remain; they mean that life stories are necessarily incomplete; the sense of self is not whole, unless completed through myth. Oral historians need to tolerate how "empathic

unsettlement poses a barrier to closure in discourse and places in jeopardy harmonizing or spiritually uplifting accounts of extreme events," as LaCapra says.[73]

The popular memory approach to oral history allows interviewees to interpret links between private memories and public myths and to explore how "strategies for containment" shape memories.[74] In the process we learn about the construction of the self and interviewees' sense of potent (or impotent) historical agency. Agency is not intrinsic,[75] and gentle probing around watershed or crisis moments in people's lives provides clues as to how interviewees made (or did not make) decisions. This allows interviewees to have insights into their shifting sense of agency over time. But are self-composure and dialogic explorations of agency sustainable after the interview?

Many oral historians have analyzed relationships between voice, storytelling and memory and have moved beyond the myth of "giving voice to the voiceless."[76] Yet in the South African context it is still common practice for the post-interview participation of the interviewee to be either nonexistent or to be reduced to brief consultations.[77] Oral historians usually retain the power to shape and "voice" historical knowledge, especially at universities. In part, this is due to our failure to change institutionalized knowledge/power relations, and in part this is attributable to the fragile political and financial location of most oral historians.[78] A solution resides in remembering that marginalized people do speak out in their everyday lives. But is anyone listening? The problem, more accurately framed, is that marginalized people have insufficiently enabled "public voices," because of a lack of resources and access to media and a lack of empathic listeners. Oral historians can contribute to forging public spaces where people talk, write, perform, and represent their memories. The multimedia and multilingual dissemination of oral histories through books, radio, film documentaries, audiovisual exhibitions, and the Internet increases possibilities for affirming both individuals and communities. For the potential of oral history methods to be harnessed, they need to be combined with strategies to build accessible archives, museums, memorial sites, school training, and urban/rural renewal projects. These strategies create opportunities for people with shared memories to make meaningful connections with each other. This is significant for the trauma survivor, who frequently bears the legacy of believing that he or she is the only individual feeling this way and that there is no choice but to endure in isolation. Through recording and disseminating oral histories, oral historians can help people to identify the social interconnectedness of past experiences and current memories. Interviewees' choice to participate or not participate in the dissemination process must be respected. These moments of social identification create possibilities where marginalized people might regenerate themselves as historical actors.

"Regeneration can be traced in the resilient ways people work through the effects of trauma by generating counter forces," LaCapra notes,[79] which potentially remotivates their agency. Regeneration involves people's efforts to emotionally revitalize and recreate their "ordinary" lives.[80] Moreover, regeneration occurs across generations, through parenting and storytelling within families, schools, and communities. This conception opens "the possibility of rethinking generation as precisely the locus of transmission" of memories, Hodgkin and Radstone observe.[81] But regenerative working through "does not mean total redemption of the past or healing its traumatic

wounds.[82] Moreover, given poverty levels in South Africa and the ages of many survivors of apartheid traumas, regeneration is about creating less painful conditions of life for their children.

The potential role of the oral historian is one of facilitator and not omnipotent healer. Redemptive myths of healing do not address the impact of trauma on people's capacity to make confident decisions and "risks premature forgetting."[83] The myth of a one-voiced community such as "the nation with a common past" might provide solace for some but might marginalize many others. In contrast, regeneration can be stimulated through democratic spaces for differing voices to express themselves. There is no fixed political content to regeneration. Those that desire a nonracial, nonsexist country, and want other forms of change will have to inject this through political struggles.

Regenerative memory work is not about putting the past to rest, but about sensitively disseminating contested views of the past in nondidactic ways. In the process, narrators and audiences can be stimulated to think about and debate issues and not be treated as passive consumers. Through dialogues over the accuracy and meaning of their memories, people can themselves contest sanitized constructions of history. But interviewees need to be forewarned that the public reception of their stories can be a bruising encounter, where "the work of bearing witness is constantly involved in the struggle against collective indifference and the forging of solidarity between eyewitnesses and audiences," as Fuyuki Kurasawa put it.[84]

A success story of regeneration has been the District Six Museum and community in Cape Town. As I discussed in Chapter 5, the museum helped ex-residents who were forcibly removed under apartheid to gain land restitution; through vibrant museum spaces with evocative visual and oral history exhibits, parts of the community are being regenerated.[85] Ex-residents have played a leading role in building this museum, through contested but productive partnerships with academic and heritage professionals. The museum staff shifts beyond stereotypical tour guiding to listening to "visitor experiences" from people such as ex-residents and those who have suffered in similar ways as they "relive" memories by telling their stories. Through a public education program and frequent visits by descendents, university students, and school groups, the museum sustains transgenerational dialogues and contributes to the "post-memories" of the following generations.[86]

In ending, I acknowledge writing through several anxious uncertainties in creating this chapter. All writing, remembering, and transmission of memories is selective, which means that regeneration will leave new silences and issues to be confronted in the future. There is neither healing nor redemption in regeneration, only possibilities for improved living. These hopes need to be tempered by awareness of the involuntary emotions of traumatic memories and the realization that "the work of mourning may never end."[87] The acts of telling and sharing memories contain regenerative possibilities, but at a personal level the emotional remains of conscious and unconscious memory involve learning to live with incurable vulnerabilities.

CHAPTER 10

Disappointed Imaginings

Narcissism and Empathy in Post-Apartheid South Africa

> I always imagined poetry is supposed to be about beauty . . . and pleasant things. Well I sat in a train one day and I saw . . . And I saw this lorry full of furniture going, coming here . . . And I wrote a poem about Group Areas. "Fall tomorrow." And then in the last stanza I wrote that the government of that time is going to fall. "Your mould, you remade us in your mould, will break and tomorrow you are going to fall." . . . But it's worked on my nerves. This is, was—it's about the anger. Bringing out all the anger of moving. And seeing people moving and seeing people breaking up their wardrobes and their cupboards, because, it can't go into the doors here.[1]
>
> —*Gladys Thomas*

In 2009, Gladys Thomas spoke to me about her memories of the 1960s forced removals from Simon's Town to Ocean View, where she still lives today. During the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1970s and 1980s, she became a significant protest poet. In our interview she traced her beginnings as a poet to writing about apartheid forced removals in Cape Town. In the above passage, she referred to writing about what she saw and felt during those events and how the regime "moulded" people's lives. She also predicted the future collapse of the apartheid state. With self-reflective storytelling, Gladys Thomas showed the integration of mental images, emotions and words and as a result her integrity shines through. The imagining memories argument is my attempt to grasp this delicate process and to hear and see the profound human qualities of displaced storytellers across Cape Town. Gladys Thomas and many other storytellers have felt several disappointments since 1994.

Given the incompleteness of the transition from apartheid to democracy, there is no definitive conclusion to this book, but I do reflect on the denial or displacement of people's legitimate disappointments and argue that there is a link to the narcissism cultivated by nationalist ideology. The intersubjective significance of oral history storytelling is also emphasized and I consider whether apartheid-forced displacements were inherently traumatic. With one eye towards the future, I provide questions for further research and I appeal to historians to research and rethink cross-generational memory and trauma in families and homes. Most of all, I argue that we all need to hold in mind empathically that there are millions in South Africa who still suffer the emotional remains of the colonial and apartheid past within and between them, now and tomorrow.

Narcissism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Disappointment

The significant successes of the post-apartheid state must be acknowledged and so too must the fact that the state could not realistically deliver on all the dreams South Africans imagined might be fulfilled under democracy. However, there have been many disappointing and even severe state failures (see discussion below). The state's failures have given rise to what I have termed "a politics of disappointment."[2] But the state's ability to appeal to narcissistic imaginings through nationalism is crucial to its hold on power in the face of growing disappointments and popular protests. Michael Ignatieff notes:

> Viewing nationalism as a kind of narcissism reveals the projective and self-regarding quality of the nationalistic discourse. Nationalism is a distorting mirror in which believers see their simple ethnic, religious, or territorial attributes transformed into glorious attributes and qualities. Though Freud does not explain how this happens, the systematic overvaluation of the self results in systematic devaluation of strangers and outsiders. In this way narcissistic self-regard depends upon and in turn exacerbates intolerance.[3]

The post-apartheid nation-state, especially during the Thabo Mbeki decade from 1999 to 2009, quickly owned successes, but failures were displaced onto "others." This displacement of responsibility involves a narcissistic impulse framed around, "I cannot tolerate the thought of my own failure and inability to achieve what I set out to do, which is to alleviate suffering," as Ian Craib observes.[4] Furthermore, the state's political denial of people's legitimate disappointments overlays an emotional displacement that involves the psychic transfer of troubling emotions from their original source onto different times or people. A version thereof is entirely blaming the apartheid past for the post-apartheid state's failure's to deliver basic services to working-class communities. This also has implications for what is or is not permissible to be remembered and

represented about the apartheid past.[5] I therefore wonder: Has the Rainbow Nation of the 1990s been replaced by the Narcissistic Nation of the 2000s?

Imagining memories at a localized level of families and communities provides sensory information and framing possibilities for people to constitute their sense of self and identities. But to feel a part of the national "imagined community" is appealing to citizens of the nation-state in transition from an authoritarian past. For example, vast numbers of South Africans have grown up believing in the redemptive vision of the African National Congress (ANC) as liberation movement. Thousands have died and suffered for this vision and still imagine themselves in a deeply loyal historical relationship to the ANC and therefore to the new nation-state. The construction of a national imaginary or master narrative draws the individual into a totalizing subjectivity, which Benedict Anderson in his classic work argued offers "personal salvation, significance, and continuity."[6]

Many psychoanalytic writers since Freud have asserted that narcissistic needs to be recognized as worthwhile and lovable are a healthy part of the intersubjective development of "self."[7] However, narcissism in the pejorative sense refers to those whose early healthy narcissistic needs were not met and who then crave complete control over how they are perceived in order to avoid intolerable feelings of rejection. Although degrees of narcissistic hurt are part of the human condition, new citizens under nation-states are interpolated or excessively encouraged to receive and celebrate only what is good about themselves and about the country. An alternative response for citizens is to accept that the nation-state is not perfect and never will be a good enough symbolic "parent," but that stance runs the risk of being abandoned to a political or emotional wilderness.[8] For nationalist leaders, and the state itself, this narcissism has the potential to become abusive or oppressive when the desire for internal control expands into dominance over others in order to continually shore up an injured self-image. Narcissism of this variety is intolerant of others and lacks empathy. If prevalent in a nationalist leader, the consequences can be devastating. (Note the toxic fusion of Robert Mugabe's identity and his authoritarian and paternal protection of the sovereignty of the Zimbabwean nation.)

It must be acknowledged that both narcissism and feelings of entitlement in South Africa are linked to unprocessed apartheid "losses and remains."[9] Although researchers need to have empathy for the painful histories that underpin these forms of narcissism, this must not blunt critique of its problematic manifestations. For example, narcissism is evident when, Bruce Kapferer notes, "nationalism makes culture into an object and a thing of worship. Culture is made the servant of power."[10] Although the conservation and celebration of cultural forms suppressed under colonialism and apartheid is vital, the reification of "culture" to serve crude political agendas must be challenged. David Lloyd similarly argues that a "paralyzing sense of loss" is displaced by a "new culture and subjecthood around a reinvention of tradition" and that, "In the shadow of nationalism, as of colonialism, there lurk, we might say, melancholy survivals."[11] I now turn to four interlinked clusters of disappointment and survival during post-apartheid transition.

1. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) amnesty process emphasized restorative justice as opposed to punitive justice. Political compromise was central to the TRC's formation, and a key example of this was the granting of amnesty to perpetrators. The price for survivors was that the perpetrator would then not face criminal charges. Justice denied was controversial and remains a source of anguish for many survivors. In the post-TRC period, there are signs that the National Prosecuting Authority will bring charges against particular individuals. However, the vast majority of perpetrators who are liable for prosecution—as they either did not apply for amnesty or they applied and did not receive amnesty—will probably never face charges because of a lack of evidence. It is estimated that approximately four tons of sensitive or incriminating documents were shredded in government departments between late 1993 and April 1994.[12] The limits placed on justice, as circumscribed by the TRC Act, were the beginnings of the politics of disappointment.

Second, the TRC's Final Report was completed in 2000; it recommended that victims receive annual payments for six years, amounting to an approximate grand total of R120,000 (US $19,720) per victim. Of the 21,298 victim applications, 16,837 were identified as potential beneficiaries of reparation payments. The state controversially took four years to make a decision and then decided to only give victims one-time payments of R30,000 to R40,000 (US $4930 to $6574).[13] Former TRC commissioners and staff members, as well as survivors themselves, were infuriated by this decision. In the run-up to this decision during the period 2000 to 2003, Khulumani, a national network of survivors, held demonstrations protesting the state's lack of action and support. An incident captured one of the central tensions faced in post-apartheid South Africa. In Alexandria, a vast black working-class township near Johannesburg, the local Khulumani group held a demonstration but were confronted by local ANC youth league members, who argued that survivors should not be putting pressure on the state to give them reparations. Instead, argued the youth, the state should be putting its scarce resources into job creation and related programs. This incident illustrates the difficult choices faced across generations in working-class communities.

Third, the grinding poverty that survivors and their descendants continue to endure is probably the most difficult disappointment for the state to resolve. The South African economy was in deep recession from 1982 to 2000. For example, using a broad definition of unemployment, the rate in South Africa in the late 1980s reached 40 percent of the economically active population. Using the narrower state definition, which excludes people who are in casual or seasonal labor, the rate is 24 percent. By 2003, 50 percent of the population was economically worse off than they were under apartheid.[14] It is only since 2005 that the economy has gone beyond a 3 percent growth rate, which is the bare minimum for maintaining unemployment at the current levels.[15] Since 2005, the economy has been booming, with widespread development and increased foreign investment. Much of this boom was driven by tourism and infrastructural development for the 2010 soccer world cup.[16] Another driving force for this economic boom has been the successes of the Receiver of Revenue in its tax collection, and the increased tax base drawn from an expanding

black middle class. But the vast black working-class majority lives either in informal settlements or in old apartheid-built townships. The persistently high unemployment rate and the fact that many workers have low income levels through informal trading or casual labor are major concerns across state and private sectors. Even during economic upswings, service delivery protests in working-class areas, especially in relation to housing, roads, water, sanitation, and other local government services, have been widespread since the early 2000s.[17]

The fourth and in my view the most unforgivable failure of the state has been its responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In the Nelson Mandela years of 1994 to 1999, the research evidence from the scientific community was growing that we were witnessing the beginnings of a human catastrophe. Instead of accepting this research and taking the lead in HIV/AIDS prevention and education programs, President Mbeki chose to critique whether HIV causes AIDS; he also questioned the efficacy and toxicity of antiretroviral (ARV) drug treatment. With the controversies resulting from the President's position, and the vacuum created by a lack of state support, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) emerged as the leading civil society voice representing people living with HIV/AIDS. During the Mbeki years from 1999 to 2009, the TAC campaigned for the state to develop a coherent national treatment plan. Instead the Mbeki government turned a blind eye and repeatedly supported "denialist" theories or unsubstantiated "traditional" forms of medicine such as the African potato.[18] The pandemic was politicized by the state's refusal, personified by Mbeki's own denialism and which led to devastating consequences.[19]

South Africa in 2011 exceeded a total population of 50 million. Over 5.5 million South Africans are currently HIV positive.[20] Less than 300,000 had access to ARVs when Mbeki was president. But since 2009 and the onset of the Jacob Zuma government, there has been a dramatic improvement, with over one million having access to free ARVs at the time of this writing in 2011. The 1994 to 2009 crisis around health care responses to the pandemic had human links with the apartheid past. Thousands of those who are HIV-positive or who have died from full-blown AIDS or secondary infections survived the oppressive apartheid regime, only to be infected by HIV in the post-apartheid period. Infection rates are highest amongst 15- to 35-year-old black youth, meaning that it is the descendants of the apartheid era who are the most vulnerable. The apartheid era has ended, but an HIV/AIDS apartheid continues, with the poor and most vulnerable bearing the brunt.

The multitude of disappointments outlined above are not simply about the loss of dreams or failed post-apartheid promises and policies. The ANC government under President Mbeki also attempted to silence or discredit critical voices. All too often reasonable aspirations and genuine disappointments were dismissed as "unpatriotic" or as "Afro-pessimism." The nation-state of the Mbeki era was easily wounded by critique and its reactions were fueled by an expectation that "racist" or "neo-colonial" agendas were behind every criticism. Political struggles around the HIV/AIDS pandemic dissipated from 2010, with the Zuma's reversal of Mbeki's policies. In fact, the Zuma government has implemented most of the TAC's demands. However, service delivery protests still continue across the country.[21]

The state's repression of service delivery protests or denial of peoples' legitimate disappointments must be challenged. It is therefore unsurprising that freedom of expression is under legislative attack, via an intelligence bill, as I write this chapter. The role of researchers and intellectuals, based in universities or in civil society institutions, as critical public intellectuals is fundamental. I am making an open appeal to older and younger South African oral historians to express their independent critical voices. Moreover, universities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), museums, and memorial projects can provide public spaces for a wide variety of voices from different communities to be heard. These politicized forms of "oral memorialisation"[22] are linked to collective processes discussed in Chapter 9, which can regenerate emotional and political agency. Articulating disappointments is evidence of this agency and is a counterpoint to the passivity induced by the nation-state's narcissistic imaginings. How South Africans grapple with these evocative political tensions and their place within a country in transition take me back to where I started this book.

The Significance of Oral History Story-Telling

> The oral history interview is a conversation: the interviewee engages in a conversation with his or herself, with the interviewer and with culture. The challenge for the historian is to analyse and decode these conversations, bearing in mind that each influences the other.[23]
>
> —Lyn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*

The starting point of my analysis throughout has been the oral history dialogue or conversation. I have drawn from existing oral history theory and have argued for imagining memories as an interpretive framework to understand how and why storytellers integrate (or do not integrate) images, emotions, and words. I have also pointed to the importance of the mind's eye and different senses that stimulate interviewees to frame verbal pictures of the past. Paula Hamilton has noted, "There are several ways to consider the role of the senses in oral histories. The first is to rethink the nature of the visual sense that has been taken for granted in so much past practice."[24] Although I could not explore the role of other senses here, Hamilton's argument that oral historians should consider all human senses is pointing us in a fascinating new direction. I hope that by illuminating mental imagery as a central feature of how remembrance and storytelling works (or does not work), imagining memories is a small step towards historicizing the senses. My argument also refers to the narrative plotting of memories, senses of place, and the "emplacement"[25] of life stories, which have social and political significance.

Asking people to be interviewed is never a neutral act; it is a request for them to engage in the memory work of narrating the private past (often intensely visual and emotional) to a public present. Anna Green asserts the need for a different conceptual vocabulary to avoid marginalizing individual autobiographical memory when

theorizing collective memory.[26] But it is also true that the individual "remembered self" should not be approached as an atomized unit.[27] Michael Jackson observes:

> Respecting this view, we may begin to see that stories, like memories and dreams, are *nowhere* articulated as purely personal revelations, but authored and authorised dialogically and collaboratively in the course of sharing one's recollections with others . . . This is why one may no more recover the "original" story than step into the same river twice. The fault is not with memory *per se*, but an effect of the transformations all experience undergoes as it is replayed, recited, reworked and reconstructed in the play of intersubjective life.[28]

Nick Crossley's argument that "intersubjectivity is the fabric of our social becoming"[29] opens ways to interpret the remembered self as an incomplete, lived social construction. This intersubjective conceptualization and approach to oral history research is significantly different from the "recovery history" mode that is dominant within South African oral historiography.[30] Oral histories through the lens of intersubjectivity means taking seriously Michael Jackson's argument for "the politics of storytelling" as both an individual and shared group practice.[31] But, as I argued in Framing Notes III, the political value of popular memories and stories is not self-evident. Although oral storytellers do have the means to interpret their own stories, oral history researchers have to perform significant intellectual tasks to engage in critical analysis, conceptual translation, and the representation of popular forms of knowledge within various public debates. If independent and critically minded oral historians and cognate professionals in South Africa do not engage in these tasks, then the politics of memory, storytelling, archiving, and heritage as an ideological terrain will continue to be dominated by the nation-state.

Echoing the work of the Popular Memory Group, Frederico Lorenz says, "All memories *are* political, but not all memories *affect* politics."[32] This is an added motivation for ensuring that people's memories are heard and seen across communities and publics. But for these forms of memory to be sustained, external assistance from researchers, archives, museums, and memorials is required. These prosthetic aids to memory are politically important, but daily interactions with family, friends, and places are still the most likely sites where memories might be elicited, heard, and seen by others. As Elizabeth Jelin notes, whether the listener or observer is an insider or outsider,

> what is needed are "others" with the ability to ask, to express curiosity for a painful past, as well as to have compassion and empathy. This creative construction is enabled much more by "alterity" than by identification between the speaker and the listener, and is not easily achieved.[33]

Empathy or empathic imagination as I have defined it in earlier chapters is central to how people establish emotional attachments to both people and spaces, and through it senses of place are created. Empathic imagination also helps researchers to distinguish between what they are feeling and what the interviewees might be feeling. By

imaginatively framing and holding in mind the emotional states of both parties, we can better navigate the transference and countertransference of oral history dialogues. For example, oral historians typically desire a relaxed mood wherein rapport can be established. "Rapport" is potentially a meaningful intersubjective experience of connectedness for participants in oral history dialogues. But to desire unbreakable rapport with interviewees is a researcher fantasy. There needs to be openness to shifting moments of connection and disconnection in the interviewer/interviewee relationship. It is also not a researcher's job to "parent" storytellers, but to bear witness to the joyful and horrific stories that they convey. Perhaps the most meaningful contribution researchers can make is not to heal people but through intersubjective dialogues to co-create emotional moments that lead to what Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela calls "empathic repair."[34]

In summary, human imagination provides the tools for storytellers to frame their memories and to negotiate their "moving places" across sociopolitical and physical landscapes. These imaginative acts of remembrance might contribute to storytellers' sense of emotional composure and confidence. But self-confidence as an emotional state is not static and is dependent on sustained meaningful experiences produced through daily social interactions. Imagining memories in everyday life has the potential to contribute to emotional containment and self-cohesion, and to connect people to others and to places. However, imagining memories is not inherently progressive; it bears the risk of being coopted or reimagined through a nationalist ideology that promises redemption but delivers less. In the prior section, I critiqued the politics of disappointment in South Africa, but here I began to sketch a political perspective that frames the social value of intersubjective storytelling and empathy. A fuller exposition of this argument would take me beyond the limits of this book.

In the Wake of Forced Removals

Since the end of the apartheid era, research about forced removals has been dominated by issues relating to the restitution process and the politics of restitution. The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) is at the time of writing in 2011 close to completing its mammoth task of processing 79,696 claims for restitution involving over 3.5 million potential beneficiaries.[35] But many writers on land issues, such as Cheryl Walker et al., have argued that the restitution process, given its administrative and legal orientation, has excluded serious attention to forms of loss, sadness, and "open half-healed wounds" that victims continue to live with.[36] Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie has also argued for more research about the symbolic losses and other losses inflicted by forced displacement."[37] There never was a TRC-like process for survivors of forced displacements. However, survivors of urban forced removals in Cape Town still bear the scars of racial humiliation and the rejection of being dumped on the Cape Flats or sent off to the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. Despite the poverty and racial humiliation experienced under apartheid, survivors do articulate their anguish:

> The forced removal of people . . . that really hurt them, the Group Areas chucked them out of their homes. [*Vincent Kolbe*][38]

> To me an injustice has been done and I never really came to terms with it . . . But to be chased out of my home because of my colour that is the one thing I will fight unto my death, that part of it! Unfortunately that has wasted a lot of my life. [*Mr. A. A.*][39]
>
> Was I nine, eight or nine? Because on the day, the last day of school. I'll never forget that I think that was the most traumatic. [*Mrs. C. C.*][40]

It is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of South Africans who were forcibly displaced experienced varying degrees of pain and loss. However, to assume that trauma was an automatic or generalized consequence of apartheid removals is problematic.[41] These general assumptions about trauma blunt interpretations of the nuances of people's life stories and reinforce a culture of victimhood that does little to help people rebuild their lives in the aftermath of apartheid. In a similar vein, Walker has rightly warned that "the simple story of forced removals leads to a narrative of restitution" in which putting ownership of land back in the hands of the majority is driven by the "naïve hope that through this act of reversal our society will indeed reach its promised land and thereby overcome the entrenched poverty, suffering, alienation, ignorance and conflict we see all around us."[42] Although many have received material restitution, such as land or cash, and this might have positive effects, it does not serve as emotional restitution. For many survivors who experienced dislocation and alienation—even those who have regained the original land they lost—are still stuck in cycles of poverty and emotional deprivation. Moreover, given the deliberate racial attack on people's identities by the apartheid regime, might there then be a case to suggest "cultural trauma?"[43] Although it is necessary to analyze the social impact of apartheid removals, I think this conceptualization would in the South African context reinforce essentialist discourses that conflate race and culture. Rather, the more precise and yet sensitive question is: Why did some who experienced forced displacement suffer posttraumatic effects when others did not?

"Belonging" refers to fundamental psychological needs to feel safe, secure, and attached to familiar people and spaces.[44] At the heart of belonging are visual and emotional attachments constructed through senses of place. Apartheid-forced displacement was therefore a potentially shattering attack on not only the individual but on various family relationships and other social networks. A narrow focus on the individual or only on forced-removal events will not be sufficient if answers are to be found to the above question. In addition, resilience is not an individual characteristic that some have and others do not. To better understand why some have the resilience to better cope with painful experiences, more research is required on preadolescent and adolescent childhood upbringing, family support, and community support as determinants in understanding notions of resilience.

I am also arguing that the developmental life phase that people are in when forced displacement occurs might be a key factor in understanding whether forced displacement is or is not traumatic. If they were children living with their family, what were the family circumstances and how did their parents mediate their experiences for their children? Why were some families pulled apart and other families able to stick together during and after displacement experiences? As I will argue in the

next section, oral histories of family and cross-generational memory and trauma are underresearched in South Africa.

Forced displacements inflicted pervasive loss. The loss of social links and relationships that had knitted together meaningful formations like families, communities, and public spaces had a ripple effect across times and generations. When survivors say, "My world was falling apart" or "We are scatterlings," they are referring to facing the threat of emotional disintegration of their inner landscapes through removal and dispersal. This threat is linked to the ongoing necessity to tolerate feelings of loss from severed attachments to familiar people and moving places. This intersubjective conceptualization, connecting the visual, emotional, and social, opens ways to think beyond biomedical or generalized notions of trauma and its impacts. Vigdis Broch-Due argues that

> forms of uncertainty about identity and belonging create anxiety about access to resources where, in a situation of increasing scarcity, entitlements are frequently tied to who "you" are, and thus who "they" are. In the fear-filled atmosphere of large scale displacements and the erosion of existing networks of social knowledge by rumour and terror, violence can lead to macabre forms of creativity.[45]

For example, the forced dispersal of families and communities has been linked to ongoing cycles of uncertainty, poverty, and the proliferation of youth gangs and various forms of violence.[46] It is not coincidental that one of the central themes of post-forced-removal stories is parents' lament about losing their children to gangs and the rise of gang networks across the dumping grounds of the Cape Flats. This links to Elaine Salo's plea to place more research emphasis on where people were removed to, the spaces and places that were constituted, for better or worse, as "new communities."[47] Future oral history research in Cape Town then needs to trace and analyze the peculiar community and memorial cultures of the Cape Flats that have emerged in the wake of apartheid forced removals. And as in Chapter 7, it also needs to trace people's movements and lives across racially bounded community spaces. Moreover, a key theme to be researched in this post-apartheid context is people's desire for "respectability." As Fiona Ross insightfully puts it:

> Appearances matter and material investment—being seen to be proper—is an important component in people's imaginings of living decent lives . . . expectations about how to furnish houses and pay for services caused considerable tension within households as people grappled with the desire to create homes that confirmed their ideas of *ordentlikheid* (respectability).[48]

These experiences and imaginings dominate lives in vulnerable and poor communities across South Africa today. The interviewees quoted in this book reside in the working-class areas of Factreton, Langa, Guguletu, Athlone, and elsewhere, and still struggle with material poverty and its impact on self-worth. Their sense of self-worth is linked to both unfulfilled material needs such as inadequate housing, jobs,

education, and municipal services and unfulfilled social needs to be seen by others as living—or having lived—a "respectable" life. As Carolyn Steedman argued:

> The proper struggles of people in a state of dispossession to gain their inheritance might be seen not as sordid and mindless greed for the things of the marketplace, but attempts to alter a world that has produced in them states of unfulfilled desire.[49]

These emotional states are linked to ongoing suffering and to people's dreams being deferred or erased by post-apartheid disappointments. Nevertheless, a respectable life where material, social, and emotional needs are fulfilled remains a core aspiration for working-class South Africans and shapes how they reimagine their futures. Further oral history research needs to both interpret the nuances of severed attachments inflicted by forced displacement and the post-displacement-related problems of dislocation, violence, and socioeconomic hardship. In the wake of apartheid removals and dispersal, new communities have been created across Cape Town, but these places remain contested sites of despair *and* hope for older generations and their descendants.

Entangled Questions: Family Histories and Cross-Generational Trauma

The central research focus in this book has been the survivors of forced displacement in South Africa. But what about their descendants: How have they experienced the emotional legacies of their parents? During my oral history research many interviewees have mentioned their parents' moodiness or uncertainties in the home or avoidance of talking about specific apartheid events. Through the oral history training that the Centre for Popular Memory has done with learners and educators in high schools across all Cape Town school districts from 2007 until the present, there are signs that more parents and children are willing to open up to researchers about these cross-generational themes.[50] As the "born frees" (children born since 1994) increase and descendants of apartheid generations become adults and parents, how will the apartheid past be remembered and spoken about in families across South Africa?

Family relationships have been well researched within psychology and cognate disciplines, but South African historiography has tended to neglect family histories. There are complex reasons for this research lacuna, but a more significant conceptual task in my view is to rethink what is meant by "the family."[51] This is necessary, given that nuclear and extended family structures have been undermined and in many cases shattered by the apartheid displacements, political repression, poverty, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I am also proposing that South African oral historians and cognate researchers need to do more work on how childhood and family memories have been shaped by what has historically occurred in and through the family home and other familial spaces. It is common for South African historians to repeatedly speak about

communities or publics, but what currency do these concepts have if the family in its real and imagined forms is ignored? What new insights can be gained by researching family homes as sites of memory and post-memory?[52]

Given my critique of conceptions of trauma, is it possible to move beyond the view that portrays trauma as a disease that is transmitted across generations? More research is required on parenting histories and how the posttraumatic legacies of parents and caregivers are intersubjectively constructed between themselves and their children. I think this intersubjective approach will contribute to reconceptualizing "family histories" as a field of study and open ways to historicize culturally diverse subjectivities in South Africa. These questions about future research and historiography also reinforce my conviction that psychoanalysis is indispensable to the historian but it "should not be a book of recipes but rather a style of thinking."[53]

More specifically, the forced displacement of families produces intersubjective effects, which compels oral historians and cognate researchers to create new research projects and lines of thinking. The above questions also need to be researched in relation to the various waves of transnational African refugees and families that continue to enter South Africa from across the continent. Consider the following story that a Rwandan refugee mother told me about an interaction she had with her 7-year-old daughter during the 2008 refugee crisis:

> "Mummy, why are we going?" [*into the refugee camp in South Africa*.] I say, "No, no, no, no, the black people here not like us." "Mummy but we are black! Mummy but we are black! Why must they don't like us?" I say, "No, no, no, no, we are not from South Africa." "Mummy, fine you're not from South Africa. But me, I born here. I'm a South African. Mummy they won't hurt, hurt me. They won't even hit me." I say, "No, no, no, no because your, your parents are not coming from here, so they may hit you." "No mummy, no, no, no mummy, I will fight for you don't worry."[54]

Off tape, the mother directly asked me, "What do I say to her?" Her request for parental advice surprised me and I was at a loss for useful words. She had earlier asked whether I had children, which I do. We carried on, speaking about her parental anxieties. But there is no simple answer to the profound question she had asked me. Her parental story painfully cuts across cultural, national, and generational boundaries, and makes explicit the entanglements that historians in this field would need to trace and interpret. Self-reflexivity and questions about our emotional investments in this kind of research work will need to continue. And more broadly, as we reflect on the families that nurtured us as children, the intellectual family (and its heritage) that nurtures or thwarts us needs to be interrogated.

Finally, post-apartheid South Africa has made considerable advances in removing statutory apartheid and in improving the lives of many people. However, the remnants of apartheid are still widespread across South Africa today. Delivering a political economy that is equitable and democratic in the aftermath of centuries of colonialism and then apartheid is not a finite process. There is no end in sight. But

that should not deter all South Africans across the cultural spectrum from imagining and reimagining a vision of a more meaningful democratic future. For oral historians then, it remains important to consider how needs and aspirations influence the ways people remember and tell stories about their pasts, now and tomorrow. With these far from final words, I reiterate the value of creating new concepts and vocabularies that can further analyze the framing, content, and limits of imagining memories through storytelling, in and beyond oral history research dialogues.

Notes

Introduction
Imagining Memories: Oral Histories of Place and Displacement in Post-Apartheid Cape Town

1. Platsky and Walker (1985), 8.
2. Watson (2006), 9–10.
3. Valentine and Minyi (2008).
4. There is a vast array of TRC literature; for example, see Villa-Vicencio (2000a), Posel and Simpson (2002), and Wilson (2001).
5. In chapters 1 through 4, I use a narrow definition of trauma, as linked to specific events and triggered by an excess of painful and incomprehensible experiences. In contrast, in chapters 8 through 10, I take a nonreferential view of trauma; see LaCapra (2001).
6. For definitions of "the self," see Stolorow (1995).
7. This book uses the "racial" labels developed under colonial, segregationist, and apartheid governments, which are still widely used in academic and mass media discourse in contemporary South Africa. However, note an acute ambivalence about using labels that might entrench "racialized" thinking and practices. See Gilroy (1993), for astute analysis of the problems of using racial terminology.
8. Memory work is the process of framing visual and emotional traces of the past into forms of memory, narrative, and other representations. A psychoanalytic conception of memory work contests the idea of the individual as autonomous, rational unit. It conceptualizes the human condition as being split between conscious and unconscious subjective dimensions. Memory work therefore has the potential to integrate thinking and feeling about one's past into comprehensible and bearable memories, but complete rational mastery over one's past is an unattainable fantasy. In this book, I argue that "imagining memories" is a form of memory work that frames sensory inputs and creates frameworks that are central to sustaining self-cohesion and identity formation over time.
9. Frosh (1994), 181.
10. Gilroy (1993), 86.
11. Parts of this literature review have been drawn from a more extensive overview of oral historiography in South Africa; see Field (2008a).
12. LaCapra (2004), 1.
13. Winter (2000), 1.
14. Kurasawa (2009), 1.

15. Huyssen (2003).
16. Frisch (1990), 22.
17. Portelli (1994), 53.
18. For a useful overview of international oral history, see Thomson (2006).
19. It cannot be assumed that African cultures are more oral-based than other cultures, as this leads to oral histories being approached as "authentic" or privileging oral histories over other historical texts. See Guy (1994).
20. Bozzoli (1987).
21. For an overview of South African oral history during this period, see La Hausse (1990).
22. For example, Keegan (1988).
23. For example, Bozzoli and Nkotsoe (1991) and more recently, Gasa (2007).
24. Gordon (1985).
25. See the pioneering Bozzoli (1987) and Bonner et al. (1989) works. There have been many subsequent oral history theses and publications about apartheid forced removals across South Africa. Here is a brief selection of urban community studies using oral history methods conducted in Cape Town: Nasson (1990b) on District Six; [Dhupelia-] Mesthrie (1998/99) on Black River, Rondebosch; Paulse (2001) on Tramway Road, Sea Point; Thomas (2001) on Simon's Town; Swanson (2001) on Harfield; and Bohlin (2011) on Kalk Bay.
26. Leroke (1994).
27. See Muller, Cloete, and Callinicos (1986).
28. For example, Makhoba (1984). Also see Frederikse (1990).
29. Minkley and Rassool (1998), 99.
30. Posel and Simpson (2002).
31. Minkley and Rassool (1998).
32. See my review of *Kas Maine* in Field (2001a).
33. See the seminal work by Samuel and Thompson (1990).
34. See Nasson (1990a).
35. Hofmeyr (1993), 11.
36. See Hofmeyr (1995a, 1995b).
37. Hofmeyr argues that we should speak of "oral texts" not "oral narratives," although the term "oral narratives" is more commonly used by oral historians. See Hofmeyr (1993).
38. See Hamilton (2002).
39. For example, Field, Meyer, and Swanson (2007).
40. See Denis (2005).
41. For example, Rassool and Prosalendis (2001).
42. On oral history in schools, see Kros and Ulrich (2008).
43. For example, Simons (2004); Callinicos (2006); and Pippa Green (2008).
44. South African Democratic Education Trust (2004).
45. See Wells (2008). I explore this question in Framing Notes III and Chapter 10.
46. Nora (1989), 14.
47. Popular Memory Group (1998, 2006).
48. Frisch (1990), 1.
49. There is a wide range of literature here. Note, for example, Thompson (1978); Portelli (1991) and Passerini (1992).
50. As the primary carrier of meaning, Western philosophy has been guilty of *logocentricism*, and one variant thereof is *phonocentricism*, which refers to the privileging of speech over writing. See Derrida (1997).

51. See Thomson and Freund (2011). Their introductory chapter provides a comprehensive and very useful literature review of the intersections between oral history and photography.
52. Manetsi and Meyer (2007).
53. See Du Toit (2009). She is also leading the way in teaching the combined use of critical oral history and photography in South Africa. For broader literature on photography and visual histories in South Africa, see Hayes and Bank (2001); Chari (2009); and Newbury (2009). Note also that many of South Africa's excellent documentary photographers use forms of oral history; for example, see Weinberg (1997).
54. Walter Benjamin (1999), 209.
55. For useful descriptions of intersubjectivity theory, see Jessica Benjamin (1990).
56. On working with memory, see Radstone (2005).
57. See the useful overview of conceptual trends in oral history by Anna Green (2004).
58. The term "coloured" is used as a derogatory label in the United States and elsewhere. But in post-apartheid South Africa, it is widely used and is not intended to be pejorative. It has been argued by Erasmus (2001) and others that people who choose to use the term as a self-reference have the capacity to redefine this term in a positive manner. The term was popularly used in the 19th century and first appears in Cape Colony statutes late in that century. However, it is only with the Population Registration Act of 1950 that it is defined in detail and imposed systematically by the apartheid state. The term was originally intended to encompass people of mixed-racial ancestry, but under apartheid it became a category to place various ethnic minorities such as the Nama, Griqua and even Chinese South Africans. For further discussion on histories and debates about the constitution of coloured identity see Adhikari (2005, 2009).
59. Scarry (1985), 50.
60. See Hodgkin and Radstone (2003).
61. See Erikson (1994).
62. Alexander et al. (2004).
63. For example, see Gay (1991).
64. Jacqueline Rose (2003).
65. LaCapra (2004), 73.
66. For a very useful national overview of land restitution themes, see Walker et al. (2011).

Part I Communities and Identities under Apartheid

1. Scott (1988), 7–8.
2. David Cohen, 1994.
3. Nuttall (2009).
4. Fraser (1984).
5. Steedman (1986), 104.
6. Tonkin (1992).
7. Yow (1997).
8. Portelli (1998).
9. Samuel and Thompson (1990).
10. Nuttal (2009), 70.
11. Thomson (2006).
12. Portelli (1991).
13. Gilroy (1993).

1 Remembering Experience, Interpreting Memory: Life Stories from Windermere

1. Portelli (1998).
2. The terms "white," "coloured," and "African" are imbued with a mixture of positive and negative meanings from the apartheid era. However, these contested terms will be used in this book as they are the dominant labels used by interviewees in referring to themselves.
3. For further discussion on the movements of Windermere's African residents between the rural and urban areas, see Qotole (2001).
4. See Qotole's (2001) discussion of "homeboy" networks in Windermere, 111–113.
5. Swart (1983).
6. Official population figures in the 14,000 to 20,000 range are cited by annual reports of the medical officer of the Cape Town City Council, 1944–1954. The percentage estimates are my own speculative calculations, drawn from Western Cape Administration Board records and newspapers of 1958 to 1963.
7. *The Cape Times* and *The Cape Argus* repeatedly reported on living conditions in Windermere during the period of the 1940s to the 1960s, but these reports contained a mixture of explicit racism and patronizing welfarism.
8. *Shebeens* are usually venues for illegal trade in alcohol. Although some shebeens sell drugs and sex, there are other shebeens that are part of ordinary family networks and constitute an important supplement to the household income.
9. Swart (1983). "Bachelors" was an insulting term loosely used at the time to refer to black African men who were migrant workers. But these men were in fact frequently married under African customary law, which was not recognized by the apartheid state.
10. Field (1996).
11. "Economic" and "sub-economic" refer to types of "council houses," public housing for working-class residents of the time. For example, sub-economic would be the most basic form, without internal doors or toilets.
12. Some people's initials have been altered to protect the confidentiality of the interviewee.
13. Several of the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, which is the mother tongue for the majority of coloured working-class people in Cape Town. The term "madam" in the South African context refers to the master–servant relationship within domestic homes. In the vast majority of Cape Town homes the madam is white and the domestic worker would have been black African or coloured.
14. There are echoes here of a mythology that suggests that the first coloured person was born nine months after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape in 1652. This mythology is often insensitively expressed as a joke. See Adhikari (1992).
15. There were several "yards" in Windermere. The two most well known were Timberyard and Strongyard. These yards were circles of corrugated iron shanties that faced inwards onto an open middle area.
16. The term *afdakkie,* as with many colloquial Afrikaans expressions, does not translate well. It refers to a corrugated iron shanty structure erected at the back of a friend's or family member's brick house. There is no official squatting in Factreton today, but many people do squat (and often pay rent to the homeowner) in these shantylike structures.
17. The interviewee is suggesting that due to pressure from their wives, these coloured men voted for the National Party leader Malan, (the first Prime Minister under the apartheid regime).

18. "Hire purchase" refers to the repayment of commodities bought on credit.
19. The third person Mrs. F. M. refers to was a research assistant, who helped me with the setting up of interviews in Guguletu.
20. For an overview of international oral history debates, see Perks and Thomson (1998); for an overview of South African memory issues, see Nuttall and Coetzee (1998).
21. Steedman (1992), 49.
22. Portelli (1991), x.
23. Marks and Anderson (1990).
24. Portelli (1991), 129.
25. Hofmeyr (1993).
26. Michael White (1988/89), 4.
27. Samuel (1994).
28. Bertaux-Wiame (1981), 256.
29. Coleman (1986).
30. Portelli (1991), 52.
31. Sigmund Freud (1991).
32. Olsen and Shopes (1991), 193.

2 Fragile Identities: Memory, Emotion, and Coloured Residents of Windermere

1. See for example, Goldin (1987) and Lewis (1987).
2. See Bhabha (1994).
3. Western (1981).
4. See also the explanation of the term "coloured" in the introductory chapter of the book.
5. Marina Warner (1994), 86.
6. The "Cape Flats" are a complex network of communities on the edge of the city center, where people forcibly displaced from the inner-city suburbs were moved to (see map).
7. Gilroy (1993).
8. Bhavnani (1990).
9. Coleman (1986), 2.
10. The boundaries between the individual body and the external world are blurred and porous. Although the mythology of the self-contained individual is at times necessary for emotional survival, critical analysis must be attuned to the construction of the individual body and self within power relations, ideology and discourses.
11. Lowenthal (1985).
12. Connerton (1989), 37.
13. Weeks (1991).
14. Jane Bennett (1997), 98.
15. Scarry (1985), 3.
16. Lutz and Abu-Lughod (1990).
17. This argument runs the risk of drawing a binary between emotions and words. However, social constructionist approaches that critically deconstruct forms of humanism tend to erase feelings and emotions. Through interpreting the relationships between language and emotions, we can learn much about the construction of self and its relationships to various internal and external phenomena.
18. Samuel and Thompson (1990).

19. Coleman (1986), 14.
20. Gilroy (1993); Bhabha (1994).
21. Laclau (1990).
22. Foster (1993).
23. Hall (1992), 256.
24. St. Helena is a small island in the South Atlantic Ocean.
25. James (1996), 42. Coloured communities are the majority in Cape Town and therefore the "coloured vote" remains a significant factor in determining which political party wins city elections. The author is rejecting the claim that "coloured voters" tend not to vote for the ANC because of racism.
26. Ebrahim Rassool (1996), 57.
27. When the term "amnesia" is applied to coloured communities, it is accusing them of having forgotten the racism and oppression they endured under the apartheid regime.
28. Erskine (1996), 6.
29. Erasmus (2001).
30. For recent publications on these themes, Adhikari (2005) and (2009).
31. Foster (1993), 77.

3 From the "Peaceful Past" to the "Violent Present": Memory, Myth, and Identity in Guguletu

1. This chapter acknowledges the memory of all those who died in the struggle against apartheid, and the memory of Amy Biehl, who was murdered on a roadside in Guguletu on August 25, 1993.
2. Weeks (1991), 91.
3. Lowenthal (1985), 185.
4. Tonkin (1990), 25.
5. The 18 interviewees drawn from in this chapter were all residents of Guguletu and formed part of my doctoral study. See Field (1996).
6. In this chapter, "the present" (unless otherwise stated) refers to July and August 1993, when these interviews were conducted.
7. For discussion of the differences and similarities between psychotherapy and oral history, see Figlio (1985).
8. For useful critiques of South African oral history, see Hofmeyr (1995b).
9. The term "community-in-memory" refers to a sense of community that has no necessary connection to spatial or social relationships, but is primarily constructed through the process of remembering and forgetting. Throughout fieldwork, I heard informants repeat the term "Windermere people." This was particularly used to differentiate themselves from "Retreat people." Retreat was another former squatter community that was destroyed by apartheid laws. Section 2, Guguletu, is dominated by former Windermere and Retreat residents.
10. Due to the political circumstances in Guguletu, I was obliged to be open about my political identity. If a conventional neutral role had been used, I would not have been granted most of the interviews.
11. Portelli (1991), 51.
12. Stick fighting is a traditional cultural practice; in this example, the interviewee is saying it was a nonviolent way of sorting out conflicts.
13. Passerini (1992), 13.
14. Samuel and Thompson (1990), 9.

15. Ibid., 3.
16. Norval (1994), 12.
17. Bhabha (1987), 123.
18. Sigmund Freud (1991), 83.
19. Gay (1985) correctly warns against the dangers of reductionism that have all too often beset psychohistory. For a useful discussion on how psychoanalytic thinking can inform research fieldwork, see Hunt (1989).
20. Hofmeyr (1993), 25–37.
21. Ibid.
22. Anna Freud (1968), 87.
23. Weeks (1991), 185.
24. Craib (1989), 91.
25. Laclau (1990). In the Lacanian sense, "lack" is not simply the force of unfulfilled desires that shapes identity formation but a constitutive element of identity formation. Hence all identities are subject to a "constitutive lack."
26. Gay (1985), 124.
27. Weeks (1991).
28. Maré (1992), 2.
29. Ibid., 12.
30. Through their memory reconstructions of the Windermere past, interviewees tend to deny the oppression they suffered during the pre-apartheid segregation years. In fact, there is no sharp disjuncture between the segregation and apartheid periods. See Dubow (1989).
31. Barth (1969).
32. Maré (1992), 2.
33. In Chapter 4, I discuss the interview with a coloured male who speaks fluent isiXhosa and says he feels more African than coloured. The decisive identification point for him was when his mother refused to let him go to a circumcision ritual with his African friends.
34. Bozzoli with Nkotsoe (1991).
35. Delius (1989, 604) traces the emergence of burial societies among male migrants. He also argues that in the face of urban pressures these rural migrants used burial societies to "maintain their footholds in the urban areas."
36. Bozzoli with Nkotsoe (1991), 53.
37. Lowenthal (1985), 196.
38. Passerini (1992), 12.

4 Disappointed Men: Masculine Myths and Hybrid Identities in Windermere

1. For a general discussion on self-sustaining myths, see Samuel and Thompson (1990), and Laubscher and Klinger (1997).
2. See Craib (1994), and Frosh (1994).
3. Mr. A. O. worked under the notorious "bucket system." Most Windermere residents did not have flush toilets; instead the bucket system involved large holes in the ground surrounded with a surface toilet structure. He would earn "a sixpence" for burying a drum of faeces.
4. For discussion of youth gangs in the Western Cape, see Pinnock (1984).
5. Connell (1995), 81.

6. "*Graafse bos*" was a bush area dominated by Port Jackson trees and owned by Sir De Villiers Graaf.
7. Dikeni (1999).
8. Mager (1998), 660.
9. Ibid., 625.
10. Field (1991).
11. Seidler (1997), 162.
12. For more detailed discussion of these issues, see Field (1996).
13. Seidler (1997).
14. Messner (1992), 169.
15. For interpretations of South African rugby and masculine identity, see Grundlingh, Odendaal, and Spies (1995); and Van der Riet (1995).
16. Rutherford (1992), 130.
17. As referred to in the Framing Notes, Mr. A. O.'s stories of physical abuse and violent incidents reminded me of my father. Both then as a child, and here as the researcher in relation to the interviewee, there was little I could do to help. However, after the interview was completed I did spend another hour listening to Mr. A. O's stories and expression of emotions.
18. Seidler (1997), 50.
19. Rutherford (1992), 126–27.

Part II Post-Apartheid Imaginings, Sites, and Places

1. Portelli (1991).
2. McGinn (2004), 7.
3. For example, see the psychological approach of Michael Forrester (2000) and the phenomenology work of Edward Casey (2000).
4. For example, see neurologist Steven Rose's account of memory (2003; 381). He makes the surprising blunt admission: "We still haven't the slightest idea of just how remembering occurs, how a simple clue can evoke the sequential memory of an entire scene."
5. Freund (2011).
6. William Cromie (1999). See also Oliver Sacks (2010).
7. Alberti (2004), 11.
8. Michael Roper (2009), 27.
9. LaCapra (2004), 65.
10. Yow (1997).
11. The "composure" notion was pioneered by the Popular Memory Group and was taken further by other historians; for example see Graham Dawson (2007).
12. Patrick Casement (1985); also see Sean Field (2008b).

5 Imagining Communities: Memory, Loss, and Resilience in Post-Apartheid Cape Town

1. See the Benedict Anderson (1983) account of the nation-state as an "imagined community."
2. Bickford-Smith, Van Heyningen, and Worden (1998), 12–83.
3. See discussion in the introductory chapter about racial categories designed under colonialism and apartheid.

4. Nuttal and Michael (2000), 2–21.
5. See Mohammed (1989); Musemwa (1993); and Mahlope (1994).
6. This was reinforced during the apartheid era, when black South Africans effectively became "foreigners" inside South Africa. For example, the predominantly Xhosa-speaking African population of Cape Town was deemed by the apartheid state to be citizens of either the Ciskei or Transkei. See Kinkead-Weeks (1992).
7. Saunders (1979).
8. See Fast (1995).
9. Mr. I. Z. was interviewed by the author in Langa, April 7, 2002. All Langa quotes are drawn from interviews I conducted with residents, for the Cape Town City Council and the Langa Heritage Foundation. This was to research the identification of heritage sites in Langa and to contribute to launching the Langa Museum in 2004.
10. Ramphele (1993).
11. Mr. C. M. was interviewed by the author, Langa, April 10, 2002.
12. Van Dieman (2005).
13. Felman and Laub (1992), 62.
14. Nora (1989).
15. Connerton (1989), 37.
16. Although this chapter primarily focuses on shared memories, it is important to acknowledge conceptually the unshared memories or competing voices of individuals or excluded groups. It is necessary to think through how both shared *and* unshared memories influence the framing of dominant community stories.
17. Jeppie and Soudien (1991).
18. My parents lived in District Six from 1956 to 1962. See the Framing Notes for discussion of my family history).
19. Swanson (2001).
20. From 1962, Guguletu was the "new" township to which most African residents in Cape Town were relocated, because Langa was massively overcrowded.
21. All District Six interview quotations in this essay are drawn from interviews conducted by Bill Nasson, Shamil Jeppie and others, between 1986 and 1989 for the Western Cape Oral History Project (WCOHP). These interviews are located in the District Six Collection, Centre for Popular Memory (www.popularmemory.org).
22. Interviewed by Bill Nasson, London, September 16, 1987.
23. Interviewed by Ciraj Mohammed, Cape Town, 1989.
24. McCormick (2002), 47.
25. Bickford-Smith, Worden, and van Heyingen (1999), 138.
26. For definitions of "the self" see Stolorow (1995).
27. Samuel and Thompson (1990).
28. Mrs. G. J., District Six collection, CPM archive; see above explanation (note 21).
29. Robbins (2000), 423.
30. Posel and Simpson (2002).
31. [Dhupelia-] Mesthrie (1998/99).
32. Sennett (1998), 12.
33. Minkley, and Rassool (1998).
34. Communication between author and Museum staff, April 19, 2005. Since 1990, informal settlements, previously referred to as shantytowns, have proliferated around the outer edges of Langa.
35. See documentary film *We Are All History: Stories from Langa,* produced by Centre for Popular Memory (2005).
36. Delport (2001).

37. Ngcelwane (1998).
38. Rassool and Layne (2001), 149.
39. McEachearn (2001), 232–233. I was able to write my family's name on the District Six map.
40. Communication between author and Museum staff member, Ms. Linda Fortune, March 7, 2003.
41. Coombes (2003), 142.
42. The District Six Museum hosted the "Hands on District Six: Landscapes of Post-Colonial Memorialization" Conference (2005), and international and local participants debated how the site should be memorialized.
43. Bonita Bennett, quoted in Tse (2005).
44. Merthen (2005).
45. In 2009, after the original publication of this chapter, the Langa Museum shut down because of a lack of financing. It has been relaunched as the Langa Heritage Museum in 2011.
46. Nora (1989), 17.

6 Sites of Memory in Langa

1. Nora (1989), 7.
2. LaCapra (2001), 46.
3. LaCapra's (2001) book gives a complex exposition of the "working through" technique.
4. Nora (1989), 9.
5. Ibid., 19.
6. Witz (2003), 7.
7. The Langa Heritage Reference Group consisted of community leaders and elders from Langa and officials from the Development Facilitation Unit and the Heritage Resources section of the Cape Town City Council (CCC).
8. The Reference Group identified potential sites in Langa, and most of these related to the period from the 1920s to the 1960s; therefore, mostly elderly residents were interviewed.
9. The first half of each interview focused on people's life stories of growing up, family, schooling, politics, work, and recreation. In the second half, the interview discussion focused more precisely on memories of sites in Langa.
10. For more on the historical origins of Langa, see Wilson and Mafeje (1973) and Saunders (1979).
11. For example, see Cole (1987).
12. South African heritage conservationists for the built and natural environments tend not to use oral history techniques, and oral historians tend to focus on "communities" and rarely conduct research on memories of place and space. Notable exceptions are Hofmeyr (1993) and Heiss (2001).
13. Hayden (1995), 18.
14. See Bank and Minkley (1998/99), which contains several articles on power and space in Cape Town.
15. All the interviews quoted in this chapter were conducted by the author and can be accessed at the audio-visual archive of the Centre for Popular Memory (CPM) at the University of Cape Town.

16. Name withheld to protect confidentiality.
17. For example see Jeppie and Soudien (1991); also Field (2001b).
18. The term "homeboys" refers to social networks that helped migrant workers to settle in urban areas and retain ties with their home district in the rural areas.
19. From 2007 to 2010, the CPM conducted oral history training for high school learners in more than twenty schools in the Western Cape region. In working with their educators, we discovered that a common complaint is that learners show a lack of interest in history as a school subject, but oral history projects have helped learners to engage with parents and grandparents and reduce their scepticism about what elder generations experienced under apartheid.
20. Mendi Square is named after the troop ship, *The Mendi*, which sank in 1917, with 600 African soldiers on board.
21. Deacon et al. (2004), 34.
22. Rive, quoted in Rassool and Prosalendis (2001), 31.
23. Portelli (1997), 32.
24. See Boyarin (1994); also Young, Clark, and Sutherland (1995).
25. See Hirsch (1997).
26. While this tendency is still common within South African universities and heritage organizations, there is a growing emphasis on "indigenous knowledge systems" (IKS) that also aim to validate how people interpret and construct knowledge about their own lives. However, I prefer the notion "popular knowledge forms," with a view to breaking from the essentialist assumptions underpinning much of IKS thinking.
27. See Portelli (1991).
28. Hayden (1995), 46.
29. On contemporary social divisions in Langa, see Merten (2005).
30. For example, some middle-class Langa residents wanted residents of informal settlements removed from the spatial margins of Langa to preserve circumcision ritual sites. But some claimed that their real motive was to protect middle class property prices; see Robbins (2000), 416.
31. See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998); Coombes (2003); and Robbins (2000).
32. See Lacy-Rogers, Leydesdorff, and Dawson (1999) on recording emotionally sensitive oral histories; and Edwards (2001) on collecting and interpreting sensitive historical photographs.
33. See Karp and Lavine (1990); and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998).
34. For examples from the District Six Museum experience, see Rassool and Prosalendis (2001).
35. Nora (1989), 17.

7 "There Your Memory Runs Like a Camera Back": Moving Places and Audiovisual Oral Histories from Klipfontein Road

1. Sipe (2006), 411. First published in 1991 and republished in *The Oral History Reader* (1998) and then republished in the *Oral History Reader* (2006).
2. Frisch (2006).
3. Ritchie (1995), 110.

4. For useful comparisons between audiotaped and videotaped interviews see Parkington (2006).
5. I ambivalently settled on the term, "audiovisual oral histories." But this might still suggest, to some, a dichotomy between "audio" and "visual." Moreover, the term does not capture the various new technological influences on oral history practices (many thanks to Steven High for this point). Perhaps, as Niklas Zimmer suggested to me, "multi-media oral histories" would better capture current and future trends?
6. For a very useful historical overview, see Bickford-Smith, Worden, and van Heyningen (1998 and 1999).
7. Most interviewees were selected and interviewed on streets, and some in workplaces and homes. Street interviews were 10 to 30 minutes in duration.
8. For example, see the CPM's (2009) film documentary on Klipfontein Road, *Soweto Sneezed and We Caught a Fever: Street Stories from Klipfontein Road.*
9. The CPM's camera person and editor for this project was Pascale Neuschäfer. See her article (2008).
10. See Meyer (2008).
11. Unfortunately, the growth of South African film documentary making has been severely thwarted by the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) plunge into financial crisis since 2009. In addition, note that there are many excellent South African documentaries that use videotaped oral history interviews, for example, Mark Kaplan's *Between Joyce and Remembrance* (2004); see film list at back of book.
12. For an account of African films, documentary and fictional, see Bickford-Smith and Mendelsohn (2007).
13. See Thomson and Freund (2011).
14. Sipe (2006), 414.
15. High (2010), 101.
16. For discussion of these central concepts, see Cresswell (2002).
17. William Batson estimates that on the eve of apartheid in 1947, one-third of Capetonians lived in "mixed-areas." See Western (2002).
18. For more oral history accounts of Cape Town history, see Field, Meyer, and Swanson (2007).
19. Western (2002), 713.
20. See City of Cape Town population figures.
21. For a post-apartheid case study on desegregation, see Oldfield (2004).
22. Of the over 200,000 people forcibly removed in Cape Town, 130,000 people will gain restitution under the post-apartheid Land Restitution Act. Of those eligible for restitution, most have opted for financial restitution and will not physically return.
23. Salo (2005), 176.
24. The CPM originally intended to interview street sex workers but did not because we could not guarantee their anonymity given that sex work is illegal in South Africa. Also, interviewing workers on street might mean a loss of business for them. Our decision to only interview during daytime hours, when the natural lighting is better, was a factor, although many street sex workers do work in the daytime. This daylight bias makes me wonder about doing a future nighttime "Street Stories" project.
25. On videotaped interviews with the homeless, see Kerr (2008).
26. Passerini (2003), 248.
27. Sipe (2006), 408.
28. Humphries (2003).
29. Brien Williams (2011), in a useful, practical overview on the subject, uses the term "video oral history."

30. High (2010), 109.
31. Sipe (2006), 410.
32. Cresswell (2004), 26.
33. Thanks to Renate Meyer, one of the interviewers, for this very useful point.
34. Neuschäfer (2008), 207.
35. Schama (2004), 24.
36. High (2010), 109.
37. Cresswell (2004), 103.
38. Paula Hamilton (2011).

8 "Others Killed in My Eyes": Rwandan Refugee Testimonies from Cape Town

This chapter was presented at the "Emotions in Oral History" colloquium in London in 2005, and at the International Oral History Association (IOHA) conference in Guadalajara in 2008.

1. It is impossible to obtain reliable statistics on how many Rwandan refugees there are in South Africa. The Wynberg Refugees Forum in Cape Town, in a personal communication in 2008, estimated that there were approximately 2000 to 3000 Rwandans in Cape Town. This is a relatively small refugee group in comparison to refugees, for example from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia, which run into tens of thousands in Cape Town.
2. The first visit was to assist with a project to videotape and archive the *gacaca* (on the grass) court proceedings; the second visit was to evaluate linkages between history curricula at schools and educational strategies at memorial centers.
3. I interviewed 12 Rwandan informants; 5 women and 7 men. Eight interviewees referred to themselves as Hutu, two as Tutsi, and two refused to assign an ethnic label to themselves. In addition, the following testimony-based publications have been useful: Hatzfeld (2005a); Hatzfeld (2005b); and African Rights (2004).
4. For example, Baer (2002).
5. Luckhurst (2008).
6. Note the critique of "trauma theories" in Hodgkin and Radstone (2003).
7. Mamdani (2001).
8. Pottier (2002).
9. Chris Taylor (1999), 55.
10. Lemarchand (2004).
11. Melvern (2004).
12. Eltringham (2004).
13. Interview with Mr. J. N., December 2, 2005.
14. Interview with Mr. J. N., December 2, 2005.
15. Jonathan Crush, quoted in Christina Taylor, 2008.
16. This is a significant theme, which I aim to write up for a separate publication.
17. Interview with Mr. J. N., November 23, 2005.
18. Interview with Ms. C. B., September 7, 2008.
19. Robin Cohen (1997).
20. Interview with Mr. C. K., May 26, 2005.
21. Daniel and Knudsen (1996).
22. Ahmed (2004).

23. Bourke (2005), 190. Ahmed (2004, 66) critiques this distinction and argues that fear is triggered by the "approaching object" and anxiety by the person's "approach to objects."
24. See Felman and Laub (1992); and Lacy-Rogers, Leydesdorff, and Dawson (1999).
25. Kurasawa (2009).
26. For example, see Antze and Lambek(1996); and Broch-Due (2005).
27. Stewart and Strathern (2003).
28. LaCapra (2001), 14.
29. Raymond Williams (1961). Interviewing circumstances with these refugees make it difficult to interpret what "new" cultures are being shaped through structures of feelings. Further research on cultural patterns prior to and after the genocide is required.
30. Field (2007a).
31. Interview with Ms. J. M., May 23, 2005.
32. Interview with Mr. J. N., November 23, 2005.
33. Buckley-Zistel (2006).
34. Interview with Ms. J. N., May 23, 2005.
35. Interview with Mr. C. K., May 26, 2005.
36. Interview with Mr. J. C., November 14, 2003.
37. This interview is interpreted more extensively in Field (2007b).
38. Interview with Ms. J. M., May 23, 2005.
39. Interview with Mr. J. B., January 25, 2005.
40. Interview with Mr. J. N., December 2, 2005.
41. *Interhamwe* means "those who work or fight together."
42. Interview with Mr. H. T., February 2, 2004. I have struggled to digest this passage. I have quoted it previously, but now think that for a few years this passage represented the limit of what I could bear. Hence, I was caught up in imagining the horror of his memories, without working through them.
43. Dallaire (1998), 78.
44. Linda Green (1997).
45. Hayes and Bank (2001), 7.
46. Edwards (2001).
47. For an excellent overview of the difficulties of bearing witness to violence, across different contexts, see Kurusawa (2009).
48. Radstone (2005).
49. Baer (2002), 10.
50. Levy and Lemma (2006), 51.
51. Luckhurst (2008), 147.
52. "Free association," the English translation of a Freudian term, is incorrect, as the German *"freier einfall"* means "irruption" or "sudden idea." Rycroft (1968), 54.
53. Rose (2007), 53.
54. LaCapra (2001) distinguishes between "structural trauma" that is constituted during early childhood development (but is not dateable) and creates an unconscious "lack," in contrast to "historical trauma" inflicted by sensory assaults produced through violence; the latter produces "loss," which can be located in time and space.
55. Interviewee name withheld; interview conducted by Carohn Cornell, January 4, 2007.
56. Interview with Ms. S. H., August 19, 2008.
57. Levy and Lemma (2006), 48. They explain, "Associations to the traumatic event, such as words, sounds or smells, which would typically form part of a signal anxiety response, are now immediately translated into an actual danger situation. The capacity

to differentiate between predicting a scenario rehearsing a memory and experiencing a live situation is collapsed" (59).
58. Heinz Kohut's phrase refers to the child's imagined separation from the mother. Quoted in Sucharov (2007), 199.
59. Sucharov (2007), 193.
60. Rustin (2007), 67.
61. Jill Bennett (2005), 10.
62. Luckhurst (2008), 83.
63. For example, in an otherwise excellent book, see Stan Cohen (2001).
64. Writing this chapter in a coherent fashion has been very difficult. I suspect that in engaging with this material my symbolic functioning at times was disrupted in trying to "think the unthinkable."

Part III Conclusions without Closure

1. Popular Memory Group (1998; 2006), 78.
2. Freund (2011), 5.
3. Gumede and Dikeni (2009), 5.
4. Verbal exchange at conference organized by the Brazilian centre CPDOC in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2008.
5. Field, 2009.
6. Abrams (2010).
7. Gumede and Dikeni (2009), 10.
8. Jansen (2009), 150.
9. Ross (2010), 164.
10. Frisch (1990).
11. Ciraj Rassool (2007), 126.

9 Beyond "Healing": Oral History, Trauma, and Regeneration

1. A previous draft of this chapter was presented at the Second South African Oral History Conference, Johannesburg, 2005.
2. BenEzer (1999).
3. For other TRC critiques, see Colvin (2003); Ross (2003); and Richard Wilson (2001).
4. The 2002 International Oral History Association (IOHA) conference theme in Pietermaritzburg was: "The Power of Oral History: Memory, Healing and Development." Some papers referred to "healing," but none gave it detailed attention. "Healing" through oral testimony is promised by some local nongovernment organizations, for example, the Institute for Healing of Memories (www.healingofmemories.co.za).
5. For discussion of historical trauma, and the related concept of structural trauma, see LaCapra (2001), 43.
6. I follow LaCapra (1998) in arguing against the uniqueness of periods like the Holocaust or apartheid, in order to avoid constructing a moral or conceptual hierarchy.

7. For an overview of commissions, see Hayner (2002).
8. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1998). *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (1998) volume 1, chapter 4.
9. Orr (2000), 239.
10. Nelson Mandela; quoted in *Time*, 31 July 1995.
11. Ross (2003), 13.
12. Desmond Tutu, quoted in Kapelianis and Taylor (2000a).
13. Mamphela Ramphele, quoted in Boraine and Levy (1995), 34.
14. Richard Wilson (2001), 14.
15. Furedi's (2004) work echoes here. While he is overly cynical about the value of talk therapy, I agree with his critique of "therapy culture" in the US and UK. He argues that the proliferation of therapy discourses since the early 1990s has pathologizing and conservative tendencies. Similar patterns emerged during the TRC, where "wounded" South Africans were to be "healed" to become "good citizens." In fairness to the TRC, during the 1990s, achieving social cohesion was a legitimate macroobjective, given the risk of further social fragmentation in South Africa.
16. For "backstage" observations, see Buur (2002).
17. For example, see the Khulumani Victim Support Group's comments in Colvin (2003); and Henry (2000).
18. Bozzoli (1998), 93.
19. Ross (2003).
20. In defence of "catharsis," see Villa-Vicencio (2000a). For a critique, see Colvin (2003).
21. Boraine and Levy (1995), xiv.
22. Bishop Tutu, quoted in Kapelianis and Taylor (2000b).
23. Ross (2003), 12.
24. Orr (2000), 240.
25. Ross (2003), 12.
26. See, for example, Passerini (2003).
27. Bundy (2000).
28. Lalu and Harris (1996), 24.
29. For responses from TRC staff members, see Villa-Vicencio (2000b); and Cherry, Daniel, and Fullard (2002).
30. For discussion of "re-enacted narratives," see Thelen (2002).
31. Posel (2002).
32. Quoted in Richard Wilson (2001), 43.
33. Richard Wilson (2001), 60.
34. Ibid, 52.
35. For more information about the Khulumani Support Group and related nongovernmental organizations, visit: www.khulumani.net, or www.ijr.org.za
36. Ignatieff (1996).
37. Audiovisual TRC records are accessible at the SABC and paper-based records at the National Archives can only be accessed through the Department of Justice. For more on these issues, see South African History Archive (www.wits.ac.za/saha/).
38. Kapelianis and Taylor (2000c).
39. For examples of posttraumatic legacies, see Stanley (2000).
40. Eng and Kazanjian (2003), 4.
41. Samuel and Thompson (1990).
42. For defense of psychoanalytic thinking, see Craib (1994).
43. Portelli (1997).

44. Portelli (1991), 51–52.
45. Anna Green (2004).
46. Ian Craib offered this insight in 1993 during my studies at Essex University.
47. LaCapra (2001), 42.
48. Friedlander (1994), 262.
49. Passerini (2003) is an excellent example of "working through" in writing about memory. For a useful comparison of psychoanalytic and oral history techniques, see Jones (1998).
50. District Six Collection, Centre for Popular Memory, University of Cape Town.
51. Interview with Ms. D. K., April 24, 2002, Cape Town.
52. Portelli (1991), 43.
53. Jones (1998), 55–56.
54. Roper (2003). His emphasis on the anxieties underlying intersubjective dialogues is particularly useful.
55. I cannot detail the variety of approaches here, which either reject or downplay psychotherapeutic "talk" responses to posttraumatic legacies. I have already mentioned the critique of Furedi (2004). From a very different perspective, note psychiatric approaches, which have a biomedical emphasis on "illness" and drugs, which is preferred to psychotherapeutic "talking." For a sophisticated psychiatric view, see Wessley (2005).
56. Casement (1985). For an oral history example, see Hartmann (1996).
57. On empathizing with a perpetrator, see Gobodo-Madikizela (2003).
58. Anderson and Jack (1991), 11–12.
59. I am in the process of conducting life story interviews with Rwandan refugees; see Chapter 8.
60. Mistrust is a common response from traumatized groups; see Daniel and Knudsen (1996).
61. Interview (name withheld), February 11, 2004, Cape Town.
62. LaCapra (2001), 41–42, and 102–03.
63. These examples contain elements of "acting-out." For discussion of "acting-out," see LaCapra (2001).
64. Felman, and Laub (1992) provide fascinating interpretations of silences in Holocaust survivor testimonies.
65. Hodgkin and Radstone (2003), 97.
66. LaCapra (2001), 110.
67. Lacy-Rogers, Leydesdorff, and Dawson (1999) is a notable oral history collection on trauma.
68. For example, Samuel and Thompson (1990).
69. Langer (1998), 70.
70. Figlio (1985), 130.
71. It is also important to consider: Is help needed or requested? Is what the researcher has to offer appropriate assistance for that individual?
72. The Popular Memory Group, University of Birmingham pioneered the notion of "composure," and it was further developed in Thomson (1994).
73. LaCapra (2001), 41–42.
74. Thomson (1994), 237.
75. Ross (2003), 153.
76. For African examples of oral histories, see White, Miescher, and Cohen (2001).
77. There are increasing international examples of postinterview participation of interviewees. For example, note the work of the Age Exchange in London and other projects. In Denmark, note the admirable work of Harrits and Scharnberg (2002).

78. The proliferation of South African oral history projects and the launch of the Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) in 2005 will increase awareness around issues of postinterview participation of interviewees and ethics, we hope. Their website is: www.ohasa.org.za
79. LaCapra (2004), 119. For examples of regeneration, see Barker (1991). Note that I am not referring to the Moral Regeneration Movement in South Africa.
80. Ross (2003), 141.
81. Hodgkin and Radstone (2003), 27.
82. LaCapra (2004), 119.
83. Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper (2000), 41.
84. Kurasawa (2009).
85. For further details on the museum, see Rassool and Prosalendis (2001).
86. For how first-person narratives and survivor parents influence the memories of following generations, see Hirsch's (1997) term "post-memory."
87. Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper (2000), 40.

10 Disappointed Imaginings: Narcissism and Empathy in Post-Apartheid South Africa

1. Gladys Thomas, interviewed by author, December 10, 2009 (reproduced by permission of Gladys Thomas).
2. Field (2011a).
3. Ignatieff (1994), 1–2.
4. Craib (1994), 11.
5. Stan Cohen (2001), 243.
6. Daniel (1997), 352; Anderson (1983), 18–19; and Jackson (2002), 108.
7. For an overview of intersubjective thinking, see Crossley (1996).
8. For discussion of the psychic dimensions of power, see Butler 1997.
9. Eng and Kazanjian (2003), 4.
10. Bruce Kapferer, quoted in Jackson (2002), 109.
11. Lloyd (2000), 212.
12. Harris (2006).
13. Villa-Vicencio and Du Toit (2006), 192.
14. Robbins (2005), 2.
15. For socioeconomic analysis, see Seekings and Nattrass (2005).
16. With the boost of the soccer World Cup over and global markets in turmoil, the South African growth rates for the first three quarters of 2011 are below 2%.
17. On service delivery protests, see Joubert (2007).
18. Nattrass (2007).
19. See Cullinan and Thoms (2009).
20. Mark Cichocki, "South Africa—Political Turmoil and Denial Feeds Raging Epidemic" http://aids.about.com/od/clinicaltrials/a/safrica.htm, accessed 8 June 2011.
21. For more on "the limits to liberation" and struggles for social justice, see Robbins (2005 and 2008).
22. For a vibrant example of political advocacy through oral memorialization, see the projects developed by the Human Rights Media Centre in Cape Town; visit: www.hrmc.org.za
23. Abrams (2010), 76.

24. Paula Hamilton (2011), 219.
25. Jackson (2002), 31.
26. Anna Green (2011).
27. For an overview of oral history approaches to "the self," see Abrams (2010), 33–53.
28. Jackson (2002), 22–23.
29. Crossley (1996), 173
30. Abrams (2010), 18–32.
31. Jackson (2002).
32. Lorenz (2010), 125.
33. Jelin (2003), 65.
34. Gobodo-Madikizela (2003), 52–53.
35. Walker (2008), 2.
36. Walker, Bohlin, Hall, and Kepe (2011).
37. Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2011), 87; and Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2000).
38. These are Vincent Kolbe's words from an interview I had with him in 1998. He passed away in 2010. I dedicate the book to him and to all the other interviewees.
39. Mr. A. A., quoted in Thomas (2001), 98.
40. Mrs. C. C., quoted in Paulse (2001), 59.
41. See Trotter (2009).
42. Walker (2008), 17.
43. Alexander, Eyerman, et al. (2004).
44. For more on attachment theory, see Wallin (2007).
45. Broch-Due (2005), 25.
46. There is a wide-ranging literature on Cape Town's youth gangs. For general and specific references linking youth gangs to apartheid forced removals and other legacies, see http://www.criminology.uct.ac.za/ and also http://www.csvr.org.za/
47. Salo (2005).
48. Ross (2010),130.
49. Steedman (1986), 123.
50. For more information on this schools project, entitled "Bridging the Digital Divide," visit: www.popularmemory.org.za
51. See Field (2011b).
52. See Hirsch (1997).
53. Gay (1998), 124.
54. Interview with Ms. C. B., September 7, 2008.

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Interviews

Most interviewees requested anonymity or confidentiality; therefore, for ethical reasons and consistency, all have been kept anonymous. All the interviews indicated below are lodged in the Centre for Popular Memory (CPM) archive at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Where interviewee permission for public access was granted, transcripts can be accessed through the Department of Manuscripts and Archives at UCT, and sound or audiovisual files at the CPM. The Klipfontein Road interviews were conducted on video; all other interviews were recorded on audio.

- *District Six:* 90 interviews conducted by various interviewers from 1985 to 1989. Quotes appear in chapters 5 and 9.
- *Windermere/Kensington:* 54 interviews conducted by the author in 1993. Quotes appear in chapters 1 to 4.
- *Langa:* 20 interviews conducted in 2002 by the author for Cape Town City Council (CCC). Quotes appear in chapters 5 and 6.
- *Klipfontein Road:* Ten videotaped interviews were conducted by CPM staff members in 2008. Quotes appear in Chapter 7.
- *Rwandan refugees:* 12 interviews conducted by the author, from 2004 to 2008. Quotes appear in chapters 8, 9, and 10.

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