

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**CULTURE, POLITICS AND IDENTITY IN THE VISUAL ART
OF INDIAN SOUTH AFRICAN GRADUATES FROM THE
UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE**

IN KWAZULU-NATAL, 1962-1999

By

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Centre for Visual Art

School of Literary Studies, Media and Creative Arts

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DECLARATION

I, Nalini Moodley declare that

- (i) The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research
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Nalini Moodley

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to document the visual art production of Indian South Africans who graduated from the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) with a degree in Fine Art, and provide an explanation of how and why their art works are so poorly documented within a post-Apartheid art historical narrative. When South African Apartheid society was designed to promote Black intellectual underdevelopment, this Indian university provided a space for young Indian intellectuals from all fields to engage with the struggle politic of the country to envision a strategy for a liberated and democratic future. While the visual art in this country has provided powerful social commentary throughout the Apartheid years, the voice of the Indian artist has remained silent. Some students managed to complete their degrees and find a little recognition as artists; the majority, however, relegated their art-making to a pastime. Little is known about this body of graduates; hence this research attempts a systematic study about how Indian Fine Art graduates fell into silence upon the completion of their degrees.

The rationale of this study is to determine in what ways the constructs of culture, politics and identity, as key environmental factors at UDW, impacted on the virtual absence of Indian artists from South Africa's art history. To this end, the social history of education of Indian South Africans since their arrival in this country has been provided. The influential and historical location of the University College for Indians (UNICOL) and later UDW as a cultural and political construct is explored against the art production of its Fine Art Department. Thus, the geopolitical space of this university as a site of struggle is contextualised. Against this background, the varied life stories of the forty-three graduates presented in this study are contextualised within the framework of separate and segregated education. These stories illuminate the unfolding dynamics that shaped the directions they subsequently took.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution of knowledge to the existing literature on Indian history in South Africa as well as on the art production of this community as students of the Fine Art Department at UDW and subsequently as a small body of practising, but not always exhibiting, artists.

Through this study I suggest that some of these graduates became internal exiles, which positioned them on the margins of the art-producing community in this country. This position

of marginality impacted on their representation within the South African art historical archive. The study makes a number of recommendations to bring these and other South African Indian artists into the picture again.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
APPENDICES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
DEDICATION	xxii
ACRONYMS	xxiii
CHAPTER ONE: A CONTEXT FOR CREATIVITY	1
1.1 Introduction: Background and Aim of Study	1
1.2 Higher Education in South Africa	4
1.3 The Geopolitical History of the University of Durban-Westville	8
1.4 Rationale for the Study	10
1.5 Research Methodology	11
1.6 Overview of Chapters	16
CHAPTER TWO: SYNTHESIS AND SEPARATION	18
2.1 Introduction: Theoretical Framework	18
2.2 Literature Review	18
2.3 A Post-colonial Framework	20
2.4 Identity	22

2.5	Indian Identity.....	24
2.6	Culture	28
2.7	Diaspora.....	29
2.8	Concluding Remarks	33
CHAPTER THREE: INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY IN SOUTH AFRICA.....		34
3.1	Introduction: Apartheid and the Indian	34
3.2	A Brief Political Historiography of South Africa (1486-1860).....	34
3.3	British Colonialism.....	36
3.4	Natal and the Need for Labour	37
3.5	The Indentured System.....	39
3.6	Indians in South Africa.....	40
3.7	South Africa Reacts to the Indian presence.....	42
3.8	Gandhi's Impact	47
3.9	On the Brink of Apartheid	49
3.10	Anti-Indian Sentiment – Apartheid and Resistance	51
3.11	Concluding Remarks	52
CHAPTER FOUR: STRATEGIES FOR INDIANS - EDUCATION FOR SEPARATION ..		54
4.1	Introduction: Beginning and Entrenching Marginalisation.....	54
4.2	Indian Education.....	54
4.3	Separation and Segregation	57
4.4	Apartheid's Education Strategies	63
4.5	Tertiary Education	64
4.6	The Need for an Indian University	66
4.7	The University College for Indians (UNICOL)	67
4.8	Initial response.....	68
4.9	The University of Durban-Westville (UDW).....	73

4.10	The Fine Art Department.....	76
4.10.1.	Staff	76
4.10.2.	Programme.....	81
4.10.3.	Location and Representation	86
4.10.4.	Community engagement.....	91
4.10.5.	Closure.....	91
4.11	The Political Ethos at the University.....	92
4.12	Concluding Remarks	95
CHAPTER FIVE: THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY		96
5.1	Introduction: South African Indian, Indian South African.....	96
5.2	Demystifying a Labelled Identity	97
5.3	Notions of Homogeneity	100
5.4	Shifting labels: The South African Indian.....	102
5.5	The Question of Racial Difference in a Post-Democratic South Africa.....	102
5.6	Concluding Remarks	114
CHAPTER SIX: NARRATIVES FOR CREATIVITY.....		116
6.1	Introduction: Stories of History.....	116
6.2	Economic positions.....	117
6.3	Generational Evolution.....	124
6.3.1.	The 1960s and 1970s.....	124
6.3.2.	The 1980s and 1990s.....	126
6.4	Pre-Training and Expectation.....	131
6.5	Students' Perceptions of FAD	133
6.6	A Collective Political Consciousness	136
6.7	Postgraduate Prospects	140
6.8	Concluding Remarks	143

CHAPTER SEVEN: CRITICAL MOMENTS	145
7.1 Introduction: Narratives for interpretation	145
7.2 History and Context.....	146
7.3 A Strategy for Analysis	154
7.4 Student Practice	155
7.4.1. Introduction	155
7.4.2. Images: Student Practice	173
7.5 Professional Practice.....	185
7.5.1. Introduction	185
7.5.2. Images: Professional Practice.....	221
7.6 Concluding Remarks	257
CHAPTER EIGHT: REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	259
8.1 Introduction: Looking Back, Looking Forward	259
8.2 Chapter Summary	260
8.3 Contributions of the study	267
8.4 Limitations of the Study	268
8.5 Recommendations for further research.....	270
BIBLIOGRAPHY	272
APPENDICES	298
Appendix A.....	298
Fine Art graduates who participated in the study.....	298
Appendix B	299
Generic Questionnaire for the Sample Population.....	299
Appendix C.....	301

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participants in the Study.....	298
Appendix B: Questionnaire.....	299
Appendix C: Sketchbook Exploration.....	301

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Representation of staff at FAD	81
Table 2: Income Distribution (extracted from McCrystal & Maasdorp, 1966: 7).....	118
Table 3: Degrees and Diplomas Awarded between 1964 and 1981 (from Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 196)	120
Table 4: Growing Student Intake for Fine Art (developed from graduation lists provided by Division of Management Information- UKZN).....	123
Table 5: Educational Level of Parents (extracted from Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 153).....	127
Table 6: Indian student enrolment at the former University of Natal (Statistics from the Division of Management Information - UKZN).....	128

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Graffiti (Moodley & Pather, 2011: 38) date and site unknown.....	9
Figure 2: Letter to the Editor, 11 November 1960, Newspaper unknown.....	70
Figure 3: Exterior view of the FAD at Salisbury Island. Image courtesy of Herselene Lazarus Charles 2010	87
Figure 4: Aerial View of UDW (free internet)	89
Figure 5: N. Block - Fine Art Department.....	90
Figure 6: UDW's Gallery (Image courtesy of Colin Sabapathy).....	90
Figure 7: Sandy Naidoo, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1994, woodcut, 36cm x 60cm.....	105
Figure 8: Kiren Thathiah, <i>Transitions</i> , 1992, oil on canvas, 2688 x1861cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery	112
Figure 9: Ravi Govender, <i>Krishna and Flute</i> , c.1995, enamel on canvas, 145.1 x 140cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery	113
Figure 10: Hasan and Husain Essop, <i>Wudhu Ghanaa</i> , 2007, photograph, 2604 x 1878cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery	113
Figure 11: Riason Naidoo, <i>Bunny Chow</i> , c.1996, oil on board, 2058 x 2982cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery	114
Figure 12: Vijay Shah, First prize for Anglo Platinum Jewellery Design Competition 2010, free Internet.....	122
Figure 13: Vijay Shah, Second prize design for Plat Africa 2009, free Internet.....	122
Figure 14: Student Poster (in Moodley & Pather, 2011: 28).....	138
Figure 15: Clive Pillay, <i>Children's Rights</i> , c.1995, mixed media, dimensions unknown	142

Figure 16: Prabashan Pather, 2009, 70 metre bill board on the N1 Highway in Johannesburg	143
Figure 17: Prabashan Pather, Advert for Volkswagen.....	143
Figure 18: Paul Stopforth, <i>Biko Series</i> (Arm and Heels detail), 1980, mixed media, 76 x 56 cm each, in Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, 2010: 41.....	149
Figure 19: Sam Nhlenhethwa, <i>It Left him Cold - the death of Steve Biko</i> , 1990, collage, pencil and charcoal, 69 x 93cm, (Goniwe et al., 2011:58).....	149
Figure 20: Sue Williamson, <i>Truth Game Series: Nkosinathi Biko - False medical certificate - Dr Benjamin Tucker</i> , 1998, colour laser prints, wood, metal, plastic, perspex, 80 x 120 x 6cm (Herreman, 1999: 33).....	150
Figure 21: David Koloane, <i>The Journey</i> (2 of 20 drawings), 1998 (Herreman, 1999: 20-21)	150
Figure 22: Jane Alexander, <i>Danger Gevaar</i> , 2004, Tableau, security enclosure with barbed wire extention, Loyiso Qanya in security uniform with baton. 252.5 x 300cm (in Langerman, 2006: 7).....	153
Figure 23: Nandhipa Mntambo, <i>Balandzeli</i> , 2004, cowhide, resin, polyester, mesh, waxed cord, variable dimensions, (Goniwe et al., 2011: 64).....	153
Figure 24: Berni Searle, Untitled from Colour Me series, 1998, hand printed colour photograph, 42 x 50cm (Goniwe et al., 2011: 82).....	153
Figure 25: Nalini Moodley, <i>Untitled</i> , 1990, etching, 45 x 35cm.....	173
Figure 26: Clive Pillay, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1984, watercolour on paper, approx. 90 x 70 cm.	174
Figure 27: Clive Pillay, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1984, watercolour on paper, approx. 90 x 70cm.....	174
Figure 28: Clive Pillay, <i>A South African Stamp</i> , 1984, screen print, dimensions unknown..	175
Figure 29: Clive Pillay, <i>Untitled</i> , 1986, screen print, dimensions unknown.....	175
Figure 30: Paul Stopforth, <i>The Interrogators</i> , 1979 (Williamson, 1989: 115).....	176

Figure 31: Clive Pillay, <i>Gagged</i> , 1984, screen print, approx. 110 x 82cm.....	176
Figure 32: Ujala Sewpersad, <i>Detainee</i> , c.1980, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown.....	177
Figure 33: Dianne Latchmigadu, <i>Untitled</i> , 1988, screen print, 60 x 40cm.....	177
Figure 34: You have struck a rock, Judy Seidman for Medu, 1982, silkscreen, (Seidman, 2007: 122).....	178
Figure 35: Hector Pietersen, <i>Sam Nzima</i> , 1976, Free internet	178
Figure 36: Dianne Latchmigadu, <i>Untitled</i> , 1989, screen print 2 x 30 x 30cm.....	179
Figure 37: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Untitled</i> , mixed media, 1989. 61 x 84cm.....	180
Figure 38: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Untitled</i> , 1989, etching, 110 x 82cm.....	180
Figure 39: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Untitled</i> , 1989, cement, approx. 150cm x 100.....	181
Figure 40: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sharpeville Six</i> , 1989, cement, 3 x 80 x 60cm.....	182
Figure 41: Mahendra Govender, <i>Untitled</i> , 1991/2, mixed media, 60 x 42cm	183
Figure 42: Mahendra Govender, <i>Untitled</i> , 1992, mixed media, approx. 60 x 42cm	183
Figure 43: Sandhia Bansi, <i>Mendhi</i> , oil on canvas, c. 1997, dimensions unknown, (in <i>Newsart KZN</i> , Vol.2. No. 6, not dated: 4).....	184
Figure 44: Sherene Timol, <i>Untitled</i> , c. 2010, mixed media, 2 x (80 x 60cm).....	221
Figure 45: Vedant Nanackchand, <i>They Came from the East</i> , 1987 oil on canvas, 2 x 2m, Collection of UKZN	221
Figure 46: Vedant Nanackchand, <i>The Sugar Fields</i> , 1987, oil on canvas, 2 x 2m, Collection of UKZN	222
Figure 47: Vedant Nanackchand, <i>The Merchant</i> , 1987, 2 x 2m, oil on canvas, Collection of the UKZN.....	222
Figure 48: Vedant Nanackchand, <i>The Purple Shall Govern</i> , 1991, screenprint, 63 x 34.5cm	223

Figure 49: Vedant Nanackchand, <i>Let Us Pray</i> , 1999, Article 17: Right to own Property, woodcut on paper, 60.7 x 42.8cm. Collection of the Durban Art Gallery.....	223
Figure 50: Ayesha Adam, <i>Untitled</i> , c.2009, mixed media, approx. 100 x 80cm.....	224
Figure 51: Ayesha Adam, <i>Untitled</i> , c.2009., mixed media.....	224
Figure 52: Andrew Nair, <i>The African Renaissance</i> , c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown	225
Figure 53: Andrew Nair, <i>The Weeping Cathedral</i> , c. 2009, graphite on pencil, dimensions unknown.....	225
Figure 54, Andrew Nair, <i>Morning Glory</i> , c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown.....	226
Figure 55: Andrew Nair, <i>Grotto'esque</i> , c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown.....	226
Figure 56: Andrew Nair, <i>Vainly, I try to get a grip on things</i> , c. 2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown.....	227
Figure 57: Andrew Nair, <i>A Life Consumed by Slow Decay</i> , c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown	227
Figure 58: Kiren Thathiah, <i>Temples</i> , c.1987, crayon and ink on card, 53.3 x 81cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery	228
Figure 59: <i>Trishula</i> brought as offerings to Guna Devi near Dharamsala, free internet	228
Figure 60: Shiva Holding the <i>Trishula</i> , New Delhi, free internet	229
Figure 61: Avitha Sooful, <i>Dislocation</i> , 2010, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown.....	229
Figure 62: Avitha Sooful, <i>Burning Field</i> , 2012, oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm.....	230
Figure 63: Avitha Sooful, <i>Open Field</i> , 2012, oil on canvas, 100 x 150cm	230
Figure 64: Avitha Sooful, <i>Road to Vrede</i> , 2012, oil on canvas, 91 x 122cm	231
Figure 65: Ravi Govender, <i>Eternal Bliss</i> , 2006, oil on canvas, 50 x 40cm, free internet	231

Figure 66: Ravi Govender, <i>God's Acre</i> , 2006, oil on canvas, 45 x 40cm, free internet	232
Figure 67: Ravi Govender, <i>Spiritual Landscape</i> , 2006, oil on canvas, 45 x 40cm, free internet	232
Figure 68: Nalini Moodley, <i>Untitled</i> , 2009, mixed media, 30 x 30cm.....	233
Figure 69: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Conversations in my Mind, Then and Now</i> , 2004, mixed media, approx. 84 x 60cm.....	234
Figure 70: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Conversations in my Mind Then and Now</i> , 2004, mixed media, approx. 84 x 60cm.....	234
Figure 71: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Conversations in my Mind: Then and Now</i> , 2004, mixed media, 84 x 60cm.....	235
Figure 72: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Conversations in My Mind: Then and Now</i> , 2004, mixed media, 84 x 60cm.....	235
Figure 73: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1998, charcoal and colour pastel, 84 x 60cm.....	236
Figure 74: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1998, lithograph, 84 x 60cm	236
Figure 75: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Untitled</i> , 1997, screen print, dimensions unknown	237
Figure 76: Detail of Figure 73	238
Figure 77: Detail of Figure 74	238
Figure 78: Detail of Figure 75	238
Figure 79: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Purdah</i> , 1994, screen print, 49 x 28cm.....	239
Figure 80: Faiza Galdhari, <i>Who Am I?</i> , c.1995, screen print, 84 x 60cm	240
Figure 81: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1997, screen print, approx. 84 x 65cm	240
Figure 82: Reshma Maharaj, <i>The Message is in the Medium</i> , not dated, screen print, dimensions unknown	241
Figure 83: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Holi</i> , c. 1997, screen print, dimensions unknown.....	241

Figure 84: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1997, screen print, dimensions unknown	242
Figure 85: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Untitled</i> , c. 1997, screen print, 84 x 60cm	242
Figure 86: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Allah-most beneficial- the most merciful</i> , not dated, mixed media, dimensions unknown.....	243
Figure 87: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Untitled</i> , c. 1997, screen print, 84 x 60cm	243
Figure 88: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Untitled</i> , c. 1997, screen print, 84 x 60cm	244
Figure 89: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Untitled</i> , c. 1998, screen print, dimensions unknown	244
Figure 90: Reshma Maharaj, <i>Raas</i> , date unknown, mixed media, dimensions unknown	245
Figure 91: Selvan Naidoo, <i>Thali</i> , 2009, digital screen print with oil paint on canvas, 1.2m x 64cm.....	245
Figure 92, Selvan Naidoo, <i>Destiny</i> , 1998, screen print, size unknown.	246
Figure 93: Detail of Figure 101	246
Figure 94: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panel 1 and 2 (each panel is 15 x 20cm), 2010,	247
Figure 95: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panel 3 and 4, 2010, mixed media.....	247
Figure 96: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panels 5 and 6, 2010, mixed media	248
Figure 97: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panels 7 and 8, 2010, mixed media	248
Figure 98: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panels 9 and 10, 2010, mixed media	249
Figure 99: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panels 11 and 12, mixed media	249
Figure 100: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panels 13 and 14, mixed media	250
Figure 101: <i>Indentured labourers</i> , Inside Indenture, (Desai & Vahed, 2007: inside cover).250	
Figure 102: Selvan Naidoo, <i>I Am An African</i> , Panel 15, 2010, mixed media.....	251
Figure 103: Selvan Naidoo, <i>Who are we, where are we going to?</i> , 2008/9, Digital printing on canvas with oil paint, screen print, 80 x85cm.....	252

Figure 104: Detail of Figure 103	252
Figure 105: Detail of Figure 103	253
Figure 106: Detail of Figure 103	253
Figure 107: Detail of Figure 103	254
Figure 108: Detail of Figure 103	254
Figure 109: Yusuf Vahed, <i>Jackfruit Dreams</i> , 2006, oil on canvas, 60 x 120cm.....	255
Figure 110: Yusuf Vahed, <i>Durban Landscape with the Quarry and Dancers</i> , 2006, oil on canvas, 100 x 90cm.....	255
Figure 111: Yusuf Vahed, <i>Identity</i> , 2008, oil on canvas, 30 x 105cm.....	256
Figure 112: Sharlene Khan, <i>Postgraduate Beggar</i> , mixed media, 2008, 61 x 84cm	256
Figure 113: Herselene Lazarus-Charles, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c. 1966, pencil, 60 x 42cm.....	301
Figure 114: Herselene Lazarus-Charles, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c. 1966, pencil, 60 x 42 cm...301	
Figure 115: Herselene Charles-Lazarus, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1966, pencil, 60 x 42cm.....	302
Figure 116: Herselene Lazarus-Charles, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1966, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm.....	302
Figure 117: Colin Sabapathy, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1982, charcoal on paper, approx. 60 x 42cm.....	303
Figure 118: Colin Sabapathy, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c. 1982, charcoal on paper, approx. 60 x 42 cm.....	303
Figure 119: Colin Sabapathy, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1982, pen on paper, 60 x 42cm	304
Figure 120: Colin Sabapathy, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1982, charcoal on paper, 60 x 42cm...304	
Figure 121: Colin Sabapathy, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c. 1982, charcoal on paper, 60 x 42cm..305	
Figure 122: Colin Sabapathy, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1982, mixed media, 84 x 60cm	305
Figure 123: Saleem Galdhari, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1986, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm	306

Figure 124: Saleem Galdhari, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, pencil on paper, approx. 60 x 42cm.....	306
Figure 125: Saleem Galdhari, <i>Aunty Nora</i> , c.1986, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm	307
Figure 126: Saleem Galdhari, <i>Aunty Panjalai</i> , c. 1987, approx. 42 x 30cm	307
Figure 127: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm .	308
Figure 128: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm .	308
Figure 129: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm .	309
Figure 130: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Untitled</i> , c.1988, pen on paper, 42 x 30cm.....	309
Figure 131: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, ink on paper, 60 x 42cm,.....	310
Figure 132: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, mixed media, 42 x 30cm	310
Figure 133: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, mixed media, 42 x 30cm	311
Figure 134: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, charcoal, 42 x 30cm	311
Figure 135: Rufus Latchmigadu, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm .	312
Figure 136: Selina Gokool, <i>Sketchbook Study</i> , c.1987, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm.....	312
Figure 137: Rajiv Manilal, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c. 1988, pencil on paper, approx. 40 x 30cm	313
Figure 138: Rajiv Manilal, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1988, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm.....	314
Figure 139: Rajiv Manilal, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c 1987, pencil on paper, approx. 42 x 30cm	314
Figure 140: Rajiv Manilal, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c.1987, pencil on paper, approx. 42 x 30cm	315
Figure 141: Rajiv Manilal, <i>Sketchbook Studies</i> , c. 1987, watercolour on paper, approx.42 x 30cm.....	315
Figure 142: Nalini Moodley, <i>Untitled</i> , lithograph, 1990, approx. 43 x 30cm.....	316

Figure 143: Selina Gokool, *Untitled*, c.1987, etching, 42 x 30cm316

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents

Dori and Peri Moodley

who taught me to value education

and instilled in me

the courage to persevere

ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
FAD	Fine Art Department
GAA	Group Areas Act
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
SAIC	South African Indian Council
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SASO	South African Students Organisation
SOFA	Society of Fine Art
SRC	Students Representative Council
UDW	University of Durban-Westville
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNICOL	University College for Indians

CHAPTER ONE: A CONTEXT FOR CREATIVITY

1.1 Introduction: Background and Aim of Study

A substantial body of art produced by Indian graduates of the former Fine Art Department of the University of Durban-Westville (hereafter UDW), KwaZulu-Natal, has never been considered in terms of its educational and historic contribution to art, both regionally or nationally. Works produced during the Apartheid era, post-1948 and into the post-Apartheid era post-1994, have not previously been documented or contextualised, and those that have not been lost or discarded, are held by the Centre for Visual Arts at the present University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) or by the students themselves. This study locates and positions South African Indian students¹ who graduated from the Fine Art Department at the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) and its predecessor, the University College (UNICOL), in a post-Apartheid milieu. In this study, I have located many of these works and re-contextualised and positioned them within the framework of disparate artistic practice and its reception in KwaZulu-Natal. I also consider the works as reflections of estrangement as well as political and cultural engagement. The study further explores the development of this body of art and situates its former marginalisation within the present South African art historical narrative.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the Fine Art graduates' representation of cultural and political worldviews, thereby establishing a framework for their art practice as students and, for a few, as artists and art teachers practising in South Africa. Within the broader political and theoretical discourse of identity in post-Apartheid South Africa, their recovery of and sense of self marks a significant reflection on art education. The timeline for the study is guided by the lifespan of the university's Fine Art Department, from 1962 to 1999. The department was first established in 1962 on Salisbury Island at UNICOL and subsequently relocated to new premises in Westville in 1971. In 1999, due to a decline in student numbers and the failure to prove its financial viability the Fine Art Department was closed. The

¹ The art students who graduated from UDW will hereafter be referred to as "graduates."

subsequent merger of UDW and the University of Natal in 2004 was a reflection of the broader transformational agenda of the country.

The forty-three Fine Art graduates who participated in this study are Ayesha Adams, Niven Anghar, Sandhia Bansi, Rajiv Baskali, Herselene Charles Lazarus, Pragasen Chetty, Errol David, Faiza Galdhari, Saleem Galdhari, Sheri Ganess, Selina Gokool, Lucky Govender, Dr P.N. Govender (father of the late graduate Mahendra Govender), Poobalan Govender, Ravi Govender, Razia Haffejee, Dianne Latchmigadu, Rufus Latchmigadu, Reshma Maharaj, Sarat Maharaj, Charles Moodley, Ashley Munsamy, Manjula-Devi Naidoo, Sandy Naidoo, Selvan Naidoo, Andrew Nair, Vedant Nanackchand, Chandra Patel, Prabashan Pather, Clive Pillay, Judy Ramgolam, Colin Sabapathy, Sajida Sabjee-Khan, Desiree Seekola, Ujala Sewpersad, Vijay Shah, Nimmi Sheodass, Anesh Singh, Kanu Sukha, Kiren Thathiah, Sherene Timol, Hajra Vahed Greer and Yusuf Vahed. Although Lucky Govender has a degree in education and not Fine Art, he specialised in Fine Art and continued to study and practise art; I have therefore included some of his observations and recollections. Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to contact and interview other graduates whose works are also included in this study: they are Sharlene Khan, Rajiv Manilal, Kuben Pillay and Avitha Sooful.

This list presents a range of graduates from the 1960s to the 1990s. While some are practising artists who exhibit occasionally, others have not produced any work since graduation, nor are they presently engaged in any art-related practice. Further, although graduates like Faiza Galdhari (graduated 1992), Sharlene Khan (graduated 1998), Andrew Nair (graduated 1984), Vedant Nanackchand (graduated 1977), Avitha Sooful (graduated 1987) and Kiren Thathiah (graduated 1984) have had successful careers, with their work accessioned into some national and private collections, a more concerted and scholarly endeavor is still required on the part of art historians to position their work within the art historical archive.

Some of the work identified in this study has been located at the Durban Art Gallery, which supplied me with images and details of the works housed in their collection. Other data has been acquired from the graduates and their personal collections and some of the works were identified at UKZN's Fine Art Department, where many works of art from UDW were abandoned after the closure.

The intention of this study is to examine the works produced by those artists in the purposive sample² to determine the content and nature of their work, both past and present, and to consider cultural and political inferences embedded explicitly or implicitly in their work.

The political history of South Africa is an imperative in this study as it has impacted on every sector of this country, with the education sector widely regarded as one of the cornerstones of Apartheid's segregationist strategy. Within the domain of education, segregated and inferior schooling for 'non-Whites'³ provided the foundation for social segregation, economic exploitation and political oppression (Nkomo, 1990: 1), resulting in varied levels of marginalisation. The ideological basis of separate development in South Africa ushered in by British colonialism in the 18th and 19th century, further polarised people in terms of racial and ethnic labels, leading to *White*, *Coloured*, *Indian*, and *Black* being principal categories. The application of these categories was reinforced in the racially structured system of education which has implicitly naturalised a racial consciousness in all citizens, with education promoting Black⁴ intellectual underdevelopment (Reddy, 2000: 1).

Colonial South Africa followed by the Apartheid order was an extremely hostile environment for anyone designated *non-White* wanting to pursue a better education or even a higher/tertiary education. The South African of Indian origin, however, who was subject to similar, though certainly not identical exclusion, was able to pursue educational aspirations if they so desired.

Nkomo (1990: 2), like many other authors, lists the objectives that Apartheid education sought to achieve. One of the main objectives he suggests was to produce a semi-skilled Black labour force that would minister to the needs of the capitalist economy at the lowest cost possible. Another intended to socialise the non-White citizenry to accept the social

² According to Neuman (1997: 206), purposive sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for selecting samples with a specific purpose in mind. This method of sampling was used to select a specific group of unique cases from a specific site for in-depth investigation.

³ "Non-White" was the Apartheid convention for describing all non-White people including Indian, African and Coloured.

⁴ In this dissertation, I will adhere to what has become a conventional term in post-Apartheid South Africa for describing different people living in this country. "Black" is used to refer to all previously politically oppressed groups, namely Indian, African, Coloured and more recently Chinese. For clarity, the term 'African' will be used when necessary to refer to the African community, and the term 'Indian' will be used to refer to South Africans of Indian ancestry.

relations of Apartheid as natural. This meant accepting, among other things, the supposed supremacy of Western civilization and the inferiority of their own. Apartheid education also sought to promote the acceptance and enforcing of racial or ethnic separation as the natural order of things which was achieved through the imposition of separate ethnic schools to instill ethnic distinctiveness and pride through separate ethnic residential townships in the urban areas and the Bantustans in the rural areas. Finally, this system of education promoted the intellectual underdevelopment of Blacks by minimising the allocation of educational resources for Blacks while maximising them for Whites. The following section presents an overview of the higher education system in South Africa

1.2 Higher Education in South Africa

Maurice Boucher in his comprehensive study *Spes in Arduis, a history of the University of South Africa* (1973) explains the structure of university education which is contextualised here. In 1916, the Union Parliament passed three Acts which created the framework for the South African university system. Of these Acts No. 13 and No.14 of 1916 granted the independence of the Victoria College in Stellenbosch and the South African College in Cape Town. By Act No.12 of 1916 the University of South Africa became the successor of the University of the Cape of Good Hope and the following six colleges were much later incorporated into it. They were: Grey University in Bloemfontein (which became independent and known as the University of Free State in 1950), Huguenot University in Wellington (which ceased to exist in 1950), Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg (which became independent and known as the University of Natal in 1949), Rhodes University College in Grahamstown (which became independent and known as Rhodes University in 1951), Transvaal University College in Pretoria (which became independent and known as the University of Pretoria in 1930) and University College in Johannesburg (became independent and known as the University of Witwatersrand in 1922) (Boucher, 1973: 13,14).

In alignment with the segregationist strategy highlighted by Nkomo, the Nationalist Party government also imposed segregation in higher education. In 1948 when they came to power, there were four English medium 'open' universities: the Universities of Cape Town (UCT), Witwatersrand (WITS), Natal and Rhodes; four predominantly White Afrikaans medium

universities (Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch, Pretoria and Potchefstroom); one bi-lingual correspondence university (UNISA) and a small African College at Fort Hare established by the Scottish Church in 1916 (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 12). But while some of these universities were considered 'open' (i.e. to accommodate all race groups) it should be noted that there were varying degrees of 'openness' resulting in approximately only 500 non-White students between for example, Wits and UCT by 1957 (Maylam, 2005: 17) and by June 1959 approximately 1 656 Black students at the four 'open' universities (Pearce, 1983: 22). Bruce Murray explains that it was therefore not a "universal openness" (Wits Review, April 2012, Vol. 20, p.19) but certainly created an opportunity for some non-White students to acquire a higher education. Paul Maylam in his article *Rhodes University: Colonialism, Segregation and Apartheid, 1904-1970*, (2005, 14–17) presents an appraisal of that university's place in South Africa's Apartheid history. He explains that although Rhodes was not legally bound to do so, the institution maintained segregationist practices during the first half of the twentieth century by admitting only a small number of Non-European graduates. He concluded that Rhodes had, for the first sixty-five years of its existence, operated within and conformed to, a social and political order based on racial discrimination.

While the University of Natal also accepted Black students, they were not allowed to attend the same lectures as White students, and as a result, were taught in separate classes, different premises and at different times, usually after hours. In 1959, the Nationalist Government after a decade in power passed the Extension of University Education Act (EUEA), which prohibited established White universities from accepting Black students without special ministerial permission or only in cases where equivalent programmes were not offered at the Black universities (Welsh, 2009: 65; Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 12-15).

Aligned with the state policy of separate development, the EUEA, which became law on 19 June 1959, led to the establishment of racially and ethnically based universities, commonly referred to as 'tribal colleges' (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 680) or what Murray refers to as the imposition of 'university Apartheid' (Murray, 1995:1).

With this act, the University College of the North was established for Tswana, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga speakers as well as for the Ndebele groups in Turfloop (near Pietersburg in Gauteng, then called Transvaal); the University College of Zululand for Zulu speakers at

Ngoya in KwaZulu-Natal; Fort Hare which was established in 1916, became the South African Native College for Xhosa speakers in 1955; the University College of the Western Cape was established in 1959 for Coloureds and the University of Durban-Westville in 1961 for Indians (Welsh, 2009: 65; Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 13; Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 398). Further, during the period 1976 and 1990, several universities were established in the independent homelands. In 1976, MEDUNSA (the Medical University of South Africa) was opened in Bophuthatswana, followed in 1983 by universities in Venda, QwaQwa and Transkei (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 680).

These universities were located systematically in areas with limited social infrastructure and amenities, consistent with the consolidation of White hegemony and the production of a subservient Black population. In keeping with Apartheid policy, these institutions were constructed largely as undergraduate teaching universities. The EUEA was subsequently repealed in 1988 resulting in rapid growth in the numbers of Black students at previously non-Black universities. At UDW, for example, Black African students began outnumbering Indian South African students from 1994 (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 680).

The Apartheid strategy of segregated education resulted in South Africa being barred from the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the International Association of Universities (Ajayi, Goma & Johnson, 1996: 72), as evidenced in this quote by Michael Polanyi (in Ajayi, Goma & Johnson, 1996: 72-73):

To exclude black students from a university is an insult to their human dignity, it is inhuman...to pretend that this is done in order to preserve their native culture is intellectually dishonest. To demand the participation of universities in a programme of inhumanity, oppression and intellectual dishonesty is a violation of academic freedom.

However, despite limited access to education and varied restrictions and limitations in this field, many Indians still managed to make considerable strides in fields such as medicine, science, mathematics, education, politics as well as the humanities. In the creative arts, Indians have carved a niche for themselves in various artistic fields, with actors, dancers and playwrights such as Ronnie Govender, Pat Pillai, Suria Govender and Jayasree Moopen achieving considerable acclaim. Some recognition has also been given to South African

Indian visual artists like Omar Badsha (photographer), Vedant Nanackchand (graduate of UDW), Usha Seejarim, (graduate of Witwatersrand Technikon) and Riason Naidoo (graduate of the University of Witwatersrand). However, in relative terms, the achievements of Fine Art graduates and the significance of their art education at UDW have gone largely unnoticed and undocumented. This study is about understanding what the nature of their art education was within the UDW context and what these Fine Art graduates have realised subsequent to their initial training, with a view to establishing their self-perceptions and reception in the visual art world.

An observation made by Jill Addleson (Interview, 2011), former Director of Durban Art Gallery (DAG), is significant as she notes that in 1980, when the DAG first formed its Board of Trustees, they compiled an acquisitions policy that was in part flawed.

...But regretfully, no vigorous and active steps were taken to include a collection of works by artists at UDW. The focus was on SA artists in general and on Black art in particular which was considered to have been badly neglected. Perhaps the emphasis on Black art overshadowed the opportunity of acquiring works by Indian artists from UDW.

As a manifestation of the Apartheid system, both UDW and DAG were to an extent isolated from each other. However, at the same time, it must be said that municipal institutions and museums seldom, if ever, purchase the work of undergraduates from any Fine Art Department, waiting rather until the graduands have realised their potential in the years following graduation, once their work reflects maturation and they show their desire and determination to practise as artists. This is supported by Addleson (Interview: 2011) and Riason Naidoo (Interview: 2011) Director of the South African National Gallery. As former sculpture lecturer at UDW, Carl Roberts (Interview: 2009) added, it is not common practice for universities to market and sell their students' work. He notes that students are in a training environment which impacts on their development, while an assertion of their voice and idiom develops much later.

Addleson (Interview: 2012) contends that of all the galleries in South Africa, DAG was probably best positioned to have acquired some of the works emerging from the graduates of UDW's FAD. She also suggests that the department and its artists could have been more aggressive in foregrounding the work at that institution and the art produced there. However, the agenda of many students in the 1980s, which is the decade Addleson refers to, possessed

a stronger political slant than a creative one, which echoed the challenges experienced by the country, with States of Emergency crippling the freedom struggle but also signalling the beginning of the demise of the system of Apartheid. Due to the politicised nature of UDW, especially since the late 1970s, many students at the university believed that in exhibiting their work they would detract from the real task at hand, namely, their commitment to all facets of the struggle for freedom. Amidst the cultural boycott and the sustained university boycotts of all activities that would give credibility to the institution, students, up to the early 1990s, relegated their careers as artists in favour of supporting the fervent political agenda which was central to most students at the time. Simultaneously, and not surprisingly, this period generated some highly significant work from this era which is a critical concern in evaluating the creative contribution of these graduates.

1.3 The Geopolitical History of the University of Durban-Westville

Resistance to Apartheid dominated South Africa for many years, with strong leadership from the exiled African National Congress (ANC) and its allies, including the Natal Indian Congress (NIC). Racism was, and to a large extent still is, deeply ingrained within the dominant social structures of contemporary Western societies, in which a university is a critical agent (Jordan & Weedon, 1995: 253) and UDW was no exception. Professor G.C. Oosthuizen, former academic at UDW and chief editor of the key text *Challenge to a South African University, the University of Durban-Westville* (1981), notes that traditionally a “university’s function is not limited to a particular community” (1981: x). Ironically, however, UDW was limited to a particular community catering specifically for the Indian community. It was within this institution that the variables of race, class, religion and gender defined the social fabric and political consciousness within which the Indian Fine Art student was shaped.

The design and location of the institution is of particular significance in this study, as it directly impacted on the conditions of learning. In 1961 the University College (UNICOL) was established on Salisbury Island in the Durban Bay. It was temporarily housed in a disused naval barracks with buildings which had been originally erected by the Royal Navy (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 32). Commonly referred to as the “University College for Indians” (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 41), it was established in terms of the EUEA to cater specifically for

the Indian community which had resided predominantly in the region of KwaZulu-Natal since their arrival from India in the 1860s.

At its inception, UNICOL fell under the direction of the Department of Education, Arts and Science. In 1963 it was transferred to the Department of Indian Affairs where it remained until the end of 1981 (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 61). From 1961 to 1971 the programme of study was derived from the University of South Africa (UNISA) which was appointed as the guardian of these ethnic colleges, which also provided examiners and set the exam papers (see Chapter Four) (Boucher, 1973: 331). In due course, UNICOL staff members were co-opted as co-examiners, which provided them with opportunity for academic development (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 45). In 1967, UNICOL was given authority to draw up its own syllabi and in 1971 it was granted academic autonomy and became the University of Durban-Westville (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 48-49). It then moved to its new premises in the borough of Westville.

It must be noted that the initiation of UNICOL as an Indian institution was largely opposed by the Indian community in Durban, as reflected in the graffiti in Figure 1. A perusal of the newspapers during the time of its construction (approximately 1960) indicates, however, that there was mixed reaction to the new institution. While Indian newspapers like *Graphic* and *The Leader* reflected a more apprehensive and antagonistic reaction to the construction of this institution, other popular newspapers with a broader more diverse readership, like *The Daily News* and *The Natal Mercury*, presented a more positive attitude from the Indian community. The subtle differences evident in the different perspectives are notable, as they suggest that *The Leader* and *Graphic* were perhaps more in tune with the progressive sentiment of the Indian community which was its primary constituency.



Figure 1: Graffiti (Moodley & Pather, 2011: 38) date and site unknown

With few other options and desperate to acquire tertiary education, Indians registered at UNICOL. However, from its inception the university community experienced many challenges. The worst was its geographical location on an island. Dr. Dori Moodley (Interview: 2011), a former member of staff, commented that this isolation was perceived as being “removed from civilisation” and presented no ambience for teaching and learning.

When the university moved to the Westville campus, the isolation was seemingly perpetuated as the campus was isolated geographically and far removed from the Indian community which it was intended to serve. Students had to travel vast distances to get to the campus as most resided in the Indian townships of Chatsworth (approximately 26km from UDW) Phoenix (approximately 30km from UDW), Tongaat (approximately 50km) and Verulam (approximately 26km from UDW). As most students were without their own private vehicles, the only transport available to them was the privately-owned busses which had limited and therefore restricted time schedules. The travel times offered restricted opportunity for extended study hours on campus and in the studios, which was necessary for the completion of many projects. This resulted in many students sleeping over in the FAD in order to meet deadlines.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study derives from the need to address the education, prospects and realizations of Fine Arts graduates from a racially exclusive tertiary institution⁵ reflective of the Nationalist government segregationist policies. The need to focus on Indian graduates in this study directly addresses the omissions in the recording of their position in South African art history. Moreover, the available literature on South African art makes little reference to practising Indian artists. It is therefore my intention to examine how the phenomena of

⁵ Ashcroft et al (2001: 17-18) and Marion Arnold (2005: 5) explain that after 1948, Apartheid laws that were enacted included the following: firstly, The Population Registration Act (1950), which meant that the population was registered according to the population groupings; secondly, the Separate Amenities Act (1950), which advocated the racial segregation of public facilities; thirdly, and important to the locale of UDW, The Group Areas act (1950), that divided land into suburbs based on ethnic groups, with Black suburbs further tailored in terms of their proximity to White areas in order to provide cheap labour; fourthly, The Immorality Act (1950) that prohibited marriages between Black and White people (www.fact-index.com/i/im/immorality_act.html) and finally, the Bantustans, which confined the Black population to designated territories (africanhistory.about.com/od/glossarybb/g/defbantustan.html).

geographic location, political schema, limited access to exhibition opportunities and job reservation, impacted on these graduates and their creativity. Further, the study explores their visual articulations in terms of culture, politics and identity, which are examined with a view to understanding and contextualising their position.

In any reflection on South African history, the examination of race and class becomes crucial. Marks and Trapido's 1987 study, examining the articulation of race, class and nationalism in twentieth century South Africa constitutes part of an emerging area for scholarship focusing on similar issues. National and racial identity for South African state policies and their deliberate manipulation of group differences, not only prevented inter-racial class solidarity but also shaped the ethnic consciousness of minority groups such as Coloureds and Indians. By way of response, these groups consequently reinforced their own sense of community, and it is from this segment of society that the Indian Fine Art student originates. Many students particularly during the 1980s like Ujala Sewpersad (graduated 1986), Poobalan Govender (graduated 1988), Anesh Singh (graduated 1988) and Judy Ramgolam (graduated 1990), in fact arrived at UDW from politicised households and continued their struggle philosophy at what was often a volatile campus. Ramgolam explains that she was already "politicised at home in JHB and was part of the student uprisings of the 1980s" (Interview: 2009). Anesh Singh also emerged from not only a very culturally aware family with a staunch Hindu background but also from a family where politics was everyday conversation. His father, having worked very closely with the Natal Indian Congress, was in fact very progressive and introduced him to the congress movements of South Africa (Interview: 2011).

1.5 Research Methodology

In view of the research aim, to investigate the phenomena of culture, identity and politics in the works of the identified Fine Art graduates, purposive sampling has been used (Welman et al., 2005: 69). The sample population includes all those graduates of Indian origin who graduated during the period 1962⁶ to 1999 with whom I was able to make contact and who

⁶ The University College for Indians introduced Fine Art in 1962, while the university was still on Salisbury Island. As a result, in 1965, Ranjith Ramdass was the first student to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art (BAFA)..

were willing to participate in the study. Of a total of one hundred and seventy nine (179) graduates, one hundred and thirty nine (139) are of Indian descent. Of this sample, forty-three graduates were interviewed, which is approximately thirty per cent of the total Fine Art graduate population. This, according to Neuman (1997: 222), is an adequate sample size for small population groups for this type of research. Numerous attempts have been made to attract a wider sample through the newspapers and through networking, with no positive results. From the sample, a body of six hundred and eighty-one works were located and documented and a discussion of sixty six of these works are presented later in the dissertation as the first sections present historical, situational and educational contexts. This selection of works have been analysed and discussed in terms of the constructs of culture, politics and identity in Chapter Seven. While I am not intending to present this body of work as lost 'gems' valued simply because they exist, the work is particularly significant as it contributes to filling important gaps in South Africa's art history and provides an insight into the dilemmas and pressures faced by this student body.

This study lays no claim to being a comprehensive record of Indian art production in Durban or South Africa: this is not its intention and its focused site has been the UDW graduates. Identifying descriptive characteristics and conducting analytical investigations has incorporated some biographical narratives, which will serve to contextualise the work within the social and political climate of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in particular and South Africa in general.

For this study I have located former students and staff and conducted fifty-eight interviews, of which forty-three are graduates of the FAD as listed earlier in this chapter. Ten have been historically linked to the university in varied capacities as lecturers, administrators and managers: Erica Clark (History of Art lecturer, 1980s), Andrew Verster (Drawing and Painting lecturer, 1960s and 1970s), Bronwyn Findlay (Printmaking lecturer, 1990s), Carl Roberts (Sculpture lecturer, 1990s), Professor Adam Habib (Political Science Lecturer, 1980s-1990s), Dr Dori Moodley (Geography Department, Administrator/lecturer, 1960s-1990s), Trish Gibbon (English Lecturer, 1980s-1990s), Professor John-Butler Adam (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, 1980s-1990s), Professor Brij Maharaj (Geography Department lecturer, 1970s-1990s), Professor Jonathan Jansen (HOD Department of Education, 1990s), Kovin Naidoo (SRC President, late 1980s-1990s) and Prakash Diar (Law student, 1976-1977). Gallery curators and directors were interviewed: Riason Naidoo of the South African

National Gallery (SANG); Marilyn Martin (SANG); Carol Brown and Jill Addleson, both of whom are past directors of the Durban Art Gallery (DAG). I have also interviewed acclaimed artists and photographers Omar Badsha and Jeeva Rajgopal, who have had encounters with the FAD and the university in varying capacities throughout the years between the 1980s and 1990s.

A survey approach has been employed to examine the research question and I will, at various stages of the research describe, explain and explore the constructs of culture, politics and identity. According to Neuman (1997: 228-231), the survey as a research design can be used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory research. Surveys are also frequently used in research that involves the individual as a unit of analysis. Data has been collected, captured and retrieved through the processes of interviews, archival research, the literature review and the application of the theoretical framework. I have used both open-ended and closed-ended questions in the interviews to collect information on facts, opinions and personal insights from the graduates regarding issues of culture, politics and identity as pertinent to their experiences at UDW (Yin, 2003: 89-90; Neuman, 1997: 241). This type of mixed questioning has offered greater scope for answers and resulted in a change of pace for the respondents, and has helped me establish a rapport for follow-up interviews.

Data captured for this study has a threefold purpose. Firstly, specific questions were used to establish the biographical and personal details of the graduates concerned. For example, I gathered information such as the participant's name, contact details, works accessioned into collections and academic qualifications. This data contributed to the descriptive aspects of the study. Additional supportive documentation has been accessed at the former University of Durban-Westville's Documentation Centre as well as its archival records. To support the descriptive nature of the information retrieved, univariate analysis, as discussed by Neuman (1997: 297), was selected as a unit of measurement. Graphic representations like tables and graphs have been included to translate the original data into comprehensive research.

In addition, multivariate analysis is applicable to data about the artworks and the socio-cultural factors. Neuman (1997: 312-315) argues that multivariate analysis allows for a discussion around concurrent relationships amongst several variables. The process includes the relationship between dependent and independent variables. For example, the dependent

variable of identity can be discussed within the context of relationships between independent variables of gender, class and religion.

Open-ended questions require a thorough understanding of the research questions, the literature review and the theoretical framework. I have therefore assessed the immediate response and formulated leading questions (Yin, 2003: 89-92). This method of inquiry has been used to gain more in-depth knowledge concerning, for example, the artists' personal views and interpretations regarding their artworks, social implications and political factors. Information about the artworks has been obtained where possible through interviews with the artists in person. According to Neuman (1997: 253), this type of interview not only has the highest response rate but results in longer interviews, with the opportunity to ask a variety of questions with more complex and extensive probing. Indeed, some interviews went on for six hours!

As collecting artefacts is a source of collecting evidence (Yin, 2003: 96), I have established that it is feasible to study all works produced by the sample population. However, due to the limitations of the study, the desired outcome has been to select only those works which highlight the phenomena of culture, politics and identity. In this regard it is further worth noting that while many works have been provided in this dissertation, only some of this sample have been critically analysed. As will be seen in Chapter Seven, the works have been analysed under two sections, namely *Student Practice* and *Professional Practice*. *Student Practice* reflects a body of work created by graduates while at university and *Professional Practice* focuses on work created by these graduates once they had graduated with their Fine Art degrees.

In addition to the above, content analysis has been used to complete a comparative analysis of the artworks and assist in the selection process. Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (2001: 12-33) note that content analysis as a research methodology allows the researcher to arrive at generalisations regarding classes of people, actions, roles, situations and events. The end result will be the selection of work that fundamentally deals with the artists' responses to culture, politics and identity. Hereafter, the analysis of the works has been guided by the literature review, the archival material, the theoretical framework and the use of post-colonialism as a research methodology.

The purposive sample population of forty-three, as discussed earlier, included Indian graduates from UDW who graduated between the years 1963 and 1999. Data was collected through the following methods:

- Personal interviews with all members of the sample, all of which were recorded, with the exception of Sarat Maharaj, Yusuf Vahed, Pragasen Chetty and Sandhia Bansi, who corresponded with me via e-mail and telephone.
- Follow-up telephonic interviews and e-mail interviews.
- Documented archival information at the Documentation Centre based at the UKZN's Westville campus, and the Killie Campbell Collection.
- Articles appearing in local newspapers, namely *The Post*, *The Mercury*, *Rising Sun*, *Sunday Tribune*, the *Leader*, the *Graphic* and the *Saturday Independent*.
- Articles submitted for publication in newspapers but only printed in the *Daily News* (23 December 2011).

The descriptive theme of this dissertation employs the use of 'thick description', a critical tool of ethnography which provides a detailed description of specifics, whether events, religious beliefs or life experiences, allowing the reader to infer cultural meaning.

Thick description is a term popularised by Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) but coined by philosopher Gilbert Ryle in *Concept of the Mind* (1949). It is considered an insider's account, and has come to be used to refer to a heavily descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and contexts which is intended to place readers vividly in the research setting (Merriam, 2009: 227; Ary et al., 2010: 493). Here it is used as a strategy to refer to a "description of the setting and participants of the study as well as a detailed description of the findings with adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from participant interviews, field notes and documents" (Merriam, 2009: 227). The following elaboration by Norman Denzin (in Ponterotto, 2006: 540) positions its use in this study:

A thick description...goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in questions.

In thick description the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard.

Thus, the types of analyses described above complement an exploratory survey in an attempt to address the research question; that is, to what extent have Apartheid, history and culture contributed to the nature of visual production by graduates from UDW between the years 1963 and 1999.

Finally, as a Fine Art graduate myself, I consider myself an ‘insider’ to this research project. This gaze has without doubt brought me to this research project which informs the selected research methodology. As a student in the late eighties I was exposed at various levels to the social, cultural, political and academic ethos of the university. Further, the fact that my father was employed at the university since its inception until he retired has been a critical factor in cementing my relationship with the institution. As a student I was introduced to the world of student politics and through the mass meetings I frequently attended was made aware of the role that mass student mobilisation could play in struggle for liberation in this country. While a student I was involved in some student activity which led me to the position of Chairperson of the Society of Fine Art (SOFA). Upon completion of my study I took up employment as a lecturer replacement in History of Art. Thereafter I completed my Masters degree at UDW and took up a more permanent position which kept me at UDW for five years. While as a student and a lecturer I was acutely aware of the work produced by the students. Subsequently, as an education officer at the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Durban Art Gallery, my interest was aroused about the limited accessioning of art work from Indian South Africans. Later as a high school teacher, I observed the level of invisibility of Indian artists in the school curricula. Now that I am teaching in Higher Education, this research project which has been brewing over the years has finally reached fruition in this dissertation and both the questions and interest generated through it will be promoted further through a possible exhibition and catalogue which will document some of the findings.

1.6 Overview of Chapters

Chapter One provided an introduction, background and rationale for this study. This chapter also presented the contexts for the construction of UNICOL and UDW, the related policies in South Africa and the framing theories and methodologies which will be explored in greater

detail in subsequent chapters. These inform the readings of the art work and underpin this study.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed for this study. The study uses the discourses of Post-colonialism, identity and diaspora as a framework to explore the trajectory of the graduates' sense of identity, subsequent marginalisation and poor self-esteem. It locates the discussion within the theoretical framework.

Chapter Three focuses on Indian historiography by introducing the Indian presence in South Africa as it unfolded up to the advent of Apartheid.

Chapter Four presents a context for the establishment of ethnic universities within the strategies of segregation and separation. Here, the focus on Indian education is explored in greater detail in an attempt to situate the emergence of the Indian student at UNICOL and UDW. The political and cultural ethos of the university is established here together with the establishing of the FAD's staff.

Chapter Five is a focussed expansion of the politicisation of identity. This chapter also explores the processes of art practice and interrogates the embedded notions of ethnicity.

Chapter Six presents the students' narratives as extracted from the interviews conducted with them. This chapter, following a life history approach, uncovers their personal stories which communicate their family backgrounds, secondary school training, perceptions of the FAD and its education and role in their subsequent career pursuits.

Chapter Seven addresses the reporting and analysis of the data captured in two sections. The introduction to Chapter Seven offers an overview of contemporary South African art which is presented in order to contextualise the analysis that follows. The two sections form the greater scope of this chapter, analysing the work of some of the forty-three graduates. This investigation is informed by the theoretical framework as expounded in Chapter Two and the geopolitical background as presented in this chapter.

The conclusion in Chapter Eight provides a summary of Chapters One to Seven discusses the limitations of the study, contributions of the research and makes recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: SYNTHESIS AND SEPARATION

2.1 Introduction: Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by the post-colonial readings as presented in the literature review in this chapter. These aspects are used to investigate art production by the Indian South African graduates identified for this study. This framework foregrounds the effects that colonialism and Apartheid had on the art production of a minority community. It traces not only the history of the term, but the history of its effects as well (Appiah in Back & Solomos, 2009: 669).

The pivotal concepts of this study are culture, politics and identity, which underscore the discussion throughout the dissertation. As such Indian identity as an imperative is interrogated in the literature review through the parameters of culture and race, diaspora theory, implicit and explicit notions of marginalisation and the critical framework of Apartheid. Some of the key concepts are further critically explored in Chapter Five.

2.2 Literature Review

As previously mentioned, little research into the graduate and postgraduate FAD achievements at UDW, and other Fine Art departments in the region, has been undertaken. Durban University of Technology (DUT) has recently begun such overviews and the Centre for Visual Art (CVA) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg has initiated a few studies of this nature. Considering that the year 2010 marked the 150th anniversary of Indians in South Africa, it is surprising that no comprehensive documentation on creative production by this community is available.

Authors such as Paul Mikula, Brian Kearney and Rodney Harber authored a comprehensive text focused on Indian temple architecture in 1982 and entitled *Traditional Hindu Temples in South Africa*. Subsequently, Ravi Govender completed his Masters dissertation entitled *The Ritual and Symbolic Relationship between Hindu temple Architecture and Sculpture in a selected group of Hindu Temples in the Transvaal* in 1995. While these research ventures presented sacred art and architecture often produced by foreign sculptors and artisans, there is a dearth of information on the visual arts of painting, sculpture, printmaking and related forms of fine art produced by Indians in South Africa. This research is thus an attempt to address the identified omission and to highlight the marginalisation and seeming invisibility

of this component of the South African art historical narrative.

In the 1980s, some of the key texts to emerge within the volatile political landscape of South Africa foregrounded previously neglected aspects of art history. These include Steven Sacks' *The Neglected Tradition: Towards a New History of South African Art 1938 – 1988* (1988), Gavin Younge's *Art of the South African Townships* (1988), and Anitra Nettleton and David Hammond-Tooke's *African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township* (1989). While these texts focused on the art produced in the Black townships, they excluded Indian artists living and working in the Indian townships of, for example, Chatsworth and Phoenix. Historical texts like Sue Williamson's *Resistance Art in South Africa* (1989) had a very particular and focused area of study, namely, the reaction to the political climate of South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s. Williamson provided a wide but selective sample of artists documenting the protest and resistance art-making of approximately 64 South African artists and followed this publication with *Art in South Africa: The future present*, in 1996, which she co-authored with Ashraf Jamal. However, the abovementioned texts make no mention of art produced by Indian South Africans working within a similar framework.

The increase in publications thereafter, reflecting on democracy in South Africa, include texts like Cantz Hatje's *New Identities* (2005), Emma Bedford's *A Decade of Democracy* (2005) and Sophie Perryer's *10 Years 100 Artists: Art in a Democratic South Africa* (2004). Again, these make very limited reference to Indian artists in South Africa, mentioning only Lalitha Jawahirilal, a former lecturer at UDW, and Sharlene Khan, who graduated from UDW in 1998. Even more recent texts such as *The Visual Century* (2011), while including an introduction by UDW graduate Professor Sarat Maharaj, makes no mention of the Indian presence within this field even though some graduates like Vedant Nanackchand, Kiren Thathiah and Faiza Galdhari have had works accessioned into national collections..

In considering the emergence of Indian graduates and subsequent artists, it is no coincidence that the work by this group is also shaped by questions of history, identity, culture and politics, all of which cluster around Apartheid as a trope. In the South African context, difference in race and class were translated into superior and inferior cultures with racial differences identified as determining factors in the creation of identities.

Within the Indian minority, Apartheid had produced a perceived helplessness and inferiority, and legislature associated with the education system at the time served to reinforce a defeatist mentality. For Pallavi Rastogi in *Afrindian Fictions, diaspora, race and national desire in South Africa* (2008: 4), the “specificity of Indian identity was often erased from the grand narrative of the freedom struggle that sought to incorporate all non-white people under a singular “black” identity forged by the commonality of white oppression.” Against the backdrop of a mentality of defeat and the concept of erasure, notions concerning artistic ability and quality in the minority population of Indians will therefore be explored with a view to identify possible factors that hindered the development of these graduates. Like artists throughout the world whose works are barometers of their political and social conditions, the graduates, particularly those between 1962 and 1990, were acutely aware of the political circumstances of their environment.

Given this overview, the following section provides a brief consideration of some of the most relevant literature applied in this study. The frameworks presented here are sometimes unavoidably brief as they will be explored and applied in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

2.3 A Post-colonial Framework

During the period under investigation (1961-1999), South Africans of Indian origin (together with the Coloured and African) were positioned on the margins of political, social and cultural hegemony in South Africa. As a historically marginalised group, the Indian community insisted on maintaining its own identity through diverse social and cultural activities and traditions. Traditionally, marginalisation is observed as being associated with deprivation and dispossession, but according to bell hooks (Ferguson, Gever, Minh-ha & West, 1990: 341), marginalisation can also be regarded as a site of radical possibility and a space of resistance, crucial for the oppressed, exploited and colonised. For her, it is the “site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one’s capacity to resist”; it offers “the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternative, new worlds” (Ferguson, Gever, Minh-ha & West, 1990: 341).

For the marginalised Indian community, marginality was derived from a lived experience that fostered necessary resistance sustained by the challenges of the present and the remembrance

of the past. hooks highlights the necessity of opposition which encourages one not to lose a radical perspective which is shaped and formed by marginality (1990: 342).

Edward Said in “*Orientalism*” (1978) offers valuable perspectives in analysing relationships of power and resistance in terms of history, art history and the socio-political context. He holds that *Orientalism* signifies a western approach of dominance and authority over the Orient. South African colonial history bears testimony to this power relationship between the colonised and the coloniser and postcolonial studies deals with these interactions. For Said, acts of resistance are more than a reaction to imperialism, and that resistance is an alternative approach to conceiving human history where part of the process is to enter into discourse with Europe (the coloniser or oppressor or those in power), engage with it, transfer it and make it acknowledge marginalised and forgotten histories, which is what this study intends to achieve (Said, 1994: 260-261).

Marginalisation as a central consideration in post-colonial studies is still bound up in the politics of the hegemony of the ‘west’ over its former territories (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989; Larson in Schwarz & Ray, 2000; Young, 2001; Hiddleston, 2009). The generic use of the term refers to any formerly colonised political or social entities or cultures, affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to present day. In essence, the post-colonial framework underscores the effects of colonialism on the recording of history, exposes the contestations in the underlying assumptions of identity, place and displacement and reveals the inherent dominant ideology of the coloniser (Ashcroft et al., 2000: 192).

Graham Huggan (in Hiddleston, 2009: 5), describes post-colonialism as a condition which celebrates artefacts and cultural practices precisely as a result of their marginality in relation to the western canon. However, the irony of this process is the subsequent exoticization of that which was formerly marginalised and which is now championed and thereby fulfils the expectation of the west and supports a fetishization of ‘Third World’ arts and culture (Hiddleston, 2009: 5; Stevens & Munro, 2008).

A South African post-colonial ‘apartheid gaze’, an expression employed by art historian Colin Richards (Richards, 1991: 101), reduces the inherent value of art to the representation of the cultural components embedded in the work of the Indian artist. Like other gazes, it is an exploitative one which demonstrates ethnic prejudice (1991: 101) and which is explored in greater detail in Chapter Five: The Politics of Identity. This study will position marginalised

Indian artistic production and engage in critical modes of enquiry which will analyse the multiple implications and varying manifestations of the South African Apartheid project.

The relevance of post-colonial discourse to this dissertation lies in its basic premise that foregrounds the historical imbalance evident in a post-colonial society. Further, it is employed here as it problematises identity by questioning the frame of representation where the image is confronted with its difference, its *Other* (Bhabha, 1994 reprinted 2008: 66). Similarly, the study is informed by the interrogation of identity by Stuart Hall (2003, 2009), the post-colonial writings of Homi Bhabha (1994) with regard to culture; the revolutionary consciousness of Frantz Fanon (1963, reprinted translation 2001), which addresses the decolonising of the mind of the colonised, and Edward Said's inherent discourse of power relationships relevant to the construction of *Orientalism* (1978), which will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

2.4 Identity

Identities in South Africa have often been imposed by a long process of identification located in western and later colonial and Apartheid perspectives. Segregation was an inherited colonial construct maintained and later refined by Apartheid rulers (Zegeye, 2001: 2). According to Frene Ginwala (1977: 5), Indians in South Africa, as a distinct minority group, have been identified by their history, race and culture, and as a result their identity was (and still is) constituted by their difference (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 25). However, Rehana Ebrahim Vally (2001: 79) suggests that all South Africans have internalised the need to distinguish themselves from others or from other race groups in order to assert their identity.

In this study, the term *race* is understood within the South African context as a socio-historical and political construct. Race established hierarchical structures of meaning attached to skin colour which "shaped people's material lives as well as their perceptions of themselves, of others, and of the world around them" (Erasmus in Daniel et al., 2005: 10).

The construction of identity is problematised in this study by interrogating relevant discourses of race, with colour and culture as the prime signifiers of racial identity. The hierarchical construction of race in South Africa and its justification resulted in race being the central tool in the manifestation of a segregated society. This racial ascription led to the racial divide becoming calcified and institutionalised by the Apartheid state. Eighteen years later,

this still proves to be a very complex ideology to disengage from the mindset of people. It is worth noting Loomba's suggestion which (2005: 105) highlights that identity is actually shaped by perceptions of religious, ethnic, linguistic and class differences impacting directly on Indian graduates both in terms of when they practised during the Apartheid era and as they practise presently. A more comprehensive discussion on the ascription of racial identity and the notion of becoming South African is also presented in Chapters Five and Six of this study.

Michael Banton (in Back & Solomos, 2009: 55-66) in his essay *The Idiom of Race* presents a broad trajectory of the concept of race that is valuable to this study. As an historical study he highlights that the word 'race' was initially, in the eighteenth century, a term used to denote a commonality of descent and character. Later in the nineteenth century, the idiom was extended to include a nationhood (and *Volk*). Later still, with political circumstance aiding the change, the main issues of race were the nature of differences between the populations, which further led to a cultivation of beliefs about group identities. These beliefs are evidenced within South Africa and have found expression through racial labelling.

In South Africa, designations of race were regarded as necessary as they allowed groups to access specific rights that were perhaps denied other groups. It was thus a human tendency to find association with a common group. I will argue that this realisation of identity is limiting and restricting: while the collective 'Black' identity which was mobilised to include Indians in the freedom struggle was strategic, the position of the Indian identity today should enable a "new political agency for self representation and determination in contemporary South Africa" (Ellapen, nd: 1). This study seeks to initiate a dialogue on the subject of cultural and political identity, agency and issues of representation together with its attached narratives and visual articulation.

Significantly, however, Kobena Mercer (in Back & Solomos, 2009: 577) argues that identity only becomes an issue when in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed and stable is displaced by the experience of uncertainty, a position that in some ways has again emerged in South Africa. Years of colonial rule and subsequent Apartheid legislation created such an environment for displacement resulting in a perceived homogenization of 'Indian' identity that fractured a community through group and racial classification. Identity in South Africa

long conformed to the script for that identity (Appiah in Back & Solomos, 2009: 671). But when that label changes, determining its impact on a society is complex.

2.5 Indian Identity

The challenge to the Indian community in contemporary South Africa (2012) is to establish an identity within a climate where identities, particularly among minorities, are complex and highly contested. Current media attention centres on on-going minority-based identity debates. In February 2011, Jimmy Manyi, then Government spokesperson, suggested that there is an “over-supply” and “over-concentration” of Coloureds in the Western Cape for which he was criticized as being racist (24 February 2011: Mail and Guardian online). He further suggested that employment opportunities would be greater if the Coloured population relocated to other parts of the country, thus echoing the forced removals of the Apartheid era. Manyi also commented on the number of Indians in positions of management, saying that they should hold only 3% of management positions, but in fact “...are sitting at 5.9%... [and] have bargained their way to the top” (2 March 2011: news24 online). Such comments fuel minority uncertainty and hark back to painful divisions evident during Apartheid, with the 1949 Riots as a case in point (see Chapter Four). The outrage these comments have caused is unfortunately not quantifiable, but they suggest a deep-seated separatist ideology still prevalent within South Africa today.

Another example is Julius Malema, the former ANC Youth League leader who caused outrage among the Indian community when he referred to Indians as ‘*coolies*’ at a gathering in Thembelihle in Gauteng, in October 2011. He was quoted as saying that the children of the residents of Thembelihe, a township south of Johannesburg, must be allowed to attend school with *coolie* children (20 October 2011: *Mail & Guardian online*). While it is seemingly apparent to the broader public that the word *coolie* is considered derogatory, Malema claimed ignorance over the alleged racist comment and subsequently apologised (Post, October 26-30, 2011). The *Mail and Guardian* (20 October 2011: online) uses the headline “Outrage over Julius Malema’s ‘coolie’ slur”, and the *Business Day* discusses it as “Outrage over Malema’s slur on Indians” (Shoba: 20 October 2011). *IOL News online* uses the headline “Indian Outrage over racist jibes” (23 October 2011). These headlines, the last of which reflects commentary from *The Sunday Tribune*, a widely read newspaper amongst the Indian population, are noteworthy as they highlight the sensitivity prevailing in the Indian South

African community. The very same article adds commentary from Indian academics, activists and business people, who all share their outrage at the comments made by Malema. Karthy Govender, a Professor in the Law Faculty at UKZN, says that “the word *amakula*...has racist connotations. If Malema is engaging in that form of dialogue he is saying that the community [the Indian community] is not deserving of respect” (Sunday Tribune: 23 October 2011).

Activist Ela Gandhi too contends that this is a racist remark and irresponsible for someone holding any kind of public office. Amichand Rajbansi, the late leader of the Minority Front, stated in the *Mail & Guardian online* that such commentary “is doing great harm to social cohesion and inter-racial harmony” in South Africa, as the term *amakula* “has hurt the millions of Indians living in the diaspora” (*IOL News*, 23 October 2011). Further it must be noted that most South Africans irrespective of race, are victims of ingrained prejudice and racial stratification.

These are just two of the more recent debates which foreground the contested nature of identity in general and Indian identity in particular in post-Apartheid South Africa. Jordach Ellapen argues that Indian South Africans have not enabled a shift in imagining an identity outside of a struggle or liberation identity which is aligned with a collective ‘Black’ identity. He suggests that activists and public figures like Mac Maharaj and Fatima Meer publicly denied their ‘Indian-ness’ in favour of being ‘Black’, thereby aligning their identity to that of the ANC. He argues that while this may be the case in the public sphere, in the private sphere most Indian South African identities manifest in various forms which are predicated on religion, ritual and linguistic specificities. By default, this becomes the expectation of the Indian community in relation to the South African population as well, and implicit in this expectation is the reflection of these specificities in their visual art. More discussion related to these aspects can be found in Chapters Five and Seven.

Rastogi, argues that Indians desire South African citizenship in the fullest sense of the word. To her the Indian community requires citizenship as a “national anchorage” as a consequence of their erasure in both the Apartheid and post-Apartheid consciousness. This desire for belonging is asserted through what she calls an “Afrindian identity” (2008: 1). For Rastogi, the term suggests both an Africanisation of Indian selfhood and an Indianisation of South Africa. Kumi Naidoo in his doctoral thesis (1997) employs this term as well, but in a political and resistance context. He proposes that in the new South Africa, Indians ought to re-imagine

themselves as a specific construction of the African continent and as a result “construct a space within a South African national identity for an Afrindian Consciousness”. He focuses on encouraging Indians to indigenise themselves without negating their rich and diverse heritage.

Further readings of Indian identity in South Africa relevant to this study, include perspectives by Devarakshanam Govinden (2008) and Smitha Radhakrishnan (2005). Govinden argues that the handling of Indian identity as an intrinsic aspect of minority politics continues to reflect the difficulty in ridding themselves off the legacy of Apartheid (2008: 34). For her the very term ‘Indian’ denotes a common identity which is a contested assumption. She highlights that the signifiers are far from stable and as sites of contestation, cause anxiety amongst the said group.

Radhakrishnan, (2011: 182) avers that Indians maintain a distinct, deeply racialised and relative position in South African society. In support of Govinden, she echoes their tenuous position in post-Apartheid South Africa in terms of their national belonging. To her Indian identity is constantly being renegotiated to fit into a shifting socio-political framework which often leads to a sense of ambivalence towards the so-called South African ‘rainbow nation’.

This context is highlighted by Franz Fanon in his essay *Fact of Blackness* (Fanon, 1967, reprinted 2008), where he shows how social identities not only affect the external elements of one’s life in a social world, but one’s interior life as well. This interior that Fanon speaks of finds expression in varied forms, one of which is the manifestation of low self-esteem embedded in the psyche of Indian graduates.

Questions of identity, as posited by Homi Bhabha (1994: 64), suggest that there can never be an affirmation of a pre-given identity (as a form of categorisation by the former South African government), but the production of an identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image. Fanon’s essay describes this transformation as the trauma of being forced to look at himself from the outside and then failing to recognise the image with which he is presented. As a result of being objectified by White South Africa’s gaze, this failure to identify with the image projected onto him results in a disjointed and ruptured sense of self. This analogy is pertinent in the South African context where the identity of the Indian manifests as an externalised image projected onto them by the South African government. Hence, what Apartheid and former segregationist policy achieved was to deny the identity of

the other, namely non-Whites, by over-determining that identity from the outside and preventing the colonised from inventing themselves in their own way.

As a result of approximately fifty years of formal Apartheid legislation preceded by decades of other forms of formal segregation under British colonial rule, South African Indians have created a sense of community consciousness and acceptance of a particular mediated ethnicity. However, Said (1994: 258-259) contends that to become aware of “one’s self as belonging to a subject people is the founding insight of anti-imperialist nationalism” and once that subject recognises a sense of imprisonment infused with a passion for community, resistance then becomes a cultural effort with greater results. The Indian history in South Africa reinforces Said’s contention. The resilience of Indians bolstered their sense of community to ensure greater results in terms of their political resistance, cultural awareness and promotion of language, music and dance. This has had a unifying effect which cemented a community that was to only acquire full South African citizenship one hundred years after their first arrival in South Africa.

While nation-building is currently seen as an imperative in South Africa, Indians are still concerned about their position and identity. Govinden (2008: 48) posits that Indian identity is not about reclaiming a lost sense of identity or harking back to a romantic notion of *Mother India*. As Rajan (cited in Govinden, 2008: 48) states, *Indian* is not an homogenous term but represents an identity which inevitably raises questions of an assumed non-Indian difference. Rajan further argues that as there is no essential quality that marks it, Indian identity is constantly made and remade, represented and erased, asserted and disputed. Identity politics as conceived by people of colour has never meant bemoaning one’s circumstances, ranking or oppressions but as stated by Mohanty et al. (1991: 276), but rather by a politics of activism, which seeks to recognise, name and destroy the system of domination which subjugates people of colour.

Hence the question of identity today draws considerable interest. Political analyst Adam Habib in discussing race in South Africa rejects the category of Indian. He says “to reduce people to an Indian identity or Coloured identity is to misunderstand how identities actually exist” (Interview: 2011). Instead, he argues for hybridity:

Fascinatingly, if you want to understand how *unIndian* you are, go to India. And you realise that there are actually traits that you have that come from the subcontinent but there are many traits that you have that have nothing to do with the subcontinent. That has to do with your own local context.

I concur with Habib, but also stress how crucial it is to locate the political context in exploring the identity and culture of the graduates in this study. In this regard in locating my own identity, it is interesting to note that when in India I am South African, yet when I am in South Africa I am Indian. Such is the nature of a shifting identity. Hence in locating and presenting art by Indians from UDW, this study engages with identity as a shifting construct in order to understand, evaluate and meaningfully participate in challenging identity-based forms of oppression.

2.6 Culture

Raymond Williams in his essay *The Analysis of Culture* (in Storey, 2009: 54), uses a three-pronged approach towards a definition of culture. Firstly, there is the ‘ideal’ in which culture is essentially the discovery and description of those values which can be seen to comprise timeless order within the human condition. Secondly, Williams presents culture seen as the body of intellectual and imaginative work, where human thought and experience are variously recorded. Finally, there is the ‘social’ definition of culture where culture is the description of a particular way of life which expresses meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. The analysis of culture from this perspective clarifies meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, and in a particular culture. Pertinent to this study is Williams’ analysis of culture, which foregrounds the ‘social’ aspect as evidenced in the culture of the South African Indian.

Homi Bhabha argues that culture as a strategy for survival is both “transnational and translational” (1994: 247), claiming that it is transnational because post-colonial discourse is rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement like indenture, and translational because the spatial histories of displacement make the question of how culture signifies, complex. Vertovec and Cohen (1999: xix) argue that through globalisation in its guise as the world-wide flow of cultural objects, images and meanings, variegated processes of creolisation, new contestations, negotiations and constant transformations emerge. In this way, diaspora is described as involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural

phenomena. With the production of hybrid cultural phenomena and new ethnicities, facets of culture and identity are often, but not always, self-consciously selected, syncretised and elaborated from more than one heritage (1999: xx).

I will argue that within the structure of the Indian community in South Africa, a hybrid sense of culture exists. With the emergence of the electronic medium of television, via the North Indian bouquet of Zee TV and the South Indian bouquet of Sun TV, and Bollywood cinematic offerings, the Indian diasporic community in South Africa is presented with complexities in establishing new hybridised ethnicities and defining new cultural productions. The strong pull to assimilate indigenous cultural components into traditional Indian practices has created avenues for fusion dance groups such as The Surialanga Dance Company and Tribhangi Dance Company to emerge thriving within a multicultural audience.

2.7 Diaspora

One of the consequences of imperial domination can be seen in the notion of diaspora which accompanies radical displacement of people through slavery, indenture and settlement (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 217; Gandhi, 1998: 131). The term diaspora,⁷ as observed by Steven Vertovec (1999: xvi) and Gijbert Oonk (2007: 14), is often used to describe practically any population considered “deterritorialised” or “transnational”, which has originated in a land other than that in which it currently resides.

There are over 20 million people of South Asian origin living outside of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as a result of varied migratory patterns from the Asian subcontinent (Oonk, 2007: 9-10). The resultant Indian Diaspora under British Colonial rule thus comprises Indians living in the Fiji Islands, Guiana, East Africa, Mauritius, Trinidad and other Caribbean Islands. South Africa has until recently had one of the largest Indian populations outside of India, comprising approximately 1.3 million. This has been surpassed by a vast Indian diasporic community in the United States of America, with large communities settling in Canada and Australia since the late 20th century. In Africa, as a result of trade migrations, there are also

⁷ Oonk suggests that prior to the 19th century the term ‘Diaspora’ was not used to describe the Indian migrants working overseas. Instead their general denominator was the ‘overseas Indians’. But once the colonial empire collapsed the focus of research shifted to the ability of the Indians to retain, reconstitute and revitalise the aspects of their culture in an overseas setting. The term ‘South Asian Diaspora’ was only used much later in the mid-1970s (2007: 15).

major Indian settlements in East Africa and Central Africa, while in South Africa, Indians consisted of predominantly an indentured community together with a smaller community of trading Indians.

Jayaram in *Indian Diaspora, Dynamics of Migration* (2004: 16), explains that one of the implications of human migration across the globe is the retention of “sociological baggage” which is explained as consisting of (a) a predefined social identity; (b) a set of religious beliefs and practices; (c) a framework of norms and values governing family and kinship organisation and food habits, and (d) language. Significantly, Jayaram claims that migrants retain physical and/or mental contact with their homeland which is characteristically referred to as “the myth of return”. The phenomenon surrounding such human migration is conceptualised under the rubric *diaspora* (2004: 16), and the four criteria posited by Jayaram are clearly reflected in the community of Indians in South Africa and referenced throughout this dissertation.

While suggestions have been made with regard to the redefining of Indian identity and the Indian presence in post-Apartheid South Africa, broad social patterns and cultural elements are still rooted in India as well as in Indian culture and Indian history. *Diaspora* is a signifier not only of transnationality but of political struggles to define the local, as a distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement (Clifford in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 221).

Vertovec and Cohen describe a “Diaspora consciousness” as a particularised awareness marked by a “dual or paradoxical nature” evident in transnational communities (1999: xviii). This duality, they say, is constituted positively by identification with a historical heritage such as India, and negatively, by experiences of discrimination and exclusion, such as in South Africa. Although these issues are evident within the local context of the South African narrative, they are translatable within the broader concerns of diaspora in general and Indian diaspora in particular. Diaspora consciousness thus creates dialectic and defining tension between loss and hope (Clifford in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 225). However, according to Mehta and Singh (2008: 3), cultures and communities in India have various levels of complexities which are also evident in Indian diasporic cultures and communities. Lamb (in Mehta and Singh, 2008: 61) argues though, that this sense of transnational living does not

simply involve the acquiring of a cultural system and importing it to another nation, but taking on practices, values and modes of living indigenous to the host country.

As a host culture, Rastogi (2008: 4) describes the Indian as occupying a “middle space”. She argues that the Indian presence in South Africa has complicated the binary of settler and indigene by introducing a third state of national belonging: that of the post-colonial diasporic. The question of diaspora, with its attached concerns of national identity, minority belonging and multiple allegiances, was further complicated in South Africa by Apartheid. However, post-Apartheid South Africa challenges these located identities, as the force binding them together has been erased. Nonetheless, post-Apartheid South Africa still retains embedded notions of a contested identity.

The experiences of the Indian diaspora in South Africa led to the acknowledgment of a “double consciousness” as discussed by Paul Gilroy (in Back & Solomos, 2009: 564) in *Dialects of Diaspora*. Gilroy’s concept of “double consciousness” as extracted from Du Bois, suggests that the concept flows from being both inside and outside the West and affects political movements towards racial oppression. Initially, South African Indian immigrants were conditioned into a double consciousness as both subjects of formerly British India, both in India and South Africa, yet outsiders to the protection and security that that very title ought to have afforded them. Their ‘outsider’ status as manifested through phrases like the “alien menace” and “unwanted intruders” (Mukherji, 1959: 24) provided a more refined and racialised political language in dealing with issues of identity, affiliation and eventual nationhood. In this regard, the South African Indian ‘nation’ is, as described by Benedict Anderson, “an imagined political community⁸...imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (in During, 2007: 256).

The Indian political struggle in South Africa was also primarily based on racial difference and cultural or ethnic uniqueness. Indian agitators for example described Indians as being neglectful of “sanitary measures [with] loathsome mode[s] of living”, urging that as a result they should be “isolated within their own location quite separated from the white population”

⁸ Anderson (in During, 2007: 256) uses the term ‘imagined’ as he refers to the smallest nations not knowing most of their fellow-members meeting them or even hearing of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Furthermore, in South Africa the homogenisation of the Indian population embedded this notion. Hence in this study the term ‘Indian community’ is used.

(Mukherji, 1959: 24). Much of this sentiment was due to a general mistrust of the Indian and what was often described as a “fear of the Indian”. As Khan (1946: 39) notes, “...the more they [the Indian] advance, the greater is the fear of the European and the more severe the laws that are passed against them”. In this positioning of the fear attributed to the presence of the Indian in South Africa, notions of Otherness are apparent. Indians would belong, in the words of Stuart Hall, to “the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the ‘Other’... at the outer edge, the ‘rim’, of the metropolitan world...” (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 305).

Homi Bhabha suggests that for those on the margins of society, identity is called into being in relation to an ‘Otherness’ (1994: 63). This was mediated and presented to the Indians in South Africa by relevant and changing segregationist constructs. The cultural politics of the diaspora is one of paranoia, discrimination and anxiety as reflected in the legislation against Indians and other non-White groups in South Africa, thus producing for the colonial subject its subaltern position (Bhabha, 1994: 84). This position of subalternity is in itself a definition of difference from the élite or the centre, and evident in the definition by Spivak (1988: 80) as the master-slave dialectic manifest in the relationship between Indians and South African Whites.

As the present study is principally interested in the visual art production of Indian South African graduates of Fine Art, it will demonstrate the political and cultural agency achieved by this group who have appropriated the dominant visual language and inflicted it to serve their own purposes. Indians across the world are being drawn together into dialogue with one another, stressing their common Indian ancestry and cultural heritage. The notion of communicating with a wider audience highlights the phenomenon of globalisation⁹ and transnationalism with its interconnectivity of peoples and the blurring of boundaries between countries.

As a result of the migration through voluntary removal for indentured labour as well as passenger Indians, Ashcroft et al. (1989: 9) suggest that an active sense of self may have been eroded by the experience of dislocation. It is in this sense of fractured self and fractured

⁹ Globalisation is characterised as the extraordinary and accelerated movement of peoples throughout the world which results in the blurring of social and geographic space (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 217).

identities that I recognise the need for reclaiming and locating this aspect of South Africa's lost visual history.

2.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented the literature as it informed and is applied to the core contention of this dissertation. The theoretical framework presented focused on aspects of post-colonialism ranging from marginalisation and deprivation to the interrogation of identity. A discussion of culture, as presented by Williams, foregrounded the social aspect of culture which is evident within the culture of South African Indians. While Rastogi's explanation that the question of diaspora, which is attached to issues of national identity, minority belonging and multiple allegiances, is further complicated in South Africa by Apartheid. Finally, diaspora as an accompaniment to the process of indenture and migration is particularised through experiences of discrimination and exclusion as experienced by this minority group in South Africa.

Where concepts have been dwelled on briefly, it should be noted that these will be discussed and applied at later junctures of this study. The next chapter positions the Indians in South Africa by presenting a historiography of their presence here.

CHAPTER THREE: INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction: Apartheid and the Indian

As is well known, Apartheid, bred of colonialism, was one of the most psychologically destructive and insidious social engineering experiments in world history. This chapter will position the history of this process as it impacted on Indians in South Africa. It will also analyse the social and political identity of South African Indians within the context of the systematic processes of socialising them as a distinct, separate and inferior population group within the racially divisible 'nationhood' mooted in both a colonial and post-colonial context. Their definition as 'alien' informed their ongoing resistance campaigns which came to define their history in South Africa. Imperative in a discussion of this nature is an interrogation of policy and legislation which embeds the notions of difference and belonging within the different race groups in this country.

In positioning the Indian presence in South Africa, this chapter takes the form of a brief historiography. Although this segment of South African history is well documented, aspects are included here as an imperative in situating the Indian presence in South Africa which ultimately gave rise to the graduates from the racially exclusive Indian university. Segregationist policies and strategies of separateness will also be analysed as they impacted upon the sample population and the broader population group from which they emerged. The chapter initiates a brief discussion of the plural histories of diaspora communities as they resist the trauma of engagement and attempt to establish a sense of rootedness.

3.2 A Brief Political Historiography of South Africa (1486-1860)

Since the advent of democracy, the process of writing and rewriting history has become synonymous with change in South Africa and is in keeping with the expectations of national and state strategies to more comprehensively amplify and document the historical archive. South African history writing has become more inclusive and representative, with a significant number of texts making commentary on focused segments of South African society. One segment pertinent to this study is, for example, the fast growing number of publications focusing on Indians in South Africa. Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed's *Inside Indenture, A South African Story, 1860-1914* (2007) is a case in point, while Devi Rajab's

text on Indian women in *Women, South Africans of Indian Origin* (2011), foregrounds the contributions of Indian women in the land of their adoption. It presents a narrative of key Indian women from indenture to contemporary life in South Africa. Jay Naidoo's autobiography, *Jay Naidoo, Fighting for Justice, A Lifetime of Political and Social Activism* (2010) is also timeous as it recounts the life history of this trade unionist and political activist who became the first General Secretary of the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). *Shades of Difference, Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa* (2007) by Pádraig O' Malley, also foregrounds the pivotal role played by an Indian South African in the struggle for liberation in this country.

A burgeoning number of texts on the ramifications of Apartheid on South African life include Michael McDonald's *Why Race Matters in South Africa* (2006), Anthea Jeffery's *People's War, New Light on the Struggle for South Africa* (2009) and David Welsh's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (2009), to cite just a few. Further in the field of education and higher education in particular, Jonathan Jansen's texts *Knowledge in the Blood* (2009) and *We Need To Talk* (2011) provide much-needed critical commentary, while Saleem Badat's *Black Man, You are on Your Own* (2009), is a key text on the South African Students Organisation (SASO) led by Steve Biko, and analyses its role in educational, political and social spheres. This small sample of a much larger body of work reflects the inclusivity and diversity of historical writings in South Africa.

However, in order to position the Indian presence and the emergence of an Indian university in South Africa, it is imperative to present a brief overview of the South African political landscape prior to the arrival of the Indentured Indians. This aspect has received little attention and warrants foregrounding as the initial point of contact between India and South Africa.

The presence of Bartholomew Dias in 1486 and Vasco da Gama in 1497 at the Cape, and regular visits by Dutch and English mariners in the 1590s, initiated the basis of trade with the indigenous people of the Cape, the Khoikhoi (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2008: 21, 40). In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck, arrived in Table Bay with approximately 90 Europeans. Subsequently, in addition to the Dutch, the Cape became home to the French and the Germans. In 1658, the first slave ships arrived, with the population of these 'unfree' immigrants numbering approximately 381 by 1690 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2008: 47). By 1790, this population grew

to 26 000 as a result of continual immigration and in 1808, when the slave trade was halted by the British (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2008: 89), approximately 63 000 slaves were imported. Of these, 26.4 % were from Africa, 25.1% from Madagascar, 22.7% from Indonesia and 25.9% from India (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2008: 53).

In August 2000, the Government of India appointed a High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora designed to document the status of the Indian diaspora and their expectation of India. This report also illuminates the initial arrival of Indians in South Africa as slaves in the seventeenth century when they worked as domestic servants, or joined other slaves who worked on newly established farms. These Indian slaves had been shipped from Bengal, Surat and the Coromandel Coast (Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, 2000: 75; Giliomee & Mbenga, 2008: 53), which were geographical areas with a rich textile heritage. Female slaves in particular were deployed in the domestic context, being proficient in fine needle-work and as seamstresses. As a new group removed from their homeland, the natural difficulty in preserving their identity as 'Indians' resulted in them intermarrying either slaves from other parts of Africa or Asia, or the indigenous San or Khoikhoi inhabitants. In time their progeny became known as 'Malays', a designation loosely applied to all Muslims from the Cape irrespective of geographical origin. Due to intermarriage, non-Muslims were assimilated into the category of Malay and much later, during Apartheid's fourfold population classification, this group came under the appellation of 'Coloured', which perhaps in part explains the dearth of information on the first Indian slaves in South Africa (Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, 2000: 76).

3.3 British Colonialism

The British temporarily occupied the Cape between 1795 and 1803, with the Cape's status as a proper British colony only being formalised in 1814 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 85), when a treaty between the Netherlands and Britain transferred the Cape Colony to Britain (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 43). It remained a British colony until 1910 when it entered into the Union of South Africa. The early years of British rule were crucial as they witnessed the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 47). The advance of Britain as a world power and its imperial vision suggested to many of its subjects that they were superior. The greater religious tolerance of the British, for example, witnessed the

Muslim community openly practising their religion, which included the building of Mosques and the use of a hybrid Dutch (described as kitchen Dutch and later to be known as Afrikaans) as their medium of religious instruction and education (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 101). Natal was colonised by the British in 1842.

At this time, the greater part of India was also under British rule (from 1858 to 1947) and both in Natal and India, one of the essential features of British colonialism was the exploitation of British Indian¹⁰ manpower and products in the interests of British capitalism. As a result of this form of economic growth, emigration from India increased, as many families voluntarily uprooted their homes and traditions and were transported great distances to be deposited in strange countries to establish new lives in totally unfamiliar circumstances (Rai, 1984). However, the Government of India's view was that the export of labour was a partial solution to the pressing problem of rural Indian overpopulation and poverty.

3.4 Natal and the Need for Labour

Subsequent to the Great Trek of 1837, where 6000 Boers and other dissidents left the Cape Colony to escape British rule, a group of the Trekkers arrived in Natal and formed the short-lived Voortrekker Republic of Natalia in 1838, which subsequently became the Republic of Port Natal in 1842 (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 113; Vally, 2001: 185-186; Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 146).¹¹ Sir Theophilus Shepstone, diplomatic agent to the 'Native Tribes' in 1846, was responsible for the general administration of Natal's Black population (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 148). Fundamental to his implementation of the British system of government was the belief that Africans should occupy specially designated reserves or locations, which led to Natal becoming a segregated state where its political system ensured that Blacks and Whites were kept separate (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 148; Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 118). Giliomee and Mbenga (2007: 148) suggest that it was this Shepstone model that paved the way for the segregationist regimes of the twentieth century, more especially the Native Administration Act of 1927 and the homeland ventures thereafter.

¹⁰ The term 'British Indian' is generally accepted as reference to the Indian national while India was under British rule. Hence the indentured labourers were referred to as British Indians.

¹¹ Subsequently, the Boers trek to the Transvaal which the British recognised as a Boer republic.

Hence having already had a presence in South Africa since the slave trade 200 years earlier, it is against this background that the arrival of Indentured Indians in South Africa will be discussed. The following section will situate the need for indentured labour and foreground the political climate into which they arrived.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the colonial settler state of South Africa consisted of two British (Cape and Natal) and two Dutch (Transvaal and Orange Free State) colonies, which were later to unite as the Union of South Africa.

In the 1850s, due to the desire to expand and flourish as a British colony, the Natal government identified sugar cane as a thriving crop whose growth was dependent on plantation labour. Farmers believed that sugar could be the mainstay of the colonial economy and in their search for labour, they first turned to Zulu labour which was not forthcoming as the cash incentive was still low (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 121). Bhana suggests that the Zulus were pastoralists and farmers who showed little interest in becoming wage earners and needed time to adjust as labourers within a capitalist mode of production which was central to the sugar plantation system (1991: 18).

With the British parliament banning slavery throughout the British Empire through the Act of Abolition in 1833, colonists in Natal faced a labour shortage and searched for alternative sources (Report of High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, 2000: 76). The British government had created safeguards against new forms of slavery, yet with the system of indenture they created neither “full freedom nor full slavery” (Bhana, 1991: 8). This newly devised system was hence little different from the earlier slave system and was perceived as such (Bhana, 1991: 8).

The search for alternative labour source continued, as unfruitful plans and attempts were made to acquire labour from sources like the Portuguese from Madeira Islands, Creoles from the French Colony Reunion, and Chinese labour (Jain, 1999: 3). Farmers eventually turned their attention to India as the experiment with Indian indentured labourers in Mauritius impressed the planters. The Mauritian experiment ultimately led to the widespread use of indentured labour by other sugar producing areas and by 1865 12 territories were receiving indentured labourers from India (Bhana, 1991: 8).

3.5 The Indentured System

Bhana (1991: 10) explains how the system of indenture operated. Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were designated as ports of embarkation for all indentured emigrants. Bombay as an embarkation port was discontinued by 1865, after which only Calcutta and Madras were used. However, it is worth noting that those immigrants who embarked from these two ports did not necessarily originate from those cities (Vally, 2001: 122).

The length of the indentured contract was a point of contention between the colonial office in Natal, the planters and the Government of India. Eventually it was agreed that after an initial period of 5 years of indenture or what was described as 'industrial residence', the Indian was free to return to India or branch out on his own. However, after a second optional 5 years, the individual was entitled to a return passage to India or to convert the return passage for a piece of crown land. This revision was eventually abolished in 1874 (Jain, 1999: 4; Bhana, 1991: 10).

The indentured system was formally ended in 1911, by which time approximately 1.3 million Indians had gone to various parts of the world as indentured labourers. Natal had received 152 184 indentured immigrants between 1860 and 1911, of which approximately 23% had returned to India by the time the importation had stopped (Vally, 2001: 122; Jain, 1999: 5; Bhana: 17-18).

Elsewhere, British capitalism had created a demand for labour yet simultaneously in India it created economic conditions that compelled labour to emigrate. Frene Ginwala highlights the processes which led to the migration of millions of Indians around the world, creating one of the largest diasporas globally. She explains that the pre-industrial economy of India was disrupted due to the advanced manufacturing methods of the British which destroyed Indian production, causing the unemployed to return to their villages and place added pressure on the land (1977: 6).

By the second half of the nineteenth century, impoverishment of the Indian peasantry in British India reached serious proportions. Ensuing natural disasters and the lack of rural capacity to absorb the unemployed urban work force resulted in this group forming the core of those who emigrated as migrant Indian labourers (Ginwala, 1977: 6).

Based on detailed studies of the process of recruitment and ships lists for emigration to Natal, researchers have determined that the majority of indentured labourers were young (between 20 and 25 years old), male (about 70%) and unmarried. About 90% were Hindus, 8.5% Muslims, and 1.4% Christians, with a few Buddhists and Jains (Jain, 1999: 6). Bhana (1991: 20) argues that the recruitment efforts targeted young males under the age of 30; often in the process of recruiting males, the ages would be rounded off to suit the demand, namely young males between 20 and 30. The extensive study presented by Bhana entitled *Indentured Indian Emigrants 1860-1902*, (1991) explains the recruitment procedures as laid down by the Government of India in 1837. He says (1991: 11-18) that initially the Emigration Agents were responsible for recruitment, but later sub-agents were employed and in turn they hired licensed recruiters. This system was subject to abuse with the appearance of illegal recruiters who played a critical and active role in attracting workers into the system of indenture.

Valley (2001: 131) suggests that given the area of specialisation, recruitment was based on skills. Thus the majority of indentured labourers had hand-related trades and were farmers, land labourers and herdsmen. The fact that indentured labour was a solution to the shortage of farm labour in the sugar cane fields of Natal, made “recruiting agents look among the lower Indian social strata, where farm-related specialisation could be found” (Valley, 2001: 131).

3.6 Indians in South Africa

South African Indians’ struggled to acquire status, maintain their identity and create social, political and cultural structures, despite being regarded as alien.¹²

¹² I have drawn largely on the publications by Rai (1984) in *Indians and the British Colonialism in South Africa (1899-1939)*, Bhana & Pachai (1984) in *A Documentary History of Indian South Africans*, Bhana in *Indentured Indian Emigrants to Natal 1860-1902* (1991) and Freund (1995) in *Insiders and Outsiders, The Indian Working Class of Durban 1910-1990*, all of which have contributed to the historiography of the political, social and economic conditions in South Africa, especially as it pertains to the history of Indians in this country. For a more contemporary analysis, I have drawn on Desai (1996) in *Arise ye Coolies, Apartheid and the Indian 1960-1995*, Vally (2001) in *Kala Pani, Caste and Colour in South Africa* and extracts from *Inside Indenture* (2007) by Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed.

As mentioned earlier, Indentured Indian labour proved highly successful in Mauritius and as a result, the Natal farmers opted for this system (Rai, 1984: 26). One of the essential features of this system was that it was a cheap form of labour and could easily be controlled (Bhana, 1991: 18). The Natal government thus prevailed upon Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape, to take up their request for Indian labour with the British colonial authorities. However, their first request was turned down for reasons which included low wages and poor provisions regarding food, clothing and medical assistance in Natal. After refining their conditions of service, the process of immigration began, with the first shipment of Indians arriving in Durban on 17 November 1860 (Jain, 1999: 3; Bhana, 1991: 19).

The *SS Truro* from Madras arrived with 342 British Indians followed by the second, the *Belvedere*, which left from Calcutta and arrived a few days later with 351 British Indians. As the first Indian labourers who were recruited under a tripartite agreement between the Colony of Natal, the Indian and British governments (Vally, 2001: 122), these indentured labourers arrived with “dreams of a better life and opportunity to save money and return to their village as success stories” (Desai & Vahed, 2007: 9). Kuppusami & Pillay (1978: 8) describe the reticent yet optimistic attitude of the Indians arriving in South Africa in the following extract:

...they arrived hopeful in a strange land, bringing with them their labour potential as their only wealth and their cultural heritage as luggage. Migration to them was a leap into the unknown. It was an enormous, emotional commitment...They did not know the scorn and discrimination they were to endure.

Challenging as their status was, the Indian labourers would soon make a significant contribution to the sugar industry, thereby transforming Natal’s economy (Jain, 1999: 4). The importation of Indian labourers helped to increase the production of sugar from 1,173 tons in 1859 to 10,172 tons in 1874, while these same labourers experienced continued and extensive discrimination (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 192).

Given increasing complaints of ill treatment and poor conditions of service, like flogging and excessive wage deductions, the importation of indentured labour stopped in 1869, only to be reintroduced in 1874 after the necessary revisions were made and conditions improved. It was finally stopped in 1911 (Jain, 1999: 5; Vally, 2001: 123).

Not all Indian immigrants were indentured labourers. By 1870, there was a second wave of Indian immigrants who established themselves as merchants and small shop owners (Vally,

2001: 123). These immigrants were popularly referred to as 'passenger Indians,' as they had bought their own passage to South Africa. While indentured Indians disembarked only in Natal, passenger Indians disembarked in Natal as well as East London and Cape Town.

Vally (2001: 124) suggests that although their reasons to emigrate were very different, this second wave of emigration was largely prompted by the first wave of indentured labourers. She explains that the Indian traders saw a commercial opportunity in the expatriate indentured population and catered for their very specific social, cultural and religious needs. The Natal government, however, did not welcome these traders and implemented what was later interpreted as one of the first anti-Indian laws, namely the 1897 Immigration Law which limited immigration based on English skills. This in effect resulted in Indians entering Natal through other ports of South Africa. However, Bhana and Pachai (1984: 30) contend that anti-trader sentiment developed into agitation by White traders to curtail the opportunities of Indians and even to expel them.

A third category of Indian emerged when the indentured labourer completed the specified term of indenture. They were the 'free Indians' who in theory could do any job and live anywhere in South Africa with many entering into market gardening, becoming hawkers, traders and fishermen (Palmer, 1956: 156; Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 149; Jain, 1999: 35).

Hence by 1911 there were three distinct categories of Indians in South Africa: those who were still under the indenture system; those who became free after their indenture, and those who came as passengers (Kumar, 2000: 5; Jain 1999: 7-9). This differential grouping highlights the heterogeneity of the Indian group which is often regarded as a homogenous, cohesive community (Desai, 1996: 4). From 1911 onwards, with the immigration policy having come to an end, the position of Indians in South Africa became tenuous and the question of repatriation of Indians became critical.

3.7 South Africa Reacts to the Indian presence

Reaction to the Indian arrival was mixed. The pioneers of indenture were dispersed to various parts of Natal and had to contend with an environment in which their supposed inferiority was taken for granted by the colonists. As Lord Cromer put it, there were two kinds of people

in the world, those who were British and those who were of the ‘subject races’¹³ (Desai & Vahed, 2008: 71). To White Natalians, the Indian trader presence which followed on that of the indentured worker was not entirely desirable as they soon threatened to compete with them in the economic field (Khan, 1946: 7). As Indian potential improved their economic condition, antagonism towards Indian traders grew, with white traders insisting that measures be taken to secure the repatriation of Indians or at the very least measures promulgated to discourage them from settling in South Africa. As a result, restrictive and discriminatory measures were passed by the Natal Legislature (Moodley in Thompson & Butler, 1975: 253; Valley, 2001: 81; Bhana & Pachai, 1984, Khan, 1946: 10). The fact that the Indian migrants were still British subjects complicated the nature of this oppression and served as a protection against excessive abuse by the government of the British colony of Natal.

The struggle between politically dominant predominantly anglophile Whites and entrepreneurial Indians trying to establish themselves, generated considerable ill-feeling. Further, as they tried to acquire necessary skills to progress in business and industry, political and economic colour bars were increasingly being imposed to prevent their self-realisation (Moodley in Thompson & Butler, 1975: 253). Despite many agreements between the colonial governments of India and Natal, these discriminatory trends continued until 1948 when the Nationalist Party came to power.

With growing anti-Indian sentiment from the White community, newspaper editorials castigated the Indian trader, labelling him a “parasite,” “dangerous and harmful” and “the real cancer that is eating into our vitals” (Desai, 1996: 4). These sentiments led to the restriction of free Indians, while indentured Indians were welcome as long as they remained indentured. The penalty for ending indenture and continuing to reside in Natal as a free Indian was the £3 poll tax (Bhana & Pachai, 1984: 53). Further, anti-Indian sentiment led to a legislative programme which was “designed to restrict the political and economic power of the Indian community and to encourage them to return *en masse* to India” (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 121).

¹³ Edward Said describes a subject race as one “dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves” (1978: 35). Within the discourse of post-colonialism, the Indians were the “Other”.

However, in Durban (Natal), where the Indian population was concentrated, Indians soon progressed materially, enabling them to purchase homes in predominantly White residential areas. White discontentment with this growing peculiarity resulted in the Pegging Act (1943), which precluded Indians from purchasing property in White areas without a permit (Mukherji, 1959: 128-130; Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 366-369). This law was followed by the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill in 1946, resulting in reaction from the Indian community. A request to the Indian government led to the latter applying sanctions against South Africa and also referring the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa to the United Nations. However, this had no effect and the Indian population remained the fourth race group in South Africa with provision for them upheld in the separate development policy.

Interestingly, indentured labourers refused to be ‘disembodied *Coolies*’,¹⁴ defined merely by number and origin. They constantly challenged legislation and the State to ensure that they were recognised as having rights and a permanent future in South Africa (Desai & Vahed, 2007: 10).

Towards the end of the 19th century until 1948, there were approximately sixty-five restrictive laws affecting Indian inhabitants in South Africa. As outlined by Kuppusami and Pillay (1978: 10), Bhana and Pachai (1984) and the SA History Online Project (anti-Indian Legislation 1800s-1959), what follows are brief references to some of the anti-Indian laws:

- 1885: The first discriminatory legislation directed at Indians, Law 3 of 1885, is passed. It ensured that Indians cannot be owners of fixed property, shall be inscribed in a Register, if they settled with the object of trading and that the government shall have the right for purposes of sanitation, to assign to them certain streets, wards and locations to live in. This provision does not apply to those who live with employers.

¹⁴ Desai and Vahed (2007: 13) explain the term as used in the context of a White ruling class that saw Indians through the lens of racist stereotypes. *Kuli*, in Tamil, referred to payment for menial work for persons from the lowest levels in the industrial labour market. In the transformation of *kuli* to coolies, the distinct humanity of individual Indians was appropriated and eliminated as the person was conflated with the notion of this form of payment.

- 1890: The Orange Free State Act 29 is passed which aimed “to provide against the influx of Asiatics and the removal of White criminals entering the state from elsewhere.”
- 1891: The Statute Law of the Orange Free State prohibits “an Arab, a Chinaman, a Coolie or any other Asiatic or Coloured person from carrying on business or farming in the Orange Free State.” All Indian businesses are forced to close by 11 September and owners deported from the Orange Free State without compensation.
- 1891: Act 25, with the proviso that indentured Indian labourers were also entitled to a gift of crown land and full citizenship rights as per the Natal Coolie Law of 1859, is withdrawn to discourage the settlement of Indians in the province.
- 1897: The immigration of ‘passenger’ Indians was prohibited by law, although the importation of Indians as a labour force continued.
- 1894: The Immigration Bill sought to amend the previous Act in two ways: firstly, by stipulating that at the end of the five year re-indenture, the Indian is required to return to India or else be re-indentured for another two years; and secondly, if he did not re-indenture or return to India he would be required to pay the £3 tax annually.
- 1894: The Natal Franchise Bill sought to deprive Indians in Natal of the parliamentary franchise.
- 1897: The Dealers Licenses Act, No 18, where Natal Licensing Officers are empowered to issue or refuse licenses.
- 1903: Indians could no longer enter the Transvaal without a special permit. Prior to this, in 1885, the Transvaal had withdrawn the citizenship rights of Indians and restricted their living and trading to certain areas.
- 1907: The Workmen's Compensation Act, No 36 is passed in the Transvaal, denying benefits to Asiatic and Coloured people. A workman is defined as a White person.
- 1907: In terms of the Education Act No 25 in the Transvaal, Coloured children are not allowed to attend European schools. Separate schools are established and while

education is free and compulsory for white children, this does not apply to Coloured children (Coloured means all people of colour, Africans, Indians and Coloureds).

- 1907: The Transvaal Immigration Restriction Act 15 bars further immigration of Indians into the Transvaal and establishes the Immigration Department to check against illegal Asiatic entries.
- 1913: The Indian Immigration Regulation Act 22 prohibited the entry of new immigrants. As a result Indian immigration ceased.
- 1922: The Durban Land Alienation Ordinance, No. 14 (Natal) is passed. This ordinance enables the Durban City Council to exclude Indians from ownership or occupation of property in White areas.
- 1925: The Asiatic Bill is introduced, designed to address the Indian presence in South Africa and a subsequent repatriation plan.
- 1926: The Liquor Act is passed. Africans and Indians are denied employment by license holders and are not allowed to serve liquor and drive liquor vans. They are also denied access to licensed premises. 3000 Indians employed in the brewery trade are affected.
- 1943: The Asiatic Trading and Occupation of Land (Natal and Transvaal) Act (the Pegging Act), becomes law. This Bill places restrictions on trading and occupation of land by Asiatics in the Transvaal and on the acquisition and occupation of land in Natal.
- 1946: The Asiatic Land tenure and Indian Representation Bill, also known as the “Ghetto Act”, is passed.

Despite such discriminatory legislation, the Indian presence in South Africa received vociferous responses from sectors of the Afrikaner population. In their book *The Super Afrikaners*, Wilkins and Strydom (1978) note that the Broederbond¹⁵ was established in 1918

¹⁵ The Afrikaner Broederbond was founded in 1918 in Johannesburg to promote the Afrikaans culture and Afrikaner economic action in a coordinated way. In 1929 it became a secret organisation and by 1933, it had

to harness political, social and economic forces to ensure Afrikaner domination and resistance to lingering economic exploitation initiated by the waning British Empire. From the outset, the Broederbond took an active interest in the affairs of Indians in South Africa. One of their reports entitled *The Future of the Indian Population* (1978) propounds the idea of a separate homeland for Indian South Africans as it was believed that they had resisted assimilation and posed a threat to the white man's identity (Wilkins & Strydom 1978: 154). Perhaps coincidentally, the establishment of the Indian College on Salisbury Island emerged from this initial idea. In this undated report it was suggested that "there is no room for them in the White nation structure, socially, politically, or otherwise, as in the case of English speakers, Portuguese, Jews and other immigrant groups" (1978: 154).

3.8 Gandhi's Impact

By the 1890s, in reaction to virulent anti-Indianism prevalent in the White community, particularly in Natal, the Indian community became more articulate in challenging its marginalisation. One such response emerged from Mahatma Gandhi,¹⁶ who arrived in South Africa in 1893. Under his leadership, the Indian population challenged British powers in Natal, opposing the carrying of passes as identity documents and restrictions on their movements across provincial boundaries (Singh, 2009: 10). Under Gandhi's inspirational leadership, the Natal Indian Congress (NIC, 1894)¹⁷ and later the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC, 1903)¹⁸ was formed, creating political structures through which the Indian community was mobilised to campaign against all forms of racial discrimination (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 193) perpetrated by the Natal government.¹⁹ Using the philosophy of *Satyagraha*,²⁰ a

1003 members. The intention of the Broederbond was to rule South Africa but it was unsuccessful in making any considerable impact of the South African society (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 289). Many of the members were teachers and lecturers.

¹⁶ Gandhi arrived in Natal, South Africa, in 1893. As mentioned previously, at this time the Indians were already separated into three separate groups and lacked cohesion. These were 'indentured immigrants who were under contract; free Indians who had completed their period of indenture and who had decided to remain in Natal instead of returning to India, and passenger Indians who came to South Africa at their own expense (Bagwande in Desai; 1996: 4).

¹⁷ The Launch of the NIC was initiated by Gandhi on August 22, 1894 (Desai, 1996: 4).

¹⁸ The Transvaal Indian Congress was initially named the Transvaal British Indian Association and was formed circa 1903 by Gandhi. It was called the TIC when India was no longer under British rule in 1950.

¹⁹ The Natal Government was made up of Lieutenant governors (1849-1880), governors (1881-1910) and Prime Ministers (1893-1910). All of these became extinct after the Union of South Africa was established in 1910.

²⁰ According to Gandhi in *My Experiments with Truth* published in 1927, the principle of *Satyagraha* was born before the word itself. It referred to the passive resistance undertaken by Gandhi and his followers in South

passive form of civil disobedience as a weapon of their struggle, Gandhi and members of the NIC and TIC challenged many laws which promoted segregationist ideology.

Subsequently, Gandhi forged a relationship with General Smuts who was the Minister of the Interior, to review the discriminatory laws against the Indians and discuss the Indian question. Their exchanges resulted in the historic Smuts-Gandhi Agreement in 1914 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 193; Mukherji, 1959:79; Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 245), which led to the abolition of the Pass Laws and provided the assurance that, after consultation with cabinet, all discriminatory laws would later be abolished. Their deliberations led to the Indian Relief Act of 1914, which repealed the poll tax on free Indians in Natal, recognised Hindu and Muslim marriages and abolished the registration and finger-printing requirements of the so-called 'Black Act' of 1907. But major issues such as restrictions on land ownership, trading rights, immigration and movement between provinces remained unresolved, with the result that Indian resistance against exclusions continued for many decades to come.

However, issues concerning repatriation resurfaced. The Union Government of 1910 was determined to reduce the Indian population and attempted to make emigration attractive to South African Indians. Dr. D F Malan, Minister of the Interior, Education and Public Health (1924-1933), expressed what came to be widely-held views in government:

...the Indian as a race in this country is an alien element in the population and...no solution to the Indian question will be acceptable to this country unless it results in a very considerable reduction of the Indian population... (in Rai, 1984: 69).

Hence, following the mounting tension around the 'Indian question', which was fundamentally a question of the Indian presence in South Africa, D F Malan tabled the Asiatic Bill in 1925 to deal with the presence of the Indians. Indian historian P.S. Aiyer (in Valley, 2001: 83) writing at the time of this Bill, explained that the object of the law was to effect economic ruin of Indian traders and farmers by declaring them 'aliens' and pressurising them into leaving the country. Needless to say, the Bill exacerbated growing tension between Indians, the Union Government and the Indian Government.

Africa and is a Gujerati word used as a designation for the struggle (1927: 266). He also defined it as a weapon for those in search of truth and went on to say that the reason it was favoured by the Indians was because it gave them dignity (Bhana & Pachai, 1984: 111).

The strategy of repatriation, according to Frene Ginwala (1977: 8), was two-pronged. Firstly, it was decided that the size of the anomalous population had to be limited by all means possible and secondly, their economic circumstances had to remain consistent with that of the indigenous people. Ginwala further explains that the first part witnessed limited immigration and repatriation, while the second ensured that economic opportunities for Indians were limited. Thus, since their arrival in South Africa, Indians experienced continuous opposition from several quarters.

However, after the Unionisation of South Africa, voluntary repatriation was initiated with an ineffectual result. By 1926 only 27,710 Indians had voluntarily been repatriated, with only 16,257 Indians voluntarily returning between 1927 and 1940, when it was finally abandoned. The existing Indian population in South Africa at that time was approximately 242 000 (Jain, 1999: 40). By 1946, the number grew to approximately 282 539 (Mukherji, 1959: 139). While repatriation resulted in many Indians returning to India, Mable Palmer says, "...at no time was it large enough to cause an appreciable decline in the size of the Indian population..." and for those who remained, very little was done to raise their standard of living (1956: 10).

3.9 On the Brink of Apartheid

As they approached mid-century, Indians, while still vote-less and voiceless, continued to struggle for economic survival. Education was minimal with only a few schools catering for the growing population. Culturally, the community established a presence, with the erection of a few Hindu Temples in Transvaal and Natal. Their presence is described by Giliomee and Mbenga (2007: 269) as "living under the shadow of government policy that considered them as aliens against whom it was legitimate to discriminate" and by Davenport and Saunders (2000: 277) as "undesirable immigrants on economic and cultural grounds."

With the signing of the Cape Town agreement in 1927²¹ there seemed, although superficially, a sense of hope for the Indians. However, discrimination continued (Mukherji, 1959: 112;

²¹ The Cape Town Agreement was between the Indian and South African Governments. Here the Union government introduced a scheme of assisted emigration to India yet also committed itself to settle the Indian question in a manner that would safeguard the standards of life in South Africa by a justifiable and legitimate

Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 270; Bhana & Pachai, 1984: 155-157). This agreement constituted a landmark for the history of Indians in South Africa as it offered considerable opportunities followed by grave disappointment. Giliomee and Mbenga (2007: 270) point out that the agreement led to the government of South Africa launching an inquiry into Indian education and undertaking to improve facilities for Indians at the South African Native College in Fort Hare. It also undertook to investigate housing and sanitary conditions in Durban, yet all of the above remained unsatisfactory (Mukherji, 1959: 112). Their disappointment was immense.

As the community settled in the country amidst various forms of discriminatory legislature, the Indian government in 1946 broke off diplomatic ties with South Africa, imposed trade sanctions and submitted the case of discriminatory practices against the South African Indians to the United Nations (Jain, 1999: 45). By 1947, the Indians in South Africa formed alliances with other oppressed communities. The Doctors' Pact with Dr Naicker of the NIC, Dr Dadoo of the TIC and Dr Xuma of the ANC, led to them working together for full franchise rights, equal industrial rights, the removal of land restrictions, the extension of free compulsory education to all non-Europeans, freedom of movement, the abolition of pass laws and the removal of all discriminatory legislation (Bhana & Pachai, 1984: 193-194; Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 369).

Later, as new Apartheid legislation was entrenched, the ANC set out a policy of mass action in which the Indian Congress leaders were involved. This narrative is explained by Desai (1996: 15-17). Known as the Defiance Campaign, it coupled the two race-based organisations in their common cause, leading to closer cooperation between them. This created the conditions for the establishment of the Congress Alliance which consisted of the ANC, South African Indian Congress (SAIC), South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). In 1955, the Congress of the People²² adopted the Freedom Charter which was also adopted by the NIC and the TIC.

means. It asserted that it would ensure that the Indian population in South Africa would not be allowed to "lag behind" other sections of the population (Bhana & Pachai, 1984: 155; Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 269-270).

²² A gathering of all people opposed to White domination to make a public declaration in unison with other races in refusing to bow to the Apartheid regime.

However later, with the subsequent reaction from government which included bannings and severe political repression, the NIC and TIC were forced out of existence.

3.10 Anti-Indian Sentiment – Apartheid and Resistance

Despite these apparent positive political relationships, “anti-Indianism” (Desai, 1996: 10) found resonance not only amongst the White communities, but also amongst the African traders and consumers in Durban. The political conditions which were already imbalanced amongst the non-white communities were well suited to clashes. According to Desai, the riots took the form of an anti-Indian pogrom fuelled by race-based differential incorporation of groups into the hierarchy of the city, with Whites at the top, Indians in the middle and Africans at the bottom (Desai, 1996: 10). The infamous 1949 Riots resulted in extensive property damage where 142 people were killed, 1087 injured and thousands left homeless (Jain, 1999: 47). This laid the foundation for competitive yet antagonistic relationships between Africans and Indians at the level of employment, housing and trade (Desai, 1996: 11-12). While this was a setback for the relationship between Indians and Africans, it resulted in further negotiation between the Indian Congresses and the African National Congress (Desai, 1996: 15). While Desai in *Arise Ye Coolies* (1996) presents a more detailed account of these riots, it is mentioned here to merely highlight the consistent anti-Indian agitations experienced by the Indian population.

Desai also presents a comprehensive account of the Indian political organisations as they pursued a liberatory agenda in the country. This section is a brief positioning of the political agenda of the Indians as extracted from Desai (1996). In desisting the promulgation of the repatriation policy, Indians were finally accepted as South African citizens in 1961, ironically the year that the Republic of South Africa was declared. Almost immediately, Asian Affairs was established within the Ministry of the Interior which, subject to considerable opposition from the prevailing Indian political structures, soon became the Department of Indian Affairs. The South African Indian Council (SAIC) functioned as an advisory body for the State, but more importantly, was viewed by the state as a vehicle for separate development. As a result, participation in the SAIC was seen as the acceptance of the policy of separate development and its members were forced to accept the Apartheid policies. Resentment took root among Indians as the varied Apartheid policies were being accepted and the SAIC was consequently considered toothless, resulting in dwindling

support. Soon the state began implementation of the Tricameral parliament²³ which the revived NIC of the 1970s had vehemently opposed. Amidst the anti-Tricameral mobilisation was the establishment of the United Democratic Front (UDF), to which the NIC and TIC were affiliated. These organisations, under the banner of the UDF, ran successful anti-voting campaigns in 1981 and 1984.

However, by the late 1970s, with the ANC banned, many NIC activists were drawn to the ANC underground. The unbanning of the ANC in 1990 opened up intense debate on the future of the NIC and the TIC (Desai, 1996: 61). Amidst the discussion and negotiations for a democratic South Africa, the NIC and TIC proved to be valuable assets at the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in 1991/1992 for the ANC. In the CODESA talks, the presence of the NIC and the TIC prevented the House of Delegates from presenting themselves as the sole voice of Indian South Africans. The NIC was henceforth seen as an organisation which was largely successful in discrediting the House of Delegates as people who partly legitimised the Apartheid structures with limited support from the Indian community.²⁴

3.11 Concluding Remarks

In presenting the historiography of the presence of the Indian population in South Africa, I have highlighted the segregationist attitudes embedded in the policies of the various governments of the country from the initial advent of the slave trade, to the repatriation plans of the Union of South Africa. Territorial segregation and the establishment of political separation by means of setting up separate constituencies for the non-White population bore witness to the embryonic form of the later Apartheid policies of the Nationalist government that was brought into power in 1948.

This chapter also foregrounded the varied forms of discrimination against Indians and presented some of their responses to the curtailment of their rights and privileges. The anti-

²³ The Tricameral parliamentary system was an attempt by the Apartheid government to include the Indians, under the House of Delegates (HoD) and Coloureds under the House of Representatives (HoR), as partners in the “apartheid machine” (Desai, 1996: 69).

²⁴ At the polls the HoD’s average percentage was 20.4% in 1984 and 22.9% in 1989 (Desai, 1996: 82).

Indian moves were countered individually, collectively and institutionally, and for the first time, the Indian voice was mobilised through the presence of Mahatma Gandhi. Political organs like the NIC and TIC and later the SAIC, also began to function albeit against a seemingly impenetrable force. Gandhi's newspaper, *The Indian Opinion*, established a mouthpiece for the Indian community, reflecting the interests of indentured and colonial-born Indians.

In the next chapter I discuss the implications of the Apartheid strategy of the Nationalist government and its impact upon the Indians in South Africa. The historical periods outlined in this chapter and those that immediately follow Apartheid, had important consequences for Indian identity and consciousness. So too in the following chapter I will analyse the education strategies of the South African government and the subsequent desire for tertiary education for this community.

CHAPTER FOUR: STRATEGIES FOR INDIANS - EDUCATION FOR SEPARATION

4.1 Introduction: Beginning and Entrenching Marginalisation

For the first hundred years since their arrival, South African Indians had been self-absorbed as various types of legislation had resulted in them focusing on their own social, political and economic conditions. Before 1948, legislative acts had not really taken on a national character and were still, for the most part, enactments for separate republics and separate population groups. This segregation and separation had compartmentalised oppressed communities, each focusing on its own problems. However, with the advent of formalised Apartheid in 1948, legislation applied across provincial barriers highlighting new plans for separate development, resulting in The Population Registration Act, The Group Areas Act and The Separate Amenities Act, to name a few. These acts affected all non-White groups, thereby contributing to a degree of unification as a comprehensive, cohesive, albeit disenfranchised, unit. The strategy of separate education for racial groups in South Africa is explored in this chapter with a focus on the need for an Indian university. This section explores the levels of differentiation and discrimination towards the Indians, with particular reference to their system of education in South Africa.

4.2 Indian Education

One of the 19th- century terms of agreement between India and the Natal government was that the children of Indian immigrants had to be educated, if only as a matter of good policy (Director of Education, Province of Natal, 1868: 10; Waiz, nd: 396). However, when the first Indians arrived, education in South Africa was hardly systematized and their arrival created an additional burden for the Natal government (Mahabir, 1977: 8). Thus, for Indians there was no education system to speak of, though Kuppusami (1946: 8) explains that contrary to popular belief, not all immigrants were illiterate. Some had a reading knowledge of the English language while others were also literate in an Indian language. What was surprising, he added, was that while religious education was not advanced, their knowledge of ancient history and Hindu mythology was high, thus creating an ideal environment for the transplantation of the traditions of India in South Africa.

Upon their arrival in this country, the only schools available to Indian children were located at Christian missions in Durban or on the sugar plantations. This afforded rudimentary secular education which was provided in government-aided schools supervised by missionaries like Father Sabou and Reverend Ralph Stott (Adamson, 1914: 64; Kuppusami & Pillay, 1978: 16-17; Kuppusami, 1966: 6; Ragubir, 1993: 53; Pachai, 1979). The majority of these mission-run Indian schools were under the auspices of the Anglican or Catholic Church, the latter exercising a significant role in these English medium schools (Mahabir, 1977: 11).

According to Kuppusami (1946: 9), Reverend Stott had two schools, one a day school and another, an evening school for older scholars. In 1871, a school opened in Lower Umkomanzi for children on the sugar estates in that neighbourhood and in 1872, another opened in Sea Cow Lake in Durban (Kuppusami, 1946: 9). Thus by 1872 there were four schools, but they did not last long as the salaries provided for teachers were inadequate. By 1875, the few schools that had catered for the Indian children ceased to exist due to a lack of suitable teachers (Kuppusami, 1946: 9). In 1879, the Natal Government appointed the Indian Immigration School Board to oversee the education of immigrant Indian children (Mahabir, 1977: 12). This Board was active until 1894 when it was abolished in favour of Indian schools coming under the general supervision of the Natal Education Department (Kuppusami, 1946: 11). In 1881, with the discovery of gold, a large number of Indians entered the Transvaal, creating an influx that was not catered for by the government. This subsequently resulted in the education of non-whites becoming an exclusively unsubsidised, voluntary mission venture (Dilla, 1973: 7). Later in the 1880s, the Witwatersrand Council of Education was formed by the Anglican Ministers who began private mixed schools on the Rand (Dilla, 1973: 8). This mixed private schooling formed the basis of Indian education in the Transvaal.

In Natal, with a growing number of Indian children wanting education, numbers grew steadily with eight government-aided schools in 1880. Five years later that number increased to twenty-five with an enrolment of 1480, almost all of which were aided schools run by the missionaries (Kuppusami, 1946: 12). By 1909, there were thirty-five schools with an enrolment of 3284 (Kuppusami & Pillay, 1978: 20-25), offering an elementary education up to Standard Four (presently Grade 6). In an attempt to augment the teachers' salaries, children of indentured Indians were required to pay three pence each and those outside indenture were to pay sixpence per month.

In addition to indentured children receiving education, those who emerged from more affluent homes or were 'free' Indians and who were able to pay more school fees, were admitted to the Government Model Primary School in Durban in 1888. However, given the deterioration of the relationship between Indians and Europeans, European parents objected to the presence of Indian children at these schools and in 1899, Indian admittance to these mixed race schools was discontinued (Kuppusami, 1946: 13).

Even after the inauguration of the Union of South Africa in 1910, there was little improvement in Indian education and despite the increasing number of Indian children there was insufficient government funding (Kuppusami, 1946: 16). However, after years of deliberation and the establishment of commissions addressing Indian education, change only emerged in 1927. The vital role played by the Right Hon. Sri Srinivas Sastri, the first Agent-General for Indians in South Africa, led to the conclusion of the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 between the Indian and South African governments, which ensured that local Indian education would not 'lag behind' any other section of the country. The Natal Education Department reacted positively to this agreement and improvements in Indian education were beginning to become a reality (Kuppusami & Pillay, 1978: 20-25; Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 22). Although more schools were being constructed, these improvements could not keep pace with the increase in the Indian schooling population.

This pressure to accommodate pupils led to the introduction of the platoon²⁵ system, or afternoon schools by the Natal Education Department.²⁶ The first of these was opened in 1951. Although intended as a temporary measure, this system continued until nationalization in 1966, with 33 543 Indian pupils in platoon classes in Natal (Mahabir, 1977: 26). In 1942, the Natal administration put into operation a scheme of free education up to Standard Six in all Indian schools (Kuppusami, 1946: 23). The education curriculum was largely the same as that applicable at White primary schools but was a less extensive version (Oosthuizen et al.,

²⁵ The platoon system operates in this way: while the senior classes, which start very early in the day are being taught the subjects that require written work indoors, the junior and infant classes, which start later in the day, are being instructed in out-of-doors in subjects that do not require written work. With the dismissal of senior classes around 13h00, the junior classes move into the rooms that have been vacated and continue with regular work until about 16h00 (Mahabir, 1977: 26; Moodley, 2011). This 'double-shift' meant that some pupils attended school during the forenoon and others in the afternoon (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 23).

²⁶ Union of South Africa's Article 85, left the control of primary and secondary education to the provinces and yet Natal's contribution to Indian education remained very poor (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 22).

1981: 23). By 1955, as a result of the Group Areas Act (GAA), the Indians were relocated to proclaimed areas and new schools had to be established, with the 3024 high school pupils in 1955 increasing by 1965 to 13 000 (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 24).

While this summary²⁷ of the development of Indian education in South Africa highlights the positive elements in this regard, it must be noted that there were several challenges like access, finance for materials, and venues. These were continually contested, often with positive results. An Education Commission was appointed in as early as 1909 to investigate the Indian education system. The Indian population was itself a motivating factor in the community's own development, and was often described as "displaying their enthusiasm for education" (Atkinson, 1978: 242).

For the Indian learner, acquiring a basic primary school education in this country was a constant struggle, but was possible with ongoing support from private enterprise like the Church, authorities in the province and later the state. Secondary level education was particularly valued as it provided an opportunity to enter the competitive labour market on an equal footing with other race groups (Annamalai, 1998: 18). Almost every young person sought to acquire a secondary education and if at all possible, a tertiary education. Thus, from the very beginning, the struggle for better education has always been regarded as one of the catalysts in social and economic mobility within the Indian community.

4.3 Separation and Segregation

In 1948, when General Smuts and his United Party (UP) lost the election, the National Party (NP)²⁸ under the leadership of D F Malan in alliance with the small Afrikaner Party (AP; Welsh, 2009: 1) came into power with among other slogans 'The Kaffir in his place and the

²⁷ Further detailed accounts of the education of Indian South Africans and their challenges can be found in Kuppusami's *Indian Education in Natal (1860-1946)*, 1946; Bhanapersad Mahabir's *Indian Education in South Africa after Nationalisation – A Metapedagogical Perspective* (1977); Somlar Dilla's *The Nationalisation of Indian Education in the Transvaal* (1973); Kailas P. Kichlu's *Memorandum on Indian Education in Natal (South Africa)* in 1928 and Kuppusami and Pillay's *Pioneer Footprints* in (1978).

²⁸ According to Welsh, it is critical to note that the driving force undergirding the NP was the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB), which was the axle around which all Afrikaner life revolved (2009: 13-15). Through the AB, the Nationalist Party could ensure Afrikaner domination by harnessing the services of Afrikaner intellectuals who would be able to create ideas about nation, 'volk' and subsequently, Apartheid. Giliomee & Schlemmer (1989: 94,95) maintain that with Verwoerd as Prime Minister, the Broederbond grew in numbers with its members occupying virtually all top positions in civil service, church and educational hierarchies, where almost every principal of a university or college was a member.

Coolie out of the country’ (Bhana,1991: 4). However, in the decades preceding the 1948 NP government, numerous Commissions of Enquiry into the alleged Indian penetration were accompanied with some form of anti-Indian agitation. For example, in 1946 the Sauer Report, a policy statement on the racial problem in South Africa, found Indians to be alien and an inassimilable element in South Africa (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 373). The report recommended rigorous segregation, consolidation of the African reserves, and the extension of the migrant labour system. During the crucial 1948 elections, White politicians had indulged white fears by embarking on what Ginwala referred to as “vicious anti-Indian” campaigning (1977: 12).

While the Smuts and Botha leadership easily accommodated the idea of Empire, the Nationalist Party heralded the Hertzogian slogan “South Africa First” (Welsh, 2009: 5). In this regard, Welsh (2009: 21) points out that in essence Apartheid²⁹ policy envisaged the maintenance of the White population as a pure race by the complete elimination of any miscegenation between White and non-White and the maintenance of the indigenous non-White racial groups as separate *volk* communities, thereby cultivating a sense of national pride and self-respect.

From the start, the new government had shown that it intended to eliminate trends towards inter-racial integration (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 378). In the Apartheid regime, every person in the country was classified by race and entered into the population register accordingly. These were Whites (of European descent), Asians (meaning people of Asian origin, mainly Indian and Pakistani), Africans or Bantus and Coloureds (of mixed descent, including the Cape Malays; see Jain, 1999: 56). Giliomee and Mbenga explain that as a policy, Apartheid was directed at uniting all Afrikaners behind a policy that appealed to both racists and reformers and addressed the interests of the Afrikaner people while also promising “undiluted white supremacy and firm control over black labour” (2007: 315).

However, by 1948, with the NP government in power, South Africa institutionalised racial differences within its population to achieve social discrimination with race as a pivot for the

²⁹*Apartheid* meaning *Apartmentness*, was a word used by Afrikaner intellectuals since the 1930s and clearly reflected the racial exclusivity in National Socialism in Germany, which had been inspirational for some time (Thompson, 2001: 182-186).

social and political organisation of the country. While White economic and cultural supremacy had implicitly been in place for centuries, this was now more rigorously enforced, as was segregation and separate development. McDonald (2006: 15-17) argues that while the policies of the Apartheid government were used to amalgamate the White minority by unifying the Afrikaners and English-speakers, it also ironically precipitated allegiances among Black South Africans resulting in a pan-Africanism that galvanised resistance and ultimately engendered desirable change. This would prove disastrous for White supremacist aspirations. Barber (1999: 140) notes that Apartheid further appealed to faith and fear: faith that a resolution could be found to the problems of race relations while retaining White supremacy, and fear that without authoritarian measures, the Whites would be swamped. Hence, McDonald (2006: 16) explains the establishment of the race/culture dialectic as follows: while Smuts associated races with cultures, separate development appreciated that cultures are permeable and susceptible to mixing, amalgamation, and contamination. In response, the policy of separate development *particularised* the cultures of Africans. Once differentiated into nations and encased in states or Bantustans, cultures became less permeable.

Hence separate development succeeded in consolidating White supremacy and entrenching segregation on the basis of race, culture or tribal affiliations. Within this dynamic of race and culture, the South African Indian was also partly reduced to a homogenous ethnic group. Although not apportioned a separate state, they experienced ongoing alienation through the GAA and many other laws instituted by the South African government to ensure White domination and Black subordination. There were, for example, between 1885 and 1941, as many as 61 pieces of anti-Indian legislation.³⁰

What was enforced as ‘Petty Apartheid’ fell under *The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* of 1953 which segregated parks, beaches, theatres, restaurants, buses, libraries, toilets and

³⁰ Some of these as offered by Reddy (2000: 9) and extracted from South African History Online are presented here. The cornerstone of Apartheid was the *Population and Registration Act* of 1950 which labeled all South Africans by race, thereby making colour the single most important arbiter of an individual. Another fundamental pillar of Apartheid legislation was *The Group Areas Act* of 1950 (also called Separate Development), which controlled where the different race groups lived and denied most South Africans the fundamental right of mobility. This Act was described by the Nationalist Prime Minister D.F. Malan as “the very essence of Apartheid,” and the “kernel of the Apartheid policy” (Jain 1999: 74). It required separate urban areas for each racial group.

other public facilities, according to race. To avoid competition from the non-White population for certain levels of employment, *The Job Reservation Act* of 1956 was implemented. In 1959 under the Prime Minister Dr. H.F Verwoerd,³¹ *The Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act* created eight separate ethnic Bantustans,³² namely, Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, KwaZulu, Gazankulu, KwaNdebele and Kangwane (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 432-436). This set the foundation for grand Apartheid.

In justifying the GAA,³³ the Nationalist Party government used the inevitable friction argument. According to the NP, the Durban Riots of 1949 were a demonstration of ethnic tensions and the tragic consequences of residential integration (Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989: 88) and the GAA was thought to promote individualism within the different racial groups. The act defined the geographical spaces within which each population group resided, guaranteeing the separation of racially distinctive groups and intended to prevent any racial integration. Prior to this legislation, many residential areas like Sophiatown in Johannesburg and Cato Manor in Durban were racially integrated spaces. What this Act did was segregate the country along rigid racial lines and complete the process of dispossession and the abrogation of almost all urban land to the White population (Ginwala, 1977: 13). While the GAA contained South African society into racial compartments, it had considerable impact on the Indian population in South Africa.

Mukherji, (1959: 166), Jain (1999: 74) and Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989: 86) submit that the Indians in general and the Indian traders in particular, were the hardest hit by this act which subsumed all previous attempts at curbing Indian penetration with the justification being the reduction of conflict between race groups. The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian

³¹ Dr H.F. Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs in 1950 and later Prime Minister in 1958, was central to the social engineering of Apartheid (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 314). It was under his design that the legislation against non-whites grew moving from differentiation to discrimination (Davenport & Saunders, 2000: 388-392). During the Verwoerd administration, Apartheid was at its most militant with the establishment of the 'native homelands', the banning of the political organisations, the Sharpeville protest, and the imprisonment of political leaders like Nelson Mandela and Ahmed Kathrada. Following Verwoerd's assassination in 1966, he was succeeded by B.J. Vorster who was followed by P.W. Botha and F.W. De Klerk, who was finally successful in dismantling Apartheid and unbanning political organizations.

³² These Bantustans were "independent" states on land that was the most unproductive and least minerally endowed. Unofficial unemployment rates ranged between 40 and 80 per cent and between 1948 and 1978 in spite of the hardship caused to the people of these 'homelands' more than 2.1 million people were forcibly moved into these areas (Jain, 1999: 58).

³³ The GAA which was first enacted in 1950, was amended six times, consolidated in 1957 and again amended several times since then (Jain, 1999: 74).

Representation Act of 1946 were implemented to prevent the large scale Indian penetration into white areas. The NP built upon this Act in 1950 as constituting national policy (Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989: 86).

David Welsh (2009: 55) presents a critical piece of writing from Alan Paton's second autobiography *Journey Continued* (1988: 181) whose extensive knowledge of the Natal experience explains his comments on the devastating impact the GAA had on the Indian communities:

Another strand in the Group Areas rope was pure unadulterated anti-Indian hatred...anger at the success of Indian shopkeepers, and a contempt for their way of life. Another was greed, a desire to get hold of the property of Indian people and particularly those Indian areas which had been surrounded by the growing white towns and cities, and so had become unbelievably valuable.

Despite assurances that the Act would not jeopardise certain groups, it clearly operated in highly discriminatory ways, particularly towards Indians and Coloureds.³⁴ Bill Freund (1995: 64) argues that these events reminded the Indian population of their vulnerability *vis à vis* the power structures of the South African Government which defined them in racial terms and reinforced their alienation in their adoptive country. Indian communities were uprooted leaving behind not only long established homes, extended families and businesses but also schools, mosques, temples and community centres. They were resettled in townships usually outside urban centres in areas with few amenities and great distances away from their employment (Ginwala, 1977: 13), such as Lenasia in Johannesburg and Chatsworth and Phoenix in Durban. Many residents arrived in these townships from 'mixed' areas like Pageview in Johannesburg and Cato Manor and Mayville in Durban. The exact number of Indians affected by this movement varies from 225 000 (Jain, 1999: 74) to 153 000 (Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989: 89) to 40 067 families.

The consequence of this Act was the successful yet involuntary exodus of parts of the population from their own mixed race environment to racially specific designated geographic spaces. These forced removals were highly traumatic for the affected communities in general

³⁴ While the GAA affected all Black communities, historians have submitted that due to the separate townships already implemented for Africans under the Urban Areas Act (originally the Native Affairs Act of 1920), the number of Africans affected by this act was much smaller than the other two Black groups (Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989: 86; Welsh, 2009: 55; Jain, 1999: 74 -76; Ginwala, 1977: 13-14).

and caused upheaval in the Indian community in particular. Large numbers in Durban had to move to the northern and southern fringes of the city and further away from their work, while extended families had to split for the first time and resettle according to their individual financial means. As a result, the middle class (and traditional Indian leadership) moved to privately owned housing like Verulem and Reservoir Hills, while lower income groups moved into municipal housing in areas like Chatsworth (Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989:91). Thus the GAA produced a clear spatial expression of emergent and prevailing class differences among Indian South Africans.

Conversely though, it galvanised Indian people in establishing their 'Indian-ness' within their demarcated areas while at the same time contributing to the erosion of many traditional ways of life within the extended family system. However, in terms of the subsequent nuclear family structure, traditional consciousness and cultural awareness were reinforced through the close interaction between Indians from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Within these delimiting boundaries and racial and cultural categorisation, South African Indians found ways to express the socio-cultural aspects of their identity, such as the continued establishment of new or alternate religious and spiritual places of worship, as it was difficult to travel to the previously established temples and mosques which were now vast distances away. This ghettoization afforded new opportunities for local businesses as they fulfilled the needs of their communities and industries, providing prayer shops, traditional clothing outlets (often run from the home), and cultural classes like music, dance and singing classes to maintain the deep seated cultural aspects of the Indian lifestyle. These networks, both socio-cultural and economic, amalgamated the Indian community in a racially divided country.

The GAA subsequently led other legislation which prescribed where people should live, how they should conduct business, where they should go to school and university and with whom they should interact. The burgeoning laws of Apartheid institutionalised existing racial divisions, with imposed identity, whether racial or ethnic, thereby objectifying people. By denying all South Africans the right to self-definition, the Apartheid government dispossessed its citizens of their identity. The implications of this dislocated sense of identity for the South African Indian will be explored later in this chapter.

4.4 Apartheid's Education Strategies

Education was also segregated by the Nationalist Party, resulting in an extraordinary determination to gain firm control of all educational institutions for Blacks (Welsh, 2009: 63). The state finally achieved control from 1953 with *The Bantu Education Act*³⁵ followed by the EUEA,³⁶ which as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, established racially and ethnically based universities for all non-white South Africans. In the education plan for the Coloured community, *The Coloured Persons Education Act*, No.47 of 1963 transferred the responsibility for education from the provincial administrations to the Department of Coloured Affairs. In 1965, *The Indian Education Act* provided for the transfer of control of education of Indians to the Department of Indian Affairs (Marcum, 1982: 3-4; Dilla, 1973: 85-94). All legislation was designed to ensure a differentiated and often inferior education for Blacks in the country. Education had to be racially different as it had to suit the needs of industry and ensure that Blacks were less able to compete with Whites (Welsh, 2009: 63-65).

According to Jairam Reddy (1991: 2), it was the Broederbond that advanced strategies for the control of Indian education as part of its broader political agenda. Wilkins and Strydom (1978: 155) cite a revealing but undated circular entitled *Indian Education in South Africa*, which shows that the Broederbond was adamant that “control must be kept in their hands, or in the hands of Indians supporting Government policy....”. The circular also dealt with *Further Aims in Education* and elucidates the very structure and design of higher education for the Indians:

³⁵ In 1953, Government took control of Black education from the mission schools. This control went hand in hand with the extension of inferior mass education for Blacks and became known as Bantu Education. With inadequate funding and poor teaching and learning sites, this form of education was designed to prevent the advancement of Blacks in the western economy (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007: 319,320).

³⁶ The highly contentious Extension of University Education Act (Act No.45 of 1959) led to the legitimization of ethnically-determined tertiary colleges in South Africa. The Act was variously described as shameful and reflecting unjustifiable racial discrimination. Further outraged correspondence from various parts of the world protested that this Act was evidence of discriminatory measures and a move to have “full and dictatorial control over university colleges for black students” (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 33). After the EAEU all rectors appointed to Black universities were committed Afrikaner nationalists. The state strategy was “to appoint their own men, some of them recent graduates, invariably from the Afrikaans medium universities and promote them rapidly” (Balintulo, 1981 quoted in Badat, 1999: 71).

Of much greater importance is the implementation of State policy through the medium of education. For this it is indispensable that the top structure of Indian education remains...in the hands of right-minded whites...It is, however, important that Indians who are sympathetic towards Government policy are appointed [in higher positions within the Department of Indian education]... These people will have to be carefully selected, and prepared to identify and combat wrong influences in education. ...Persons in these posts must be strong enough to withstand pressure of certain groups...It is thus essential that control of appointment to senior posts in education must remain for a considerable time in the hands of right-minded whites (in Wilkins & Strydom, 1978: 155).

Wilkins & Strydom (1978: 157-158) conclude that key posts in Indian education were initially manned by Broederbond supporters like the Director of Indian Education, Mr Gabriel Krog and Professor S.P. Olivier, both of whom served on the Broederbond executive. Professor S.P. Olivier was subsequently appointed the rector of the University College for Indians from 1961 to 1981, when he retired. Welsh in his discussion on Apartheid, upholds this claim when he avers that rectors of these 'tribal' or 'bush' colleges were Apartheid supporters.

The following section will discuss the impact Apartheid policy had on tertiary education of the Indians in South Africa and the subsequent erection of an Indian university.

4.5 Tertiary Education

As the desire for education was growing, there was a teacher shortage. An attempt to address this shortage was made with the establishment of the St. Aidans Provincial Training College in 1904, staffed by lecturers from India. As this college could not fulfil the demand for teachers in the growing Indian education sector, in 1951 the Provincial Administration built a teacher training college in Springfield (Kuppusami, 1966: 10; Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 26-27). Similarly, the Transvaal College of Education was established in 1954 as the acute shortage of teachers in the Transvaal needed to be addressed (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 27).

With the minimum necessary expenditure from government on the education of Indians, it became clear that if the Indians wanted to realise their educational potential they would have to draw on their own resources. As Mahabir (1977: 58) notes, although the financing of Indian education was the responsibility of the provincial administrations, in the course of time this subsidy became quite inadequate. This resulted in a remarkable feature of Indian education in Natal in which Indian parents made contributions of money and land for the

building of Indian schools, evident in the Rand-for-Rand system between the government and the community. This mobilisation by the Indian community to subsidise their own schools ensured that Indian children acquired secondary as well as tertiary education depending on their capacities.

In 1926, Srinivas Sastri mobilised the Indian community by collecting R32 000, establishing a high school combined with a training college and handing this over to the Natal Provincial Administration. In 1930, Sastri College was opened to all Indians with white academic staff, which were gradually replaced with Indian lecturers from India (Kuppusami, 1966: 10; Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 27). In 1949, the Indian philanthropist Hajee M.L. Sultan offered to pay half the cost of a building to house a new Technical College for Indians in Durban. Here again, it was the Indian community which took the first steps to provide educational institutions to improve their lives and create opportunities for intellectual and economic betterment (Ginwala, 1977: 15). This technikon came to be known as the M.L. Sultan Technikon in Durban,³⁷ now incorporated into the Durban University of Technology.

Acquiring a university education was a challenging process. By 1960, the by now fourth generation Indian population had limited access to tertiary education which was largely dependent on economic affluence. Admission into the Natal University College would have been the most obvious option for Indian students, as approximately 80% of all Indians lived in Natal. In 1935, Dr Mabel Palmer persuaded the then principal of the Natal University College, J.W. Brews and the College Council, to admit non-white students to the institution. This commenced in 1936 at separate substandard venues; sometimes Sastri College was used on a part-time basis, generally on the weekends (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 28; Greyling 1982: 3). With a limited range of subjects, Indian students had been able to acquire a Bachelor of Arts since 1936, Commerce since 1946 and Medicine since 1951(Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 28; Behr, 1988: 188-189; Kuppusami, 1966: 10). Those students who wished to study pure and applied sciences and whose families were affluent enough, were encouraged to proceed to the Universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand only after having acquired Ministerial

³⁷ This Technikon, like many others in the country, has reflected the transformation of the country. The institution changed from M.L. Sultan Technikon to The Durban Institute of Technology and presently to the Durban University of Technology.

permission (Greyling, 1982: 3; Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 28; Bhana & Pachai, 1979: 385). While Indian students were registered at these universities, they were often segregated from the European students even at examinations (Behr, 1988: 189). Thus the need for further tertiary opportunities for non-whites had developed and the government responded with the EUEA and its ethnic based university colleges.

4.6 The Need for an Indian University

In 1961, Indians were officially recognised as a permanent part of the population. The hope of repatriation was at last laid to rest (Bhana & Pachai, 1984: 249) as immigrant Indians were finally granted the status of permanent residency and thus South African citizenship (Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, 2010: 80). In line with constitutional implications of this announcement by Prime Minister Verwoerd, the South African Indian Council (SAIC) was formed in line with Apartheid ideology to advise government on Indian matters. It was a statutory body operating in 1968 with nominated members and its role was hotly debated amongst Indians. While some viewed it as a “channel of communication as an interim measure” others argued it was a “powerless body...intended...to...placate a small section” (Bhana & Pachai, 1984: 249).

In 1961, the Department of Indian Affairs³⁸ was also established and among its many functions was the monitoring and control of Indian education. This department would give special attention to the economic and social developments of the Indian population as an independent community in the Republic (Mahabir, 1977: 61). More importantly, it was also responsible for the implementation of the Indian Education Act No.61 of 1965.³⁹

The history of tertiary education in South Africa is well documented in texts like Behr and Macmillan’s *Education in South Africa* (1971), Behr’s *Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652-1988* (1988) and Marcum’s *Education, Race, and Social Change in South Africa* (1982). There is also a range of Master’s and Doctoral theses which focus on

³⁸ According to Kuppasami & Pillay (1978: 14), although some viewed the new department with distrust, a greater number were favourably inclined towards its acceptance for, prior to its creation, the Indian was without status, without a future and without a guardian. With the establishment of the Department, a phase of uncertainty and insecurity had passed and the Indian could look forward to the future with a measure of hope and courage.

³⁹ This Act shifts the control of Indian education from the provinces to the central Government and the Minister of Indian Affairs.

this area of study. Likewise there is no dearth of information on the development of the ‘tribal’ colleges which emerged as a result of the EUEA and this discussion can be located in the introduction of this dissertation. The next section will focus on the development of the University College for Indians (UNICOL), which subsequently became the University of Durban-Westville (UDW).

4.7 The University College for Indians (UNICOL)

Salisbury Island, a disused naval barracks, was identified as the site for an exclusively Indian university. It was in a dilapidated condition, certainly not ready to house students, but with the expediency of the Department of Public Works it was renovated, making classes possible from 1 March 1961 (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 40). The College was constituted under the tutelage of the University of South Africa (UNISA) which provided the syllabi, examination papers and examiners (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 45). Upon its inception, there existed only two faculties, Arts and Science, with limited courses on offer. In 1962, after a request to UNISA to include other courses, Fine Arts and History of Art were then offered alongside Anthropology, Arabic, Hindi and Geology (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 46).

From the beginning, the university community experienced many challenges at UNICOL. The geographical location of the institution, on an island, physically marginalised the Indian students. Dori Moodley (Interview: 2011), a former member of staff, commented that this isolation was perceived as being “removed from civilisation” with “no ambience for teaching and learning.”

The difficulty experienced in accessing the university was challenging for both staff and students. The ferry trips via ferrying agents proved problematic and disastrous, with the university boat eventually sinking. There are many humorous accounts by former students about these trips which led to many missing class, being ill on the choppy waters and some falling into the bay while trying to board the boat! Another means of travel to the campus was a roadway via the Bluff, but proved to be too lengthy for daily travel.

Another challenge to the UNICOL, as discussed by Oosthuizen et al (1981: 50) and Moodley (Interview: 2011), was the African Explosives and Chemical Industries (AECI), which were loading explosives and continuously making conditions on the island even more trying. For many years, AECI used the island for the loading and exporting of explosives to other

countries and as it was considered dangerous for the students and staff to be present during these sessions, the university was closed during such operations with all residences shut down as well. This caused disruption to the academic program.

In spite of the challenges and the resentment toward the establishment of the institution, there were many students and staff who viewed the university as a site which provided them with an education that they were barred from receiving at any other South African institution. As a result, the university became a crucial site of struggle within the ambit of “education in particular and the liberation movement in general” (Reddy, 1991: 3). At the moment of its inception, the university was regarded and opposed as an instrument for the implementation of the Government’s policy of separate development aligned to the Apartheid ideologues of this country. Ever since then the university consistently and consciously challenged the Apartheid order (Greyling, 1981: 4; Reddy, 1991: 3).

4.8 Initial response

In 1961, the Indian community celebrated its centenary in South Africa, with various commemorative services and events held in Durban. These were multi-racial in character and highlighted the aspirant unity and equality among the races. In this climate, a separate university for Indians was considered with a great deal of suspicion (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 36). Although the opening of the university in 1961 was not intended to mark this historic occasion, according to Professor Jaap Greyling, later rector at UDW (1981- 1989), “it was nevertheless an interesting coincidence and of great significance” (1982: 2). But due to the mistrust under which the institution was established, it was not surprising that there was initially a lack of support from the Indian community.

The principle behind the establishment of a separate university for Indians was generally, though not exclusively, rejected by Indians in Durban. In an article in *The Daily News* entitled *Natal Indians still reject ‘varsity’* (17 November 1960), Mr P.R. Pather, president of the Natal Indian Organisation, foregrounds the reaction of the Indians to the idea of a racially separate university when he said they “reject a separate university for Indians” claiming unanimous support from the Indian people. In the same article, Dr G.M. Naicker, the president of the South African Indian Council, supported this opinion:

... [the] Indian people have every right to fear this monstrosity...We do not regard the tribal university as a place of learning; indeed it is a centre for the indoctrination of the Indian mind.

In the same year, 1960, a special conference was held by Natal's Indian leaders to discuss counter-moves to the proposed university on Salisbury Island. Their suggestions to oppose the university included a boycott followed by an effort to enable students to register with universities overseas while sitting for examinations locally. By 10 January 1961, there were already approximately 32 Indian students making inquiries about taking London University degrees in preference to the University College on Salisbury Island (10 January 1961, *Indians ask about courses at London University*, Newspaper title unknown).

In a newspaper article dated 26 November 1960 (newspaper title unknown) and entitled *Nationalists under fire from Indians about University College*, the Chairman of the Durban Council of the Nationalist Party, Dr Jooste, responded to questions about the new university by saying that it would take into consideration the different background and way of life of the Indians and would "operate within the framework of Indian life." But this did not appease community leaders who were vehemently opposed to the type of segregationist ideology embedded in this new form of ghettoized education intended for a minority community. With implicit distrust and despite assurances from Dr Jooste that Indians would eventually assume leadership roles at UNICOL; another grievance was the fact that the university council and most of the teaching staff were White. The tenor during this time in the history of the university was severe and implicitly noted in the public domain, via comments like "the Indian community totally rejects this proposed university" (M.D. Naicker in *Nationalists under fire from Indians about university college*, 26 January 1960, newspaper title unknown).

The incumbent Rector, Professor S.P. Olivier appealed for a change in attitude by appealing to the cultural identity of the Indian community:

The aim is that he or she will not only be able to remain bedded into the service of his community but also that all of them, with their long tradition of culture behind them, will be able to make their contribution...to the building up of a South Africa which has a very important part to play in the emerging Africa and the world. I trust then that our Indian community will accept this university college as their own... (*Daily News*, 21/11/60).

Although his statement highlights his perspectives of the South African Indian as a separate, culturally rich ‘Other’, he includes the new citizenry as a community that can contribute to the building up of a South Africa.

Within the community, however, there were voices which highlighted the difficulties experienced by students who were attending Natal University during this time and were partial to the establishment of the new university for Indians. The following letter to the editor (Figure 2) expresses the oft-quietened voice of those who wished to acquire “some education rather than none” (Moodley, Interview: 2011):

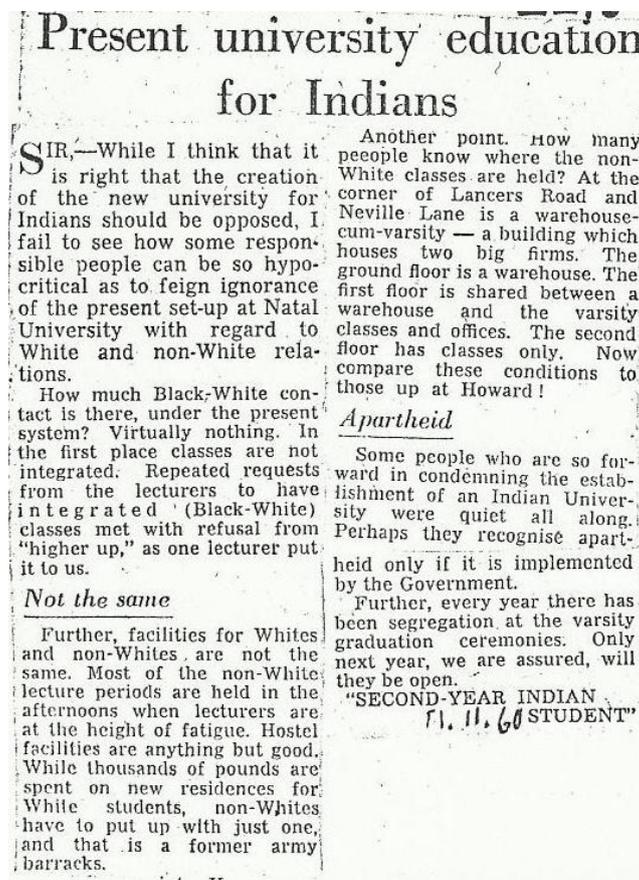


Figure 2: Letter to the Editor, 11 November 1960, Newspaper unknown

However, by 1962, the newspapers reflect a change in attitude towards the University College as can be seen in the following titles of newspaper articles: “*More Staff and Students for Indian College* (Natal Mercury, 20 January 1962); “*Indian College Lecturer*” (Natal Mercury, 23 January 1962); “*Entries At Indian College Tripled*” (Natal Mercury, 14 February

1962) and “*Boycott Off At Indian University*” (*Natal Mercury*, 12 March 1962). While still protesting the ‘idea’ of a separate segregated institution, this sample reflects an acceptance of the university and the response it received from the Indian community in South Africa, given the growing numbers. However, despite such growth after ten years it was still known as “No-Choice” University (*Daily News*, 25 February 1972).

Comments from the Natal Indian Congress and the Natal Indian Organisation at the inception of UNICOL (in Reddy 1991: 2), highlight the historical significance of this Apartheid college:

That this attempt should happen to us on the eve of the centenary of our settlement in this country is adding insult to injury and makes us cry out in anger against the rank injustice upon a people who have given unstintingly of their lives, labour and learning toward the progress and development of their multi-racial country.

Many regarded students at UNICOL as ‘sell-outs’ (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 41) and referred to as “apologists for Nationalism” and “Nationalist slaves.”⁴⁰ Andrew Verster (Interview: 2007), one of the early Fine Art lecturers at UNICOL, remembers the climate of resentment and the attitude of the students at that time:

There was a...resentment among students and understandably so...they’ve been pushed into this bush college and had almost exclusively white lecturers and [it] was actually an awful place in those days because of Prof. Olivier...the rector. A very smooth-talking verkrampte Nationalist. All the wrong views about everything...He had no respect for [the Indians]...he liked tame Indians! Anybody who would tow the line and so on and of course they weren’t respected by the students who saw right through them.

Ironically though, while the Indian students were being ostracised by their community for supporting this ethnic university, so was the rector, who was considered a ‘sell-out’ by many whites, both English- and Afrikaans-speaking, for assisting in the establishment of segregated Indian education (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 41).

While this college marked a phase in the development of young Indian intellectuals in terms of access to improved facilities thereby meeting aspirational aims, it was within a context

⁴⁰ Newspaper unknown, 26 January, 1961, *Nationalists under fire from Indians about University College*.

which the majority of students rejected (Timol, Interview: 2011; Lazarus Charles, Interview: 2011; Patel, Interview: 2011; Govinden, in Moodley & Pather, 2011: 16). As they were not in favour of the College, they accepted it under protest as there was no alternative provided (Greyling 1981: 6; Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 37). As a result, from the early 1960s, a systematic campaign was pursued both locally and abroad to liberate these ethnic universities “from the shackles of ethnicity and separateness” (Reddy, 1991: 3). Further, slogans such as “*Liberation before Education*”, “*People’s Education*”, and “*Intellectual Home of the Left*”, popularized and symbolized the struggle against Apartheid education (Reddy, 1991: 3). Professor J.J.C. Greyling in his installation address as Rector in 1982 commented on this aspect of campus life: “...students will be allowed to study and discuss politics but the practicing of party politics and disruptive activities will not be tolerated” (1982: 9). The Minister of Indian Affairs, Professor O.P.F. Horwood, in his inaugural address as Chancellor of UDW in 1973, highlighted the nature of protest at the university:

...the pursuit of scholarship needs time for calm, unhurried contemplation...as much as it may need challenge, scepticism, and argument. That is why I take such serious exception to the activities of those...who often on the flimsiest and most doubtful pretexts make a fetish of demonstration and protest and thereby disrupt the “even tenor” of the [university]... (1973: no page number)

Prime Minister BJ Vorster present at the same address also made reference to the negative forces at play:

[There are]...insidious forces of negative and destructive ideologies which are out to destroy the university and the society from within and without. The leaders must give guidance and get their priorities right...These forces want the relatively innocuous students to be turned into dangerous and irresponsible revolutionaries. No university can afford to allow other interests but *academic* ones to occupy its teaching, its research, its character and its motivation (1973: no page number).

Varied addresses, much like the above mentioned and slogans, common to most student politics related to the university, highlighted the Indian students’ alienation from the ‘establishment’, their grievances against ‘inferior’, segregated education and lack of freedom of speech (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 162-163). At UDW, as at other universities around the world, the consequences of adopting a position of ‘struggle’ were severe – expulsions, bannings, detentions, teargassing, beatings and the closure of the university were commonplace. The campus thus became inundated with counter intelligence and a security

police presence. For most of its early history, these developments were a central feature of the university's life (Reddy, 1991: 3).

4.9 The University of Durban-Westville (UDW)

As the island campus was always intended as a temporary home, in 1969 The University of Durban-Westville Act⁴¹ converted the university college into a fully-fledged university with powers to conduct all its academic affairs from 1970 (Behr & Macmillan, 1971: 241; Bhana & Pachai, 1979: 422). Soon thereafter, the university moved to a new campus situated in Westville. One of the possible sites for the construction of the new campus was a plot of land on which the Hare Krishna Temple stands today in the Indian township of Chatsworth (Moodley, Interview: 2011). Moodley states that this was identified as a lower income township and as a result it was believed that this could result in the student intake being limited mostly to those who resided in Chatsworth, many of whose residents would be unable to afford the cost of a university education. Hence, of all the possible sites, the Group Areas Council preferred Chiltern Hills as it bordered on several other Indian settlement areas (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 53), such as the middle to upper economic area of the Indian suburb of Reservoir Hills. The campus was situated in the Borough of Westville and was therefore named the University of Durban-Westville (UDW).

The inclusion of the word 'Durban' was as a result of the link the Indian community had with this city and 'Westville' because the Borough of Westville had made available 200 hectares of land for the establishment of the campus (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 32). The transfer of the university took place in February 1972 to a still incomplete new campus (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 53). In 1973, the university was officially opened by then Prime Minister B.J. Vorster and Professor S.P. Olivier was installed as the first Vice-Chancellor of UDW and in 1981, the university fell under the Department of Internal Affairs as a 'state' funded university (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 53).

⁴¹ Less than a decade after the establishment of the ethnic colleges, in 1969, these colleges were granted full university status. These came into operation in 1970 and 1971. The financing was carried out by the Minister of the State concerned, namely Bantu Education, Coloured Affairs and Indian Affairs. This also meant that the regulatory system under UNISA came to an end (Behr & Macmillan, 1971: 241-242).

However, for some time a UDW degree was to some perceived to be inferior. Kanu Sukha, a former student, explains: "...a UNISA qualification would be better recognized than some ethnic university qualification" (Interview: 2009). Many students boycotted their graduation ceremonies as a result of the nature of the institution, reinforcing the perception of UDW as a 'bush college'.⁴² Some students like, Sukha,⁴³ began their Fine Art degree at the University College for Indians while it was subject to UNISA, but left the university in their final year in favour of registration at UNISA as they were aware of the stigma attached to the Indian institution of UDW.⁴⁴ This perceived stigma foregrounds the condition of "otherness" as experienced by the Indian community at many levels.

Despite some negative perceptions, the University of Durban-Westville was unique in that it catered specifically for the Indian minority by offering a wide range of courses on various aspects of Western and Eastern civilization and culture. As a result its curriculae were unlike those of other Universities. It took into account the rich ancient heritage of Indian South Africans and attempted to support the community as it operated in a 'diasporic' locale. In its attempts to develop Eastern disciplines, the University required communication with the external world of research and study. However, political concerns like sanctions and the cultural boycott,⁴⁵ made contact with India and the Middle East very difficult as the Indian Government refused to grant visas to potential visiting lecturers or exchange agreements.

⁴² The location of the Black universities in mainly rural areas, combined with the quality of education and the lack of academic freedom, led to black institutions being referred to as "bush colleges" (Badat, 1999: 73).

⁴³ Kanu Sukha attended the University College for Indians and was midway during his study when the University was granted academic autonomy. As a result of the political climate and the attitude of the students and largely the Indian community, the degree from the new UDW was not favoured. Hence he opted to change institutions midway to ensure that his certificate would not be tagged with UDW. Sukha was interviewed in Cape Town in 2009.

⁴⁴ Prime Minister BJ Vorster made mention of the isolation of South Africa in his address at UDW on the occasion of the official opening of the University buildings and campus: "when one considers the tremendous changes over the globe, it is evident that the relative isolation of South Africa has undergone radical changes...Although we have/ become used to it (being isolated and threatened) over the years, we suddenly find ourselves as the focal point of the world – the only country in which the whole of the outside world seems to be interested..but still one which has not and will not bow to outside interference and outside domination. We, the peoples of South Africa, will continue to do our best for the advancement and harmonious co-existence of our peoples and the...boycotts, threats and the world's anti-South African press will not force us to alter our course" (1973: no page number).

⁴⁵ The Cultural Boycott was conceived as an important aspect of the ANC's strategy for the total isolation of the Apartheid regime. It began in 1961 in when the British Musician Union adopted a policy decision not to perform in South Africa as long as Apartheid exists. This gained currency in all fields of the creative arts including playwrights, actors, producers, scriptwriters, films, and various other cultural activists, who would not permit their work to be viewed before segregated audiences based on colour. The boycott spread from the United

In spite of these politically strained challenges and the sentiments expressed by Vorster and Horwood, some significant scholarship emerged, as did exceptional graduates who were to become key role players in South Africa's new political dispensation. Some of these are: Pravin Gordhan, Minister of Finance; the late Roy Padayachee, Minister of Public Service and Administration; Zac Yacoob, Justice in the Constitutional Court; Strini Moodley, political activist; Karthy Govender, Human Rights lawyer and Professor at UKZN; Saths Cooper, Former Vice Chancellor of UDW and President of the International Union of Psychological Science; Ahmed Bawa, Vice Chancellor of the Durban University of Technology; Ramesh Barathram, Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Cape; Malusi Gigaba, Minister of Public Enterprise; Vusi Gumede, who until recently was the Special Advisor at the Ministry of Public Enterprises; Yunus Carrim, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs; Kumi Naidoo, International Executive Director of Greenpeace; Pregs Govender, ANC MP (1994-2002) and presently Chair of the Independent Panel of Experts reviewing South Africa's Parliament; Mohamed Surty, Deputy Minister of Basic Education; Valli Moosa, former Minister of Constitutional Development (1994-1999) and Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (1999-2004), and Angina Parekh, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Faculty Co-ordination at the University of Johannesburg. From this list it becomes evident that many of the alumni took up employment in varied powerful political and academic spaces. From this fact one could infer the strong political ethos prevalent at UDW and UNICOL during the early years, prior to the changes that took place in the country since 1990.

Thus although the 'ethnic' nature of the university was largely deplored by sections of the very community it was intended to serve, particular departments were well placed to develop meaningful relationships with the Indian community and maintain a distinct oriental curriculum. The inclusion of subjects like Indian Philosophy, Oriental Studies, Islamic Studies, and a variety of Indian languages such as Sanskrit, Urdu, Tamil and Hindi, created an atmosphere which supported the uniqueness of the institution. In this way the university endeavoured to encapsulate Indian-ness, however superficially (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 124).

Kingdom to America where South African productions like, "Ipi Tombe" was closed due to mass demonstrations by anti-Apartheid groups in New York City. In 1981, the Associates Actors and Artists of America, a union with over 240 000 actors, took a unanimous decision that its members should not perform in South Africa (African National Congress website: www.anc.org.za/themes.php?t=Boycotts)

One department that established a strong connection with the community was the Speech and Drama Department which, within its scope of traditional teachings from Greek to modern European theatre, opened up opportunities to include Eastern and Indian theatre, Sanskrit drama, and Classical Indian dance (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 142). The Music Department, although teaching from a totally western bias, included some Indian music history and attempted to offer tuition in the sitar and some Indian string instruments as well.

In the Fine Art Department, the curriculum offered in-depth study of Indian art and architecture as well as studies in Buddhist and Islamic art. In 1970, there were ninety-eight students who had registered as undergraduate Fine Art students and eight as postgraduate students. From 1962 to 1999, one hundred and seventy-nine students graduated from the University of Durban-Westville with degrees in Fine Art, with one hundred and thirty nine of them being Indian. The following section will present an overview of the Fine Art Department, its staff, curriculum and eventual demise.

4.10 The Fine Art Department

4.10.1. Staff

The FAD, like many other university departments, underwent significant transformations during its thirty seven-year lifespan. Given changing headship and staff together with the transformation of the student body, the FAD reflected the varied transformations of the country and its political, cultural and social ethos. The department was initially under the headship of Professor Jack Grossert who remained in that position from 1963⁴⁶ at UNICOL until 1974 at UDW, when sculptor Professor Pierre Volschenk took over until 1986. On his retirement, the department of History of Art, which functioned as an independent department, merged to form the Department of Fine Art and was headed by Professor Thomas Matthews until his tragic death in 1993. Thereafter it was headed by Vedant Nanackchand, who was acting HOD until Professor Pitika Ntuli was appointed in 1995. Ntuli was HOD for two years until he was seconded to the administrative position of Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor from

⁴⁶ From the research undertaken it is evident that Grossert was appointed HOD from 1963. However the FAD was functional from 1962 with the first graduate emerging in 1965. There is therefore an inconsistency with the dates and as a result I can infer that the department functioned with Grossert as interim HOD in 1962 with his appointment being finalised only in 1963.

1996 to 1998. Subsequently, Vukile Ntuli was elected Acting HOD by the staff and remained in that capacity until the closure of the FAD, with the last eight students graduating in 2000.

The number of staff members at UNICOL and UDW was far too numerous to present and capture individually. Some members of staff were part-time and taught for many years, like Jean Powel and Irmgard Frauwallner and some taught a variety of courses, while others were more specialised. Through my interviews with the graduates, I was able to create an approximate time frame reflecting the staffing at the FAD. Many attempts have been made to contact all members of staff and while some were fruitful, leading to contacts like Sarat Maharaj, Andrew Verster, Vedant Nanackchand, Kiren Thathiah, Vukile Ntuli, Carl Roberts, Bronwyn Findlay and Nasan Pather, who provided some insight, other attempts were unsustainable for research purposes. There were failed attempts at interviewing former staff like Jean Powell, Anton Chapman, Patrick O'Connor, Julie Manegold and Erica Clark.

Although these members of staff expressed an interest in the project, numerous attempts at following up on possible meetings were in vain. The following table reflects a chronological representation of staff members, their training, both undergraduate and post-graduate where possible and their teaching at UNICOL and UDW. While it was not always possible to determine exact dates for their employment at the university, I have presented estimates which locate them within a specified period. It must be noted that this list is in no way complete but it is as comprehensive as was possible with the assistance of Grania Ogilvie's *A Dictionary of South African Painters* (1988), graduates and some former members of staff. Names have over the years also been forgotten, as some members of staff were there for a very short period of time and/or the memory of the graduates/staff proved weak in this regard. In addition to this list, there were numerous administrative staff members who have been excluded from this table but who nonetheless played crucial roles in the day-to-day activities of the department. I have included the qualifications of staff only if it was relevant to the field of Fine Art.

	Staff	Courses Taught	Staff Qualification Undergraduate	Staff Qualification Post-graduate	Period at UNICOL/UDW
1	Professor Jack Grossert	HOD, Drawing	University of Natal BA	University of Natal (MA) University of Stellenbosch (PhD)	1963 – 1974
2	Cassim Lakhi	History of Art (became associate Professor in 1974)	University of Natal BA Hons (FA)	University of Natal MA (FA)	1962 – 1980
3	Jean Powell	Textiles and Applied Art	Natal Technical College	University College: London (Diploma in Art And Design)	1969 - 1974
4	Irmgard Frauwallner	Ceramic Design	Unknown	Unknown	1960s – early 1980s
5	Van Coller	unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1960s
6	Andrew Verster	Drawing	Camberwell School of Art, London (National Diploma in Design)	Reading University (Art Teachers Diploma)	1962 - 71
7	Van Tonder	unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1970s
8	Patrick O'Connor	Painting	University of Witwatersrand BA (FA)	Unknown	1964
9	Sarat Maharaj	History of Art	UNICOL, BA (FA)	Reading University, PhD	Late 1960s
10	Kathleen Adler	History of Art	University of the Witwatersrand	Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London	1960s
11	Maurice Kahn	Graphic Art	University of the Witwatersrand, BA (FA)	Transvaal Teachers Higher Diploma	1971 - 1976
12	Professor Pierre Volschenk	HOD, Sculpture	University of South Africa, BA	University of South Africa MA (FA) University of Pretoria, PhD	1975 – 1986

13	Professor Thomas Matthews	HOD, History of Art	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Rhodes University MA (FA) University of South Africa, PhD	1981 – 1993
14	Kalavati Bhika	History of Art	University of Durban-Westville BA (FA)	Unknown	1970s
15	Michael Petit	Painting, Basic Design	University of the Witwatersrand, BA (FA)	University of Witwatersrand, MA (FA)	1973 - 1977
16	Diana Kenton	Painting	University of Natal, BA (FA)	University of Natal	1976
17	Marilyn Martin	History of Art	University of the Witwatersrand	University of Witwatersrand, MA (Architecture)	1974 – 1977
18	Maureen Bradshaw	Painting	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Rhodes University, MA (FA)	1980s – early 1990s
19	Johannes Van Heerden	Painting, Art Appreciation	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Rhodes University, MA (FA)	1978 - 1985
20	Richard Crowe	Painting	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Rhodes University, MA (FA)	1980s
21	Gerrie Nel	Jewellery	University of Stellenbosch, BA (FA)	University of Durban-Westville MA	Early 1980s - 1987
22	Carol Beresford	Sculpture, Art Theory	University of Stellenbosch, BA (FA)	Unknown	1985 - 1987
23	Graham Lang	Sculpture, Theory of Art	Natal Technikon (FA)	Rhodes University MA (FA)	1988 - 1989
24	Penny Leyland	Painting, Drawing	Unknown	Unknown	1980s
25	Daryl Nero	Painting	University of Natal, BA (FA)	Croydon College of Art, London	1977 – 1980
26	Ashley Ward	Painting, Drawing	University of Durban-Westville, BA (FA)	Pratt Institute, New York, MA (FA)	Late 1990 – 1994
27	Francis Verstrate	History of Art	Unknown	University of Durban-Westville, MA	1980s
28	Erica Clark	History of Art	University of Natal, BA	University of Natal, MA (History of Art)	1987 – 2002
29	Vedant Nanackchand	Printmaking, Theory of Art, Acting HOD	University of Durban-Westville, BA (FA)	Art and Design, Middlesex Polytechnic, London	From the 1980s to closure 1994 – 1995

30	Anton Chapman	Painting	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Rhodes University, MA (FA)	1988 – 1990
31	Shamin Parthab	Jewellery Design	University of Durban- Westville	Unknown	Late 1980s – early 1990s
32	Carl Roberts	Sculpture	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Rhodes University, MA (FA)	1990 – 1995
33	Gabriel Mazibuko	Sculpture	University of Durban- Westville	Unknown	1996 – 1997
34	Ben Nsusha	Sculpture	Chelsea School of Art, University of London BA (Hons-Sculpture)	Unknown	1997 – 2000
35	Isabel van der Watt Moodliar	Painting, Drawing	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Unknown	1989 – early 1990s
36	Julie Manegold	Painting, Drawing,	Rhodes University, BA (FA)	Rhodes University, MA (FA); Art Psychotherapy, Goldsmith College, London	1989 – 2000
37	Janet Van Graan	Painting, Drawing	University of Cape Town, BA (FA)	University of Cape Town, MA (FA)	Late 1990s
38	Liz Loubser	Jewellery Design	University of Stellenbosch, BA (FA)	None	Late 1989- 1991
39	Kiren Thathiah	History of Art	University of Durban- Westville BA (FA)	University of Durban- Westville, MA (FA)	1991 – 1997
40	Vukile Ntuli	Painting Acting HOD	University of Fort Hare, BA (FA)	Royal College of Art	1992 – 2000 1998 -2000
41	Lalitha Jawahirilal	Painting	Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts BA (FA)	Royal College of Art MA (FA)	1995 – 1997
42	Sabine Marschall	History of Art	Eberhard-Karls- Universität (Tübingen), BA	Eberhard-Karls- Universität (Tübingen), MA and PhD	1995 – 2000
43	Nasan Pather	History of Art	University of Durban- Westville, BA	University of the Witwatersrand	1990s
44	Karl Koperski	History of Art	University of Cape Town, BA	University of Cape Town, MA	1990s
45	Nalini Moodley	History of Art	University of Durban- Westville, BA (FA)	University of Durban- Westville, MA (History of Art)	1992, 1994- 1997
46	Reshma Maharaj	Jewellery Design	University of Durban- Westville	University of Durban- Westville, Higher Diploma in Education	Late 1990s

47	Bronwyn Findlay	Painting	University of Natal, BA (FA)	University of Natal, MA (FA)	1992 to 2000
48	Pitika Ntuli	HOD	Nazarene College, Teachers Certificate, University of Botswana	PRATT Institute in New York, MA (FA)	1996 – 1997

Table 1: Representation of staff at FAD

As evident in Table 1, the FAD had over the years employed a large number of staff. It can be established that they have had a significant impact on their students but this will be almost impossible to quantify. Nonetheless where this is evident in the analysis in Chapter Seven, I have made relevant comments.

4.10.2. Programme

For the first ten years the university was managed by UNISA which determined the course and the content, as well as overseeing the examinations. In terms of Act 45 of 1959, UNISA was made the guardian of the ‘tribal’ colleges until they gained independence. UNISA also played a significant role in the governing of the institution, supervised their academic life, helped to staff them and conferred its degrees (Boucher, 1973:331). From the UNISA calendars up to and including 1969 it can be determined that the Fine Art degree syllabus comprised the following: at first year level Painting I or Sculpture I, Design I, Anatomy and History of Art; at second year Painting II or Sculpture II or Design II, Drawing from life II and Graphic art I and History of Art II; at third year Painting III or Sculpture III or Design III, Drawing from life II, Graphic art II and History of Art III; the fourth year of study included Sculpture IV or Design IV and History of Art IV.

From the syllabus as presented in UDW’s calendars between 1971 and 1999, I have summarised the following programme which reflects a slight shift which includes Art Appreciation, a generic introductory course in the study of art. From 1971 to 1979, the programme included Anatomy (a one year course focused on simple skeletal anatomy); Art Appreciation and Introduction to Art (a one year course focused on an introduction of the history and appreciation of the visual arts); Art (a progressive course which began in first

year with an introduction to drawing, painting, design, and life drawing, continued in second year with a focus on painting and life drawing or basic design and life drawing, and finally in third year allowed for specialisation in Painting or Design;⁴⁷ Drawing (a one year course which focused on observation drawing); Drawing from Life (included drawing from human figures as well as developing figure compositions); Painting (a progressive study which began with introduction to various painting media and developed into advanced compositional studies); Graphic Art (included cutting and printing of graphic art compositions in lino and wood and the execution of pamphlets, brochures and posters).

The programme in the 1980s reflects a shift towards streamlining the subjects in order to consolidate the Fine Art programme. In this regard the first year of study included Art Appreciation, Two Dimensional Design, Three Dimensional Design, Introductory Painting and one ancillary subject which could include a language or philosophy. The second year of study constituted a continuation of the ancillaries, History of Art 1, Drawing from Life 1, and two of the following: Painting, Printmaking, Ceramic Design, Sculpture and Jewellery Design. Third year was a continuation of the two selected areas of specialisation, Drawing From Life 2 and History of Art 2. Fourth year focused on three subjects, namely, History of Art 3 and the two areas of specialisation.

From 1988, the programme was once again revised under the headship of Professor Thomas Matthews and the department was renamed the Department of Fine Art and History of Art. The first year programme included Basic Art, Object Drawing, Theory of Art 1, History of Art 1 and one ancillary. Second year continued with Drawing from Life 1, Theory of Art 2, History of Art 2, one area of specialisation⁴⁸ e.g. Printmaking 1 and an ancillary. Third year subjects were Theory of Art 3, History of Art 3, Drawing from Life 2 and the area of specialisation e.g. Printmaking 2. Final year focused on two subjects namely, History of Art 4 and the area of specialisation e.g. Printmaking 3. In 1988, with the introduction of History of Art 1 at first level, the student was now offered the opportunity to register for a Masters in

⁴⁷ Design included basic design exercises in form, black and white design, colour composition, repeat patterning, lettering and applied design in one craft. In second year this course focused on design in two dimensions and construction in three dimension including wood, metal and scrap. At third year level design applied to two crafts such as fabric printing, mosaic, stained glass, pottery and weaving. At fourth year, this was carried out in one selected craft.

⁴⁸ Area of specialisation was a choice of Printmaking, Painting, Sculpture or Jewellery Design.

History of Art upon completion of the B.A. Fine Art degree, which in effect offered them an Honours qualification in History of Art 4.

The 1990s witnessed slight shifts in the programme with only one major change: the phasing out of the Jewellery Design course due to declining numbers and the increasing costs involved in maintaining the subject. Since then, however, the programme remained unchanged until the late 1990s when it came under the School of Performing and Fine Art Studies. The content of the course though remained as is until the department's closure in 1999.

The programme at UNICOL was that which was offered by UNISA which, as already mentioned, also conferred the degrees. At the time of his appointment as HOD of the newly-established Fine Art Department, Professor Jack Grossert was a well-respected educationist, academic and painter. Initially an art teacher (1935-1948), he later took up a part-time lecturing position in the Art Department at the Natal Technical College. Subsequently, in 1948 he founded the Ndaleni Art Centre in KwaZulu-Natal, from 1948 to 1952 was organiser of the Arts and Crafts African schools in Natal, from 1952- 1962 he was inspector of Art and Crafts for African schools and colleges in Pretoria, and from 1963 to 1974, was Head and Professor of Fine Art at UNICOL and UDW (www.sahistory.org).

His doctoral study titled *A Critical Review of the Development of Art and Crafts Education in Bantu Schools in Natal with particular reference to the period 1948 – 1962* (1969) reveals his extensive association with Bantu⁴⁹ arts and crafts education and his hypothesis that this aspect of creativity is fundamentally linked to the culture of this sector of society. This study further presents a historical review of the stages by which arts and crafts acquired status as subjects in Bantu schools. His research foregrounded the art education received by Bantu children while also focusing on specialist training in this subject at teacher training colleges for Africans. Further in his thesis he makes a claim for the value of art training responsible for cultivating constructive thinking (1969: 13) as well as the intrinsic value of using traditional aspects of one's own culture as a fundamental teaching tool. He also expresses a

⁴⁹ Grossert used the term 'Bantu' as a reference to the indigenous people of the KwaZulu Natal. This term was popularised since the terms 'kaffir' and later 'native' were abandoned as they had objectionable implications. With the establishments of the Departments of Bantu Education and Bantu Administration in 1954 the term 'Bantu' became commonly used.

philosophy of education which postulates the necessity of making the subjects in the curriculum a means whereby the personal becomes a significant participant in the learning process. He suggests that the personal circumstance of the learner, in this case the Bantu learner, be taken into consideration in the system of education, rather than applying a foreign European or North American design (1969: 695-696) to local environments. It can be inferred from this philosophy of education that these similar concerns filtered through into his headship at UNICOL. The inclusion of the Indian aspects of art history were perhaps due in part to his influence of providing a contextualised form of learning which he believed made the art education not only more inclusive but relevant. While he did receive a academic modernist training under Professor O.J.P. Oxley at the University of Natal, his experience and research into Bantu arts and crafts seemingly allowed him to create a personal imprint on UNICOL whilst still following the UNISA curriculum. Further from his vast experience as an educationist and his extensive development of visual art within Black communities, it can be deduced that he was at that stage the most suitable candidate to develop the FAD at UNICOL.

Alongside Professor Grossert, the History of Art Department was managed by Professor Cassim Lahki who joined UNICOL after he was approached by Professor Olivier to teach in the Faculty of Commerce. He, however, preferred rather to lecture in the Department of History of Art where he remained from 1963 until his early retirement in 1980 (Dangor, 1999: no page number). The subject of Indian and Islamic art was a personal passion for him and its introduction into the syllabus at UNICOL, with Professor Grossert's support and encouragement, was significant for future developments and study at UDW. This field of study later became one of the distinguishing aspects of the B.A.F.A. at UDW. Professor Lakhi is also acknowledged for building the History of Art section of the library into a highly respected collection particularly on Islamic Art and Architecture and Arabic Calligraphy (*The Column*, Vol.4. No.2. 1980: no page number). Upon his retirement, *The Column* also commended him for his assistance in establishing the departments of Arabic, Urdu and Persian, Islamic Studies and Oriental Studies.

When Grossert retired in 1974, Professor Pierre Volschenk headed the department, a position he retained until 1986. During this time, students received similar training to that offered at UNICOL, with a shift in the curriculum being noted. This included Graphic Art, which featured strongly under the management of Grossert, being replaced by a more

comprehensive course in Printmaking taught by Vedant Nanackchand. Art Appreciation was also replaced by Theory of Art, with the painting and drawing syllabi remaining unchanged.

Circa 1978, a new course in Jewellery Design was introduced by Gerrie Nel, and subsequently taught by Sharmin Parthab, Liz Loubser and Reshma Maharaj. When Nel left the university in 1987 he went on to pursue a business venture in Stellenbosch. In this endeavour, he drew on the skills of two of his students who excelled in their study. Jasmin Ibrahim and Parween Jhetam distinguished themselves when Ibrahim won first prize in a Jewellery Design Council Competition and Jhetam won third prize in a competition sponsored by Intergold (*Varsity Voice*,⁵⁰ November, 1987: 19).

Finally, by the mid 1980s, Ceramics was eliminated, with Sculpture being the only three dimensional study offered. Once Volschenk left, Carol Beresford took responsibility for the sculpture department for 18 months between 1986 and 1987, after which Graham Lang took over until 1990. Upon Lang's emigration to Australia, Carl Roberts assumed responsibility for the department until 1995. Thereafter, Gabriel Mazibuko, a UDW graduate, taught sculpture until the closure of the department.

In 1986, with the retirement of Volschenk, Professor Thomas Matthews, the HOD of the History of Art Department, who had joined UDW in 1983 (*The Column*⁵¹ Vol. 7 No.2:10), was appointed HOD. Subsequently, as already mentioned, these departments merged to form the Department of Fine Art and History of Art, which led to changes in students' perceptions of the FAD (as discussed in Chapter Six). Although the department underwent a change of name, for continuity in this study I will maintain my reference to it as the FAD.

In the late 1980s, Professor Matthews taught extensive courses on Indian and Islamic Art and Architecture and with his growing interest in the field of Indian temples in South Africa, students were exposed to wide-ranging studies of local temple sculpture, painting and architecture. While Professor Lahki focused on Islamic Calligraphy and some Indian temple architecture, Professor Matthews presented a wide ranging scope of the subcontinent's art

⁵⁰ *The Varsity Voice* was a university news publication which was widely read by both staff and students.

⁵¹ *The Column* was a university publication published by the Public Relations Department at the University of Durban-Westville.

history, including Buddhist discourse (Govender, Interview: 2011). As a student of the late Professor Matthews, my own recollections of the syllabus highlight a broad scope, from the Indus Valley Civilisation to Mughal Art and Rajput painting to the Modern Indian masters like M.F. Hussain, Nalini Malani and Raja Ravi Varma. This course was further enriched by the subsequent teachings of Kiren Thathiah, who had completed his Masters degree focusing on the relationship between traditional Indian aesthetics and Modern Indian painters in his thesis titled *Traditional Indian Aesthetics and Modern Indian Painting: A Correlation* (1989).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a great many new members of staff joined the FAD. It is noteworthy that Isabel van der Watt, Julie Manegold, Carl Roberts, Anton Chapman and Graham Lang had all acquired undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications from Rhodes University and that some people already on the staff, such as Maureen Bradshaw and Thomas Matthews, were also graduates of that university. Although the profusion of Rhodes graduates as teaching staff at UDW is an unusual and an interesting phenomenon, probably due to Matthews' training there, its analysis is not the focus of this study.

Much later, in 1998, Vukile Ntuli (Interview: 2012) introduced an Arts Management course which was an attempt at diversifying the Fine Art course towards making it more viable. The intention was to train students to work in galleries, studios and in the public art sector, equipping them with necessary skills to solicit finance for their projects and manage those resources in bringing a project to an end. Unfortunately, with the dwindling students numbers and imminent closure, the fruits of this endeavour are difficult to quantify.

4.10.3. Location and Representation

It has already been established that UNICOL was a temporary site for the university and as such was a former naval barracks. The physical structure of the FAD at UNICOL (Figure 3) was fair and although cramped offered students the necessary access to studio space to continue with their creative explorations.



Figure 3: Exterior view of the FAD at Salisbury Island. Image courtesy of Herselene Lazarus Charles 2010

UDW was a far more impressive campus set on a sprawling hilltop and with far more appropriate teaching facilities. However, it is important to note that the uniqueness of this university was further entrenched with the establishment of both a mosque and temple on the campus.

The new campus known as the University of Durban-Westville and its new Fine Art Department (see Figure 4) was striking. Situated in N Block, the department comprised six large, well-fitted studios which catered for Printmaking, First year practice, Figure Drawing, Painting, Sculpture and Jewellery Design (Figure 5). In addition, the department also had its own lecture theatre for Art Theory and social gatherings, a darkroom, and two courtyard gardens. When I was a student, it housed a small shop which catered for the material requirements of the students with a small array of materials, from cartridge paper to brushes and pencils and a sample of paints.

In neighbouring L Block, commonly referred to as the Tower Block, students would attend History of Art lectures in L24. Next door to L24 was situated the university's Gallery (Figure 6) managed by Collin Sabapathy, who was Curator from 1988 until 1997 when he was retrenched. The FAD had a small collection of works presumably belonging to the university.

According to an article in *The Column* the university had, by 1979, a sizeable collection of approximately 50 works most of which were donated to the FAD's collection. This collection included works from Raymond Andrews, Kevin Atkinson, Walter Battiss, Gregoire Boonzaier, Bettie Cilliers-Barnard, Mauric Kahn, Scully, Helmut Starke, Uranovsky, Gunther van der Reis, Nico Verboom and Anna Voster (*The Column*, Vol.3. No.3. November 1979: 61). Later the collection included works of some students and staff including a painting by Professor Matthews (Sabapathy, Interview: 2011).

The gallery was thus a significant site for students to exhibit their work and for the FAD to create a presence on the campus. As a result it was frequently used for student exhibitions as well as by outsider organisations and artists.

Student exhibitions were an annual occurrence as is common practice at most universities. These are end of year displays of work produced generally by the final year students. However, it is worth noting that from 1965 to 1979 there is no evidence to show that students exhibited annually. Yet from 1979 onwards there are almost continuous annual shows in the department and then at the gallery with additional exhibitions being hosted outside campus at private galleries like the (then) NSA in Overport. One of the reasons for the shift could lie in the active leadership of the department and thereafter in the availability of competitions for participation. One of the larger undergraduate exhibitions was held at Studio 104 in August 1983 where 120 paintings and drawings were displayed (*The Column*, Vol.7.No.2. 1983: 4). Later in late 1980s and subsequently in the 1990s with the availability of competitions students often participated in the Rolfes Exhibition, the Swan Young Artists Exhibition and the Standard Bank Drawing Competition. These exhibition opportunities both on and off campus were critical to determine the development of the department. At such a student exhibition Professor Matthews (*Varsity Voice*, November: 1990) remarked that the

...exhibition adequately reflected the department's intention to give students a sound academic training, where the eye is taught to see and the hand to record accurately what is seen. We aim to address the formal issues and to reach a certain standard of professionalism.

This highlights a level of determination in developing a department with a high standard of productivity and professionalism. This aspiration for success, as evidenced in Matthews'

comments was emulated by the students who in the 1990s participated in exhibitions as the country's political tide began to turn.

However, since the closure of the FAD, the aforementioned collection of the gallery is untraceable. Perhaps this aspect would prove to be a worthwhile area for future investigative study.

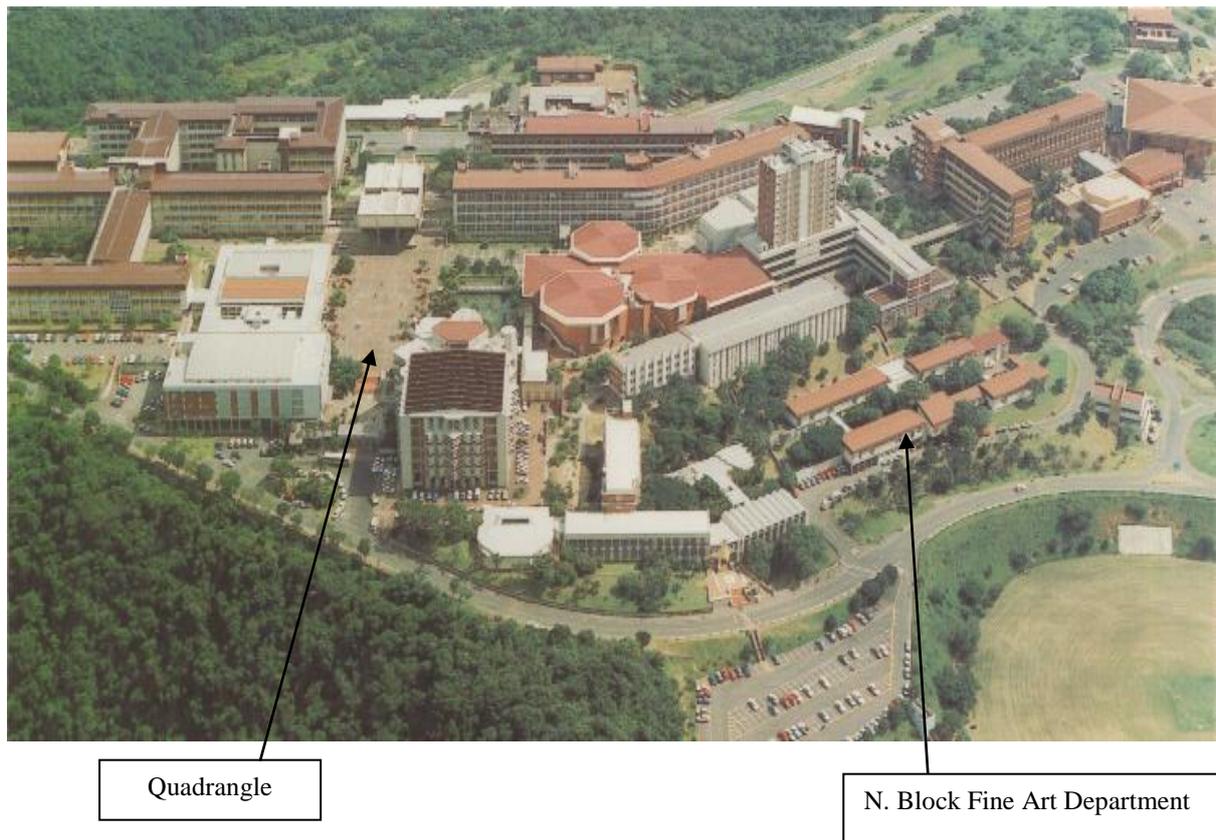


Figure 4: Aerial View of UDW (free internet)

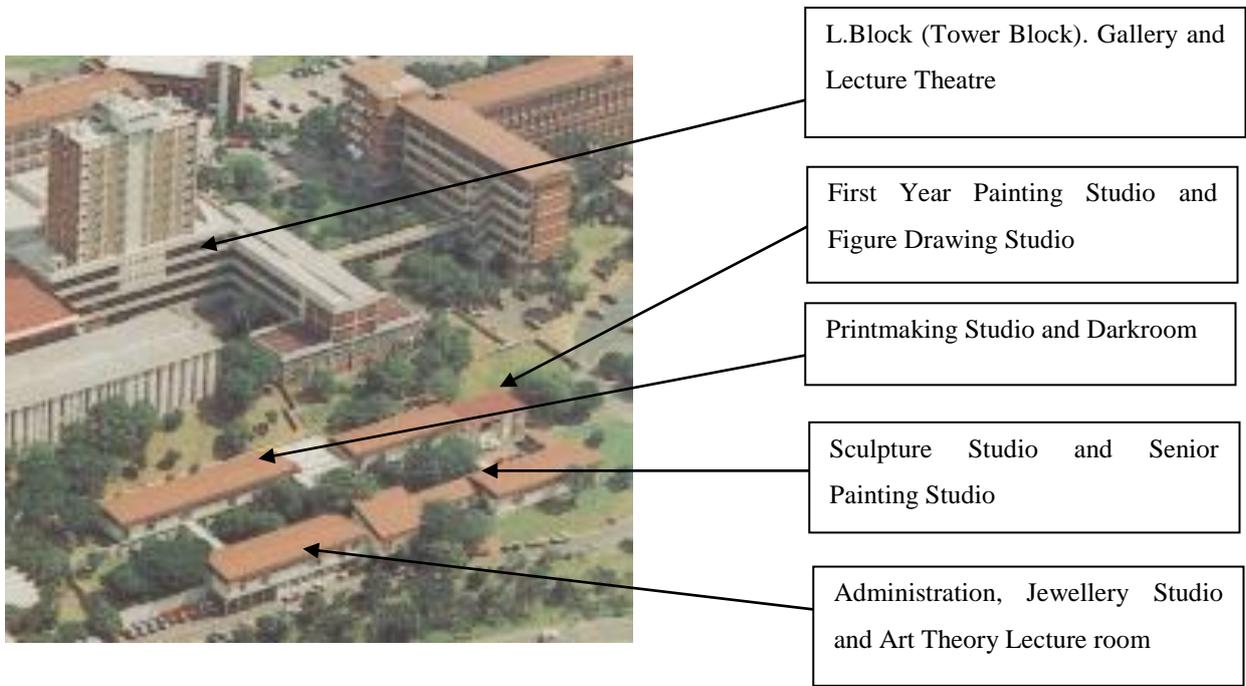


Figure 5: N. Block - Fine Art Department



Figure 6: UDW's Gallery (Image courtesy of Colin Sabapathy)

4.10.4. Community engagement

Apart from designing a curriculum with an Asian slant ostensibly to appease the impervious Indian community, the university later also embarked on community outreach programmes which were envisaged to realise more interaction between the University and the community. One such plan was a series of liaison committees which were being established throughout the country between the university and the broader Indian community. According to Professor Greyling, the Vice-Chancellor in 1982, as explained in *The Column* (Vol.6. No.2 November 1982), the university's overall objective in encouraging the formation of liaison committees was to promote harmony between the community and the university. It envisaged that each committee would represent the interests of the people in its area and channel all complaints, recommendations and suggestions to the university. The committees would act as information sites for the receipt and dissemination of information in the hope that this would strengthen the bond between the university and the community. As the first of its kind in South Africa, the university made an effort to ensure valid communication with the various communities it serves. The implications were far reaching but fundamentally concerned with the acceptance of the university.

In the 1990s, both staff and students from the FAD were also actively involved in community outreach programmes. These were mainly mural paintings produced in the Ladysmith area north of Durban and in some hospitals around Durban.

4.10.5. Closure

In the 1990s, UDW shifted direction from an institution with “an underbelly of dissent and rebellion” (Butler-Adam, Interview: 2011) to being an institution that advocated change. From the late 1980s, the university opened its doors to all race groups which created a shift in UDW's market. The university went from all Indian to a mixed race institution very quickly. Students now had choice and while many African students came to UDW, many Indian students went to the University of Natal. The financial aid scheme of the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)⁵² made tertiary education accessible to all qualifying

⁵² NSFAS is a loan and bursary scheme funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training for those who do not have the financial means to fund their studies and / or cannot access bank funding, study loans or bursaries (South African Government Services).

students and as a result, departments which traditionally serviced the needs of Indian students were now threatened with dropping student numbers. Further, as Trish Gibbon (Interview: 2011), English lecturer at UDW and involved in the restructuring processes of the university recalls, from 1994 the ‘student market’ changed with students wanting to acquire degrees which would have ensured immediate employment prospects. As a result, various departments were under pressure to become more viable or face closure. Thus UDW came under significant financial pressure further compounded by the rapid appointment changes in rectorship.

This placed a considerable pressure on the FAD, the Drama department and the Music Department. As is often the case the creative arts are expensive departments to run and almost always have fewer students, thus making their financial viability precarious. Along with other departments like Indian languages, the financial pressure of dwindling student numbers was detrimental to their sustainability and they were forced to close. The reasons for the closure of these departments are explained by various key role players at UDW during this time. In the late 1990s, under the rectorship of Mapule Ramashala, and in a short period of time the university found itself in a financial crisis. Gibbon (Interview: 2011) further explains that it was at this time that departments had to show their financial viability which was never a concern before. According to Vukile Ntuli (Interview: 2012) and Vedant Nanackchand (Interview: 2010) the reasons cited were financial, as the department was unable to generate funds and was too expensive to maintain. It was draining finances from the rest of the more viable departments and proving to be a liability to the university. Jonathan Jansen, Head of the Department of Education at the time categorically explains it as “... just financial. Just based on more staff than students...” (Interview: 2011).

This discussion on the Fine Art Department and its closure is included here to contextualise the circumstance from which the graduates presented in this study have emerged: the staff, curriculum and site at which they acquired their degree are crucial elements in attempting to situate their art production and their seeming invisibility in the art world today.

4.11 The Political Ethos at the University

The 1960s, the first decade of UNICOL, was politically a relatively quiet decade for a number of reasons. Worden (2000) suggests that this quietude was attributed to the banning of resistance organisations like the PAC and the ANC, increased police powers of detention

and heightened state control over publications and broadcasting. Furthermore, ongoing forced removals weakened potential urban resistance, and the Bantustans provided an outlet for any frustrations. For most Blacks, however, it was regarded as a period of intensified exploitation, vigorous social control, demoralisation and fear (Badat, 1999: 77). Under these conditions, it was almost impossible for any political organisation to engage with or challenge the state.

In spite of this atmosphere of fear and sullen compliance, the late 1960s and early 1970s in South Africa brought with it the emergence of widespread strike action together with demonstrations. Institutions of higher education and secondary schools as well as unrest in education throughout the western world, signalled a revival of opposition after almost a decade of relative silence. Developments in Southern Africa in 1975, like the successes of Frelimo in Mozambique, the defeat of Portuguese colonialism, the ongoing engagements between the invading South African forces in Angola and military support by Cubans (1974), and the collapse of White rule in Zimbabwe (1979), all proved that greater opportunities for guerrilla action could emerge. These successes contributed to the militancy and assertiveness of Black students throughout the country. Thus when the decree came that Afrikaans will be the language of instruction for some school subjects, the students were ready to take action resulting in June 16th 1976 being a landmark in South African politics (Worden 2000: 130-132; Reddy, 2000: 10-12).

Subsequent events took the form of student protest marches, police shootings, countrywide student boycotts and stayaways. The state police responded with shootings, mass arrests, detentions, and the banning of individuals and numerous organisations. The Black, ethnic universities were not intended to create dissidents as they were under the strict control of the Afrikaner nationalists. But they did. Badat (1999: 77-77) highlights this surprising challenge from the higher educational institutions:

They [Black universities] had been charged with the responsibility of intellectually and politically winning students to the separate development project and generating the administrative corps for the purpose of the strict ideological control of the black institution, their domination by Afrikaner nationalists and the repressive controls on students.

In the 1960s, the powerful new ideology of Black Consciousness emerged. Originated amongst university students in Natal, this development eventually morphed into the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) under the presidency of Bantu Steve Biko, a student

at the segregated medical school at the University of Natal. Biko believed that Blacks needed to acquire a social identity of their own, as evidenced in his assertion that “what Black Consciousness seeks to do is to produce...real black people who do not regard themselves as appendages to white society” (1978: 51). This radical conscientisation soon permeated the University of Durban-Westville as well. Close contact between Biko and the students at UNICOL, like Sarat Maharaj⁵³ (Interview: 2009) and Sherene Timol (Interview: 2011), resulted in the advancement of the struggle as Biko’s reference to ‘Black’ was more one of attitude than based on particular ethnicity.

The climate of revolt in the 1960s resulted in fomenting dissent among the student population at UNICOL, increasing in momentum when the University moved to the Westville campus in 1971. Police harassment of Black Consciousness leaders increased on campuses nationwide, culminating in the arrest, torture and murder of Steve Biko while in police custody in 1977 (Worden, 2000: 133). While the influence and impact of Black Consciousness influenced many teachers and students across the country, the impact thereof is not the focus of this dissertation.

The 1980s was also a decade marked by the increased feasibility of the demise of the Apartheid state. Professor Olivier, in the university publication *The Column* (Vol. 4. No.2. December 1980: 12), also acknowledged the crisis in the country and the consequent crisis on campus when he said that “...1980 was a traumatic year, with drawn-out demonstrations, intimidation, victimisation and subsequent violence on the part of some students which led to the police eventually having to be called in.”

In 1981, when the university celebrated 21 years, Professor Olivier retired and *The Column* acknowledged his contribution to tertiary education and the upliftment of the Indian community. The university had started with a staff of fifteen in 1961, and twenty-one years later had a staff of more than eight hundred. Departments had increased from less than twenty to more than seventy; faculties grew from two to eight; student numbers increased from one hundred and fourteen to approximately five thousand (*The Column*. Vol.5. No.1. December

⁵³ Sarat Maharaj is a graduate from the UDW and is presently a Professor at Goldsmiths College in the United Kingdom.

1981), and by then six thousand degrees and diplomas had been awarded to Indian South Africans.

In accounts of political opposition to Apartheid during the late 1970s and 1980s, the campaigns of students in higher education, their militancy and their role as catalysts and detonators of anti-Apartheid political struggles have been well documented and acknowledged (Badat, 1999: 1).

4.12 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented the overarching strategy of the South African government which ultimately led to the establishment of a university for Indians. It discussed the various strategies which had significantly and directly affected the Indian population, and highlighted the various ways in which that community mediated its difference and position of alienation, which subsequently led to assimilation into the South African society. The university was also presented as a site ripe for not only academic engagement but political and social engagement as well, which in due course led to the economic mobility and ensuing stability of the Indian community.

An overview of the FAD was provided in order to create a context for the production of art by the graduates. The staff, department structure as well as the political ethos of the university was presented to highlight the significant growth and eventual demise of the FAD.

The next chapter will consider some of the issues regarding identity, with particular reference to those South African artists of Indian origin who graduated from the Indian universities of UNICOL and UDW.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

5.1 Introduction: South African Indian, Indian South African

Identity is attached to and affected by shifts in space and place, where the definition and the essence of the concept are “continually being explored, examined and experienced by people” (Goldschmidt, 2003: 205) in various expressions located in the social and cultural spheres of society. This is particularly relevant to South African society which like any other society, is constructed through membership⁵⁴ and attached to heritage, language and religion. These in turn are further evident in South African culture and politics.

The South African Indian has been confined to the race lexicon of the South African population, resulting in dislocation and relative isolation from other allocated identities. The racial/ethnic/colour divide functioned in relation to White self-definition as a binaristic ‘otherness’ identified by post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1994: 64). Bhabha suggests that the very identification of these differences acknowledges the colonizer’s “invitation to identity” – who you are is who he (the colonizer) says you are (1994: 64). This has had considerable implications for the Indians in South Africa, as the Indian community became increasingly homogenised in fulfilling colonial and Apartheid expectations.

Homogeneity had implications for Indian graduates who realised these expectations as based on the specificities attached to being Indian. Work presented to galleries by Indian graduates like Charles Moodley (Interview: 2011), Anesh Singh (Interview: 2011), Sajida Sabjee (Interview: 2009) and Rufus Latchmigadu (Interview: 2009), was expected to reflect their Indian-ness almost as a static and identifiable form that all Indians naturally manifest and adhere to. The homogeneity of the community emerged soon after the arrival of the indentured Indians when, as a diverse population group representative of numerous castes and cultural divisions, they were summarily referred to as either Madrassi or Calcuttie, which reflected their port of departure (Vally, 2001: 122). Such was the beginning of the homogenous identity attached to Indians in contemporary South Africa. Such labelling failed to include the impact cross-culturalism or modernity would have had

⁵⁴ Membership to groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, language, religion, and so on creates institutions with boundaries for the located identity to manifest (Goldschmidt, 2008: 205).

on the community. Further, the Indian South African could conceivably therefore constantly reproduce an identity which assumes the role of that pre-given identity, further fulfilling the expectations of the colonial centre.

In Apartheid South Africa, Vally (2001: 79) argues, the need for communities to differentiate themselves from each other arose not only from imposed racial differentiation, but also from a need to assert their specific identity. This was prompted by the need to align culture, society and politics to provide access to specific rights assigned to that particular group and thereby to pose a collective challenge to the state that denied them their rights (During, 2005: 152). Such a position prevails even in present post-Apartheid South Africa: the struggle for Indian identity occurs within a troubled pluralistic society where communities need to locate themselves and assert their difference and visibility. New legislation like the affirmative action policy, employment equity and Black economic empowerment are means of redefining and rectifying the economic imbalances of the past. Black economic empowerment for example is a tool to help bridge the economic gap between the Black and White communities in South Africa and to realise a degree of equality. The need for these policies foregrounds the instability of identity in South Africa as a post-Apartheid country.

The impact of politics on the construction of Indian identity is pivotal to this study as both UNICOL and UDW became increasingly politicised sites of learning. The following section situates the trajectory of the shifting political identity of the Indian community in South Africa.

5.2 Demystifying a Labelled Identity

Prior to 1994, identity was largely based on ethnicity and race in South Africa with narrow parameters imposed by government, thereby exposing peoples to preconceived notions of self-identification determined by race. As a result of the Group Areas Act, Indians lived in “Indian communities surrounded by temples, mosques, all-Indian schools, an Indian-only university and generally interacted with Indians in most aspects of their lives” (Vahed, 2010: 621). The institutionalised sense of identity ensured that South Africans were always able to define themselves through various designated identity strata (Vally, 2001: 79). However, after 1994, despite many utopian ideals of nation building and inclusivity, the

former racially determined labels of Black, White, Indian and Coloured were retained, ostensibly still needed for statistical reasons.

Wilmot James and Jeffery Lever in their article *The Second Republic: Race, Inequality, and Democracy in South Africa* (in Hamilton et al., 2001: 32-33) foreground the rationale necessitating racial classification in post-Apartheid South Africa. They claim that while it was envisaged that all South African citizens would cease to have a racial category, pressing political realities could not altogether ignore the group contours of South African society. As a result, the transition to democracy has not led to the complete eradication of the need to name and classify (James & Lever in Hamilton et al., 2001: 32-33). As racial categorisation persists in the present, such labels are further entrenched and are difficult to suppress. For sociologist Ashwin Desai (1996: 114), the prevailing ideology which “pretends non-racialism, actually reinforces separateness”, resulting in ‘ethnic’ separateness located in racial labels. These signifiers therefore also ensure that skin colour is *still* retained as a marker of status and/or value in society.

Mario Pissara, editor of *Third Text* (2010: editorial), poses some interesting questions on issues of labelling at this point in South Africa’s history. He says that retaining four problematic racial categories as primary indicators of identity has consequences for the future. A whole new generation never subjected to the Population Registration Act, is now being asked to tick boxes: African, Indian, Coloured, and White. Since many of these young people come from families and communities that have themselves accepted these identities, there is thus little probability of ever erasing them.

The term “Indian” in South Africa was and still is associated with the category of non-White – which is why some Indians prefer the term *Black*. This afforded them the opportunity to identify with the majority of the disenfranchised population. For some, the term *Indian* is an attempt to highlight difference and otherness within the larger Black group and meant *not White*, but also not *African* or *Coloured* (Govinden, 2008: 60). Hence, artists like Avitha Sooful, Judy Ramgolam and Ujala Sewpersad classify themselves as *Black*. During the Apartheid era, while still students at UDW’s Fine Art Department, they were political activists subscribing to the ideological associations of *Black identity* that included

Black (Africans), Coloured and Indian people, which is now the official position in the new democracy. Ramgolam (Interview: 2009) explains her position in the extract below:

I didn't classify myself as Indian. I wasn't brought up in an ethnic Indian home...I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing. I was a Christian brought up in a Eurocentric tradition. Brought up to believe to be Indian was not very good...the whole Christian mindset from a colonial missionary point of view. The first time I learnt about Hinduism was when I did Indian art. So I therefore don't have a strong ethnic [Indian] background...I didn't subscribe to an Indian notion...because of my involvement with AZAPO and because I didn't see myself as Indian. I was Black and if I said I was Indian I would always put in inverted commas...'cause we considered ourselves Black from an ideological perspective.

While Ramgolam positions her identity outside the category *Indian*, many writers explore the assumption of what the term *Indian* denotes. Anthony Appiah (in Back & Solomos, 2009: 670) argues that once the racial label is applied to a people, ideas about what it refers to, ideas that may be much less consensual than the application of the label, come to have a number of social effects, as evidenced in Ramgolam's explanation. Appiah explains that these labels have not only social effects but psychological ones as well, which shape the way people conceive of themselves and their identification.

As a result, Indian 'identification' is often called into question even by the very community to which it is attached. Over time and as this community succumbed to the powerful hegemonic force of colonialism and Apartheid, it gave way to what Anand Singh (2008:6) refers to as new forms of Indo-South African identities. He explains that these Indo-South African identities are based on adaptation to the conditions that South Africa offered Indians as an ethnic minority. This identity construction was defined by its opposition, where one's own image was presented and represented from the "inescapable roundabout way of otherness" (Escobar in Araeen et al., 2002: 147).

While practising within the confines of 'otherness', many graduates interviewed in this study highlight the idiom of personal identity in South Africa and as expressed in their art work. Selvan Naidoo (Interview: 2011), in considering his identity, explains that he is a South African. As he has no ties with India, he wants to engage with questions and issues that are pertinent and relevant to all South Africans, not just Indian South Africans. "A lot of issues I'm dealing with are relevant to all South Africans...there are some works that explore issues from my spirituality but equally there are works that don't." He continues:

...in the same way a Black or White artist will explore their culture and religion, I will explore mine. But by being Indian I don't want to be pigeonholed into creating work that explores mysticism and so on...I want my work to be accepted as South African and not Indian.

Similarly, Sandy Naidoo (Interview: 2011) expresses what is perhaps not uncommon within the Indian community, and that is, a desire to be accepted as a South African regardless of whether she practises Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity. She argues that in South Africa we are presently perpetuating race as an important cultural signifier, and that particularly within the schooling system, it is still commonplace to refer to learners as “an Indian learner,” or “an African learner”, thus using the race lexicon as a measure of identification which further entrenches race as a signifier within our society.

Identity is always challenging and fluctuating and the identity of the graduates shifted significantly in their explanations of how they relate in the new South Africa. For these graduates, their identification has been imposed and based on external perceptions. For some, their work is an expression of their culture and religion, with an identifiable Indian content or subject matter, while for others, their creativity lacks any connection to their Indian origin. For this reason I intend to show that the signifiers of a local Indian identity are far from stable and are often contested as having been imposed in an attempt to marginalise and significantly reduce notions of belonging. In what follows I explore the construction and negotiation of an Indian identity in South Africa.

5.3 Notions of Homogeneity

Religion, culture and ritual within each linguistic group in the Indian community differs significantly. These divisions still retain differentiation among Indian South Africans that finds expression in the art practice of some artists who explore their religious beliefs and cultural practices. An artist like Reshma Maharaj, as a *Kathak* exponent, explores her ‘Indian-ness’ through representations of *Kathak*, which is a typical north Indian style of classical dancing, while Faiza Galdhari explores the teachings of Islam and the role of women within the Muslim lifestyle.

Hence, the historiography of the Indian artists in South Africa seems to find, in varied ways, mediation in their artistic expressions. These are sometimes consciously engaged with or

are a natural outcome of the everyday experiences of being Indian South Africans with distinctive cultural, religious and linguistic attributes.

While During (2005: 145) suggests that identity, in this case Indian identity, is created by placing into groups individuals who share the same traits and consequently reduces individuality within that group, Appiah (in Back & Solomos, 2009: 671) argues that there is an “intentional conformity” to existing expectation in the process of reinforcing that identity. Hence, as a result of being a collectivising notion, the projection of identities upon groups has created a sense of dislocation from the broader collective, namely, the South African population.

In South Africa, it was not in the interests of the state to acknowledge diversity within the Indian community. As a result of having obvious phenotypical features and a common territorial origin, Indians were seemingly easy to define. In this sense, the Indian community fitted neatly and seamlessly into the architecture of Apartheid where Indians were identified as a homogenous group.

From the indentured and passenger Indian identity to the homogenising identity recognised by the former South African regime, Apartheid brought with it a discriminatory agenda which formulated new identities. Consequently, as the nation narrated itself, it had the power “to block other narratives from forming and emerging” (Said, 1994: xiii). The boundaries between the Indian community and the rest of the population were increasingly reinforced and with the introduction of the Indian townships, cemented a strong bond even within the complex internal stratification of this community. In the face of a perceived threat, that of the Apartheid government, the community clustered around their distinct ethnicities to assert their strength and thereby entrench a unified and specific identity. Hence, Vally (2001: 171) suggests that an Indian supra-identity was developed in response to exterior conflict and threat.

By the 1960s, the third generation of Indians born in South Africa was adjusting to becoming South African citizens, with English the preferred medium of communication, superseding the use of vernacular languages (Singh, 2008: 9). Without a unifying language of their own, English usage enabled Indians the opportunity to enter and engage with the national and later, the global economy. It afforded them integration into the broader internationalist networks and access to careers and education which were predicated by a

sound knowledge of English. The significance of being able to communicate in the then official languages of the country, at the time English and Afrikaans was invaluable in the process of becoming South African. This was finally realised in 1961.

5.4 Shifting labels: The South African Indian

The changing socio-political context of South Africa has significantly influenced identity formations and the political imperatives of identity claims (Hammett, 2010: 255). In post-democratic South Africa,⁵⁵ racial identifiers are being reconceptualised, suggesting provocative ways in which issues of race can be addressed. The continued use of race and racial classification in South Africa further entrenches racial identity at a time when issues of race are being addressed globally in a move towards non-racialism and the understanding of racial identities. Similarly, even at UDW, while some graduates sought to move beyond their racial categories in their creative work, it did not always lead to an erasure of race in their day-to-day experiences on and off campus.

Racial identities are currently experienced within a context framed by the simultaneous depoliticisation of race on the one hand, and the deployment of these categories in profoundly political ways on the other. A negotiation of racial identity seems to exist as a constant parallel to the new dispensation. However, ‘becoming’ South African is proving to be problematic in a context in which the mediation of difference and sameness once again challenges citizens to negotiate their cultural exclusivity as a facet of a collective national identity.

5.5 The Question of Racial Difference in a Post-Democratic South Africa

With the birth of a democracy, South Africans were encouraged to forge a new collective identity. Archbishop Desmond Tutu foregrounded this notion when he described the multicultural population of South Africa as the ‘Rainbow Nation’.⁵⁶ In the initial post-

⁵⁵ This phrase was first propounded by then President F.W. De Klerk in 1990: “The ‘New South Africa’ would recognise the reality of the need for people and communities to remain themselves and to be able to preserve the values that are precious to them – so that the Zulus, the Xhosas, the Sothos, and the whites can each feel secure in their own distinctiveness” (in Desai, 1996: 115). This highlights the insidious nature of the race divide as envisaged for the ‘new’ country.

⁵⁶ When the new Government of National Unity (GNU) came into power, it appealed to citizens’ sense of common purpose to forge a unified nation. Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, at a celebration

Apartheid utopian moment of the 1990s, this idea had immediate appeal to the multiple cultures which peopled this country. It offered the enticing opportunity of living harmoniously side-by-side in a new multiracial South Africa, that would be distinctive yet compatible blending together of cultures in a new unity that simultaneously upheld diversity. This unifying vision, as observed by Smitha Radhakrishnan (2005: 263),⁵⁷ presumed racial identity to be the primary category through which a divided people could be united. The Indian minority in South Africa found itself in an ambivalent position amid these negotiating discourses of national belonging/identity. In this environment, culture was utilized as a tool to articulate what Radhakrishnan (2005: 264) calls a “racialized politics of minority recognition” for South African Indians in the process of reconstructing a new post-Apartheid, multicultural, democratic nation-state.

The euphoria of that moment blurred the realities of existing in a ‘new’ country against the backdrop of a four-colour rainbow. The reality of this subtlety, however, required its citizens to foreground their racial difference while at the same time subsuming it into the process of conceiving of a ‘new’ common South African-ness. Desai (1996: 119-120) critiques this ‘rainbowism’:

...despite its moments of hysterical intimacy, [rainbowism] functions strictly to codify the outpourings of unity and delivery of reconciliation and strictly delimits the linkages that may occur between groups as they do find new ways of living together. It is nice as far as it goes but...functions to contain and constrain...

As the ‘rainbow nation’ acknowledges the racial/ethnic divisions of each group, it constrains the engagement and mobility between the races, necessary for the development of a South African national identity. In this “four nation thesis” (Desai, 1996: 124) of the new dispensation, South African Indians have elected to express their difference in cultural terms (Radhakrishnan 2011: 182), upholding a distinct, though deeply racialised, relative position in society. Although the terms of this form of national belonging remain tenuous in

commemorating the new nation, introduced the rainbow over South Africa as a symbol of reconciliation and unity among all the diverse people in the nation. This spirit of unity is captured in the new identity adopted by South Africa as the nation of the “rainbow people” (Møller et al., 1998: 246).

⁵⁷ Smitha Radhakrishnan is an associate Professor at Wellesley College and spent a year in South Africa observing trends within the Indian community in Durban in their attempt at constructing and preserving their sense of Indian-ness. These engagements were done primarily through the Indian classical dance community which offered her opportunities to observe public displays of Indian community and culture.

a post-Apartheid world, the identity of South African Indians is constantly being renegotiated to fit a shifting socio-political reality and practice (Radhakrishnan, 2011: 182).

However, as the 'rainbow nation' was constructed and conceived, developments were envisioned the demands of a new country seeking out new boundaries, new geographies, new strategies for engagement and new images. Thus 'multilingual and multi-vocal' (Enwezor in Pinder, 2002: 372) realities came to be used in the refining and redefining of South Africa's identities.

Appiah (in Back & Solomos, 2009: 675) suggests that collective identities provide scripts and narratives that people could use in shaping their identities and telling their stories. These narratives are critical in the historiography of the South African artists of Indian origin. Govinden (2008: 32) maintains that it is necessary to understand the social construction of identities in various contexts in order to read the way in which identities are narrated and represented, and the reasons and purposes for different constructions. Therefore, in considering the historical and contextual construction of an Indian South African identity as conveyed in the art of Indian graduates, I am particularly sensitive to the complex historical tapestry embedded in a recollection of South Africa's recent past and the processes involved in this construction. Boyarin and Boyarin (in Appiah & Gates, 1995: 305) suggest that group identity has been constructed traditionally in two ways. On the one hand, it has been figured as the product of a 'common genealogical origin' and on the other, as the product of a 'common geographical origin'. While their first suggestion is tainted in South Africa by associations with difference and race, the second has a generally more positive association.

Homi Bhabha (2004: 62-63) in his process of identification suggests that "...to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness..." He (2004: 62-63) proposes that the question of identification "is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image." Some of the artists in this study have assumed their pre-given identity. In this regard, I find it pertinent to reflect on a print by Sandy Naidoo (Figure 7), which consciously embraces aspects of Indian identity that contribute to a racially and culturally specific perception of 'Indian art' in South Africa.



Figure 7: Sandy Naidoo, *Untitled*, c.1994, woodcut, 36cm x 60cm

Both the subject matter and palette used in this print reference Indian religion and culture. It also recalls the Hindu temple which is viewed as the repository of all arts in India and in South Africa (Champakalakshmi & Kris, 2001: 9). The palette used is reminiscent of the richness of Indian textiles. Hence the overall impression is of an Indian-ness or Orientalism intelligible within an Orientalist frame, dealing with matters of religion and culture and related to the imaginary of the Indian motherland. However, as Bhabha (1994: 66) suggests, in a post-colonial context the problem of identity returns as the persistent questioning of the frame of representation, which is confronted with its difference or its 'Otherness'. The image is thus immediately geographically and culturally located and thereby phenotypically located in establishing the identity of the producer of that image as Indian within the South African context. While this image can be critiqued within the

discourse of historical contextualisation, it also seems to reflect a palpable celebration of the richness of Indian history and identity.

Such celebration of Indian identity often found expression in the public arena. The media supported the growing demand by including newspaper supplements like the *Extra*, in the *Sunday Times* and the *Herald* in the *Sunday Tribune*, which were welcomed by the Indian population who looked forward to reading news relevant to their social circles. The weekly *Post* and its predecessors the *Graphic* and the *Leader*, were also forms of networking and communication between South African Indian communities. Over and above these publications, many smaller commercial newspapers proliferate in Indian neighbourhoods and townships. The SABC's magazine programme *Eastern Mosaic* and its predecessor *Impressions*, have for many years presented television broadcasts primarily for Indian South African audiences.

The media agents highlight notions of difference and ethnicity similar to the agenda of the Apartheid and post-Apartheid stage. Even the Indian radio station Radio Lotus, now known as Lotus FM, has experienced a somewhat nuanced transformation within the changing climate of South Africa. Their television advert aired between 2000 and 2002 reflected upon the renegotiated and shifting spaces for Indian South Africans. This advert, discussed by Radhakrishnan (2005: 262), focuses on a young Indian woman who dreams she is at a cocktail party where all the black men and women are dressed in White and all the White men and women are dressed in Black. As she is dressed in white she attempts to make conversation but is ignored. As the Lotus FM slogan tune plays in the background, she changes dramatically into colourful, almost rainbow-like, Indian clothing and is then transformed into being the centre of attention at the party. At this point, she awakens to the clock-radio which says: "*Good morning. You're listening to 'not-everything's-black-and-white-radio' on Lotus FM.*" This advert engages directly with the concept of the rainbow nation yet simultaneously awakens specific racial signifiers marked by phenotype and reinforced by traditional clothing, music, dance and cultural enactment. The advert attempts to mediate a space for Indian people within the post-Apartheid vision of cultural identity existing seamlessly within the 'rainbow nation'.

These mediated conceptions of Indian identity through varied forms of social media establish and reinforce ideas of belonging and identity for Indians in contemporary South

Africa, through the essentialised articulation of racial and cultural difference. But this is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, by articulating the need to be culturally identifiable, they extend the insulation and isolation of the Apartheid regime and write themselves into a new racialised politics for minority recognition within the new dispensation. On the other hand, there is a strong desire for Indian South Africans to be seen as South African first and as Indian second, which unfortunately is a seemingly impossible process, as contemporary South Africa perpetuates race-based thinking.

Identity is a complex concept, in that it defines who somebody is in terms of their physical attributes, adherence to a belief system or even a cultural/religious preference. In this way the body of people being labelled have little power to choose what features will be used to identify them, as these are socially determined from the outside and make the members of this community aware of their uniqueness (During, 2005: 145; Escobar in Araeen, Cubitt & Sardar, 2002: 146). From the point of view of individuals, these external, partial and collectivising identities dislocate one from oneself. However, because individuals exist socially through their identity, without an identity there is no such thing as a socially situated individual, as societies, identities and individuals do not exist independently of one another (During 2005: 145). Individuals do not embrace or enact a single identity; rather they have identities which are based on a multiplicity of traits ranging from skin colour to economic status to gender, nationality, region, profession, religion and so on. During noted that “gender, race or ethnicity, and class are the identities, most of all, by which we are placed socially” (During, 2005:146).

Stuart Hall suggests that we should think of identity as a production, never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 222). By implication, this problematises the authority with which the label is attached. South Africa’s political dispensation authenticated representations which, although constituted from within, were equally constituted from without.

A personal example clarifies this phenomenon. As a lecturer in a ‘multiracial’ classroom where I am the only Indian person, my ‘otherness’ is constituted outside of my control. My lack of control in determining my identity impacts on the perceptions attached to my cultural identity and thereby question my very ‘South African-ness’. During class discussion, it has been made very clear that students do not see me as a South African. The

fact that I am a fourth-generation South African does nothing to alleviate their suspicions about the authenticity of my 'South African-ness'. In addition, I have been told that I do not sound like an Indian should, which in all likelihood is due to the stereotyping of Indian South Africans in the mass media. Thus Hall's assertion that identity is always in process, is valid: it is complicated further by the complexities of identity peculiar to South Africa.

The unique circumstance in South Africa requires further consideration of Hall's concept in thinking about 'cultural identity'. Hall (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 300) identifies two aspects of cultural identity, both of which find resonance in this study. The first position defines cultural identity as one shared culture, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold common. He explains:

Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.

This oneness Hall speaks of can be identified as central to Indian-ness in South Africa. It was this conception of identity that played a critical role in the liberation struggles of Indians in this country. This concept of 'oneness' continues to dominate the Indian community as a marginalized people and finds expression in the maintenance of Indian-specific media manifestations like Lotus FM, *The Post* Newspaper, Eastern Mosaic, *The Sunday Tribune Herald* and *Sunday Times Extra*.

The second position as outlined by Hall (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 302-303) recognises that while there are significant points of similarity, there are equally significant points of difference which constitute "what we really are" and significantly "what we have become" due to the intervention of history. Hence the ruptures and discontinuities that constitute cultural identity in this second sense are a "matter of becoming" as well as "being". He explains that this notion of identity belongs to the future as much as to the past and like everything historical, it undergoes constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, identities are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power, which reflect Indians position in the narrative of the country. Hall states that it is only from this second position that we can properly understand the traumatic character of the 'colonial experience' (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 302) which in South Africa constitutes the experiment of colonialism and Apartheid.

Indian South Africans have generally been associated with religious affiliation reinforced by the many religious celebration and rituals that individuals uphold and participate in. Consequently, the collective cultural identity of this minority is built around the social super-structure expressed through different Indian experiences. Further this collective identity is reaffirmed through the assumption of intentional conformity to expectations from 'above' and conforming to the script of that identity (Appiah in Back & Solomos, 2009: 671) and through the process of assimilation into the foreign country. Accordingly, performing a particularised role is a consequence of the labels applied to the community. Hence Bhabha concurs with Hall when he maintains that identity is never a finished product, but rather it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of totality (1994: 73).

Under Apartheid, the image of totality created a subaltern identity where some visual production was perceived to support and reinforce anti-Apartheid strategies (see Section Two: Isolation and Engagement). For students, this strategy consequently denied them credibility as emerging artists and very likely limited their career opportunities. Clive Pillay (Interview, 2009) explains this strategy:

Although the standard in Fine Art was quite high...One thing we made clear...we were studying there under protest and we never wanted the institution to take credibility as we saw it as an Apartheid university. For example...we never used the gym or played sport...because the kind of sport was Apartheid sport...I mean in retrospect we think...why the hell didn't you play sport...but at that time you were fighting the system. I did lots of photos of Cato Manor...at that time Indians and Africans were living side by side and I did a photographic essay and then my stuff was selected to go to an exhibition to another university and I was so upset 'cause I was going to be giving credibility to this university...I destroyed all the negatives...which I now regret...

Ravi Govender (Interview: 2011) supports Pillay's view of the strategy undertaken by most students in the 1970s and 1980s. He explains that this strategy could have resulted in their subsequent limited exposure in the 'art world' and given Addleson's comments regarding the collection of art works produced by Indian South Africans during the 1980s (see p.6) it is not unexpected that the graduates were also indirectly aware that the collection policies of galleries did not favour them.

We did not want to exhibit our work in establishments like the Durban Art Gallery at the time because we felt it was part of the regime. It was part of the mechanism to keep the society in a way that it shouldn't have been shaping consciousness at the time.

Rufus Latchmigadu (Interview: 2009) adds another perspective when he highlights the highly politicized nature of the university's student body and the impact it had on the lack of exposure for the fine art students.

What was disappointing was we did the work, but it was not able to get out there because we needed to associate ourselves with progressive art associations and there weren't any at that time. At that time, the TV programme "Collage" was on and they came down to the Fine Arts Department and wanted to do an exposé on printmaking and graphics and Vedant [Nanackchand] told us about it so we were busy doing an etching at that time and they were going to come and film this. The SRC heard about this and they came and shut them down because "Collage" was not progressive at that time.

This anecdote highlights the extent of protest politics on campus. While this incident was not a daily occurrence, it undoubtedly intimidated young students who were loathe to challenge the SRC and as a result, many often accepted this implicit position of protest as their contribution to the liberation struggle. This type of incident may also have impacted negatively on any possible opportunity for exposure and future prospects in the art world. But by the same token it could have contributed to future prospects as well. While Latchmigadu highlights the above incident as having a considerable impact on the later development of many Fine Art students, he is also quick to foreground the dire need for such forms of protest. Thus, as in most Fine Art Departments and common among art students in general, due to their limited exposure as undergraduates, the likelihood of developing careers as practising artists is challenging. Further as is common amongst many graduates, upon completion of their BAFA, most set their sights on acquiring the Higher Diploma in Education which would secure them employment as teachers.

It is important to note that these anecdotes are provided mainly by students who graduated during the 1980s, the most dynamic decade for the university with regard to both political activity and academic growth. This decade saw the SRC become a vibrant force bolstered by the political landscape of the time. The 1960s saw the university in its infancy and the 1970s brought changes in campuses and witnessed the beginning of a resistance ethos. However, the 1980s saw the university at its most volatile as well as its most dynamic, due in part to the

beginning of the demise of Apartheid. By the time the department closed in 1999, the political landscape of the country had rapidly evolved with employment opportunities increasing.

While one could argue that these graduates bore the brunt of a series of social and political challenges which limited their progress as practising artists, there are some graduates who continued to produce art without the expectation of any acknowledgement or monetary gain. They practised for the sheer pleasure of creating work, some electing to donate their work to organisations or temples for public scrutiny and appreciation. Such is the sentiment of Ravi Govender, who made a conscious decision not to make any money from his work. He says: "...money is not the question...I will not use my creativity to make money but I will use it for the betterment of mankind" (Interview: 2011). While one of his paintings is located in the DAG's permanent collection, most can be found in private collections around the world.

Charles Moodley (Interview: 2011) also paints for the simple pleasure associated with creating a work of art. However, this attitude was adopted much later in life after a series of abortive attempts to approach galleries. Moodley stresses the value an exposure to the art world would have provided for him as a student, reiterating the precedence that the political agenda assumed in the 1980s. However, a more modest exposure to an interested community might have shifted the perspectives of the art graduates from one of resistance to one of access and appreciation.. But for Moodley a key consideration is the notion of self-esteem, which is evident when he posed an interesting question regarding the FAD and its teaching staff: "Did they believe in us? Did they believe in our ability and...did we believe in ourselves?" These are critical considerations in determining the extent to which each of the role players, namely, the graduates, the staff at FAD, the community and the art world in Durban, were complicit in the marginalisation of these graduates.

The art works of South African Indian artists⁵⁸ that are exhibited and accessioned into the Durban Art Gallery's collection, for example, seem to bear a strong Indian 'flavour' reflected either in the title or in subject matter. Works of art recently selected for the "*Celebrate*

⁵⁸ 'South African Indian artists' as a category refers to all those artists of Indian origin whose work has been accessioned into a gallery's collection but who have not necessarily graduated from UDW. Of the artists mentioned above, Riason Naidoo graduated from the University of Witwatersrand and Hasan and Husain Essop graduated from the University of Cape Town.

Durban 2011” exhibition at the Durban Art Gallery displayed four pieces from their collection to represent their theme. Each of those works bear similar Indian cultural peculiarities: Kiren Thathiah’s *Transitions* (Figure 8); Ravi Govender’s *Krishna and Flute* (Figure 9); Hasan and Husain Essop’s *Wudhuu Ghanaa* (Figure 10) and Riason Naidoo’s *Bunny Chow* (Figure 11). Thus the selection reinforced the perception that a sense of Indian-ness distinguishes the works and reveals a degree of cultural specificity.

The titles of other works included in the DAG collection are Thathiah’s *Temples* (c.1992, Figure 58) and Galdhari’s *Purdah* (1994, Figure 79) presented later in this dissertation. While they may reflect aspects of Indian culture, it should be noted that the works are presented within a modernist idiom. The significance of a collection of this nature is critical to this study as on the one hand, the works suggest stereotyping but on the other, it is vital for the city’s gallery to reflect the cultural and creative manifestations of the local Indian community. The multicultural agenda, like the transformation agenda in South Africa, needs to find expression in spaces like galleries, which are repositories of the creativity reflective of society.



Figure 8: Kiren Thathiah, *Transitions*, 1992, oil on canvas, 2688 x1861cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery



Figure 9: Ravi Govender, *Krishna and Flute*, c.1995, enamel on canvas, 145.1 x 140cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery



Figure 10: Hasan and Husain Essop, *Wudhu Ghanaa*, 2007, photograph, 2604 x 1878cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery



Figure 11: Riason Naidoo, *Bunny Chow*, c.1996, oil on board, 2058 x 2982cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery

5.6 Concluding Remarks

To conclude this discussion on the politics of identity, it is not uncommon that minority communities the world over view themselves through their projections of ‘otherness’ and perhaps also find a sense of rationalisation in their transnational histories of migration, their narratives of colonisation, or even their experiences as political refugees. In *The Disinherited* (2007), which examines the achievements of the Spanish in exile, Henry Kamen suggests the concept of the ‘internal exile’, which I will borrow from him. For Kamen, the internal exile is a disinherited person, who uses his deprivation to reclaim his identity and his distinctive culture (2007: xi).

In short, and to apply this analogy, Indian students who graduated from the University of Durban-Westville imposed upon themselves a position of internal exile. While still remaining within the country, they ‘exiled’ themselves from activities and institutions which would have been of benefit to them and their subsequent careers in the interests of the liberation struggle or as a result of collective intimidation. They practised their art in the

confines of their homes, with minimal exposure to the public, preferring not to fight the system or expose their work to critical scrutiny based on its merits. Their defeatist mentality coupled with a low self-esteem, perpetuated their presence on the margins of the society where their desire to be ‘artists’ was allowed to recede, as the realities of desirable and necessary self-sufficiency took precedence.

The narratives presented in this chapter, albeit anecdotal, are pivotal in positioning Indian graduates. Supported by Govinden’s contentions (2008: 1), when she explains that in post-Apartheid South Africa, there is a need to recount “suppressed histories of the past.” She acknowledges that one of the ways of rewriting history has been through the recalling of personal experiences of the Apartheid era in the quest to create an alternative national identity that transcends the separate nationalisms that existed in the past. The emergence of these histories highlights the under-explored histories in this country.

Given the complex, shifting ground of being South African today, notions of identity at this moment in South Africa’s history are diverse and perplexing. The pertinent question of who determines identity, oneself or others, raised by Goldschmidt (2003: 211) remains a complex one. The politicising of identity in South Africa is overlaid with the historical background of colonialism and Apartheid, which still persist in different forms. Hence interrogating the various understanding of identity is a necessary and critical activity in South Africa today, whether in contexts of creativity or crisis.

The next chapter, while still considering aspects of identity does so within storied narratives of the graduates. These narratives position the histories of the graduates and their emergence into academic training at the Indian university.

CHAPTER SIX: NARRATIVES FOR CREATIVITY

6.1 Introduction: Stories of History

After interviewing forty-three Fine Art graduates from UNICOL and UDW, I compiled transcripts which situate these graduates within the framework of an Indian South African presence and their educational history in South Africa. In most cases these graduates were the first to acquire a degree in either their immediate or extended families, the value of which has been highlighted in the desire for Indians to acquire education as a means to ensure future economic stability and social standing. Although job reservation impacted on the varied career paths of these graduates, the mere acquisition of a degree certification was often of sufficient importance to the Indian community, reflecting a more intrinsically valuable asset, that of intellectual capital or academic prestige. Many Indian families today still uphold academic prestige by displaying graduation photographs on the walls of the lounge or entrance ways to their homes. A visit to most of the homes of the interviewees bears testimony to this assertion as do the observations of P.D. Hey (1961: 37) in *The Rise of the Natal Indian Élite*. This is a symbol of deep pride for the family and signifies intellectual capital to those outside the family circle. It highlights their aspiration for success, not only economically but socially and politically, bearing in mind their long history of alienation and struggle in this country.

Once the interview transcripts were reviewed, I chose to contextualise them in the form of historical narratives which present the cultural and social dimensions of the community from which these Fine Art graduates emerged. These narratives foreground the role of the community and its culture as well as the deep seated Apartheid legacy which, as mentioned earlier, significantly affected this minority community. The following sections also highlight the diverse challenges facing the graduates with regard to job opportunities and job reservation and further, the interwoven aspects of campus politics, national politics and student life which had a significant impact on art production, or the lack thereof, by Fine Art graduates.

The narratives are thematically presented focusing on the following areas: family backgrounds, pre-training and expectations, attitudes to the university, political engagement and career pursuits. While the narratives are presented as a means of understanding and representing the data, I do not consider the life history of every graduate in the sample. The

information has been collated to illustrate how particular individuals negotiated their creative paths in an unequal society and ultimately within a racialised university. To begin this narrative, it is imperative to position the economic status of the Indian population in Natal to highlight the intrinsic dynamics of the population from which the students emerged.

6.2 Economic positions

A study conducted in 1966 by the South African Institute of Race Relations (S.A.I.R.R.) on Indians in South Africa casts some light on the economic positions of Indian South Africans during the emergence of UNICOL and later UDW. In 1961, when the University College was first opened, the Indian population in Natal was just 394,854 (McCrystal & Maasdorp, S.A.I.R.R. 1966: 1), with 90 percent of this population under 45 years of age and only one quarter economically active.⁵⁹ McCrystal and Maasdorp explain that due largely to prejudice around job reservation, 22.7 percent of this group remained unemployed. They also suggest that the support received from the cohesiveness of the Indian family unit and the joint family system,⁶⁰ secured the unemployed in the knowledge that they would receive protection and security from their kinsmen. In addition, a small number of Indian women were employed largely due to the “age-old conservative attitudes within the Indian society towards the employment of women” (McCrystal & Maasdorp, 1966: 6).

During the 1960s, the income of an average Indian household was relatively low, resulting in substantial levels of poverty. In 1960, McCrystal & Maasdorp (1966: 7-9) show that 22.8 percent of Indians earned under R200 per annum, with 0.7 percent earning R3000 and more per annum, while the highest percentage group earned between R200 and R399 per annum. In the following table extracted from McCrystal & Maasdorp, the racial differentiation in earnings between Whites and Indians is evident.

⁵⁹ McCrystal & Maasdorp (1966: 2-3) use the term ‘economically active’ to suggest those members of the Indian population who are actually working or prepared to work. Notably only 5 per cent of Indian females were classified as economically active

⁶⁰ The joint family system has long been the common form of family organisation sanctified in scriptures and secular law in India. It is in the joint family that the biological, psychological and social forces unify to provide the individual with a start to life. It is also a haven for the frail the sick, the unemployed and the aged. Therefore as a self-governing body it is a symbol of prestige, pride, growth of race and continuity of class (Moodley, 1997: 76).

Income per group	Whites	Indians
Under R200	3.6%	22.8%
200 - 399	8.1%	30.2%
1000 -1199	6.7%	3.4%
2000 - 2999	18.1%	0.8%
3000 +	10.4%	0.7%

Table 2: Income Distribution (extracted from McCrystal & Maasdorp, 1966: 7)

While it is now generally assumed that all Indians in South Africa are mainly middle class, during the first twenty years of the university's life it was evident that approximately 48 percent of Indian South Africans lived below the poverty line with a small but growing middle class (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 148). Although the vast majority of Indian South Africans could barely afford to send their children to university, thousands struggled to do so, indicating the considerable importance attached to education (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 148-149).

Oosthuizen et al. (1981: 149) further highlight the consideration shown by the university towards their economic status, by keeping its fees as low as possible. In 1980, while a B.Sc. degree at the University of Witwatersrand cost approximately R880 p.a., at UDW it was only R300, which was the lowest of all universities in the country. Sherene Timol commented on the impact the cost of a university degree had on a family. Any changes in degree choice or the need to repeat a first year was devastating for a family, and few students had parents who were able to finance a repeated year of study even though the fees were in the region of R120 (Interview: 2011).

Ravi Govender (Interview: 2011) also comments on the luxury of studying when as students they were fully aware of the limited means of their families. He poignantly reveals that "failure was not an option". Many graduates to this day are not aware of how their degrees were financed as many came from families which were not financially secure. However, in spite of the financial pressures, parents were very supportive of their children even when as

they embarked upon a degree which did not ensure employment. Their only comfort was that this degree allowed entry into the teaching profession, a career path highly regarded by the Indian community.

Between the 1960s and 1981, a university degree was a much more sought after qualification than a diploma as it proved not only to have greater currency within the social and economic circles of the Indian community, but would also ensure a better chance of employment. The growing interest in attaining a degree is clearly visible in the Table below, extracted from Oosthuizen et al. (1981: 196), which shows that student numbers had grown from three degrees awarded in 1964 to 253 in 1981 in the Faculty of Arts alone. During this period, 1 972 degrees were awarded against just 75 diplomas, which support the community's preference for degrees over diplomas. The only faculty which reflected a greater number of diplomas was the Faculty of Education, which offered diplomas catering for the specific needs of teachers, such as the Diploma in Special Education, in School Counselling and in Remedial Education (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 199).

Degrees and Diplomas Awarded 1964 – 1981												Total
Faculty	Arts		Commerce		Education		Engineering	Health Sciences	Law	Science	Theology	
Award	Deg	dip	Deg	Dip	Deg	dip	deg	Deg	Deg	deg	Deg	
1964	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	10
1965	11	1	1	0	0	23	0	0	0	14	0	50
1966	31	1	4	1	6	32	0	0	0	30	0	105
1967	56	2	2	0	5	45	0	0	0	28	0	138
1968	86	3	3	1	8	90	0	0	0	30	0	221
1969	95	4	4	2	7	121	0	0	2	26	0	261
1970	118	3	7	2	12	102	0	0	1	32	0	277
1971	135	8	19	1	4	126	0	0	3	41	0	337
1972	89	9	17	2	7	66	0	0	5	44	0	239
1973	111	10	39	2	11	63	0	0	10	35	0	281
1974	77	5	54	4	11	99	0	0	13	62	0	325
1975	100	4	67	11	23	79	0	0	5	77	0	366
1976	106	4	68	14	26	75	0	0	5	85	0	383
1977	159	3	66	16	27	69	0	0	6	63	0	409
1978	150	2	85	16	43	108	0	0	17	73	0	494
1979	169	8	76	26	43	140	0	0	36	106	0	604
1980	223	6	84	15	89	164	1	0	40	90	1	713
1981	253	2	97	13	98	196	4	18	26	77	1	785
Total	1972	75	693	126	420	1599	5	18	169	919	2	5998

Table 3: Degrees and Diplomas Awarded between 1964 and 1981 (from Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 196)

In spite of the challenges associated with the university entrance which included the physical challenges of transport to the university, political conflict, and general perceptions that they might only be acquiring a second class education, the degree certificate was not jeopardised in any way. While popular degree choices included the B.A. (Arts),⁶¹ law, education and commerce at UNICOL and UDW, students also chose general B.A. degrees specialising in other fields of study such as Speech and Drama, Music, Physical Education, Fine Art and Classics, as well as the general B.Sc. and in the health sciences, B.Pharm., B.Optomety, and B.Sc. (Physiotherapy) degrees (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 197).

⁶¹ The Bachelors degree included areas of specialisation such as a generic B.A.; B.A. (Fine Arts); B.A. (Law); B.A. (Physical Education); B.A. (Social Work); B.A. Library Science; B.A. Honours and a B.A. Honours (Social Work) (see Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 197).

While most other degrees offered clear career paths, the Fine Art degree offered vague, if any, career opportunity at the outset. For the Indian family, the concept of “Fine Art” meant very little in terms of how one would pursue a career or in fact *if* a career was indeed possible. This uncertainty was highlighted by many parents, including mine, who exclaimed, “What *will* you do with that?!” (Sheri Ganess, Interview: 2011; Chandra Patel, Interview: 2011; Sherene Timol, Interview: 2011; Charles Moodley, Interview: 2011). Professor Volschenk, the Head of Department (HOD) between 1974 and 1986, while acknowledging that most graduates became teachers, stated in Oosthuizen et al. (1981: 145-146), that those students who graduated specialising in Jewellery Design found immediate employment or even went on to establish their own workshops. He further stated that Ceramic Design and Printmaking also led to various careers, without elaborating on where and what these opportunities were.

Contrary, though, to what Volschenk indicated, graduates interviewed for this study highlighted the grave difficulties experienced in acquiring work in their fields of specialisation and only one graduate, Vijay Shah, has to date become an established jeweller. One of the reasons for his success is the fact that his father and extended family had always owned a successful jewellery store in Bond Street in Durban’s CBD, a business which he seamlessly moved into and subsequently out of, in order to establish himself as an independent designer of note. He has subsequently won numerous competitions nationally, and in 2010 was awarded first prize for the Anglo Platinum Jewellery Design Competition in the Professional Category (Shah, Interview: 2011) (Figures 12) and in 2009, won second prize (Figure 13) in the Plat Africa competition (www.angloplatinum.com/jewellery). Other Jewellery Design students, however, like Judy Ramgolam (Interview: 2010), Nimmi Devraj (Interview: 2011) and Reshma Maharaj, were unsuccessful in acquiring employment in this field and subsequently entered the teaching profession, where Devraj and Maharaj are currently employed.

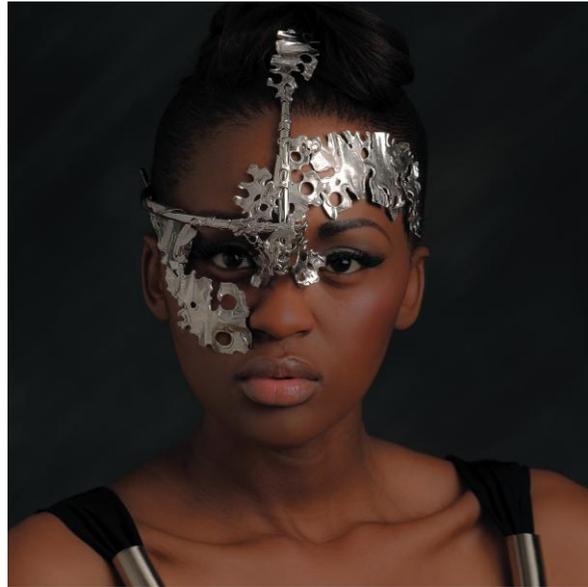


Figure 12: Vijay Shah, First prize for Anglo Platinum Jewellery Design Competition 2010, free Internet



Figure 13: Vijay Shah, Second prize design for Plat Africa 2009, free Internet

In the Indian community, an appreciation of visual art was not sufficiently established in order to inform parents of what a Fine Art degree would entail. However, it was sufficiently reassuring for parents to know that their children would go to a university. But in the 1960s, Razia Haffejee (Interview: 2011) points out, “the Indian community was not interested in the arts” and “at that stage did not appreciate what they regarded as a western academic art

training” (Chandra Patel, Interview: 2011). Their conservative attitudes towards fine art training are briefly explained by Ravi Govender (Interview: 2011):

...can you imagine me taking my nude drawing or nude painting home in my portfolio and trying to draw and colour and paint...I had to hide away and work when everyone was asleep because it would create a storm in a traditional Indian household. Never mind hanging that up...

Under the guidance of strong and supportive parents though, the growing student numbers in Fine Art, evident in a summary in Table 3 reflect an attitudinal shift towards the degree. The drop noted in the 1990s was as a result of the closure of the FAD in 1999 and the phasing out of the degree, while ensuring existing students complete the course. In 2000, the last group of 6 students graduated.

Year	Degree in Fine Art
1962 - 1967	4
1970 - 1979	14
1980 - 1989	65
1990 - 1999	49
2000	6

Table 4: Growing Student Intake for Fine Art (developed from graduation lists provided by Division of Management Information- UKZN)

The growth in student intake was supported by an increasing stability within the working environment for Indians which witnessed many parents of students going back to tertiary institutions to further their studies. The Springfield Training College,⁶² for example, offered seasoned, employed teachers opportunities to improve their qualifications and thereby improve their economic position. Many of these teachers had very basic qualifications because of the shortage of Indian teachers in primary and secondary schools and the urgency with which teachers were initially trained (Peri Moodley, Interview: 2011). In 1966, there

⁶² Institutions like the Springfield Training College, which prepared students to teach in the primary and junior secondary levels of school (Hey, 1961: 62), offered in-service training for under qualified teachers to improve their qualifications.

were 4 359 Indian teachers in the Natal primary and secondary schools, of which 907 had only a matriculation certificate graded as A, while 2 301 were graded as either A or AA (i.e. below matriculation) (see Rambiritch in S.A.I.R.R., 1966: 53). These low numbers of graduate teachers hampered the educational development of the community but witnessed a growth in self-improvement. Hey (1961: 44)⁶³ in his construction of the schooling life of affluent Indians in Natal, foregrounds the tremendous importance that education has in the life of this population. In his presentation he acknowledges the great lengths to which family responsibilities surpass individual academic goals and highlights what he calls a surprising feature of this community with the “dogged persistence of students” in their pursuit of advanced study.

This significant educational aspiration reflects the desire for both financial and social upliftment. In a similar vein, there were also a growing number of Fine Art graduates who went back to university as part-time students to attend evening lectures in an endeavour to improve and diversify their qualifications and skills. Graduates like Charles Moodley, Poobalan Govender, Judy Ramgolam and Kiren Thathiah are just a few examples of graduates from the FAD who went on to further their studies and acquire degrees outside their areas of specialisation in order to improve their career opportunities. But in order to fully comprehend the challenges experienced by this group of students, it is necessary to understand the generational shift presented in the sections below.

6.3 Generational Evolution

6.3.1. The 1960s and 1970s

In the history of the FAD, students emerged from diverse backgrounds. While most homes had no tertiary graduates, some students emerged from enlightened, liberal and progressive families. Razia Haffejee was raised in a traditional but liberal Muslim family where her

⁶³ Hey (1961: 13) presents a detailed study of the study order within a family. He explains how decisions are made regarding who gets the opportunity to study and at what cost to the family. Once a member of the family, usually a senior male first, has completed his studying and has been secured in a profession, he will then turn his attention and resources to other family members, delaying his own marriage and aspirations, in the interest of the family and helping them to achieve by providing financial support. He says “the teacher will save during his teaching years and will then turn to law, business...or even medicine, once he has secured himself as a teacher” (1961: 14). There are numerous such narratives which highlight the progress desired by Indians not only for themselves but for their families.

mother was the much celebrated Zuleikha Mayet, author of the *Indian Delights* (1961) cookbook and her father a renowned gynaecologist, Dr Mahamod Mayet. As a family with financial stability, her parents travelled widely thereby impacting on her decision to take up the study of Fine Art. Her mother acquired her education through correspondence as she was not allowed to leave the home and in many ways, the education of her mother paved the way for her own education. She attended the Durban Indian Girls High School after which she enrolled at UDW. However, as enlightened and progressive as her family was, the children were often cautioned against participation in any political activity and any fraternising outside the domain of accepted respectability.

In contrast, students like Chandra Patel and Sherene Timol emerged from more overtly politicised families which laid the foundation for their own political engagement. As a student, Patel (Interview: 2011) participated in covert attempts at communication with the then banned African National Congress (ANC), as their headquarters were located close to their family café which was a point of distribution for varied forms of political propaganda and announcements. In this way her family conscientised her politically, which led to her becoming a highly politically engaged student when she attended UNICOL.

Sherene Timol (Interview: 2011) came from a very progressive Muslim family and in the race lexicon of South Africa, was classified as ‘Cape Malay’. She had an Indian Muslim father and a Cape Malay Muslim mother and as a result of her mixed heritage, felt rejected by both sides of her extended family. As a young person she recalls that the feelings of “not belonging” had a significant impact on her perspectives and perceptions of life. Her classification as ‘Cape Malay’ was a decision taken by her father who realised that for a time the laws of the country privileged the Cape Malay who enjoyed greater freedom in South Africa, while similar laws conversely limited travel and other freedoms allowed to Indians. However, this categorisation did not always work in her favour as she was refused entry into UNICOL. She subsequently applied to the Department of Indian Affairs to be reclassified as Indian based on her father’s status in order to access the university, and thus successfully changed her race!

In the 1940s, the political activity of Timol's family also included liaisons with struggle icons like Dr Monty Naicker under the Liberal Study Group,⁶⁴ of which both Naicker and her father Mohamed Timol were founder members. It was during these times that many political meetings were held in Durban at the Red Square, now known as Nicol Square. These meetings were followed by gatherings at the Timol home at 40 Dominion Court, which Timol says (Interview: 2011) was colloquially referred to as "10 Downing Street". The Timol residence became a popular venue for social-cum-political gatherings where dissemination of pamphlets and other literature occurred which would later be distributed by Mohamed Timol who, as a commercial traveller, was in a position to do so throughout the province.

With similar historical backgrounds to Patel and Timol, Manjula-Devi Naidoo (Interview: 2011) was also part of an unconventional Indian family residing in the Indian township of Chatsworth. Her parents were very supportive of her desire to study and pursue a career in fashion design, while ignoring the traditional consideration of early marriage for young Indian women. Politically active and progressive, her family was closely associated with political activists like Strini Moodley and Saths Cooper.

6.3.2. The 1980s and 1990s

While the 1960s and 1970s attracted students from politicised homes and progressive family structures, the generation of graduates from the 1980s and 1990s emerged from an Indian community that was more secure with greater economic stability. This does not, however, suggest that the inequalities in South Africa had levelled out: it only suggests that in the face of such sharp inequality amongst the race groups, the personal growth of the Indian population was significant when compared to their circumstances in the previous two decades. While Seekings and Nattrass (2005: 187) highlight the paucity of statistical data in the analysis of the latter stages of the Apartheid state, which thereby limits the analysis of this submission, much of the information gleaned from graduates and other interviewees supports such a proposition.

⁶⁴ This group was initiated around 1942 as a result of being increasingly disillusioned by the Indian Congresses and more specifically with its leaders. This group was dominated by members like H.A. Naidoo, Dawood Seedat and I.C. Meer and went on to constitute the left wing or Nationalist Block of the Natal Indian Congress (sahistoryonline).

The family structure in the Indian community in the 1980s was slowly being eroded by westernisation and a new spirit of individualism (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 150), and many of the male students like Ravi Govender, Clive Pillay and Anesh Singh, who resided in the lower economic townships of Chatsworth, emphasise the pressure on them to lighten the financial burden of their families. In contrast, many female graduates who came from the middle-class suburbs like Reservoir Hills, Westville and even Overport, like Sheri Ganess, Desiree Sekola, Selina Gokool and myself, were not carrying the same burden.

While it was considered desirable for women to obtain degrees, this was because it signified the *potential* for her to have a career, if she chose, rather than because she was actually *required* to be a breadwinner. The woman in the Indian household at this time was generally valued more for *acquiring* a degree which would at some stage provide her with a career should she so desire. This incidentally is true for all female graduates interviewed as their parents/family would support them while the male graduates were under more pressure to eventually provide some financial support to the family. Within this community, Indian women were relatively subordinate to their male counterparts, evidenced in their marrying young with little more than a basic primary school education (Hey, 1961: 75). Table 4, extracted from Oosthuizen et al (1981: 153), supports this assertion as it reveals the generally lower level of education of mothers as opposed to the fathers of first year students at the university in 1981.

Educational Level of Parents		
	Father %	Mother %
Std 6 and below (Grade 8)	43.48	69.15
Std 7 (Grade 9)	3.70	4.41
Std 8 (Grade 10)	20.13	17.12
Std 9 (Grade 11)	5.15	1.69
Std 10 (Grade 12)	14.82	3.73

Table 5: Educational Level of Parents (extracted from Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 153)

However, later in the 1980s, more and more students came from households where one or both parents had already received some form of secondary education and aspired to have their children acquire a tertiary qualification. Both Desiree Sekola (Interview: 2011) and Sheri

Ganess (Interview: 2011) were the first in their respective families to acquire a B.A. degree. Both women were raised in middle class homes where they were sheltered from the radical politics of the 1980s. Both were pressurised by their families not to get involved in politics on campus and focus on their academic work, as the reputation of UDW as a politically engaged campus with frequent boycotts was well known in the Indian community.

This perception resulted in a slow but steady growth in the number of Indian students electing rather to register at the University of Natal, as shown in Table 5.⁶⁵ However, the political agenda at UDW had a significant impact on these women who then struggled to reconcile their parents' desire with their own growing sense of struggle politics. There was a common sense of conflict among many students as their desire for equality in the country became overwhelming. In spite of what the degree offered and the political climate at UDW, both Sekola and Ganess' parents were satisfied that their daughters would ultimately acquire a degree. This was no small accolade for the family and one that the parents held in high esteem.

Year	Enrolment
1990	2 711
1991	2 956
1992	3 246
1993	3 598
1994	3 928
1995	4 468
1996	4 949
1997	5 529
1998	6 281
1999	6 529
2000	6 984
2001	7 665
2002	8 465
2003	9 211

Table 6: Indian student enrolment at the former University of Natal (Statistics from the Division of Management Information - UKZN)

⁶⁵ Data on the numbers of Indian students prior to 1990 were not available due to system changes and the lack of computer generated data.

Selina Gokool also came from a middle class household headed by a father who was a school principal in Reservoir Hills. His support and encouragement ensured that she completed her degree and continued with her Higher Diploma in Education (HDE), which would ensure her employment as a teacher. This career choice will be examined in greater detail later on in this chapter.

Charles Moodley, Rufus Latchmigadu, Ashley Munsamy, Poobalan Govender, Colin Sabapathy, Andrew Nair, Vedant Nanackchand, Ravi Govender and Lucky Govender, all chose Fine Art as they had a passion for the arts and were also deeply aware of the value the degree had in their families. Rufus Latchmigadu, Ravi Govender, Anesh Singh and Ashley Munsamy were the first graduates in their immediate and extended families. While they were passionate about the subject and aware of their talent, they were also fully aware of the pressure to find employment, which saw them all, except for Munsamy, enrol for the HDE.

Equally important for all these graduates was the burden of success which weighed heavily on them. Having “opportunities they [our parents] didn’t have” (Charles Moodley, Interview: 2011) was a burden which weighed heavily, though it was intended to be a motivator for success. Graduates like Ravi Govender and Charles Moodley explain that their parents did not want their children to struggle and bear the hardships and prejudices they had borne. Their desire for a degree was thus based on the desire for their children to succeed in an unequal society.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, all of the graduates interviewed had three things in common. Firstly, they had supportive parents; secondly, they needed to acquire a degree as opposed to a diploma and finally, the majority were first time graduates in their extended families. In addition, the group interviewed also highlighted the importance of religion in their homes, with culture and traditional values foremost.

However, the late 1980s and 1990s brought to the university a diverse group of students from less traditional families in terms of religion, and more diverse backgrounds in terms of financial security and educational composition. While some emerged from affluent homes of doctors and educators, others came from homes where parents were commercial drivers, factory workers or small business owners. Even more diversity was noted with regard to religion. Some students still came from conservative cultural, traditional and religious families while others came from atheist homes or from inter-religious households where no

specific form of religion was practised. This diversity at a micro level reflected the constantly shifting socio-cultural macro dynamic of the Indian community.

While the 1980s witnessed the height of the demise of Apartheid with two states of emergencies, the 1990s witnessed a shift where the political agenda became less intrusive. Students now began emerging from communities which were more informed and diverse and more appreciative of the richness and potential of Fine Art. The pressure to make a financial contribution to the family was less overt and more students were intending to move away from their family home and seek work elsewhere, an idea gaining currency within a community previously opposed to the notion of unmarried children living away from the family home (Oosthuizen et al., 1981: 150).

The liberated nuclear family system, however, had little impact on the value of a degree. By the 1990s, most of the students came from homes which already had graduates within their extended families and it was no longer the exception but the rule, that upon completing a matric, a child was now *expected* to acquire a degree.

However, this last decade of students was still passionate about their choice of study and no longer merely registering for any degree for the sake of acquiring one. Almost all had done art at school and so came into the course with some prior knowledge about Fine Art. Significantly, the lacklustre interest of some of these graduates in participating in this study is a reflection of their attitude to the manner in which their course was phased out at UDW. As the first group of students at UNICOL believed they were given a second class education, similarly this last group believed they were being given a “raw deal” as the degree was being phased out (so says a graduate from the last group who wants to remain anonymous in this study). The ambience in the FAD in these final stages was one of despondency both by staff and students as evident in this recollection by Findlay (Interview: 2009), a printmaking lecturer at the time:

We [the staff] had to see the last few students through to the end. So the department got quite empty and there wasn't a spirit anymore...I left in 2000. It was harsh. There were rumours that they were going to close [us] down. I remember we got letters saying the department had been abolished, please hand in your keys at Stores. It was as sharp as that! And then they renegotiated for a bit longer with fewer students...without accepting first years...the treatment was shocking... because it was so hard and so sharp.

6.4 Pre-Training and Expectation

Towards the 1960s, while there was a growing demand for secondary school education, there were few schools to choose from. For those families living in the Durban CBD, female children generally attended Dartnell Crescent Primary School followed by the Durban Indian Girls' High School.⁶⁶ Here the girls were offered basic art education like painting and design. According to ex-pupil Razia Haffejee (Interview: 2011), the extent of the design class was to depict kitchen condiments on a piece of paper, while painting "involved little more than painting three apples on a table". Other students who went through this school include Ayesha Adams, Chandra Patel and Manjula Devi Naidoo.

Although the level of training for those who were fortunate enough to receive it was basic, there were many others like Timol and Charles Lazarus, who were not exposed to any art training at schools like St. Anthony's, yet they still had a passion for the subject which ensured they pursued it at tertiary level. Others like Colin Sabapathy and Andrew Nair, who were not offered any art training at Burnwood Secondary and Isipingo Secondary respectively, are still producing work and continue to exhibit.

All students who graduated in the 1980s and 1990s with the exception of two, Faiza Galdhari, from Hillview High in Newlands East and Charles Moodley from Asoka Secondary in Chatsworth, had access to art training up to matric level. This foregrounds the shift in focus in the school curriculum from a theoretical and rigid curriculum to one that was opening up and included the arts like music, speech and drama and art.

Art as a specialised matric subject was only offered in some Indian schools. The graduates in this study matriculated at the following schools with Art as a matriculation subject: Protea Secondary and Woodhurst Secondary in Chatsworth; Shallcross Secondary in Shallcross; Burnwood Secondary in Overport; Port Shepstone Secondary in Port Shepstone and Reservoir Hills Secondary in Reservoir Hills. Incidentally some of the Art teachers at these schools like Reservoir Hills Secondary (Ayesha Adam) and Woodhurst Secondary (Lucky Govender), were former graduates of UDW.

⁶⁶ This was the first Indian girl's high school which opened on 30 January 1945. Many Indian women did not receive formal secondary education until the middle of the century. This delay also highlights the traditional submissive and marginal position of women in Indian homes (Hey, 1961: 16).

Most students at the FAD, like Sherene Timol, Manjula Devi Naidoo, Kirendra Thathiah, Colin Sabapathy, Rufus Latchmigadu, Ravi Govender, Clive Pillay, Charles Moodley and Faiza Galdhari, had been recognised for their raw talent and deep passion for the subject and were encouraged to pursue it as a career. Others like Selina Gokool (Interview: 2011), Desiree Sekola (Interview: 2011) and Sheri Ganess (Interview: 2011) also had a passion for the subject but were uncertain how they could find employment on obtaining their degrees. Like most young people, they explain that they were totally immature and ignorant about what they could do with the degree upon completion. But whatever the personal journey that brought them to the FAD, once they arrived at the university their expectations either increased or receded based on their experiences on campus. Timol, as mentioned, had exhibited her work prior to entering university, and went to university with the expectation of acquiring the necessary skills in all techniques which would aid her in expressing herself more competently in terms of the social and political issues she wished to address. However, at the end of her study she was and still is very disappointed as, in her opinion, the course offered to her was too basic and much had to be learnt on her own or via older students in the department (Interview: 2011). While this sentiment can be viewed as an indictment on the teaching at the time, it is not uncommon for students to feel this way. However, for Timol the politicised nature of the university at the time reinforced her feelings of acquiring a second class qualification.

Similarly, Chandra Patel had the “glorious idea of being an artist” (Interview: 2011) but her experiences at the UNICOL were “disheartening.” She regarded her lecturers as “third grade” who were good in their own work but not seemingly able to communicate the basics to the students. While Timol and Patel were disappointed as their expectations were not realised, others like Manjula Devi Naidoo and Selina Gokool were pleased with the level offered to them at the FAD. As they did not have any expectations, they were grateful for what they received and accepted their education without question or complaint.

Rufus Latchmigadu highlights how the FAD broadened his horizons. What he expected and what he experienced were “chalk and cheese.” For him, while he expected a more relaxed and less stressful degree, he realised only too soon how demanding a degree it was. Those who wanted to pursue a career in art soon realised they would have to work extremely hard with long hours required if they were to excel at their practice, acquiring as much information from their lecturers as possible. This aspiration for knowledge is highlighted in this comment

by Ravi Govender (Interview: 2011): “I wanted to [explore] every nuance of my ability and the art [historical] traditions to achieve the best I can.”

6.5 Students’ Perceptions of FAD

Perceptions of the FAD evolved over the years, as evidenced by the marked shift in student comments from the earlier UNICOL experience to the 1990s at the Westville campus. At the outset, the University College was often perceived as being merely an Apartheid institution which students had no choice but to attend. For graduates of the early UNICOL island campus, it was perceived as a “concentration camp” or a “glorified high school” (Lazarus Charles, Interview: 2011). It provided a stepping stone for young academics to gain experience (Chandra Patel, Interview: 2011), to being a “demeaning” and “traumatic space” where students were treated as “third class citizens” (Sherene Timol, Interview: 2011). Hajra Vahed Greer in *Reflections, Salisbury Island 1961-1971* (in Moodley & Pather, 2011: 42), provides an account of her stay at UNICOL while a student of the FAD:

The Island evokes such a medley of contradictions: fury (given the political context of its history), the aspirations of our parents – so many of us were first generation university students...anxiety (security agents planted amongst us) and the ‘buzz’ of a rising political, social and gender consciousness...As for the lecturers: those who tried to valiantly educate, with an eye over their shoulder; racists who resented; colonials who patronised; coconuts who betrayed; opportunists who used the Island as a stepping stone for careers elsewhere...

Greer (Interview: 2011) elaborates on her perceptions of the Fine Art staff. She explains that politically they were a mixed group with a few liberals who accepted only “educated people of colour at their tables.” Others, she says “were colonials who helped and patronised people of colour, and several used UDW as a stepping stone to careers at White institutions like Natal Tech. None of the White and Indian staff challenged the status quo of an Apartheid institution in any way.” While Greer’s comments scathingly berate the apathy of the staff, it must be noted that under the circumstances, opposition to the status quo was not welcome and had serious consequences, hence young staff were cautious, to say the least.

Andrew Verster a young 24 year old lecturer at UNICOL recalls a somewhat different perception of interaction with students and the university. He says while students knew little about art as a result of their Indian secondary school art education, they were mostly:

...resentful about being there and not at a proper university – it wasn't regarded as a proper university and I remember Patrick [O'Connor] and I were both young...and were also quite politically involved. We were really seen as part of the students. On the side of the student and...they [the students] just sort of felt that we also felt a little bit awkward about the whole setup...

Admittedly, while the students were passionate about studying art, their perceptions of the FAD and UNICOL as an institution remained tainted, as shown above. Patel and Timol, while critical of the university as a whole, acknowledge the good work done by some of the staff like Jean Powell, Professor Cassim Lahki and Professor Jack Grossert.

Grossert, Head of Department of FAD, at the time, is also credited as a “very clear thinker...” by Verster, (Interview: 2008) and by students like Herselene Lazarus Charles (Interview: 2011), as being a very good and patient lecturer as well as a respected administrator.

Younger members of staff like Verster and O'Connor, while exceptionally talented and prolific artists today, unfortunately are not credited with having the same impact on their students. One reason suggested for this was their youth and lack of teaching experience, which resulted in poor communication with students. Further, the political tension on the campus resulted in staff leading students away from political content as they claimed it would be very problematic, with little further explanation. Timol expands on this limitation as she highlights the extreme difficulty experienced by most students in being creative in the stifling environments of UNICOL and UDW. Her frustrations are highlighted in this anecdote:

I could never do anything there although I tried. Maurice Kahn set a project for graphic design titled “1912” where we were expected to depict something about the year 1912. So I researched and at that time Gandhi was here. So I just started cutting out a little bit. I didn't even finish! He said, “What clichéd rubbish! I'm going to give you zero for this!” I felt so bad. I said, “What do you mean clichéd...This is history. Do you want me to say something about the Boer War?” He said, “Well, there are lots of things that you could do with 1912. Why must you do this clichéd work about the struggle?” I said to him, “You are a privileged White man in this country but you forget you are a Jew and what they did to you! You might not have experienced it but your forefathers did!” He said, “You're just going to jeopardise yourself doing this work.”

The FAD was thus in the 1960s perceived to be a stifling and traumatic place where students found it difficult to be creative and had no freedom of expression (Patel, Interview: 2011). Many students like Patel, Sukha and Timol were strongly of the opinion that they were “not taught” but rather “self-taught” and “blundered along receiving an inferior education” (Timol,

Interview: 2011). Further, the buildings were cramped and lacked a conducive atmosphere for creative expression.

In time though, the situation improved, with students providing a more positive picture of the FAD. In the 1970s, when the campus moved premises to the new Westville site, a more comprehensive training was offered as expanded upon in Chapter Four. While art work was still discipline- specific and project-based and remained so until the department closed, it was in those early days at UDW that the predominant perception was that the campus was restrictive, where any political statements were frowned upon as they would, according to Professor Grossert, “get you into trouble” (Haffejee, Interview: 2011).

In the 1980s, students’ perceptions of the FAD and the university changed as a result of the sharp shift towards a more explicit political agenda among the university’s student population. Tied to this was the changing political climate of the country which in retrospect, can be described as the height of Apartheid with two states of emergencies. In the FAD the change of HOD from Volschenk to Matthews also led to changes in the student perception of FAD by 1986 (see Chapter Four).

Within the new merged Department of Fine Art and History of Art graduates bear testimony to shift away from the rigidity of Professor Volschenk, who was a sculptor, to the more flexible, nurturing and progressive leadership of art historian and painter, Professor Matthews. The fact that Matthews was the leading authority on Indian temple art and architecture in South Africa, heading the Indian university’s Department of Fine Art and History of Art, instilled a great deal of pride and worth amongst the students in the department, and was a coup for the university. Consequently, the students of this generation were far more appreciative of their syllabus and experienced a shift towards an attempt to forge new relationships with the staff who, even during the late 1980s, was still predominantly White.

While in the past, at UNICOL the structure of the degree seemed disjointed to students, it now began to formulate into a more cohesive and coherent whole. The increased focus on theory and history with its growing syllabus in Indian and Islamic art and architecture, located students within a local and global framework of art history. It provided them with a deeper appreciation of their own rich cultural heritage irrespective of their religious backgrounds. While new techniques were being taught and strong theoretical components

developed, students still felt a “distance” (Charles Moodley: 2011; Ravi Govender: 2011) between staff and students. Most staff members, with the exception of Cassim Lahki and later Vedant Nanackchand, Kiren Thathiah, Nasan Pather, Lalitha Jawahirilal and I, were White and this seemed to have created a barrier for student/staff engagements.

For students, the staff members were ‘nice’ but the gap between them was vast. They were there to “make sure we did the work”, in contrast to the tenure of Professor Volschenk, when they were “largely self-taught” (Ramgolam, Interview: 2010). The political circumstances of the country and the racialised divisions of society resulted in students who felt they were unable to approach their lecturers. For many, like me, these were the first White people we had had instruction from, and the social stratification that prevailed prevented a commonality in which a sense of ease and confidence could be expressed.

However, in contrast to earlier negative contentions, Faiza Galdhari (Interview: 2011), one of the few practising artists since graduating from UDW, emphasises that the FAD opened up a whole new world for her which provided an excellent grounding, with good lecturers who were professional and who provided excellent technical guidance. She adds that her subsequent experience as a practising artist which involved interacting with Fine Art graduates from other universities draws attention to the good training she received in printmaking techniques. In her experience, this was on par with graduates from any other university in the country.

6.6 A Collective Political Consciousness

Prior to major transformation in South Africa in the 1990s, the students at UDW and UNICOL were faced with overwhelming political challenges. From its inception and the negativity with which it was introduced and received, the institution generated and engaged a radical and political mind-set among students. In his expansive text on student politics during Apartheid, *Black Man, You are on your Own* (2009), Badat explains the nature of segregated universities as attempts to control the education of Blacks (2009: 59) and reproduce racial and cultural domination (2009: 61). Further, Black universities were noted for being dominated by White staff with differential salary and service conditions (Badat, 2009: 59).

Although UNICOL bore the brunt of the political agenda of the 1960s in South Africa, it must be noted that globally, the 1960s was a decade of widespread political turbulence with

the Vietnam War (1959-1975), and the assassination of key political figures like J.F. Kennedy (1963), Robert F. Kennedy (1968), Martin Luther King (1968) and Malcolm X (1965). All highlight the sharp political ethos evident in other parts of the world. In South Africa, it was the decade which began with the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, followed by the transition to becoming a republic in 1961 and ending with the Rivonia Trial in 1963/4, when Nelson Mandela along with other freedom fighters were sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. It was also in 1960 that the ANC was banned and went underground to establish its armed wing *Umkhonto We Sizwe* in 1961. Later, in the 1980s, the country was also exposed to riot police, extreme and brutal violence and intimidation.

The 1960s was the decade when human rights had taken a battering and in which the management of the UNICOL campus asserted its draconian laws (Anand Jayrajh in Moodley & Pather, 2011: 11), one of which included the dress code which demanded that female students wore dresses and male students wore jackets and ties to campus. This epoch in South Africa placed students in a political straitjacket, reinforced by the oppressive management on campus. The degree of oppression was evident in the difficulty students experienced in forming a Student Representative Council⁶⁷ which was only considered by management if the rector presided over all meetings with absolute veto rights on all issues. Students fought this as well as other issues like poor hostel conditions, high transport costs, lack of freedom of speech, intimidation and spying and the fact that they were forbidden to join the National Union of South African students (NUSAS)⁶⁸ in the early days and the South African Students Organisation (SASO)⁶⁹ in the later years (Sam Moodley in Moodley & Pather, 2011: 27-28).

⁶⁷ A Student Representative Council was not established at UDW until 1970 due to a deadlock with the authorities over the power of the SRC (Badat, 2009: 67).

⁶⁸ NUSAS was formed in 1924 as a union of students at White universities. A major obstacle to a radicalisation of the organisation was that although the leadership was liberal and radical, the mass base tended to be conservative and not ready to support any project of Black liberation. Although Black members found NUSAS limiting with their liberal stance in support of Black liberation, many SRCs were attracted to join as it provided one of the few avenues for voicing opposition to Apartheid. During the mid-1960s, NUSAS was accused of being a communist organisation and a front for the banned liberation movements. A number of their leaders were banned, arrested and deported. This together with marches to protest against state repression gave the organisation some credibility among Black students. By joining NUSAS, Black students could try to influence the organisation from within to adopt more radical policies and forms of action (Badat, 2009: 49).

⁶⁹ SASO was formed in 1968 and provided Black higher education students with a political home and an avenue for political activity outside the Black political parties. It provided political education and organisational training and was instrumental in rekindling a new era of Black political activism. Through Black Consciousness it tried to rebuild the mind of the oppressed and focus on consciousness to develop self-esteem, pride, confidence and

This sentiment is further reinforced and highlighted in a poster (Figure 15), which challenged the status quo of the campus and the enlightened or *verkrampste*⁷⁰ position of the students.



Figure 14: Student Poster (in Moodley & Pather, 2011: 28)

Moodley's assertion is supported by Patel (Interview: 2011), when she describes UNICOL as having an "overt police presence" and where everybody on the island was politicised. She says authorities were constantly "clamping down on students", resulting in more covert underground operations. Whether or not students were politically aware when they arrived on the island, they were certainly conscientised on site (Patel, Interview: 2011).

Both UNICOL and UDW were highly charged political spaces. Both institutions were politically charged sites with security police virtually a constant presence, as revealed by all interviewees. The UDW campus was a campus noted for its political struggles as the idea of

solidarity amongst Black students. Within higher education, SASO began the tradition of the racial and ethnic campuses becoming sites of struggle and gave a more political tone to the overall black higher education movement (Badat, 2009: 104-106).

⁷⁰ This Afrikaans term referred to the conservative political attitudes especially with reference to Afrikaner nationalism (WritersEventsOnline). During Apartheid there were people with a particular political consciousness which was either progressive/liberal (Verligte) or conservative (Verkrampste).

inequality unified all students in their common cause i.e. equality and human rights for all South Africans. As proclaimed by SASO, the students were “an integral part of the oppressed community before we [are] Students” (in Badat, 2009: 60). This became the culture of the institution. The first outburst by students was the solidarity boycott of 1972.⁷¹ This reactionary behaviour came to symbolise the UDW culture and reached its height in the 1980s with constant police presence, boycotts, marches and students subject to bird shot and purple dye (Ravi Govender, Interview: 2011). Students were often arrested and imprisoned; after being questioned, some were immediately released (Selina Gokool, Interview: 2011), while others were detained for longer periods of time. These were traumatic and challenging days for students at the university. Up to the 1990s, graduates unanimously agreed that their education was received under protest. But with steadfast student leadership in an established SRC, stalwarts like Vasu Gounden, Ashraf Adams, Kumi Naidoo and Kovin Naidoo played critical roles in the management of the student body politic.

In general, UDW’s political structure created an opportunity for the youth to play an active role in the struggle for emancipation. As Anesh Singh (2011) recalls, “there was a high level of student politics with AZAPO and AZASM and various other congress movements active on campus”. He says that UDW was a base for the NIC and the UDF and functioned as a political front for various political organisations. UDW created an opportunity and base for students and staff to further their political agenda and currently key political figures in contemporary South Africa attests to this statement. Interestingly, the ANC held its first 48th national conference at UDW in the sports centre in 1991.

Trish Gibbons (Interview: 2011), a member of staff in the English Department between 1984 and 2000, maintains that

UDW was a very sensitive barometer of political and social change...but while it was this site of change it was also a very controlled campus...with police rolling onto campus in their armoured vehicles and unarmed students and staff

⁷¹ In 1972, Onkgopotse Tiro, a former SRC president at the University of the North (UNIN), was expelled from his institution for a graduation speech that attacked segregated education and White domination of Black institutions. SASO called on students to boycott classes until Tiro was re-instated. The university reacted by suspending the SRC and banning all meetings, after which 1146 students were expelled. The Tiro and UNIN student expulsions not only led to solidarity boycotts at other Black universities but served as a catalyst for student protests around the country. UDW was one of the first to erupt in support of the call (Badat, 2009: 74-75).

literally pitting themselves against caspers and people in bullet proof vests carrying weapons.

This political situation often found expression in the students' art works but for approximately the first twelve to fifteen years, they were dissuaded from using this imagery. Nevertheless, while students in their search for material photographed the marches and riots on campus, many had their cameras confiscated by the police under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act (Rufus Latchmigadu, Interview: 2011).

Finally, according to Sheri Ganess (Interview: 2011), the location of the department also supported the political agenda of the campus as it was isolated and far removed from the main hall (where mass meetings were held) and the 'quad' (which often witnessed the clash between students/staff and police), and thus perfect for what Ravi Govender (Interview: 2011) calls "clandestine meetings" supported by lecturers who also "turned a blind eye to protect their students". But it is Rufus Latchmigadu's (Interview: 2010) comment that poignantly situates the political nature of the campus and the students: "...you couldn't divorce yourself from politics. Whether you were vocal or not – you were political by virtue of the fact that you were there!"

6.7 Postgraduate Prospects

Upon completing the Fine Art degree, graduates soon realised that the job market did not cater for them and preferred to employ those with a diploma in graphic design rather than those with a Fine Art degree. As a result, the HDE became an attractive and quick option for guaranteed employment and of course, within the Indian community, teaching was widely considered as being a highly regarded profession. According to Anand Singh (2005: 124-125),

Any person aspiring to become a teacher was often instantaneously bestowed with respect and admiration within the community. [Teaching] was a well protected job offered by the state, with attractive benefits and all those who qualified with teaching degrees or diplomas were guaranteed employment – but in Indian schools only.

All the graduates interviewed for this study, with the exception of Sherene Timol, Herselene Charles Lazarus, Prabashan Pather and Clive Pillay, went on to complete the Higher Diploma in Education (HDE).

While the HDE would guarantee employment, it could not guarantee that these graduates would teach art, their area of specialisation. Due to limited art teaching positions in the 1980s, and a dire shortage of Junior Primary (JP) teachers (Ganess, Interview: 2011), some Fine Art graduates elected to take up these JP teaching positions or opt to remain unemployed if they refused. Others had to teach subjects in the schooling curriculum ranging from primary school Geography, Mathematics, Afrikaans and Physical education to secondary school subjects like History, Afrikaans, Geography and Maths. However, there were some graduates like Ravi Govender, Andrew Nair, Selvan Naidoo, Sandy Naidoo, Ujala Sewpersad, and Desiree Sekola who were eventually given an opportunity to teach Art as a secondary school subject and have been doing so ever since. Many senior secondary level Art teachers have progressed substantially to hold senior positions in their fields. Selvan Naidoo, for example, has been the Chief Examiner for Design nationally since 2006, while Anesh Singh is presently the principal of Golden Steps School for the severely impaired. Ravi Govender migrated from teaching to become Director of the Durban Indian Documentation Centre in Derby Street and is presently employed as Executive Support of the Department of Art, Culture and Tourism in KwaZulu-Natal. Pragasen Chetty went on to take up the position of Manager of Visual Arts and Crafts in the Eastern Cape Sector of Arts and Culture.

Some of the Fine Art graduates also went on to take up lecturing positions at various tertiary institutions around the country. Vedant Nanackchand, after spending many years at UDW, is presently employed at the University of Johannesburg, while Kiren Thathiah was Professor of Fine Art and HOD in the Department of Fine Art at the Vaal University of Technology. Kanu Sukha lectured at the Teachers Training College in Cape Town before it closed as a result of the mergers of tertiary institution which began in 1999 around the country. Judy Ramgolam taught at numerous high schools for many years before joining the Vaal University of Technology, and is presently lecturing at the University of Johannesburg. Avitha Sooful and Reshma Maharaj are both also employed at VUT and have been there for many years.

Other graduates became increasingly involved in the art world. Herselene Lazarus Charles eventually worked as a designer at David Whiteheads before resigning in 1977 to take on the responsibilities of her young family. Some like Timol and Patel were disillusioned by job reservation and the ensuing frustrations which gave them limited, menial work usually assigned to non-White workers in the design industry. Sherene Timol thereafter abandoned

the job search in favour of starting her family, while Chandra Patel registered for a degree in social work.

Clive Pillay, also frustrated at the limitations of the FA degree, wanted to pursue a career in the advertising world. However, this gap in his knowledge led him to study further and acquire a diploma in graphic design at the (then) M.L. Sultan Technikon. He thereafter worked as a graphic designer at various NGOs involved in adult education, like the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED). Figure 16 is an example of his illustrative work.



Figure 15: Clive Pillay, *Children's Rights*, c.1995, mixed media, dimensions unknown

Later, towards the mid-1990s, other opportunities opened up in the 'new South Africa'. Prabashan Pather used his FA degree as a base to enrich his knowledge, and was awarded an MA in Culture and Media Studies at the University of Natal in 1997. This exposed him to the advertising industry, resulting in his acquiring a subsequent diploma in Advertising at the AAA School in Cape Town. With these diverse skills, he was more easily employable and is presently the Art Director at Ogilvy in Cape Town. Figures 17 and 19 present some of his work as an Art Director, while Chapter Seven will present and explore his paintings.



Figure 16: Prabashan Pather, 2009, 70 metre bill board on the N1 Highway in Johannesburg



Figure 17: Prabashan Pather, Advert for Volkswagen.

6.8 Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has extrapolated and presented the views of select Fine Art graduates as they emerged from interviews conducted with them. A few salient points come to light which I would like to summarise here. Firstly, for up to the mid 1980s students attended the Indian university under protest. Secondly, they emerged from families which valued the degree certification above all else and throughout their struggles on campus, the students were aware that the *degree* should never be put in jeopardy. Thirdly, a large majority of students came to university from lower income families where university fees were an additional financial burden. Fourth, most embarked upon teaching as a profession as it provided secure

employment, and finally, all graduates received a political education with or without their consent.

The following chapter will present the art works as they emerge from the portfolios of these graduates.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CRITICAL MOMENTS

7.1 Introduction: Narratives for interpretation

During the 20th century art in South Africa has served a multitude of purposes. One of the most significant, in my opinion, is its role in articulating and bolstering the freedom struggle. This kind of art has been variously described as “protest art”, “resistance art”, “political art”, “agit-prop”, “propaganda art”, “oppositional art”, “committed art” and “intervention art” (Clarke, 1992: 17). This art-making, particularly from the mid 1960s to the 1980s, often occurred in a racially segregated context with limited opportunities for interaction between racial and cultural groups. But this segregation also had international support when, due to the cultural boycott, the country was banned from participating in most international foray such as the Venice Biennale (from 1962 to 1992) and was only invited to participate again in 1993 after an absence of 27 years (Williamson in Herreman, 1999: 32) and then too, only after the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of all political parties.

The historical and political context of South Africa, as has already been discussed, is crucial to the contexts of UNICOL and UDW. This chapter will demonstrate how Fine Art graduates from this institution practised their creativity largely within the “education under protest” paradigm. However, in this endeavour, I will also foreground the manner in which these graduates negotiated their paths as students, and thereafter as teachers and artists. Their individual narratives, as highlighted in Chapter Six, have illuminated the interplay of family, university, success, failure and compromise in their personal and creative journeys. Their responses to these personal situations as well as the political landscape found expression in diverse forms of representation, which is analysed in this chapter.

The rationale for positioning this research within the South African political and historical context is to examine its probable influence on the creative work of the FAD graduates. Here concepts of culture, politics and identity delimit the theoretical discussion preceded by an overview of art produced in South Africa during the time-frame of the study. This overview is presented in order to create a context from which to analyse and situate the art work.

7.2 History and Context

In writing this section, I am aware that the consciousness of a racialised South African history permeates all aspects of this discourse. However, the extent of the impact that Apartheid and implicitly colonialism per se, had on these graduates and their art work for approximately the first thirty years, is significant. During this time many practising visual artists in the country, like Paul Stopforth and Thami Mnyele, experienced censorship when their work appeared in public spaces. Erica Clark in her Masters dissertation, *Protest Art in South Africa, 1968 – 1976* (1992:19), explains that politically active artists and intellectuals were often confronted with detention and harassment. She cites the example of Omar Badsha, a prolific commentator and photographer, who was frequently detained and harassed for his involvement in Black Consciousness initiatives and what were regarded as illegal trade unions. As a result, however committed the artists were to the political struggle, their art was often prevented from becoming part of a mass conscientisation and mobilisation programme (Clarke, 1992: 20).

Throughout this dissertation I have maintained that the insidious nature of politics in South Africa has often proved to be dangerous terrain to traverse. For many years this experience has weighed heavily on the daily life and consciousness of this country's citizens. This study has provided a group of Indian Fine Art graduates with an unusual opportunity to reflect on their trials and triumphs within such a politicised environment, in an unthreatening and secure manner, reinforced by the passage of time and subsequent maturity. In many instances this reflective experience has proved to be an invaluable experience which has prompted a review of their capacities and potential engagement in future work.

One of the key factors emerging from discussions with the graduates, particularly those who explored a political idiom, was the shift in consciousness they hoped to achieve with their work. The Marxian idea that art can change consciousness and in turn change society was acknowledged, as was the notion that intentional militancy without a change in consciousness was defeatist. In this regard, community projects like the *Helping Hands* in Chatsworth provided opportunities to engage with community consciousness. Albie Sachs in his controversial paper "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom" (in de Kok and Press, 1990: 20-21), suggests that "the power of art lies precisely in its capacity to expose contradictions and reveal tensions", which for him was a crucial aspect of the struggle. He further questions the

intention of the struggle when he asks, "...what are we fighting for, if not the right to express our humanity in all its forms..." Sachs' comments highlight the significant role that art and culture continue to play in South African society. Rashaad Araeen in his foreword to the *Visual Century, South African Art in Context* (Volume 3. 1972-1992, 2011: xi), emphasises that art has always been part of the human struggle, not only for self-realisation but also for the betterment of society. For him art offers a means through which one can look into the past, evaluate the present and determine a way for the future. Art history, he says, is therefore of fundamental importance as it provides information about the past and how human beings have perceived the world and their own place within it. These comments are significant in the delineation of the 'value' of art histories in this country and gives impetus to the continued integration of South African Indian art into the art historical archive of this country.

In an attempt to locate this narrative in South Africa, it is necessary to include a brief overview of key works that implicitly and explicitly explore and engage with the prevailing language and systems of resistance. While this in turn may require some consideration of the broader context of twentieth century art produced in South Africa, the scope of such an overview would be substantial and is not the focus of this dissertation.

In spite of the racial policies of South Africa, art practice was often associated with the envisioning of an imagined post-Apartheid country. From the 1930s and well into the 1990s, art practice mitigated against all restrictive segregationist policies, where Black and White artists from all walks of life attempted to create a model for a utopian intercultural post Apartheid society. These peaked in the 1950s with the cultural precincts of Sophiatown and District Six⁷² and the emergence of visual art centres like the Polly Street Art Centre, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church Arts and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift.⁷³ Rorke's Drift nurtured artists like Azaria Mbatha, Johan Muafangejo, Paul Sibisi and Sam Nhlengethwa (Oliphant and Roome in Herreman, 1999: 176) to name a few, while Polly Street gave a voice

⁷² Sophiatown (founded in 1899 near Johannesburg) and District Six (Cape Town) were townships with a cosmopolitan life which engaged in inter-racial jazz music, writing and theatre productions. Both these areas were destroyed by the forced removals of the Apartheid government in terms of the Group Areas Act.

⁷³ The Evangelical Art and Craft Centre was established by Peder and Ulla Gowenius in 1962 at the old mission station known as Rorke's Drift. The purpose was to nurture the unique artistic heritage of Africa. When the art section closed in 1982, Rorke's Drift came to embody the colonial approach or limiting art teaching for Africans to the field of craft production (Oliphant and Roome in Herreman, 1999: 176). In 2004 it was reopened as a learnership with funding from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Arts and Culture (<http://mg.co.za/article/2006-05-12-reviving-rorkes-drift>). Accessed 4 November 2012.

to artists such as Sydney Khumalo, Louis Maqhubela, Ephraim Ngatane, Lucas Sithole and Ezrom Legae (Miles, 2004). Particularly in its early years, many of these artists like Azaria Mbatha and Sam Nhlengethwa produced work that confronted Apartheid within the framework of Christian iconography.

During the late 1960s, events such as the Sharpeville massacre, the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, sustained intimidation, incarceration and censorship, invariably affected some artists more than others. Some went into exile like Ernest Mancoba (Paris), Gerard Sekoto (Paris), Dumile Feni (USA) Azaria Mbatha (Sweden) and Pitika Ntuli (Swaziland and London), while others like Thami Mnyele were forced to flee the country to Botswana where he was eventually killed by the South African Defence Force in 1985 (Clark, 1992: 19).

During subsequent years, the impact of Apartheid provided compelling subject matter for artists. Until the 1970s there were few images of overt protest in art-making, as Government repression of political activity limited such forms of expression. The rise of Black Consciousness in this decade and the subsequent death of its leader Steve Biko in 1977, sparked one of the key moments of resistance in South Africa, that of the Soweto Uprising of 1976. Following the momentum of this tragedy, a conference *The State of Art in South Africa* was held at the University of Cape Town in 1979. This gathering argued for a positive role for art in the struggle to end Apartheid. Further, it called for increased educational opportunities for artists and a boycott of all state-sponsored exhibitions, and further raised serious concern about the inadequacies of art educational opportunities for all South Africans (Pissarra, 2011: 7; Berman, 1983: 297 & 374; Sack in D'Amato in Herreman, 1999: 44). This signalled the impetus for an increasingly engaged art that would challenge the *status quo* in all its facets.

One such attempt at challenging the status quo was the number of works that emerged focusing on the death of Biko. Paul Stopforth, for example, created a series of mixed media drawings in 1989 entitled *Biko Series* (Figure 20) from autopsy photographs he managed to obtain at the time (Koloane in Herreman, 1999: 20; Sassoon in Law-Viljoen, 2010: 40).

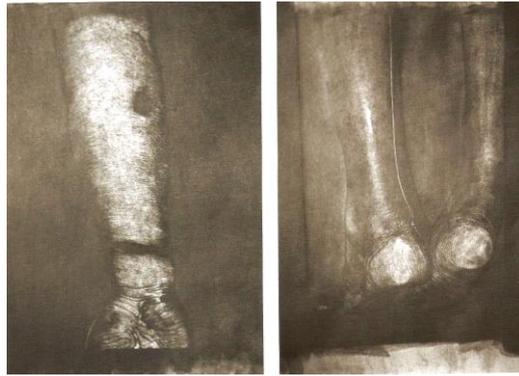


Figure 18: Paul Stopforth, *Biko Series* (Arm and Heels detail), 1980, mixed media, 76 x 56 cm each, (in Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, 2010: 41)

Later work from the 1990s by Sam Nhlengethwa, for example, also depicted the martyr Biko lying dead on the cement floor of the prison cell after being assaulted during interrogation. The title *It Left Him Cold* (Figure 21) makes reference to the then Minister of Justice Jimmy Kruger's statement on the death of Steve Biko (Law-Viljoen, 2010: 41). According to Richards (Goniwe et al., 2011: 61), this work can be seen as a symptom of the dehumanisation of the system of Apartheid, became an iconic theme in much art, and was also widely used to reflect the contribution of Black Consciousness to the struggle in South Africa.



Figure 19: Sam Nhlengethwa, *It Left him Cold - the death of Steve Biko*, 1990, collage, pencil and charcoal, 69 x 93cm, (Goniwe et al., 2011:58)

Sue Williamson also used this theme in a print set against the backdrop of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) post-1994, entitled the *Truth Game Series: Nkosinati Biko – False medical certificate – Dr Benjamin Tucker* (Figure 22). David Koloane's *The Journey* (Figure 23) is a series of twenty drawings which were done after the police officers responsible for Biko's death applied for amnesty at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This theme also found expression in the work of Mahendra Govender (Figure

41-42) who explored the death of Biko and alluded to the interrogation spaces within which he was killed. Thus the extent of reflection upon the brutality of the state was significant.

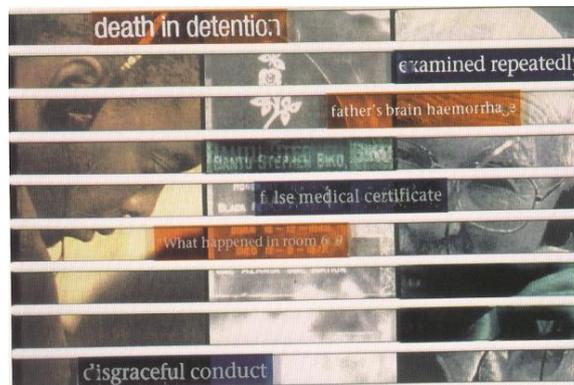


Figure 20: Sue Williamson, *Truth Game Series: Nkosinathi Biko - False medical certificate - Dr Benjamin Tucker*, 1998, colour laser prints, wood, metal, plastic, perspex, 80 x 120 x 6cm (Herreman, 1999: 33)



Figure 21: David Koloane, *The Journey* (2 of 20 drawings), 1998 (Herreman, 1999: 20-21)

Some of the artists who were engaged in resistance art often cultivated a political awareness through artistic expression reflective of particular moments in South Africa's history. Many Black artists residing in the townships produced a form of social realism reflecting the conditions in which their communities lived (Koloane in Herreman, 1999: 20). The fundamental imbalance of access to formal art education led to the development of this sub-market adjunct to mainstream South African art. To most Black artists, the primary objective, according to Koloane (in Herreman, 1999: 21), was to sell their work. This would provide not only a means of subsistence but more importantly would imply success. When commercial galleries opened their doors to Black artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it provided ample opportunity for many Black artists to show and sell their work. This body of work later became known as 'Township Art'. The content of the works here tended to sentimentalise the picturesque abjection of township life, and included imagery of dilapidated houses, washer women, teary-eyed urchins, penny whistlers, Black mother and child tableaux, physiognomic

exaggeration with oversized feet, hands, lips and eyes, and few scenes of resistance (Fransen, 1982: 363; Peffer, 2009: 31; Koloane in Herreman, 1999: 20).

Koloane (in Herreman, 1999: 21-22) critiques this idiom by suggesting that, due to the growing interest, potential buyers, art dealers and galleries demanded a certain 'type' of work which developed into formulaic reproductions, which were "sanitised" and "virus-free." Matsemela Manaka, quoted by Oliphant and Roome (in Herreman, 1999: 175), supports Koloane's critique when she argued that artists developed a 'victim' aesthetic which was produced for a guilt-ridden and patronising White art market. Peffer (2009: 27) also foregrounds the notion that Black artists were expected by their White patrons to depict their own people and customs within a narrow iconographic range: either through typical scenes of 'township life' or a post-colonial gaze of 'exotic Africa'.

This attitude gave impetus to the shift in ideology with regard to the positioning of art in society. According to Peffer one of the key instruments in this shift was the Medu⁷⁴ festival held in Gabarone in 1982, where the slogan *art as a weapon of the struggle* was born. Here several hundred South African visual artists, writers, musicians and actors, many exiled and living abroad, attended the week-long Medu-organised *Culture and Resistance* festival (Peffer, 2009: 77). The purpose was to examine and propose the role of art in pursuit of a future democratic South Africa as a prelude to the creation of the United Democratic Front (UDF).⁷⁵ At this pivotal festival, the title 'cultural worker' was adopted instead of 'artist', which was considered to be more élitist (Peffer, 2009: 80). The idea that art could articulate struggle perspectives required prominence rather than the individualistic desires of the 'workers' themselves (Peffer, 2009: 80-81). Shirli Gilbert in her article "Singing Against Apartheid: ANC Cultural Groups and the International Anti-Apartheid Struggle" (2007: 436), avers that during the late 1970s and the 1980s, it was widely agreed that an ideal art was not élitist or exclusive, but was intimately connected with the people. She says (2006: 436) its

⁷⁴ The Medu Art Ensemble was formed in 1977 by artists who fled the townships. Initially, it was open to only Black artists, but later allowed White artists in when it became more aligned with the principles of the ANC (Peffer, 2009: 74).

⁷⁵ The United Democratic Front was formed in 1983 and was an alliance of progressive and grassroots organisations which resisted sham political reforms and demanded total eradication of the Apartheid system (Peffer, 2009: 77).

purpose was not only to portray their plight but also to articulate their hopes and aspirations explaining further that:

...truly revolutionary art served to educate, awaken political consciousness and galvanise people into action...art was a vehicle for condemning the regime and informing the world about apartheid. In short, culture was emphatically promoted as a 'weapon in the struggle for national liberation and democracy in our country'.⁷⁶

Another catalyst for a shift in creative evaluation was the 1988 exhibition of Black artists at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, appropriately titled *The Neglected Tradition: Towards a New History of South African Art* (1989). Curated by Steven Sack, it addressed the under representation of Black art in South African art institutions and therefore signalled the emergence of the revisionist moment that had written historically marginalised Black artists into the South African script (Pissarra, 2011: 9). Thus the 1980s signalled a major shift and became known as the contentious period of 'resistance art' or 'resistance narratives' (Williamson, 1989:7) and signalled the beginning of the demise of Apartheid.

In the 1990s a paradigm shift was noted which provided South African artists with international opportunity for exposure (Williamson & Jamal, 1996:8). However it can be noted that artists were still 'stuck' in the resistance mode with some works recalling the struggle idiom (Williamson & Jamal, 1996:8). Thus an overview of contemporary art practice in South Africa still reflects a degree of rootedness in the political history of this country. Many artists continue to engage in the varied forms of political reflection within diverse contexts. Such expressions include aspects of multiculturalism, identity, religion, race, and the fundamental question of what it means to be South African. For example, Jane Alexander's installation (Figure 24) *Danger Gevaar Ingozi* (2004), reflects upon the varied layers of separation, segregation and the all-pervading fear in South Africa, while Nandipha Mntambo's work (Figure 25) explores culture, race, gender and the duality of "indigeneity and foreign-ness" (Richards in Goniwe et al., 2011: 65). The use of spice in Berni Searle's

⁷⁶ These ideas are found frequently in ANC struggle literature which focuses on the impetus that the various boycotts had on liberation struggle: for example, the academic boycott which had its beginnings in 1965 and the sports boycott and expulsion from the Olympics in 1968. See J.B. Spector's article *Non-Traditional Diplomacy: Cultural, Academic and Sports Boycotts and Change in South Africa* (<http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/AAMwebsite/AAMCONFpapers/Spector,JB.doc>).

(Figure 26) *Colour Me* series (1998), explores amongst other aspects, a history of the slave and trade ships which used the Cape as a port. Gabeba Baderoon suggests that the notion of the exotic spice and exotic skin, recall the memory of the brutal trade in human beings, as spice indexes a brutal history (Baderoon in Goniwe et al., 2011: 85).



Figure 22: Jane Alexander, *Danger Gevaar*, 2004, Tableau, security enclosure with barbed wire extension, Loyiso Qanya in security uniform with baton. 252.5 x 300cm (in Langerman, 2006: 7)



Figure 23: Nandhipa Mntambo, *Balandzeli*, 2004, cowhide, resin, polyester, mesh, waxed cord, variable dimensions, (Goniwe et al., 2011: 64)



Figure 24: Berni Searle, Untitled from *Colour Me* series, 1998, hand printed colour photograph, 42 x 50cm (Goniwe et al., 2011: 82)

South African artists were now tasked with the imperative to re-image and re-imagine their art and identities (Williamson & Jamal, 1996: 13). This resulted in artworks which still reflect a grappling with notions of identities and ethnicities (Williamson & Jamal, 1996: 6-8), while still problematising 'being' South African. It is therefore evident that art produced in the macrocosm and in the public domain of South Africa is thus still located in the political sphere of unresolved identities and in a search for the recovery of self (Ramgolam, 2011: 111). Periodic disruptions, both historical and political, created changing contexts, propelling artists into contentious spaces.

The following analysis of work from the microcosm of UDW illustrates similar representations evident in the national domain. The discussion presents a body of work from c1966 to 2011, from student explorations to contemporary practices, which reflect on the former graduate's creativity today. In the analysis aspects of culture, politics and identity will delimit the investigation.

7.3 A Strategy for Analysis

This chapter will present the work in two sections. The first section *Student Practice* will present and examine the work produced as part of the graduate's training at the FAD. While this section focuses on the work produced, it is not intended to present a critique or evaluation of the FAD's curriculum or staff. The intention is to present the students engagement with the study of fine art, to foreground their talent and technical ability and finally, to highlight the strong impact that the culture of political engagement had on their art practice.

Section Two, *Professional Practice* presents an analysis of work produced by graduates upon the completion of the Fine Art degree. Some of these works were produced as part of a Master of Fine Art portfolio, particularly from Kiren Thathiah, Ravi Govender, Faiza Galdhari and Reshma Maharaj. Others derive from subsequent artistic output which engaged with issues of identity as they manifest within the microcosm of the Indian ethnicity in South Africa. This section highlights work that derived from personal expressions of identity construction to a broader engagement with identity within the multi-racial South African context. Not only do many of the works presented here reflect a politically repressive ethos but one that also celebrates, questions and ultimately challenges notions of democracy and

inclusivity in post-Apartheid South Africa. This discussion further explores issues of identity, place and displacement, diaspora and notions of ethnicity.

7.4 Student Practice

7.4.1. Introduction

The year 1986, was a period marked by volatility and ongoing protests in support of political change both in the country in general and at university campuses throughout South Africa. This climate was further emboldened by the implementation of the 2nd state of emergency in June of 1986. In the same year Terence King, then HOD of the Fine Arts Department of the University of Natal on the Pietermaritzburg Campus, commented on the significance in South Africa of education and in particular, art education, at the South African Association of Art Historians 2nd conference held in Johannesburg. Supporting the arguments presented in the introduction to this chapter, he noted that education would invariably “in some measure reflect social attitudes and values and might to some extent act as an agent for social change” (1986: 109). In keeping with this Marxian tenet, Fischer also maintains that the essential function of art was to enlighten and stimulate action and ensure that man is able to recognise and change the world (2010: 23). For many UDW FA students, similar aspirations emerged. On the one hand, they wished to record their ethos and the complex cultural realities in their encounter with westernised modernity. On the other, they wished to both document the volatile situation they experienced (see works of Clive Pillay, Figure 26-31; Ujala Sewpersad, Figure 32; Dianne Latchmigadu, Figures 33 and 36; Rufus Latchmigadu, Figures 37-40, and Mahendra Govender, Figures 41 and 42), as well as proffer visions of the future in both the social and political sense (see works of Vedant Nanackchand, Figures 48 and 49, and Selvan Naidoo, Figure 103).

But perhaps ‘conscientising’ is a more appropriate expression, where according to the late Ashley Ward, former student and lecturer at UDW, conscientising becomes an educative process (SAAAH, 1993: 115). He claimed that at UDW this was a slow and painful process, but one that was regarded as necessary if a commitment was to be made to redress the prejudices firstly of Apartheid, and thereafter in a post-colonial, post-Apartheid society. For Jonathan Jansen, education was the *means* for conscientisation of the oppressed for whom, in South Africa, “education *was* the struggle” (in Oliphant et al., 2004: 163). However, he notes that in some cases education was placed by students on the “backburner of student and

community struggles in pursuit of the broader social and political liberation of the country...” (in Oliphant et al., 2004: 164). This strategy is evident in the following body of work which presents student engagement with the struggle politic through the art work they produced while still under-graduates at university.

A large number of works have been identified for the selection here but the analysis has been delimited by the focus of the study. The sixteen works selected provide a compelling body of undergraduate work reflecting an anti-Apartheid sentiment as it moved beyond the idiom of raised fists, barbed wire and associated metaphors. The works are largely reflective of the politically charged decade of the 1980s. One of the catalysts for the momentum of this decade was the 1976 uprisings and the subsequent death of Steve Biko, the impact of which was presented in the introduction to this chapter. Thereafter, the 1980s bore witness to unprecedented mobilisation of South Africans under the banner of the newly founded United Democratic Front (UDF), which ushered in the revival of non-racial politics in South Africa.

When the national political climate changed in the 1980s, greater militancy erupted among the student body which is reflected in some of the work presented here. Student work that had been located from the 1960s and 1970s were limited to sketchbook studies and therefore not included in the main body of the dissertation as they reflect a genre typical of any art school. Further, student work from the 1990s was difficult to locate as graduates had either lost work or given it away. Thus the works presented here from the 1980s reflect the impact that the political climate had on student art production. However, sketchbook studies and studio exploration have been included as Appendix C, as the substantial body of images located reveal various levels of draughtsmanship both in the rendering of the human form and landscape and in the preparatory work for project-based production. The images presented reflect the rigorous training these graduates were exposed to and the commitment they gave to their work.

During the 1980s, two states of emergency were declared, one in July of 1985 and the other in June of 1986, which significantly eroded the impetus of the liberation struggle. It was during the political uprisings in the late 1970s and 1980s that students at UDW, as at many other universities around the country, frequently expressed their solidarity with the marginalised in mass meetings, resulting in varied forms of resistance, the most common of which were student boycotts. While this study focuses on the student struggles at UDW, it

should also be mentioned that similar activities engaged students at other universities around the country. Jansen (in Oliphant, et al., 2004: 163), in his recollections of his student days at UWC in the late 1970s, highlights the severity of political engagements on campus:

...[There were] ubiquitous mass meetings as students ‘declared solidarity with the comrades in Soweto’, signalling the end of classes; the influx of police and spies; constant running away and against; untold courage on the part of otherwise conservative students; and the postponement of degrees and diplomas to another year...

The reality described by Jansen at UWC was not unlike that at UDW. The invasiveness of politically motivated resistance spurred on by the SRC, found expression in many art works, some of which are presented here. Although a form of resistance emerged, it was largely invisible to a wider audience. Many of the works presented in this section were created as expressions of frustration and emergent resistance intended as student reflections of political change in South Africa. The volatile political climate gave impetus to the creative energy of the students whose socio-political subject matter was a natural outcome of this experience. Anesh Singh (Interview: 2011) explains:

As a South African Indian living in the country, wanting to make changes...how could I have used my art?...very literally...a wheelbarrow lying there...that was the workers’ struggle.

In this light, a simple object could make a powerful statement. Similar thoughts filtered through in my own work, where in a photo-etching from 1990 (Figure 25), an easily recognisable structure, that of the Durban City Hall, evoked and addressed the vast colonial history of the country. Here the domes of the city hall rise ominously from the land and indirectly from the strength of the oppressed disenfranchised people of the city. The structures of power are used as a vehicle to convey wealth and power built upon the subjugation and oppression of the Black people of South Africa. The city hall was for many a bastion of colonial grandeur in Durban and the silenced cityscape reflects the silent histories of how that grandeur became a signifier of separation and segregation.

But it was also commonplace to reference social trauma and abjection as subject matter and some staff members like Nanackchand, Van Heerden and later Thathiah, encouraged students to engage with material that was accessible and close to their personal experience. Clive Pillay indicates how the struggle determined his work, noting that:

...the struggle to a large extent dictated what I did. I did not want to draw pretty pictures to make people happy. I tried to create a kind of protest art...I wanted to be able to change the way people viewed things...(Interview: 2009).

This direction was given momentum by the call from the African National Congress to all in the creative arts to channel their energies into producing art for and about the struggle as well as the direction taken by practicing artists since The State of Art in South Africa conference of 1979.

These sentiments which originated at various other platforms are poignantly reiterated by the well known author and struggle stalwart Nadine Gordimer, (Campschreur and Divendal, 1989: 12) where she claims that art, is at the heart of liberation. Within this national context and within a student body that was strongly aligned with the ANC, it was commonplace for student work to directly allude to the struggle where a culture of resistance was used to rouse and embolden the oppressed. This direction vilified the artistic output of many art students who positioned themselves as ‘cultural workers’ and who accepted their social and political responsibility as potential artists.

In what follows, I highlight the level of participation of a select number of graduates who elected to comment on the political ethos and struggle for liberation in relation to local and national issues. The work to be discussed reflects an attempt at creating a shift in consciousness and generating change, with students questioning what it meant to be inclusively South African in an Apartheid context.

The works are presented chronologically, beginning in 1983 with Clive Pillay.

Clive Pillay (graduated in 1983)

In the 1980s Clive Pillay was already a political activist at home, in the township of Chatsworth in Durban, prior to his registration at UDW. His direct involvement in the resistance politics of the time, led to an engagement with what he referred to as “underground” activities or “covert operations” and recalls that the police were always in pursuit of him, creating high levels of anxiety among family members (Interview: 2009). During this decade, the two States of Emergency resulted in an environment where political activists like Pillay lived in constant fear for their lives. This context can be variously revealed through his body of work which reflects on the social implications the system had on the poorest people of Chatsworth and its surroundings. The work of this printmaker

reflects both symbolic and social realist imagery, with many of his images derived from student photographic shoots in Durban. During these excursions he documented the ravages of Apartheid while providing firsthand knowledge of the harsh realities experienced by the majority of South Africans. The development of a 'township' paradigm attached to notions of abandonment and displacement are explored in the two township scenes presented in Figures 26 and 27 (c.1984).

In these watercolours, Pillay focuses attention on everyday life within Chatsworth. Townships, demarcated as such by the Groups Areas Act (GAA), eventually became important sites for cultural production, political activity and community building (Radhakrishnan, 2011: 183). The Indian townships were generally separated from White and African areas by vast stretches of land but were never fenced in. African townships were larger and more densely populated with a more overt, demonstrable culture of resistance than Indian townships. Indian townships were also not under the same degree of surveillance that African townships were and thus seemingly enjoyed a small measure of autonomy. These townships emerged as a result of the GAA with Chatsworth being planned in 1960 and 'opened' in 1964. Indian people were forcibly removed from previous integrated areas in Durban, and obliged to move to settlements with mass housing, few amenities, and fewer spaces of social and cultural engagement. The resultant notions of place and displacement then become central to Pillay's township scenes.

Pillay presents townships as bleak sites of hopelessness rather than as sites that aggressively rejected Apartheid's geographic and political divisions. The isolation experienced by disparate communities brought together as a result of their 'Indian-ness', is foregrounded by Pillay's internal gaze, as a member of *a particular* community, resulting in the presentation of a self-referential view. While living in Chatsworth, as an activist and a member of community organisations like *Helping Hands*, interaction with this environment was part of his daily experience (Interview, 2009). In Figure 26 the image comprises a view of Chatsworth life with the cheap and poorly designed mass housing system that typifies this township. These homes offered small spaces limiting the number of people who could be housed in one unit; which resulted in the dissolution of the joint family system which was still common among many Indians. The disruption of the family structure also led to a sense of displacement experienced by older members of the community, whose purpose as care-givers and advisors of the extended family was no longer required. This sense of loss is

evident in the silence of the environment devoid of children or interactions suggestive of healthy family relationships. The mobile tuck-shop is a further representation of the limited access to amenities, while the vegetable seller in traditional Indian dress shifts the viewer's attention to the struggle for survival. The frustrations are evident in the facial features of the women, with the foregrounded male portrait suggestive of strong patriarchy prevalent within this community.

The commentary on the level of 'comfort' experienced by Indians in townships is juxtaposed with isolation and despair experienced by their Black South African counterparts (Figure 27) whose environment is significantly more austere. Here Pillay uses the external gaze of the outsider, as he implicitly reflects on the conditions under which Black South Africans of the townships live. Once again he explores notions of place and displacement and the implicit struggle experienced by township dwellers uprooted from their homes into these alien environments.

Pillay focuses here on the dilapidated housing structures, the preparation of food on an open fire, the sparsely clothed child and the glimpse of 'luxuries' like the transistor radio and the damaged couch. While he foregrounds a male portrait in the first image, here he presents a female portrait which is suggestive of the plight of the matriarch who is left to fend for her family in the absence of a male provider. In this he also alludes to migrancy, the disruption of the nuclear family and abjection. He represents dejection and despair but retains the Indian protagonists' sense of dignity under trying circumstances, in an empathetic gaze at those on the margins of society. Together these scenes highlight the relevance of post-colonial discourse in this dissertation; a discourse which upholds the hypothesis that historical imbalance problematises notions of an envisaged homogenised nationhood.

Both these images reflect the harsh reality of being socially peripheral and once again draw attention to the segmentation of South African society as it manifested in the 1980s and which, many would argue, still exists. Many South Africans remain economically deprived and are consequently unable to escape the ghettoised residential enclaves determined according to the polarities of dominance and subordination that shape their identities. Many attempts were made to create community awareness which would mobilise and empower those on the margins of society, but few found fertile ground.

In *The South African Stamp* (Figure 28, 1984), Pillay presents the viewer with an image focused on the plight of abandoned young children living in dilapidated buses and shacks. Many of these images derived from photographs taken in Cato Manor, a township in Durban where Indians and Africans previously lived together in relative harmony. As noted earlier, one of his photo essays was selected for an exhibition at another university (he was not sure which one). Of this incident Pillay (Interview: 2009) recalls: “I was so upset that I was going to give credibility to this university (UDW)...that I destroyed all the negatives”. Subsequently, he regrets that decision, but notes that “...at that point in time...it was protest...I refused to sell out!” (Interview: 2009). The level of protest implicit in Pillay’s thinking is explained in his refusal to watch television when a set was first bought by his father, as for him, it was simply a propaganda tool for the Nationalist government to which he refused to be exposed (Interview: 2009).

As in most philatelic conventions in South Africa, historic figures or the flora and fauna of a region are frequently depicted. However, in his *The South African Stamp* Pillay depicts an impoverished shack to expose the appalling conditions in which children lived, all but abandoned by society. A glimpse of a bright future is suggested with the slightest hint of light and life that awaits the children beyond the tragedy of their stark shack dwelling. This is in contrast to the foregrounding of their dark skin colour and their racial categorisation. At the time hierarchical structures of meaning attached to their skin colour would subsequently shape their material lives as well as their perceptions of themselves and the world around them (Erasmus in Daniel et al., 2005: 10).

In Figures 26, 27 and 28, Pillay creates images of townships as spaces belonging to what Fanon calls “colonized people” (1963: 30). Fanon further defines these sites as “a world without spaciousness” where their realities are of no concern to the coloniser and where the ‘other’ exists far removed from interaction with the dominant class. Here Pillay again explores these concerns, focusing attention on those on the periphery in an attempt at shifting prevailing acceptance of their condition and creating a consciousness of mobilisation and action.

Another print by Pillay, *Untitled* (Figure 29, 1986), illustrates the theme of resistance more overtly. Here he depicts a dynamic composition with two male images, one of whom directly engages the eye of the viewer with a disturbing self-assurance. Seemingly, the two figures are

involved in some kind of struggle, with one gazing at the onlooker and the other caught in a forceful grip against his will. The ensuing struggle is presented to us as a fixed moment during this engagement. The ‘victim’ in this image, obviously in pain, is anonymous and suggested through the partially obscured facial features. The pain might allude to his being subject to interrogation which was commonplace during the 1980s and well known to young activists like Pillay and his contemporaries.

Pillay explains that the struggle was an intrinsic part of his life. His youth in Bayview, Chatsworth, reinforced his political engagement, and the frequent harassment by police that he and his co-activists experienced fuelled the making of this kind of imagery. Later, the murder of his friend Lenny Naidu by state forces reinforced his resistance idiom resulting in a series of works that reflect his opposition (Interview: 2009). The representation of this particular image in Figure 30, with its steely greyness recalls other similar images from the period, perhaps one of the most recognisable being the chilling image by Paul Stopforth *The Interrogators* (Figure 30). At first glance this is simply a representation of three close-up portraits of middle-aged white men, but as Emile Maurice points out, they are the security officers who tortured and killed Biko. In these close-ups *The Interrogators* identify those who operated in the “murky shadows of apartheid” (Maurice in Pissara, 2011: 91) and similarly Pillay’s print confronts some of the iniquitous strands of Apartheid like detention, torture and interrogation. As a student representation Pillay’s image is noteworthy in terms of composition, technique and content which result in a compelling image of resistance.

In *Gagged* (Figure 31, 1984), an isolated human head is positioned atop a steel pole in a brutalised presentation of implied ‘voicelessness’ and enforced silence. The saturated red and contrasting blue reinforce the violent processes involved in the silencing of the oppressed.

While Pillay has suppressed his Indian identity other facets of this were expressed through his engagement with the Chatsworth community where, through community activism, his sense of self was affirmed. When asked why he had not produced more visual art, his response was that “drawing does not save the people” (Interview: 2010) foregrounding his belief that more practical interventions were necessary in uplifting his community. Rather his identity is constructed through the labours of shared history and spoken in the communal language of “us” rather than “I” (Castells, 2004: 56). Gavin Younge, in *Art of the South African*

Townships (1988) reminds us that art produced in the 1980s can only be fully understood or appreciated if one recognises the plight of artists at the time (1988: 10). He says:

At this point in time, younger artists no longer [had] faith in the power of subtle, elusive and surprising art forms and either retire[d] their talents or submerge[d] them in organisational work. The promise of art as a form of human communication which is visually, emotionally...and intellectually satisfying has been side-lined by the urgency of a social and political situation...(Younge, 1988: 10).

These comments are pertinent to Pillay's decision to forego an artistic career in favour of community work at the Chatsworth Youth Centre, where he is still active as the manager.

Ujala Sewpersad (graduated in 1985)

Like Pillay, Ujala Sewpersad also centered on images directly associated with the states of emergency of the 1980s, producing several images of detainees, one of which has been located and included in this dissertation. This image *Detainee* (Figure 32, c.1980) derived from first-hand accounts of the experiences of her many activist contemporaries at the university as well as her own. Like her fellow student Clive Pillay, the notion of artist/activist is reflected in these works as critical reflections on the political circumstance by students and active, dynamic youth leaders who were instrumental in attempting to affect change both locally and nationally.

In *Detainee* (Figure 32), Sewpersad focuses on an anonymous person bound in rope, yet another victim of the abusive practices sanctioned by the Apartheid state. Sewpersad is the 'artist-as-witness' driven to depict what she sees or experiences (Interview: 2011). For her, the commitment to art-making was an imperative which focused on what it meant to be South African during those traumatic years marked by fear and anxiety and which, in her view, needed to be addressed as unambiguously as possible (Interview: 2011).

Pissara comments on the value of art produced during this decade as it functioned as a mirror for society. For him, many such images are explicitly or implicitly violent, their power residing, in part, in their mediation of horror and intimacy in the visualisation of that which is unmentionable (2011: 3). Further, with so much work alluding to resistance, it is not surprising that the perception of art in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s was indelibly tied to images of resistance and to the notions of resistance art itself.

Subsequently, many writers have commented on the value of this type of militant subject matter as noted by Albie Sachs in his provocative 1990 paper “Preparing Ourselves from Freedom” in which he called for a ban on the notion of culture as a weapon of the struggle. For him resistance art was more than a limited repertoire of symbols, clenched fists and poised guns and should now rather explore the full range of human experience thereby moving beyond the limitation of struggle politics. Pissara (2011: 3) also suggests that overtly political subject matter was not always the most viable way of articulating resistance, nor was resistance necessarily aligned to a specific liberation movement.

Images such as Sewpersad’s *Detainee*, still fall within the ambit of Sachs’ debate in that it focuses primarily on the aspect of victimisation and the ‘voicelessness’ of an anonymous individual. In its abjection, the victim becomes emblematic of the struggle.

Dianne Latchmigadu (graduated in 1989)

Dianne Latchmigadu also located her creative voice within the political ambit, focusing on the dehumanising effects the political climate had on an already traumatised society. Using the technique of screen-printing, her images were based on the politicisation of the campus. Figure 33, *Untitled* (1988), represents T Block, a lecture theatre block alongside the pond at UDW. This space flanked the quadrangle which was frequented by students to socialise and later hold mass gatherings as well as protests. This was also one of the areas where police would lie in wait after mass-meetings or during various types of protests. Professor John Butler-Adam, former deputy Vice-Chancellor (1991-1995), highlighted the significance of this space during the late 1980s and early 1990s when he recalled the moments he had to position himself, in his academic robe, between police and students (Interview: 2011). This statement is reinforced by his wife Trish Gibbons’ recollections. She says:

...the police rolling onto campus and the security services in Caspirs...with tear gas...[led to] some very heavy times on campus...but it was always that tightly controlled. Controlled not just by the university management and administration but controlled literally by the security forces. So protest took a very sharp form of unarmed students and staff literally pitting themselves against Caspirs and people in bullet proof vests, and carrying weapons. I can remember my husband in fact standing in front of a group...wearing his academic robe...our armour as academics was our academic robe... (Interview: 2011).

Gibbon's comments serve to highlight the extent of the struggle ethos on campus and focuses on the quadrangle as a significant space of both social and political engagement. Latchmigadu presents a photo negative with an attached diapositive strip on the right panel which directs the viewers' attention to the artist's lens. The main image, while shrouded in darkness, bears a surreal reflection of the buildings in the pond, while the images on the side panel foreground covert political activity and mass student mobilisation. The main image presents an uneasy silence on what is generally a space marked by fervent student activity. Here the blackness of the pond creates a sinister commentary on the highly populated environment, with garish colours used to convey the reflections in the pond. The image of the building contains the forms of two highly recognisable struggle images. The first on the top left is that of the Medu Art Ensemble's poster *You have Struck a Rock* (1981, Figure 34), while the other is the iconic image by Sam Nzima of the dying Hector Pieterse (Figure 35) who was shot during the 1976 Soweto uprisings. On the side panel, images of people engaged in conflict and subject to brutality, are represented.

The use of the Hector Pieterse image has become an iconic symbol of the struggle partly because in its frequent exposure it came to symbolise June 16th 1976 (Seidman, 2007: 121). It has been variously reproduced and transcribed in a range of media, often used to reinforce the purpose of the work in which it was included. The image also signifies the struggle for equal education opportunities in South Africa and here Latchmigadu's appropriation of it reinforces the struggle within the institution itself. There are strong implications for this assumption, as the print projects the image of Hector Pieterse emblazoned on one of the main lecture theatres of T Block.

The second poster image used in this print is *You have struck a rock*, which later was an image frequently used on posters for the celebration of Women's Day. This image comments particularly on the women's' struggle in this country, their role in the South African liberation struggle and the prevailing suffering of women. The words on the poster *Now you have touched the woman you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder. You will be crushed*, emerged from a song that was sung during the 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings in which the ostensible silence of women was reversed, with women becoming the main opponents of state intransigence. Opposed to the pass laws the march had far-reaching

consequences and has come to be regarded as the most significant protests of the early anti-Apartheid struggle⁷⁷.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the role of women in the struggle again came under the spotlight when women were detained, tortured and killed. The emergent Black unions began to recognise that segregation and discrimination on the grounds of gender could be as dangerous as segregation and discrimination on the grounds of race, and that gender discrimination was equally built into the laws and social structures of Apartheid (Seidman, 2007: 123). In this image Latchmigadu's, complex composition also foregrounds a degree of sophistication in understanding how the medium can be used to create an amalgam of images that reflect a convergence of diverse liberatory positions.

For students residing in Chatsworth, almost 30 km away from campus, bus journeys home created opportunities for groups to discuss the political situation as it played out both on and off campus. These trips proved insightful and became spaces for informal political studies and student mobilisation. Students would witness police spot checks as they entered or exited the campus through the boom gates, and on some occasions, Latchmigadu and her fellow students were interrogated by the police as their bags were checked for any 'illegal' material. On one occasion after a mass meeting, her camera was confiscated, an incident which had a significant impact on her. In the 1980s this was reflected in fear and mistrust, common features of student life which reflected broader sentiments typical of South African society. In Figure 36, *Untitled* (1989), Latchmigadu explores the implication of student harassment alongside the symbolic notion of transition, which applied both to the university and the country. While still a country and university in chaos, towards the late 1980s UDW was also a university in transition. The doors of the institution were opened to all races by the late 1980s and the bridge used in Latchmigadu's image, is suggestive of the shifts which were occurring in different parts of the country.

This diptych by Latchmigadu addresses and depicts the brutality of the 1980s through the commonplace harassment and detention without trial that was experienced by activists throughout the country, and, as noted earlier, especially by students on campus. The

⁷⁷ Upon liberation the new government declared a range of new public holidays one of which was 9 August being declared Womens Day.

silkscreen is overlaid with impermeable symbols of execution reinforcing the chaos of the times. Here, pale-hued and simply constructed images of human forms are surrounded by and embedded in a blood red background that draws attention to the brutality of the 1980s. These symbolic renditions also “hark back to different forms of execution throughout history” (Latchmigadu, D, Interview: 2011).

This image, like that of Sewpersad’s, addresses conflict and confrontation and alludes to violence and aggression. Here, in an attempt at moving away from representing the South African police, Latchmigadu used the British ‘Bobby’ and England’s race riots of the early 1980s as a metaphor for the South African struggle. The first image is of a woman who is being harassed by police, as she anxiously stares directly at the viewer. Over this image, Latchmigadu casts a spider’s web which suggests the insidiousness of the covert operations both nationally and in particular on campus. There were numerous so-called ‘spies’ and ‘agent provocateurs’ on campus and this led to some degree of frustration and fear for those students who were determined to let their voices be heard. The top panel is also given a small border on two sides in which Latchmigadu presents images of execution from a range of international sources. This commentary focuses the viewer’s attention on of the prevalence of violence and power struggles as universal forms of oppression.

In the second panel, the image of the fearful woman is replaced by the image of a man who seems more aggressive, seemingly charging forward towards the onlooker. While the police open up the door of the car, the male victim shifts the sentiment to one of power, creating a sense of ambiguity as to the ‘real’ threat posed in the image. The menacing quality of the image is further conveyed by the overlay of images alluding to death: the solitary red chair, the decapitation, the hanging and the guillotine. Together the panels convey resistance art typical of the 1980s.

Rufus Latchmigadu (graduated in 1989)

In some of his work, Rufus Latchmigadu explored the struggle idiom in his art. As a student, his work ranged from the more populist imagery of raised fists and barbed wire anchored in scenes of conflict and confrontation (Figure 37, 1989), to more subtle and sinister scenes of brutality enhanced through frenzied mark-making (Figure 38).

As noted earlier, in response to the uprisings of 1976, the subsequent detention, torture and murder of youths, journalists and anti-Apartheid activists, many art students in the 1980s created works of protest. In Figure 38 (1989), Latchmigadu depicts imaginary bestial creatures which signify the inhumanity that prevailed at the time (Interview: 2011). The figure seems to reflect what Fanon (1963: 27) calls a “terrifying future in the consciousness of another ‘species.’” Intense fear permeates both the orchestrators and victims of Apartheid. While the enforcers fear the possibility of what is to come, namely liberation and democracy, the system transforms both parties into pained reflections of what could be a strengthened humanity.

Figure 39 (1989) is a sculptured image of a cement torso in bondage. Here Latchmigadu once again makes reference to a society *in extremis*, the limbless, headless roughly hewn figure alluding not only to physical decapitation but that of a mindless social order where all sense of humanity has been excised. The immobility to which this figure is condemned references the momentary impotence of the struggle and the challenges faced by activists to effect change. The brutally scarred and hacked torso bears no signifier of race, and could thus be seen as an indictment of the inhumanity of a brutal segregation system and its impact on both victim and perpetrator.

Another sculptural piece by Latchmigadu (Figure 40, 1989), a series of three portraits, is in part, a commentary on a 1984 incident, where six South African protestors were arrested and sentenced to death by hanging in 1985 for the murder of a Black councillor. While none of the six actually committed the murder, they were indicted for being present and part of a crowd protesting against rent increases (www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/mrder-trial-sharpeville-six-opens).

These portraits although incomplete, comment on the pending death of a group that came to be known as the Sharpeville Six. For Latchmigadu, “the real struggles behind those apartheid killings are often lost and through overexposure...death becomes glamorised by history” (Interview: 2011).

Much like the bound torso (Figure 39), these images emerge from the rough-hewed concrete, and reflect on mortality and the turbulent climate of the 1980s. As a representation of marginality, such images function significantly in contributing to what Stuart Hall (in Araeen et al., 2002: 74) calls “belongingness” within a country. He points out that national heritage is

a powerful source in creating meaning for communities, and those who cannot see themselves reflected in its mirror cannot properly belong. For Hall, heritage is a discursive practice in which a nation constructs for itself a collective social memory. In this regard, the construction is under constant review and its meaning can only be known through the objects, artefacts and artworks that eventually symbolise the essential characteristics and history of a nation. These sentiments are valuable in remembering that artists ought also to be valued for contributing to perspectives on South Africa's social history. Thus, the value of these works is based largely based on their being an invaluable student commentary by individuals from a particular sector of the South African community.

In preparation for these pieces, Latchmigadu explained that he spent time at various hospitals studying the contorted expressions of those lying ill in hospital as they hovered between life and death, noting "for a while that was what it felt like to live in South Africa at that crazy time" (Interview: 2011).

Mahendra Govender (graduated 1992)

The late Govender⁷⁸ emerged from a politicised context of Silverglen in Chatsworth. Introduced to politics by his father, he was a member of the Azanian Peoples' Liberation Organisation (AZAPO), which influenced his beliefs and adherence to the Black Consciousness ideology (Govender, 2011). While at school he was an activist, which served to bolster his struggle agenda when a student at UDW. In Figure 41 *Untitled* (1991/2), he pays homage to the late Steve Biko and recalls those famous words of Jimmy Kruger, former Minister of Justice and Police: "*It leaves me Cold*" (Govender, 2011). In this piece, Govender contrasts the contrasting emotions of shock and approbation experienced by different South Africans after the death of Steve Biko. Much like the images presented earlier in the introduction to this chapter, Govender's use of Biko lying dead highlights the popular use of the image, but in this instance the large looming image of a complacent Jimmy Kruger

⁷⁸ Mahendra Govender hailed from a privileged background, but he nevertheless refused to study at the prestigious private school of Michaelhouse, a gesture which was in sympathy with his fellow residents of Chatsworth, most of whom would not have been able to afford private school fees. He therefore attended Chatsworth Secondary. On completing his B.A.F.A he went on to teach and after a frustrating year of teaching, resigned to study Architecture which he completed. While pursuing post-graduate studies in Architecture, he became ill with lymphoma and passed away in 2001. The artwork here was preserved by his father Dr P.N. Govender, who also obligingly afforded me an interview and discussed the work and plight of his son.

appears overhead. The image includes the Biko trial, with Biko defending his position of defiance surrounded by court attendees. The image conveys an overwhelming sense of powerlessness reinforced by a sombre tone in sharp contrast to the mood of satisfaction by the state, which celebrated this perceived 'triumph'. Govender's choice of the Biko image reflects his support for the Black Consciousness movement and conveys both 'self-identification' and alignment with the struggle in his role as artist/activist in keeping with the strategy of resistance art

In Figure 42 *Untitled* (1992), Govender presents a silenced monochromatic environment which recalls the moment after interrogation, perhaps the interrogation of Biko, a theme frequently explored by other artists like Paul Stopforth, whose interrogation spaces have become iconic representations of this genre. Similarly, Govender comments on the interrogation space as a site of solitary confinement, a space of violence, and a site of hopelessness and despair. The image of the solitary chair set against a grey, cold and silent space, alludes to the unknown and potential torture experienced by activists who were lucky to have escaped death. But while the activities of those interrogation spaces were notorious and feared, they were never a deterrent from continuing with the liberation struggle.

However to characterise all art produced at UDW as political would be inaccurate. While there is a large amount of anti-Apartheid art produced during the 1980s, there were many instances where works were more diverse in subject matter. Later in the 1990s, with a shift in the political landscape, students produced works which explored a broad range of subjects from religion, landscape to portraiture, among many others.

Sandy Naidoo (graduated in 1995)

With the shift in the country's political agenda after 1990, the unbanning of the political organisations and the release of political prisoners, the focus for students in the FAD seem to have changed substantially. While very few student works were located from this decade those that have been located reflect a strong cultural focus with no hint at the political realities of the period. The 1990s was also the decade which signalled the opening of the countries universities to all racial groups and witnessed the increase in Black students to UDW and other universities. This was also the decade which witnessed a slow decline in the student numbers at UDW's FAD which as mentioned earlier led to its ultimate closure in 1999.

In Figure 7 seen earlier on page 104, Naidoo explores her Hindu heritage with particular reference to temple imagery. The rich colour and composite dance postures visibly conveys an Indian-ness with which she is familiar. As an art form widely supported by the Indian community, Indian classical dance, particularly *Bharatha Natyam*, enjoys a position of privilege both here and in India, where it is a national dance. In South Africa it is the will of many Hindu parents to ensure that their daughters and on occasion their sons, acquire the skills necessary to perform this art form. Naidoo explains that she sees herself as part of the ubiquitous melting pot which is unique to this country while still maintaining her privilege of being South African and expressing her Hindu self, as an Irish person would celebrate St. Patrick's Day and as a Zulu person would express his/her culture (Naidoo, Interview: 2011).

As a South Indian Tamil-speaking woman, Naidoo's lineage can be traced back to the south of India and the indentured labourers who came to South Africa. The use of the sculptural dance postures have been appropriated from temples in India particularly from the temples of Belur, Halebid and Kesava, of the Hoysala period (12th century). These images are considered forms of worship, and dance too is viewed as an act of worship and devotion. The use of the temple is significant as it is a place of worship for the upliftment of the individual and the society, where the combination of the diverse art forms of music, art and dance unify to create an environment conducive for worship (Moodley, 1994: 17).

The rich, bold palette used by Naidoo is used in multiple woodblock prints, creating a dynamic yet crowded composition. The interaction of the diverse dance postures present movement and rhythm within the composition. Here the sculptured dancers emerge from the architecture that is suggested throughout the image. Evidently this student work produced in 1994 offers insight into the apparent shift from politically burdened subject matter of the 1980s to a more diverse engagement within student practice.

Sandhia Bansi (graduated in 1999)

Sandhia Bansi is a devout Hindu and in her painting *Mendhi* (Figure 43, 1999) she visibly identifies her ethnicity through the signification of a *mendhi* pattern. Here the detail study of feet covered in *mendhi* pattern comment on the traditional pre-wedding ritual of *mendhi* application on the hands, arms and feet of the bride. These elaborate decorations use intricate patterning to create a unique latticework almost impossible to reproduce. The ancient ritual of *Mendhi* design originated in India and is almost synonymous with Indian culture and over the

years has become a striking signifier of Indian-ness throughout the world. It must be noted, however, that while it is used on Hindu and Muslim brides, it is also more recently commonly used as body decoration in contemporary South African society.

For Bansi this work was an intense technically exacting painting, which as a student piece, rendered it highly successful.

7.4.2. Images: Student Practice

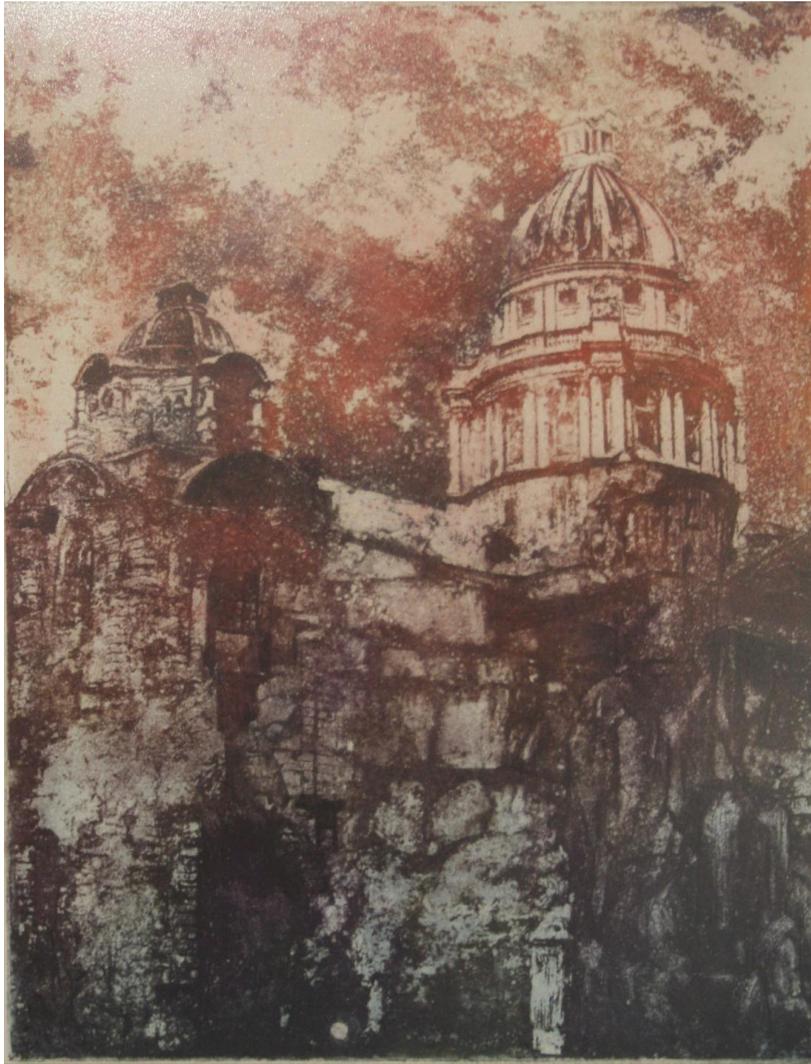


Figure 25: Nalini Moodley, *Untitled*, 1990, etching, 45 x 35cm



Figure 26: Clive Pillay, *Untitled*, c.1984, watercolour on paper, approx. 90 x 70 cm.



Figure 27: Clive Pillay, *Untitled*, c.1984, watercolour on paper, approx. 90 x 70cm

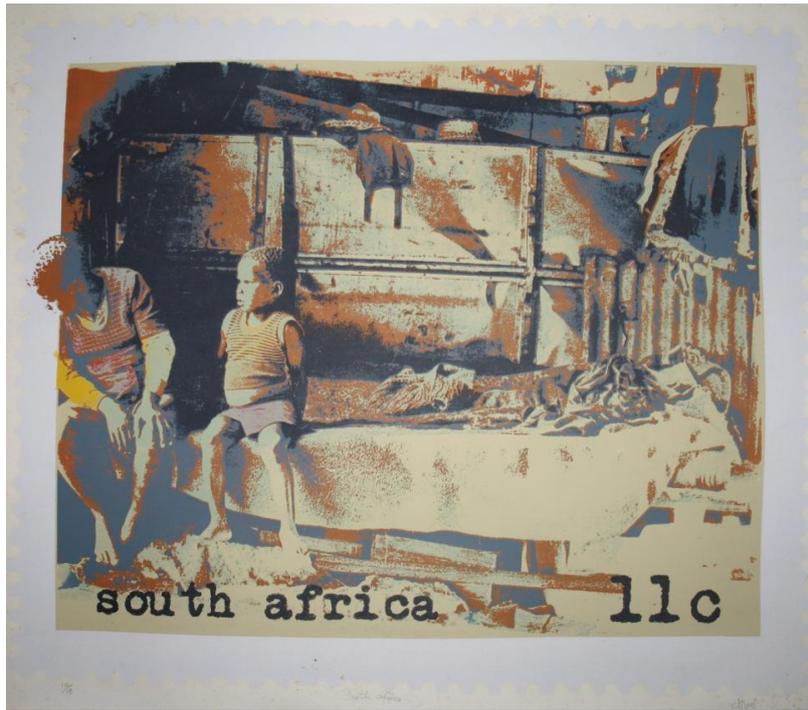


Figure 28: Clive Pillay, *A South African Stamp*, 1984, screen print, dimensions unknown



Figure 29: Clive Pillay, *Untitled*, 1986, screen print, dimensions unknown

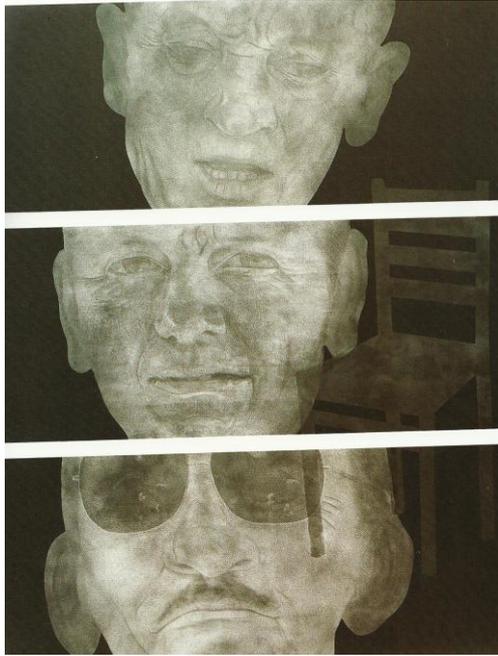


Figure 30: Paul Stopforth, *The Interrogators*, 1979 (Williamson, 1989: 115)



Figure 31: Clive Pillay, *Gagged*, 1984, screen print, approx. 110 x 82cm



Figure 32: Ujala Sewpersad, *Detainee*, c.1980, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown



Figure 33: Dianne Latchmigadu, *Untitled*, 1988, screen print, 60 x 40cm

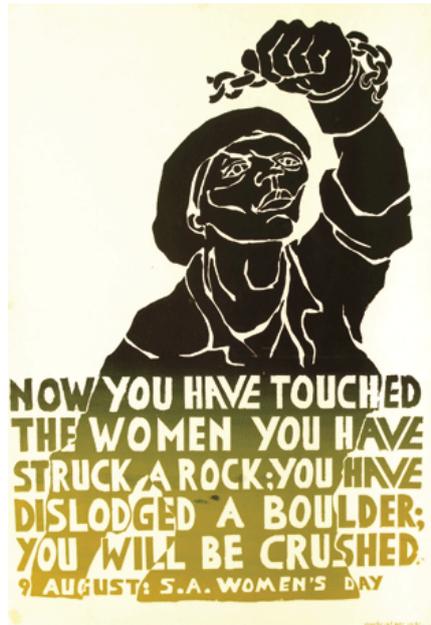


Figure 34: You have struck a rock, Judy Seidman for Medu, 1982, silkscreen, (Seidman, 2007: 122).



Figure 35: Hector Pietersen, Sam Nzima, 1976, Free internet



Figure 36: Dianne Latchmigadu, *Untitled*, 1989, screen print 2 x 30 x 30cm



Figure 37: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Untitled*, mixed media, 1989. 61 x 84cm



Figure 38: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Untitled*, 1989, etching, 110 x 82cm



Figure 39: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Untitled*, 1989, cement, approx.150cm x 100



Figure 40: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sharpeville Six*, 1989, cement, 3 x 80 x 60cm

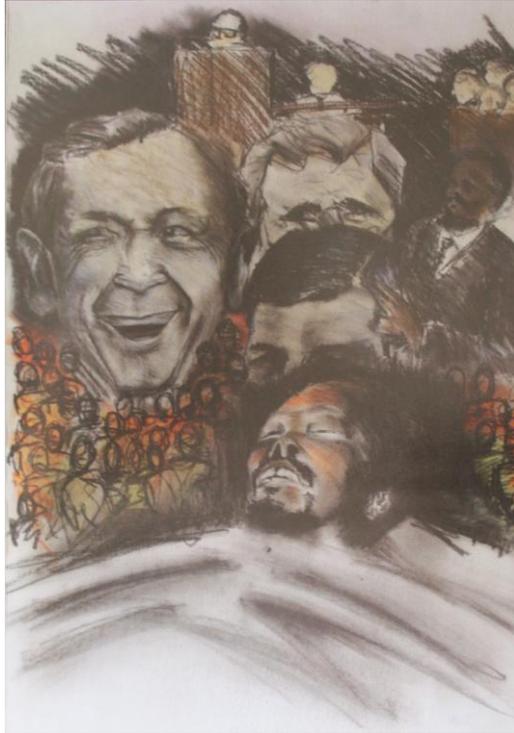


Figure 41: Mahendra Govender, *Untitled*, 1991/2, mixed media, 60 x42cm



Figure 42: Mahendra Govender, *Untitled*, 1992, mixed media, approx. 60 x 42cm



Figure 43: Sandhia Bansi, *Mendhi*, oil on canvas, c. 1997, dimensions unknown, (in *Newsart KZN*, Vol.2. No. 6, not dated: 4)

7.5 Professional Practice

7.5.1. Introduction

The social, cultural and political construction of identity in South Africa is fragmented because of our fractured and multicultural society. As Govinden posits (2008: 34), the tendency to maintain separate identities in the post-Apartheid era is ironically celebrated for the very freedom it affords to do this. She adds that a slogan that reflects the state's idealism, *One nation – Many cultures*, creates a utopian sense of unity-in-diversity and reflects an aspirant national identity. However, in deploying this slogan, the African National Congress appeals to the idea of a unified nationhood, yet ironically, at the same time it foregrounds the different racial population groups whose difference was upheld and reinforced in demarcated regions during colonial and Apartheid era demographic restructuring. In addition to the slogan reinforcing racial and cultural difference, bureaucratic requirements in South Africa still require that its citizens identify themselves in terms of designations such as African/Black, Coloured, Indian/Asian or White. Interestingly, there is no category for the identification merely as 'South African'.

By their very nature, all identities are multi-dimensional, multi-layered and at times contradictory. Further, they are pluralistic and in flux, subject to continuous processes of recalibration. In other words, we could conceive of minority communities living within the diaspora as living within hybrid societies.

In present-day South Africa, we have emerged from what Govinden refers to as the dynamics of the 'negotiated revolution' in which some of the former structures of identity and difference still remain intact (2008: 33). Bhabha (1994: 66) explains the post-colonial context of problematising identity as a persistent questioning of the frame or space of representation where the 'Oriental stereotype' is confronted with its difference or sameness. Reflecting on Bhabha's ideas, Govinden (2008: 33) suggests that it is important to problematise notions of difference, which may be essentialising while at the same time responding to difference without representing it as closed or unchanging. Even though there is an upsurge in multiculturalism with increasing overtures to co-existence among various ethnic or racial groups, many individuals remain culturally separate and polarised (Govinden, 2008: 33).

In this section I focus on art that highlights and exposes notions of identity against presentations of difference as well as those works that provide commentary on post-Apartheid South Africa. I also focus on religious persuasions and sensibilities along with several broader concerns regarding issues of identity in order to establish the extent to which those who made these works attempted to foreground aspects of their history and culture, while at the same time reflecting on the teachings and practices of their beliefs. This chapter also foregrounds the complexities involved in the assumption of a common Indian identity presumed to be associated with Indian students. Graduates like Faiza Galdhari and Reshma Maharaj present an almost direct commentary on religious discourse and difference among Indian South Africans, while others like Kiren Thathiah and Ravi Govender express a more subtle philosophic interpretation.

The works presented in this section were realised once students had completed their BA Fine Art degrees and had left the university. For the purposes of this dissertation, this work then constitutes their ‘professional practice’ and my reference to them will be as ‘artists’ rather than as ‘graduates’. However, it should be noted that some students, like Kiren Thathiah, Ravi Govender, Avitha Sooful, Faiza Galdhari and Reshma Maharaj, went on to complete their Masters degrees in Fine Art exposing them to potential exhibition opportunities which in turn encouraged them to further their artistic careers on graduating.

As in the previous section, I have presented the fourteen artists chronologically according to the year of graduation and, where necessary, have added contexts that provide a background to support the analysis.

Sherene Timol (graduated in 1972)

Sherene Timol is an activist of mixed descent who still is confronted by personal conflicts regarding her own identity as defined under Apartheid. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Six, her exposure to the political ethos of the time at a young age resulted in her adopting a critical and progressive attitude which continues to be reflected in her current art practice. The catalyst for this direction was prompted in particular by an experience she had as a student, where, in order to attend UNICOL she had to change her ‘race’ from Coloured to Indian, a process and action that subsequently evoked questions about her identity and sense of belonging.

This has led to her writing poetry and creating works that interrogate the inherited histories to which she was subjected and further prompted her to search for her roots. This search offered interesting results. Initially convinced of having slave roots, she later discovered that in fact her ancestors were voluntary emigrants from Indonesia.

Timol problematises her identity by exploring ideas of syncretism, creolisation and hybridity. Mercer (in Minty, 1994: 5) explains that hybridised identities are often associated with ways of surviving and thriving in conditions of crisis and transition. Timol's shifting label from Coloured to Indian resulted in anxiety as a result of multilayered discrimination. Further, according to Bhabha (1994: 85), inscribed within this anxiety is a position of subalternity where one is not simply oppressed but lacking autonomy.

These considerations are reflected in Figure 44 (2010). Here a diptych with hand stitched and stuffed anthropomorphic forms, plot a journey representative of the migration of her family from Indonesia to South Africa. Here it is worth noting that Timol focuses on the migration of people and the struggles they experienced irrespective of their place of origin, be that India or Indonesia (Interview, Timol: 2011). The first panel depicts a terrain interspersed with a few figures in bondage, while the second panel presents many more figures individually tightly bound with rope. Implicit in this context is the commodification of Black individuals at the expense of their humanity. Here Timol expands on the desire to determine her roots, and focuses on notions of origination as well as the challenges of rootlessness, as expounded by Minty (2004: 14). The work reflects on colonial referents such as slavery, the politics of dislocation and notions of hybridisation, freedom and re-presentation which are central concepts in the construction of identity among diasporic immigrants to South Africa. At the same time, the work reflects on the schisms that applied in racial identification and segregation in South Africa.

In exploring her identity, Timol also challenges the ways in which the inscription of race was used under colonialism and more particularly by the Apartheid state. The neutrality of the colour of the fabric and the raw harshness of the material used foreground for her the construction of the designation of 'mixed race' in South Africa (Interview, Timol: 2011). Timol, through the absence of race specification, limits essentialising positions in this work. While she has expounded on her difficulties in making the shift from Coloured to Indian, she

now steers away from references to ethnic minorities which reinforce stereotypes about these in a South African context.

Vedant Nanackchand (graduated in 1977)

Vedant Nanackchand is presently the HOD of the Visual Art department at the University of Johannesburg. His career as a practising artist spans at least three decades, with his work collected by both local and international art collectors and museums. Some of his works focus on socio-political themes while others address Indian history and culture. The diverse range of his body of work is impossible for inclusion in this study and as a result, I have just included five.

The first is a series of three paintings (Figures 45-47, 1987) which were commissioned by the T.N. Bhoola Trust for the Documentation Centre, established in 1979 at the former UDW, where they still reside. These powerful paintings present a documentation of the Indian experience in South Africa by paying tribute to firstly, the arrival of the indentured labourers in *They Came from the East* (Figure 45), secondly, their work on the sugar plantations, *The Sugar Fields* (Figure 46) and finally, *The Merchant* (Figure 47) which presents the development of the Indian business endeavours in South Africa. This narration of an Indian presence highlights the assimilation of Indians into South African society. The paintings plot the journey of the Indians from the sea voyage to the cultivation of the sugar fields and to the development of a middle 'class-ness' with which Indians came to be associated. While the works are presented in a documentary style they do offer insight into the shifting identity construction of Indian South Africans evidenced here, with the changes from traditional wear of dhotis, turbans and saris to the western-styled clothing and environment as seen in *The Merchant* (Figure 47).

The grand scale of this series of paintings (each is 2m x 2m) present the viewer with a sense of history and accomplishment. The paintings, through expressive mark-making, offer a rich palette and complex compositional arrangements. In this way Nanackchand conveys complex scenes in an attempt to enrich each format with significant historical detail. The first image (Figure 45) narrates the arrival of the indentured labourers from the sub-continent and through the contrast of the White overseer, highlights the sense of anxiety experienced by these labourers. The second image through a dramatic compositional arrangement mirrors

their labour on the sugar cane fields of KwaZulu Natal. Here through the use of primary colours Nanackchand mirrors both the richness of the KwaZulu Natal landscape as well as the demands of indenture. Both these compositions position the Indian in traditional garments reflective of the traditional society from which they arrived. However, in Figure 47 one observes a shift in the representation and demeanour of Indians in this country. *The Merchant* offers insight into the development of the Indian presence in Durban suggesting their level of prosperity.

It is pertinent to observe that through indenture Indians engaged in a process of establishing an exclusive and inflected Indian identity in South Africa. Govinden (2008: 81) reiterates this notion in suggesting that through indenture and the various oppressive policies affecting the Indians in this country, a process of naturalising ethnicity was pivotal in creating an exclusive identity. This notion is evident in Figure 47 where the distinctive and exclusive identity Govinden speaks of, finds expression in the presentation of the South African Indian.

Predictably the process of cultural transplantation as presented in this series of paintings, created what Govinden calls 'little Indias' in South Africa (2008: 83). This image, *The Merchant* (Figure 47), reflects on the 'free-passenger' Indians who established themselves as merchants, traders and craftsmen in Durban, thereby creating an environment which evokes the memory of India. Nanackchand offers a portrayal of the evolution of the Indian trader from the horse and cart trader, to the street vendor and finally to the larger sophisticated and elegant retail stores. The 'little India' is visible in the scenes of Grey Street in Durban, an area distinguished by its peculiar Indian goods and services. On this iconic street which has been renamed Doctor Yusuf Dadoo Street, the Juma Masjid Mosque is located, the first mosque to be built in KwaZulu Natal in 1884. Thus, it is significant that Nanackchand's street scene utilises not only Grey Street, but the iconic Indian retail store, *Popatlal Kara* as a backdrop. But it is the inclusion of the Standard Bank building that is significant. It alludes to the great contribution of the Indians to the economic prosperity of the country while also symbolising their individual material prosperity. This scene therefore suggests the emergence of new aspects of identity, suggested through the change in style of dress and implied affluence, being re-constituted within South Africa. Thus these images imply the assimilation of economically and politically successful Indians into the tapestry of the emerging democratic South Africa.

In Figure 48 (1991), Nanackchand depicts a critical moment in South Africa's liberation struggle. With the imminent decline of Apartheid an increase in mass meetings and illegal gatherings ensued throughout South Africa, especially at more politicised campuses. As this grew in number and frequency, the police devised new ways of dispersing these gatherings, drawing on well known procedures used internationally. Tear gas was commonly used as were water cannons which powerfully neutralised such gatherings, but which also further enraged protesting groups. However, in addition to these, water was at times infused with a purple dye, as a result of which, once dispersed, those found with the purple stain were easily identified and detained. On 2 September 1989, anti-Apartheid protestors marched on Parliament and were stopped by police who used this purple dye on them. However, while unattended by the police, one protestor turned the purple spray onto the police and the surrounding buildings which included the National Party headquarters and the white walls of the Old Townhouse. The next day graffiti appeared in the city of Cape Town proclaiming "The Purple Shall Govern" (The Sunday Time Heritage Project, <http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/memorials/WC/ThePurpleShallGovern>. Accessed 5 November 2012).

This iconic moment embodied the imminent demise of the Apartheid state and the unbanning of all political parties and prisoners on 2 February 1990. This phrase was particularly memorable in that it recalled the primary statement of the ANC's Freedom Charter, namely, 'The People Shall Govern.' In *The Purple Shall Govern* (Figure 48), Nanackchand positions Archbishop Desmond Tutu as an activist, both in the UDF and as a religious leader, leading the country towards a blessed freedom alongside other religious leaders like Trevor Huddleston and Frank Chikane. Here the centrality of the cross is positioned against a darkened ominous sky, its sublimity enhancing the utopian path ahead, further reinforced by the calm of Tutu's face which looks skyward, doubtless in gratitude for spiritual guidance.

Another work by Nanackchand is part of the Art for Humanity portfolio. Art for Humanity (AFH) is a non-profit organisation based in Durban, at the Durban University of Technology and initiated by Jan Jordaan. This organisation specialises in the production and promotion of fine art print portfolios, exhibitions, billboards and research projects that advocate human rights issues in South Africa and abroad (www.afh.org). One such endeavor, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights International Print Portfolio, was produced to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the declaration. From this portfolio Nanackchand's woodcut *Let Us Pray*

(Figure 49, 1999) illustrates Article 17, the Right to Own Property. In his commentary, Nanackchand explains that this image is a celebration of the international right of individuals, especially women, to enjoy the freedom to own property (www.afh.org.za/index.php?option). He adds that ownership of property comes with responsibility which necessitates the right to adequate protection from extreme forms of human behavior. Nanackchand also alludes to the fear embedded in homeowners where houses take on a fort-like appearance in an attempt at securing the family within. High walls, barbed wire, electric fences and ferocious dogs become common features of homes in a heterotopian South Africa as rampant crime in a post-Apartheid context instills fear in this country among all its citizens.

The powerful composition of this woodcut comprises a range of architectural styles enclosing three images of women, two of whom reflect profiles of African women identified through their facial markings. This main image is contained within a barbed wire framework with a central image comprising ferocious dog heads. The range of homesteads include westernised ones as well as culturally specific homes such as the Ndebele homestead, located at the top of the print, while at the bottom are a series of shacks comprised of corrugated iron affording rudimentary protection. This separation of homesteads directly references economic distinctions that continue to prevail in South Africa. Together, the dogs and the barbed wire offer protection for the women who gaze beyond the confines of their homesteads and the picture plane towards an implied freedom. Nanackchand's use of printmaking processes like screen printing and intaglio reveals his expertise and his strong sense of design.

Ayesha Adam (graduated in 1979)

Ayesha Adams, a former art teacher at Reservoir Hills Secondary School, held her first solo exhibition at the Durban Art Gallery in July of 2011. In the body of work at this exhibition, some images focused on a township idiom presenting scenes which comment on the issue of the lack of delivery in South African townships. These images (Figure 50 and 51, c.2009) confront the viewer with the realities and ramifications of South Africa's post-Apartheid history which failed to deliver on the aspirations of the citizens. David Koloane in an interview with John Peffer (2009: 33) explains that the broader context for Township Art was embedded in Apartheid legislation. The work therefore was an illustration of the inhumane conditions under which most Black people lived. The townships that emerged as a result of Apartheid engineering were political spaces expressive of confinement, restrictions and

taboos. Hence, Township art was a form of collective memory with limited iconographic range, while carrying the overwhelming burden of representation of the urban Black experience (Peffer, 2009: 34).

Here Adam's images are reminiscent of the more contemporary post-Apartheid issue of non-delivery evident in townships and the rapid emergence of squatter camps around the country. Her contrast of monochromatic images against iridescent rich hues (Figure 50) conveys the extensive tensions that have emerged in a so-called free and democratic South Africa. In this context heightened and perhaps unrealistic expectations have conflicted with the realities of providing homes to a massive influx of people to urban areas. In her scenes of imposed social deprivation (Figure 50), the realities of segregation and separation are communicated as they impact on daily activities. The crowded composition and the general sense of desperation and abjection are conveyed in depictions of suffering; repeated protest action (due to poor service delivery); challenges faced by children in the form of child headed households and child abuse, and a lack of access to education and amenities, express dissent both implicitly and explicitly. While the image is reminiscent of the township idiom, Adam's interpretation focuses more on the challenges faced by the majority of this country who are still burdened by the imbalances of society.

While much of the work concentrates on the representation of Black communities, some work also focuses attention on the ideal of a democratic multi-cultural SA. In *Untitled* (Figure 51), the post-Apartheid narrative is explored through another crowded composition reflective of the diversity of South Africa. Figures merge and disappear into each other creating a metaphoric melting pot where dissolution of identities becomes the norm. Here Adams alludes to the advent of democracy where the South African 'rainbow nation' was envisioned now detracted from by a heterotopian reality.

Andrew Nair (graduated in 1983)

Andrew Nair, a school teacher at New West Secondary in Durban and an outstanding draughtsman, produced a series of graphite works for his first solo exhibition in September 2011 entitled "*Withdrawings*". The exhibition was held at the KZNSA gallery in Durban where his works were well received by the public. This body of work was produced over a period of ten years and represented a journey of self- discovery (Interview: 2011). While influenced by numerous 17th and 18th century masters, Nair also draws inspiration from artists

like Giorgio De Chirico, Vincent Van Gogh and Pieter Breughel. In Figures 52-54 (c. 2009), his silent post-Apartheid realms invite exploration. *The African Renaissance* (Figure 52), *The Weeping Cathedral* (Figure 53) and *Morning Glory* (Figure 54), are depictions of the city of Durban that allude to the transformation and simultaneous neglect of historic buildings like the City Hall and the Immanuel Cathedral, both sites of public demonstrations and implicit support from religious and civic structures for the struggle. Nair presents a stark contrast between the squalor of contemporary Durban and the rich architectural heritage of the city (Interview: 2011).

Bren Brophy, curator of the KZNSA, has commented on one of the most classical references in this body of work, namely, *The African Renaissance*. For Brophy, the work is

an exquisitely rendered portrait of the front of the Durban City Hall (steps). The figures (many insalubrious) portrayed in seemingly everyday activities are configured precisely to mirror the figures on the steps of ‘The School of Athens’, one of the most famous paintings by the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael. Commentators have noted of Raphael’s work, that almost every known Greek philosopher can be found in the painting. Nair has neatly and perhaps subversively raised the question of the nature and intent of our own ‘African Renaissance’ (<http://www.nsgallery.co.za/exhibitions/withdrawings.html>. Accessed 10 October 2011).

In all works on exhibition, Nair uses the conventions of the sublime in which a dark brooding atmosphere with receding light alludes to the receding Apartheid era, while the post-Apartheid dawning reflects aspirant hope for this country. Brophy adds that like De Chirico, who is best known for evoking haunted, brooding exteriors and arcades, “Nair’s drawings combine complex psychological insights with stinging social expositions that paint a less than rosy picture of modernity” (www.nsgallery.co.za/exhibitions/withdrawings.htm. Accessed 10 October 2011).

These comments are pertinent as the images allude to a re-emergent political consciousness, even though Nair claims not to be making an overt political statement with this body of work, asserting that they “are intensely passive and have nothing to do with politics” (Interview: 2011). Perhaps it is even possible here to suggest that Nair’s work alludes to global turmoil, as globalisation veils the conflicts and power struggles that prevail throughout the world. This

is suggested in his claim to be addressing the human condition rather than the narrow definition of that which is political.

In *Grotto 'esque* (Figure 55, c. 2009), *Vainly, I try to get a grip on things* (Figure 56, c. 2009) and *A Life Consumed by Slow Decay* (Figure 57, c.2009), Nair takes the viewer on an intensely personal journey into his psyche, reflecting on the title of the exhibition, “*Withdrawings*”, which address his personal self-doubt and withdrawal from society as in a form of self-preservation. Here troubled figures and embedded haunting faces, emerge and disappear into the fine detailed work of his complex landscapes. This body of work reflects anxious and disturbed landscapes rooted in a rich tapestry of imagery which comments on the duality of the intensely personal, as well as offering social commentary on the degradation of society.

Kiren Thathiah (graduated in 1983)

In 1987, following an exhibition of work by the UDW Fine Art Department, the Durban Art Gallery purchased for its collection, *Temples* (Figure 58, c.1987), by Kiren Thathiah. This mixed media work, part of Thathiah’s submission for his Master of Fine Art degree, was initiated pre-conceptually where gestural mark-making evolved subsequently into identifiable forms. While not prescriptive, for him the painting symbolises the degeneration of religious belief, with Thathiah noting that “you can find whatever you want in it” (*Varsity Voice*, June/July 1988: 7). When *Varsity Voice* probed Jill Addleson, then curator of the gallery, for purchasing the painting, she explained her interest thus:

For me it’s an interesting mix of east and west...something I’ve long been hoping for...An integration of Western technique and Eastern philosophical content. The painting could have only come from our local environment. It has so many strands and threads that reflect the richness and vitality of South African society. *It’s the first one I’ve seen...*and it’s an exciting development, that I hope indicates the beginning of an entirely new school of South African art” (*Varsity Voice*, June/July, 1988:7).

While Thathiah was strongly influenced by his uncle John Pillay,⁷⁹ a prolific temple sculptor in Durban, he ironically steered away from any content that was implicitly Indian in his undergraduate years. However, towards the end of his Fine Art degree, while searching for “something to paint”, he utilised Hindu subject matter and completed a painting that dealt with the ritual of Kavadi which was to pique his interest, leading to the work produced for his Masters degree (Thathiah, Interview: 2009). Further, his interaction and exposure to Indian philosophy under the tutelage of Professor Thomas Matthews impacted on his painting explorations.

He explains that his work was however also not politically neutral, yet at the same time it referenced his “own human condition” (Interview: 2009). In this personal yet political space, Thathiah draws attention to the intersection of identity and difference as notions in a constant state of flux, and hybridity (Minty, 2008: 14). In the South African context of colonial and Apartheid histories, the human condition is signified through categorised difference within an ethnic and racial politic, where culture is often conflated with race (Govinden, 2008: 35).

While Thathiah speaks of his “human condition”, he is by implication making reference to the identity of the Indian community. Govinden (2008: 35) suggests that this is due in part to an essentialised notion of race and ethnicity which in *Temples* and *Transitions*, are commodified in the anxiety to perpetuate it. This resulted from the homogenising tendencies of Apartheid and colonial histories of this country, which “obliterated what were seen as the untidy complexities of traditional societies” (Govinden, 2008: 35). However, during this transitional period at the university, many facets of identity creation were in part based on historical imagination. This location of identity led Thathiah to subsequently embark on a study of Indian aesthetics as reflected in Hindu painting, which became a central concern in his art practice.

In *Transitions* (Figure 8, 1992), the process of transformation is implicit in the expansive vistas which are rich with embedded symbolism. The Hindu iconography of the *trisula* or

⁷⁹ John Pillay is a well-known temple sculptor whose work can be seen in Durban in the *Draupathi Temple* in Jacobs Road and the *Ambalavan Temple* in Cato Manor (Matthews in Arkin et al., 1989: 214).

trident and the *mandalas*⁸⁰ emerging from the landscape, reference the Hindu pantheon of deities and the symbols thereof. The *trisula* has myriad symbolic meanings in Hinduism. While predominantly signifying the holy Hindu trinity of *Brahma*, the creator of the universe, *Vishnu*, the preserver, and *Shiva* the destroyer of negativity, it also suggests notions of rebirth as it is regarded as one of the weapons of destruction for the Goddess *Durga* (as offered by devotees in Figure 59) and for Lord *Shiva* (Figure 60). Here the Hindu concept of rebirth implicates the impending rebirth of a new South Africa after experiencing the trauma of colonial and Apartheid rule.

The South African landscape tradition has often been problematised as it is regarded as inseparable from contradictions. Of his focus on the troubled South African landscape Thathiah explains that:

There has always been the contestation between the physical concerns and the metaphysical and spiritual concerns in my work. It is the dissatisfaction with the physical that promotes other voyages. It was not to escape the painful realities of the physical (political landscape) but to substitute it with other, less painful and perhaps more idealistic realities.

While these comments reveal the tensions in his paintings Jennifer Beningfield (2006: 2) in *The Frightened Land*, explains that landscapes in this country have also tended to convey concepts of renewal and destruction, as well as comfort and unease. It has always been subject to tensions and contestations based on the history of the land, and the lack of stability in the land led to its scrutiny in order to re-imagine the land. Thathiah always used the landscape as a metaphor for change and as a vehicle for his ideas about the world. Strongly influenced by Indian philosophy, the landscape for him “became devoid of ownership and ceased to be just a physical manifestation” but a pointer to metaphysical realities (Interview: 2013). His sombre hued canvas is filled with anonymous human forms that appear and merge with the obscure darkened landscape. He explains that the figures, alive or dead, naked or clothed, sleeping or awake, are intended to express the Indian philosophic concern that the figure is not the centre of reality but is one immersed in its surroundings/environment. The

⁸⁰ A mandala is a circular shaped image which represents wholeness. It can also be seen as a model for the organisational structure of life – a cosmic diagram that reminds the individual of their relation to the infinite. Describing both material and non-material realities, the mandala appears in all aspects of life: the celestial we call earth, sun and moon, as well as the conceptual circles of friends, family and community (www.mandalaproject.org/what/index.html. Accessed 2 May 2012).

duality of life and death evident in the painting echoes the birth and rebirth of the country as it was poised for 'freedom'. While the parallels of the Hindu concepts of Karma and rebirth are also evoked in *Transitions*, both paintings bear complex social implications which allude to the emergence of a new South African consciousness and humanity as well as the dispelling of previous eras of oppression and inhumanity.

Temples and *Transitions* also reflect on Indian diasporic identity, where through the translucent layering of colour and texture, an emerging Indian identity is alluded to and is discernible. Vertovec's (1999: xix) proposal of three meanings of diaspora is significant here in that he suggests that diasporic consciousness is conveyed in a mode of cultural production in which the global presence of cultural objects, images and meanings, results in variegated processes of creolisation, negotiation and constant transformation. In this he notes that forms are referred to as hybrid, syncretic or alternate (1999: xx). Stuart Hall (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 312) offers an explanation of diaspora which reflects many of the perceptions of Indian graduates discussed in this dissertation:

...Diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of 'ethnicity'...the diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.

While I am in effect attempting to decipher a modern South African Indian creative aesthetic, Hall's notion of production and reproduction, aligned with Bhabha's notion of presence through absence (1994: 75), is pertinent here. The location and presence of an Indian diasporic identity is realised through the absence of a sense of rootedness and home, which reflects the fact that all identities are by their very nature multi-dimensional, multi-layered and contradictory.

For Minty (2004:14), the notion of the hybrid represents ideas related to roots, rootedness and rootlessness. Roots, he says, reference land, place and home, and since home is potentially multi-placed in the diasporic imaginary, the question can be asked, when does location of place become home? And further, what is the difference between feeling at home and staking claim to a place as one's own? Minty notes further that radical art practices are one of the

key ways in which diasporic subjects rearticulate their notions of home and this, he says, is true for a number of artists, like Thathiah, who emerged from active political and cultural struggle during the 1970s and 1980s (2004: 14).

In an interview with Nasan Pather (in *Scratches on the Face*, 2008/9), Thathiah explains the negotiation of a new South African Indian consciousness in the establishment of a diasporic identity:

I do think that for a brief time there was a space for an exploration and questioning of what could constitute 'Indian-ness'...There was no formulaic overall conceptualisation of identity and what visual form it would take, we were starting to critically examine what 'Indian-ness' meant in the late nineteen-eighties. There were very few people who took their work into a mode that could be described as 'obviously Indian', but generally it was very low key. We tended to reject the constricting identities prescribed by Apartheid and reacted negatively to essentialist definitions of who we were.

Thathiah's comments are revealing in that they situate the mediation of an Indian identity against the politicised identity imposed by the South African government. However, as Hall indicated, this identity is one that is constantly produced and reproduced through processes of transformation, and that process was actively engaged with at UDW during the 1980s. While Indian graduates were supportive of the liberation struggle in their fight for equality, many used their art to comment on that struggle, while others allowed their work to reveal a different agenda which was not necessarily one that reflected the "Indian-ness" that Thathiah speaks of. However, this is not nearly as revealing as the expectation from the institutions and Durban audiences of what kind of art these Indian graduates ought to be producing. Vivian Attwood in her editorial in *Newsart KZN* (not dated: 1) declared:

If you are looking for representational work by an Indian artist that speaks to you specifically of his life experience, expect lean pickings. In fact, you will have more luck finding hen's teeth than practising Indian artists. You might just have to go back home with a copy of *Indian Delights* and a packet of mixed spices.

Her irreverent comments convey a rather ill-informed expectation of a specific kind of representation and a preconceived notion of Indian-ness as expressed by Thathiah, and hence a notion of identity constituted not outside, *but within* representation as discussed by Hall (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 313). The Indian graduate as a practising artist creates work not as

“a mirror held up to reflect what already exists” (Hall in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999:313), but rather highlights shifting self and cultural perceptions that may or may not reference Indian-ness.

As Benedict Anderson highlights in *Imagined Communities* (in During, 2005: 256), communities are distinguished not by their falsity or genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined, and in South Africa it is perfectly plausible that the Indian community is imagined within a particularised mode of practice whether referencing art, music, dance or food.

Avitha Sooful (graduated in 1986)

Avitha Sooful, current Head of Department of Visual Arts and Design at the Vaal University of Technology and a practising artist, has produced a large body of work but over the past ten years landscapes dominate her work and can be said to function at times as a commentary on current political issues. Her landscapes examine aspects of natural, built or imagined environments, and in October 2012 she presented a series of landscapes for her solo exhibition *Heaven and Earth*. According to her artist’s statement, the works focus on the duality of male and female as associated with the masculine form of the Heavenly Father and the earth referenced as Mother Earth. Ramgolam, in her doctoral study (2011), has written extensively about the work of Sooful. Of her landscapes, Ramgolam asserts that they become a socio-political vehicle transformed to personify a metaphysical presence. In the 1980s, Sooful was an activist and her works continue to reflect this. While she remains disillusioned by the present South African dystopia, she focuses on mirroring the socio-political context of South Africa and her ambivalent attitude to democracy (Ramgolam, 2011: 157). To her the land and the landscape are about:

.... time and place. It’s about history and ownership. I believe they are also about the historical reflection. I found it important to paint exhibitions of memories of landscape to parallel the memories I have of Apartheid’s separateness. A time when Indians by law were not allowed to live or sleep over in the Free State. My paintings reflect and celebrate the landscape but also concentrate on the lack of the human element (Sooful in Ramgolam, 2011:158).

Sooful’s landscapes (Figures 61, 2010, 62-64, 2012) are representations of the Free State’s constrained landscape which reflect former White “privilege and domination” and recall the

prohibitions applicable to inferior races [including Indians] in the Free State (Ramgolam, 2011: 158). These landscapes also reflect on the invisibility of those who were not considered a legitimate part of the land. These people-less spaces recall the GAA, where the presence of Black people in White zoned areas was selectively allowed. Beningfield (2006: 209) explains that in an urban context, the action of slipping in and out of the city at dawn and dusk rendered Black people not wholly invisible but as incomplete participants in this urban landscape. The GAA also ensured that Black people were conscious of their temporary status within these White spaces, and were always involved in a return from the centre to the space outside its formal limits (Beningfield, 2006: 210).

Although the work bears no signifiers of her Indian identity, the history of Indian-ness in South Africa is acknowledged through text in *Dislocation* (Figure 61, 2010). According to Ramgolam (2011:162), Sooful maintains that Indians in South Africa, who were previously not allowed in the Free State, are still confronted with the dilemma of not being Black enough and are subsequently still subjected to subtle forms of racism. The silence that surrounds this ongoing discrimination alluded to by Sooful, resonates with aspects of the erasure of Indians from particularised South African spaces. Thus, the silences in the landscapes, which incidentally provided inspiration for a substantial body of literature, speak not only of alienation from the land but also of an “active removal of speech” (Beningfield, 2006: 220) that could have countered the Apartheid state. Further, with reference and opposition to present-day South Africa, the land becomes a political site which reflects upon its history and the role that the Afrikaner people played in the process of creating a raced place for the preservation of an Afrikaner dominated nation (Ramgolam, 2011: 158). In these paintings, Sooful therefore interrogates the search for new identities in a new democracy while simultaneously reflecting upon the former associations with this idiom.

Ravi Govender (graduated in 1987)

Ravi Govender began his career as a teacher, later becoming Director of the Durban Indian Documentation Centre and presently employed in the Department of Arts and Culture. Of the many graduates from UDW, Govender still practises as an artist, though not for commercial purposes but in response to a spiritual calling. Like Thathiah’s landscapes, Govender’s employ a similar style which highlights a subtle reference to Hindu mythology and

spirituality. This similarity could in part be the result of Thathiah supervising Govender's Masters degree in Fine Art.

Jeff Chandler (in *Newsart*, no date: 3) comments on the popularity of landscape as subject matter for university students, a genre fostered in the curriculum by lecturers at UDW, many of whom were Rhodes graduates and in particular, the late Professor Thomas Matthews, who had been a member of the Grahamstown Group.⁸¹ Chandler highlights the influence that Matthews had on his students, particularly on Thathiah and Govender.

However, Matthews' own interest in eastern art, and his introduction of eastern studies to the fine art course, was to impact on a number of young artists. Kiren Thathiah, followed by Ravi Govender, began exploring their spiritual identity within the context of Indian culture and mythology, seeking to express a distinctive "Indianness" in their paintings. Landscape remained the subject matter, but became fused with images and symbols evoking eastern mysticism.

For Govender, the FAD was a reflection of the larger campus. By his fourth year (1987), he recalls that the Fine Art programme was rapidly changing as was the whole ethos of the university and the country. Much of the earlier work produced by him reflects the Eurocentric bias of the department, while his later work, which formed part of his Masters portfolio, reflects a transition into the dynamism of an 'Indian aesthetic' (Govender, Interview: 2009). Govender explains that the change in his style is due largely to changes in management and the headship of the department. Under the control of Professor Pierre Volschenk (1974-1986), a rigid Eurocentric idiom prevailed. However, when the headship changed from Volschenk to Matthews, there was a significant shift in consciousness as well (Interview: 2009). This was probably due in part to Matthews being the leading authority of Indian art and aesthetics in South Africa, who therefore generated greater flexibility in the structure of the courses on offer during his tenure.

⁸¹ The Grahamstown Group, based on European Romanticism and Expressionism, was founded by Brian Bradshaw in 1964 and was made up of a closed group of select students and staff by invitation only. Having worked within the confines of Rhodes Art School, they developed a distinctive style dominated by Bradshaw who as the HOD from 1961 to 1978, was a powerful personality. At that time, Rhodes was one of the largest art schools in the country. The works produced were based on a manifesto which endorsed the use of solely indigenous subject matter as legitimate material for art. Here landscape was preferred as a result of the easy access to subject matter.

In *Krishna and the Flute* (Figure 9, c.1995), Govender, perhaps influenced by Thathiah, introduces Hindu iconography like the *trisula* and the holy cow. The *trisula*, as explained earlier, suggests the cycle of life according to Hindu philosophy, while the bull/cow recalls the mythology of both *Krishna* as a cowherd, and Lord *Shiva*, whose vehicle is *Nandhi*, the cow. His imagery creates a challenging narrative even for the knowledgeable Hindu. The layering of colour and the application of paint recall the work of Indian modernist B. Prabha, whose textured surfaces were evocative rather than descriptive. The partly discernible image astride the cow/bull is indecipherable, which suggests the form of one of the images within the Hindu construction of “God”, or could also depict a devotee. The iridescent orange form located in the distance suggests the deity of *Shiva Nataraja* as the lord of the dance. The *Shiva Nataraja* is a popular representation of *Lord Shiva* as He performs the cosmic dance which is believed to destroy all forms of evil and ignorance (Champakalakshmi & Kris, 2001: 79-80). The cosmic dance is rendered subtly through a change in scale and a slight reference to the dance of Shiva, engaging in the process of rebirth and the notion of *karma* within what can be imagined as a South African landscape.

Again the genre of landscape is used to identify physical places and representational forms in which social, cultural and political meanings are embedded, thereby communicating meaning (Beningfield, 2006: 3). Beningfield also suggests a distance and detachment prevalent here, as well as a dependence in which direct and unmediated interaction with aspects of the natural world remain possible. This possibility is explored in Govender’s landscapes where nature and religion exist within a symbiotic space. The illusory nature of the human form mounted on the bull amidst an imagined land engages the viewer with a ‘foreignness’ attached to the diasporic processes of separation and entanglement which implies a ‘living here’ and ‘remembering there’ allusion (Clifford in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 224). While these works invoke memories of a strong Indian heritage embellished with Hindu symbolism, they convey a diasporic landscape in reference to an imaginary India where religious practice is fundamentally part of daily routine.

In Figures 65, 66 and 67, Govender’s devotion as a Hindu and his close association with the practice of Hindu rituals find expression. The titles of the works are almost self-explanatory, as they resonate with Hindu philosophy and mythology. *Eternal Bliss* (Figure 65, 2006),

recalling the concept of liberation of the soul or *nirvana*, was painted after a sacred Hindu ceremony referred to as the *Hanuman Puja/Poojay*.⁸² In this devotional ritual, devotees enter a trance state during which they perform a dance and bless fellow devotees that are present. This ceremony was witnessed regularly by Govender at the home of an uncle who entered such a trance state after a series of cleansing rituals had been conducted, including abstinence from meat for a month prior to a particular *Hanuman Puja/Poojay* prayer. Govender explains that at the moment of trance there is complete surrender to the divine with no distractions but a very powerful and disciplined approach towards maintaining the spiritual energy (Interview: 2011). For him, this experience is almost revitalising with an “energy that pours out”, creating a desire in him to sensitise all that we need to feel this energy and to live it every day. The black linear forms in Govender’s work are of burglar bars, common and necessary features of most South African homes. They are used here to symbolically refer to the threshold between the two worlds, the spiritual and the material (<http://www.indereunion.net/actu/govender/govender/html>).

Govender explores the identities of both Africa and India and the implicit forms of engagement materialised within the dialectic of “rootedness” and “rootlessness” of the South African Indian. In this work he challenges assumptions of “home” and the authenticity of what Kavitha Ramachandran (in Govinden, 2008: 48), calls the “diasporic children.”

In *God’s Acre* (Figure 66, 2006) Govender once again explores the landscape, referencing specific aspects of the Drakensberg mountain range in KwaZulu-Natal, where rock strata and formations resemble the *murtis* (images) and sculptures of South India. For Govender, the location is imbued with a tangible spirituality and power where, in keeping with several cultural premises worldwide, he feels the presence of the divine (Interview: 2011). Govender’s *Spiritual Landscape* (Figure 67, 2006) with the signature symbol, the *trisula*, is an attempt at depicting his spiritual journey in the context of Hindu temple worship. The composition includes a background composed of three cellars which could also represent the sanctum sanctorum of a temple housing the *gramadevatas* (presiding deity). These symbolic forms have been used in his depiction of these deities. The foreground is composed of a

⁸² *Hanuman Poojay* is a prayer dedicated to the monkey God *Hanuman* who is a devotee of Lord *Rama*, an incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*, part of the Hindu trinity. This prayer is desired as it affords peace and prosperity to one’s life (www.iloveindia.com/spirituality/puja/hanuman-puja.html).

mixture of forms and colours that highlight the material world and the quest of the individual/devotee for the Divine. This journey is central to the attainment of spiritual enlightenment in many world religions, in Hinduism guided by the Divine Master, represented as an elongated image that conveys the superhuman element (<http://www.indereunion.net/actu/govender/govender/html>).

Perhaps this body of work heralds the beginnings of what could be termed a 'South African Indian art' where the 'Indian-ness' or 'Indianicity' (as employed by Chandler), of the works no longer creates barriers in understanding and reading of the implications of these images. Here the expectations of the public and the expectations of the artist need not be aligned to ensure a more holistic experience of the context and content of the South African Indian art work.

Nalini Moodley (graduated in 1991)

As a student, my area of specialisation was printmaking, with explorations in etching, screen printing and lithography. However, once I completed my study, access to printing equipment proved problematic and so I ventured into oil painting. Having painted infrequently since 1992, I do not have a large body of work and those that I did produce have since been destroyed, severely damaged or have been given away as gifts. While teaching at Hillcrest High School some years ago, and being one of three Indian members on a predominantly White staff, the celebration of festivals like Deepavali and Eid provided peculiar interactions between teachers of the two race groups. During these celebrations it seemed the Indian staff would bring their plates of sweetmeats and share these with the White members of staff who commented on the use of paper doilies in this offering. Similar comments were observed at a later environment, that of Kingsway High School where I also taught. This piqued my interest which led to my consideration of the use of the paper doilies as a signifier of Indian-ness and 'exotic' food which I explored in Figure 68 (2009).

In this mixed media image, pattern is used as a signifier of Indian-ness. On a deep hued purple background a patterned cut-out from a traditional sari is attached, and around which emerges a circular imprint of a paper doily. The use of the doily consciously collapses the difference between Hindu and Muslim while unifying the misconception of a common

identity to which both were subject under Apartheid. In this regard, one cannot overlook the homogenising tendencies of colonialism and subsequent Apartheid, which obliterated the subtle and overt differences, that are embedded in being Indian and in particular Indian South African. Govinden's (2008: 36) assertion that under colonialism and Apartheid, expressions of identity or of difference were linked to cultural and racial specificity, is pertinent here, as this led to the homogenising of different ethnicities.

The arrangement of form, moreover, can be interpreted as a metaphorical analogy where the circle is seen as symbolic used to protect the central image from complete assimilation and acculturation into a new multi-cultural society. As the doily appears and disappears, it highlights the shifting identities that I experience as an Indian South African and that Indians experience as a minority in this country. These are simultaneously self-imposed and externally imposed, reflecting the constantly evolving nature of Indian South African identity. Thus the image oscillates between functioning as a cultural signifier, reflected in the use of the sari and as a contemporary symbol realised through the use of the paper doily. This shift echoes the imagined space of difference and sameness as experienced by myself in an environment like Pretoria, where Indian-ness is seen as different from the norm, and certainly more uncommon than in Durban, where the majority of Indians reside. As a result, there is the projection of an otherness realised through cultural indicators like pattern and colour.

Faiza Galdhari (graduated in 1991)

Faiza Galdhari is a Muslim printmaker whose works interrogate issues of location and dislocation in relation to the representation and empowerment of Muslim women. Of mixed descent, she is identified as 'Coloured' and as a result of the GAA was forced to live in a 'Coloured area', which she maps out in a series of four prints titled *Conversations in my Mind Then and Now* (Figures 69-72, 2004). Here she had little contact with other Muslims, since most would be classified 'Indian' and would therefore reside in Indian areas. As a result of residing in a Coloured area with little access to Muslim people, the imaginary of rootedness is displaced as the desire and romance of home and religio-cultural belonging are made more enticing and bolstered by the pervasiveness and resilience of the human spirit. Through strong patterning, particularly in a circular form, she makes reference to Islamic motifs and in particular, the iconoclastic idiom in Islam while the history of a journey is

symbolised by the inclusion of an oriental slipper (Figure 70). These images foreground the resilience of the human spirit in migrating from foreign lands to this alien country. A description of her biology as evidenced in the label “*Coloured*” or “*Gekleurde*” (Afrikaans for coloured) (Figure 69), which is intended to designate racial and social order, denies her distinctiveness and ironically conflates into her “South African-ness.” All four works consider the complexities of being Muslim in South Africa and reflect on history and culture through the use of various symbols like the map, the sweetmeats and the use of the colour black.

The textual reference of the map in Figure 69 and 70 demarcates the restricted group area for Coloureds. The additional reference of the rich sweetmeat of the *jelebi*⁸³ and *ladoo* (Figures 71 and 72), become key signifiers of Muslim Indian identity and highlight the cross-fertilization amongst South Africans which underscores the limiting notion of Indian-ness in South Africa. Further, the reference to migration and movement is realised through the representation of the map work which traces the passage of the journey of the Muslim community which came from the South Asian subcontinent. The map also signifies the shifting of place as experienced by Galdhari as a Coloured woman, from an Indian residential area to a Coloured designated area and back to an Indian area. Rastogi (2008: 18) offers notable perspectives here on national belonging, suggesting that in the transitional and post-Apartheid period, racial affiliation incorporates a spatial affiliation, particularly asserted through place. This suggestion finds resonance in the works of Galdhari, which focus on the dialectic of place and home while challenging notions of home and belonging. A description of her biology as a Coloured woman which was intended for social order in this country denied her very existence as a Muslim woman, an identity she now fully completely embraces as a woman in *purdah*. Given the complex, shifting ground of being South African today, the pertinent question of who determines identity, one’s self or others, raised by Goldschmidt (2003: 211), highlights some of the complexity in Galdhari’s work.

Galdhari’s work also engages with the monotheistic foundations of the Islamic faith. The assertion that there is only one God, there is nothing is like Him and nothing can represent

⁸³ *Jelebi* and *Ladoo* are sweetmeats that are popular with South African Indians irrespective of their religious leanings. These are used in celebrations, rituals and on religious occasions.

Him (Al-Faruqi in Galdhari, 1998: 9) is sourced in Islamic law or *Shari'ah*, a divine law. This perspective prescribes a non-representational iconoclastic art for Muslims by explicitly prohibiting the use of figurative imagery in the visual arts (Interview, Galdhari: 2011).

Galdhari explains that from the inception of their creativity, Muslim artists in South Africa are continuously cautioned to refrain from drawing, painting, printing or sculpting representational imagery. She says this 'cautioning' is backed by Islamic doctrine which if ignored, results in the artist being alienated by the Muslim community and in extreme cases, being labelled or branded as 'evil' (1998: 7).

In spite of the above, she practises as a Muslim artist and the works presented here reflect her strong adherence to the Islamic faith while often departing from the prescriptiveness of Islamic law. The images convey a distinct Islamic character as they present the discourse of Muslim women in South Africa. The discussion of the works reflect on many conversations with Galdhari in which she described her journey as an artist and as a Muslim woman, whose life and artistic trajectory was intrinsically shaped by the legacy of Apartheid. This classification further impacted on her education which was received alongside Christian Coloured children to whom she could not relate (Interview: 2011).

I, unlike many other Muslims my age who grew up in the Apartheid era, did not live in a so-called designated 'Indian' area, and neither did I attend an 'Indian' or Islamic state-aided school. My contact with Muslims, most of whom resided in 'Indian' areas at the time, was thus minimal. The risks of the dilution of my Islamic identity were extremely high, as compared to my peers. However, having very influential parents who abide by the Islamic value system, and attending *madressah*⁸⁴ daily as a young girl, created a strong foundation which moulded my Islamic identity (1998: 71).

Galdhari interestingly believes that Apartheid taught her tolerance, which aided her in her subsequent challenges, one of which was the challenge to 'look Muslim'. While her projected identity was initially not that of an orthodox Muslim woman, she was often questioned about the authenticity of *being* Muslim. Comments like "You don't look helluva Muslim!" challenged existing notions of what the outside expected of her and subsequently what she expected of herself. While she was always 'Muslim inside', for many years she struggled with the fact that the 'outside' was not complete. For her, Muslim women are meant to dress

⁸⁴ Islamic school attended by Muslim children usually in the afternoon (see Galdhari, 1998:169) .

modestly and cover up their hair and body up to their arms and ankles, reflected in the women she had been representing in her images. She later realised that the time had arrived for her to dress in the manner she desired and she then began to don the full *burka*, a one piece garment completely covering her face and body with only her eyes and hands visible (Galdhari, Interview: 2011). This challenge of ‘looking’ like a Muslim woman resonates with Mercer’s notion of the stereotype which he says is a product of a code, and an interpretation of a reality that reproduces and legitimates assumptions of race (1994: 82). He contends that the ideological and cultural power of the codes determine dominant representations of race which are echoed in Galdhari’s fundamental desire to belong to and identify with a particularised group.

Galdhari’s work problematises this notion of identity where the question of belonging is critical. In other words, how does the category of ‘Indian’ blur categories such as Malay, Muslim and Coloured, which were labels attached to Galdhari at various points in her life? As Govinden (2008: 61) points out, ethnic, religious and racial categories are not distinct markers of race and ethnicity and are therefore pertinent in considerations of Galdhari’s work. Further, the categories mentioned above are constantly shifting denying any stability which interestingly is created for Galdhari in the adorning of the *burka*. Galdhari straddles the arbitrary divide between Indian and Coloured (Govinden, 2008: 61), and the reality of identity marked by religious adherence. This further draws attention to the various pivotal intersections between culture, politics and identity in the works of all the graduates presented in this study and an Islamic cultural identity in the work of Galdhari in particular.

In her work, Galdhari attempts to resolve the limitations and prescriptiveness regarding art making. She notes that by “assimilating useful aspects of the visual language learnt from my western training into my own artistic expression, which extracts from Islamic sources...This I feel is reflective of my upbringing, my art training and...my Islamic identity” (1998: 72-73).

In Figures 73-80, which are part of the portfolio for her Master’s degree, Galdhari is intrinsically narrative with strong figurative representations. As a Muslim artist, her use of figures were very controversial but was not intended as such. “It was my western training that taught me the only way I knew how to communicate” says Galdhari (Interview: 2012), who freely uses representational imagery as a means of promoting her religion, an act of “*dawa*”

i.e. the act of using art to spread your religion (Interview: 2011). Galdhari explains her position:

...I enjoy this aspect of my work tremendously. My personal view is that these images which are meant to be viewed for their aesthetic merits alone, should not be classed in the same category as those which are produced for un-Islamic practices...I have produced these images with the aim of conveying a particular message to the viewer, just in the same way that an author uses text to make a particular point. These images should be interpreted in this light because I have not attempted to compete with my Creator...I am comfortable with these images, even though I am aware that these will not be popular in the Muslim art market...every Muslim artist should be aware of the traditions governing art, but they should also be able to exercise the responsibility to distinguish between the use and abuse of representational imagery in art (1998: 74-75).

These figures focus on the dual positioning of women within the modern world and in particular within the Muslim world. Galdhari (Interview: 2012) further notes that these works which are a sample from a more extensive body of work, address the common misconception that Muslim women who are dressed in the *burka* are oppressed. Moreover, these images present an evaluation of Muslim women living in a westernised society but as a minority. She juxtaposes the Muslim woman as one able to maintain her own identity against the allure of the west. This is represented through western aesthetic preferences where women are expected to reveal their physiognomies as reflections of beauty, success, and even overt sensuality. Galdhari (1998: 73) explains that the subject matter reveals her interest in the tensions between Islamic and western conventions and the repercussions this has for Muslim women, living in the modern world. Her images position the conflicting perception of women where the Muslim woman is positioned in contrast to all that the western woman reflects. However, for Galdhari this assertion is false, as for her, the Muslim woman intentionally reflects values and a moral code preserved through the heritage and teachings of Islam.

The symbols used in the work are carefully selected and denote aspects synonymous with western mass culture and consumption. In addition, Galdhari includes in all her work a characteristic circular form extracted from Arabic writing which is equated with the “full stop” in the English language. For her (Interview: 2012), this form, as in Figures 76, 77 and 78, symbolises eternity and presents a never-ending continuum of worship, devotion and faith.

In addition to the symbolic use of the circular form, the colour black is often used symbolically, as can be seen in the works already discussed. This is an indirect reference to the stereotypical identity of Muslim women dressed in the traditional black cloak (*pardah*) and Galdhari's silkscreen *Purdah*⁸⁵ (Figure 79, 1994) and *Who Am I* (Figure 80, 1995), reference this convention. In these works, she sourced her imagery from Qur'anic illumination, fashion magazines and textual documentation, including the script in both Arabic and English. Here she celebrates the strength of the *pardah*-dressed women whom she regards as role models for her family and community. A significant body of her work therefore, features calligraphic script, and various related decorative elements which are juxtaposed with representational imagery alongside a rich narrative.

Phillipa Hobbs and Elizabeth Rankin comment on the duality of textual material in Galdhari's work. They note that Galdhari uses textual reference to foreground the position of the Muslim woman in the family and community (1997: 110). This role is laid out in the Koran and as related in *Purdah*, is specific and detailed, illuminating the aspiration that “*your rank by Allah rises*” when one conforms to these prescriptions (Galdhari, Interview: 2011).

The duality in these images foregrounds the tensions in Galdhari's work between Islam and western conventions and perceptions. This tension is visualised through the images of the high heeled sandal and costume jewellery overprinted on the enveloping symbolic black of the image, thereby enhancing the subject's shifting identity. Galdhari points out that the use of the western symbols of modern femininity highlight the notion that while in *pardah* Muslim women are “still *just* women and human beings” (Interview: 2013). Their covering in the long dress, the *abaya*, is by no means restrictive or compulsory but worn of free choice as it represents obedience to their creator. This garment is worn over their ‘regular’ clothing which is reflective of their human-ness and their femininity, which may in fact be the glamorised items of Gucci shoes, make-up or mini-skirts (Interview: 2011). Further, as women who exist in a contemporary society they are not without the desire to be desirable and as such she highlights that whatever garments are worn underneath the *abaya*, are private and Islamic teachings do not deny women the right to “express their sexuality or negate their

⁸⁵ *Purdah* is a garb worn by some Muslim women to cover all parts of the body except the eyes, hands and feet (Galdhari, 1998: 170)

humanity” (Interview: 2011). In many parts of the West, Muslim women in *pardah* are stereotypically considered spiritual ‘beings’ likened somewhat to the Christian nuns who are celibate, unadorned and often in black. On the contrary, in Islam, celibacy is only prescribed for the unmarried and the use of black, although not prescribed, is common due to its lack of transparency and the degree of anonymity that it offers (Galdhari, Interview: 2013). It is thus this range of issues which plays on stereotypes and ethnicity that are explored in this body of work.

In conclusion, Galdhari’s work offers a reversal of the negative perception Muslim women in *Purdah* received in westernised contexts or by the uninformed. Her work is moreover an act of spreading her religion and repositioning the Muslim woman as more liberated and demanding greater respect than those who aspire to the western appeal of sensuality and over indulgence.

Reshma Maharaj (graduated in 1992)

Reshma Maharaj completed her first two qualifications at UDW, where she received her Fine Art degree in 1992 and a Master of Fine Art degree in 1999. She is presently employed as a lecturer in the Graphic Design Department at VUT. As noted previously, Maharaj is a professional Kathak dancer who has contributed to community activities in Lenasia, Sharpeville and Sebokeng. As a printmaker, she also works with mixed media and collage, exploring different aspects of Hinduism formulated through *Kathak* and evident in Figures 81-90. In India, dance is seen as a form of worship where the dancer performs the ritual of prayer using the various *mudras* (hand gestures) and *bhargas* (body postures) of the body. The dancer worships *Shiva* as *Lord Nataraja* who is the king of dance, as well as renditions in honour of *Lord Krishna*, but always begins with an offering of obeisance to *Lord Ganesha* (Figure 85, c.1997), who in Hindu mythology is the remover of obstacles.

Kathak developed as a north Indian style of dancing alongside the growth of the Mughal Empire, and Maharaj reflects this relationship in her works through architectural design and patterning. Further, according to Maharaj (Interview: 2012), this work represents the aspirations of the dance and dancer reaching out to God through the performance. She utilises the adornments of the performer as embellishment (Figure 86) and in this way recalls the use of precious and semi-precious stones in Mughal architecture.

Her depiction of the *Kathak* performance captures the complexity of the dance alongside the musical accompaniment. The screen print in Figure 81 (c.1997) presents a rich textured tapestry of design and pattern which is enhanced through the layering of dance sculptural postures and mango-leaf designs popularised in Indian textiles. This pattern work reveals a dancer caught in a posture indicative of Lord Krishna playing the flute. Here an attempt has been made to visually evoke the sound emanating from the flute which leads the dancers in movement. The use of gold inks and rich colour add subtle embellishment to the multi-layering of the format. In the *Message is in the Medium* (Figure 82), the shifts in the structure of the body create a synthesis with the Hindi text which repeats the syllabic notations around which the rhythm of the dance develops. Figure 83 (c.1997) foregrounds *Holi* a festival of colour and exhilaration which is popularly celebrated in India and some communities in South Africa. The swing of the skirt of the *Kathak* dancer is a central image around which the composition develops. Once again Maharaj uses rich colour and pattern to convey the dynamism of the dance during the festival of *Holi*. Figure 84 (c.1997) focuses on the musical accompaniments and footwork of the vibrant dance enhanced through a change in format which supports and enhances the shift in perspective.

Maharaj uses an opulent palette to evoke the forms of dancers and deities subtly rendered through the layering of translucent inks and rich colouring. The images are enriched with traditional Hindu decorative motifs like the common paisley or mango patterning and the richness of the *mendhi* designs evident in Figure 81. With the representation of Indian temples and temple sculptures in some of these prints, Maharaj reflects the diasporic imaginary of India while also exploring notions of identity embedded in a national as well as an ethnic minority context. Here the question of diaspora as explained by Rastogi problematises identity through the prism of national identity, minority belonging and multiple allegiances. Govinden (2008: 50) further explains that diasporic identity exists in a hybrid space which embodies the essentialisation of identities, such as particularised Indian identities. Maharaj's palette, pattern and imagery present an Indianness reminiscent of the sub-continent and echoed variously by Indians in South Africa.

The designs utilised in her prints are also reminiscent of Mughal decoration as well as inspired by Rajput miniature painting (see Figures 87, 88 and 89) with delicate embellishment in design, and colour being used for its emotive purposes thereby foregrounding its vibrancy. Most of these works reference her adherence to the teachings of

Hinduism and the value of culture and heritage implicit in the arts of music and dance, and the foundational teachings of Hindu philosophy. Here she employs a symbolic and stylised representation of the dance suggested through flat beds of colour, the use of text and the flatness of the dance costumes. The use of the peacock feather is a common symbol of the dance when it is dedicated to *Lord Krishna* and involves the narration of His mythologies. In Figure 88 (c. 1997), Maharaj creates a dynamic composition which portrays the stylised iconography of the *Kathak* dance and symbolically uses the feather, the jewellery and the text to convey a comprehensive dialogue of dance as a form of worship.

In *Raas* (Figure 90), Maharaj depicts the *Raas Leela* dance of *Krishna* with his beloved consort *Radha* and the *Gopis* (cowherd dancers). This performance is believed to have occurred at night in the groves of the Vrindavan forest, the revered home of Lord Krishna. Again, each colour reflects the emotion of *Krishna*, *Radha* and the *Gopis*. The nine colours relate to the nine rasas or emotions experienced by humans and depicted in dance: these are love, sorrow, laughter, anger, fear, heroism, disgust, wonder and peace.

Maharaj's body of work present an idiom comparable with modern Indian artist M.F. Husain, whose fragmented forms create a degree of abstraction, as reflected in some of these prints.

Selvan Naidoo (graduated in 1995)

In Figure 91 (2009), Selvan Naidoo presents his viewer with an image of a *Thali*. This is a South Indian symbol of marriage manifest in the Tamil culture and is of particular significance in the Hindu marriage ceremony. The image derives from the temples of Khajuraho, where the union of male and female love is given visual articulation. In South Africa, the tying of the *Thali* is still an intrinsic part of the Tamil wedding ceremony. It is a yellow cord embedded with small gold pendants in traditional shapes, predetermined by the lineage of the bridegroom's family. The union of marriage is considered complete once the *Thali* is tied around the neck of the bride. The image by Naidoo is overlaid with text, which explains the seven sacred steps in a Hindu marriage known as *saptapadi*.⁸⁶ While the priest

⁸⁶ The ritual of *saptapadi* symbolises the journey of married life. The first step is taken to earn and provide a living for the household while avoiding those things that might harm them. The second step is taken to build their physical, mental and spiritual powers which will lead to a healthy lifestyle. The third step is taken to earn and increase their wealth by righteous and proper means. The fourth is taken to acquire knowledge, happiness

chants the relevant *mantras* (spiritual incantations), the bride and groom take the seven steps around the fire, a ritual symbolising the vessel of married life.

Although the image displays aspects of Hindu religion, Naidoo (Interview: 2011) is quick to point out that “...by being Indian I don’t want to be pigeon-holed into creating works that explores only mysticism...”. This comment alludes to the homogenisation and stereotyping of South African Indians which is experienced in almost all aspects of South African life. Through this image and others in his *oeuvre*, Naidoo explores his South African identity as one profoundly different from that of India.

Vidhan Pathak in his discussion of the Indian diaspora in South Africa, highlights that in their host countries, diasporic persons mostly remain minority groups who preserve their “ethnic, religious identity and solidarity” which serves as a basis for maintaining cultural significance (in Dubey, 2010: 91). According to Motwani (in Motwani et al., 1993: 6), Indians in the diaspora feared losing their cultural identity and were inclined to be over-religious, rigid, conservative, and orthodox. This is a position Kamen (2007: xiii) endorses when he asks: Who is more authentic: those who leave or those who remain? It is also worth noting that while Indian cultural characteristics are rigidly adhered to in South Africa, they are in fact significantly different from those practised in India.

Maharaj explains that in a highly racialised environment like South Africa, Indians often retreated into their cultural and religious cocoons (in Raghuram et al., 2008: 26), which resulted in most Indians practising their religion almost obsessively. South African Indians have developed religious practices which were carried down through the generations and zealously guarded, some of which find little resonance in India itself. The *Purtassi*⁸⁷ prayer is a case in point. While Tamil-speaking Hindus in South Africa abstain from meat during this month followed by a series of rituals and services, the root of this prayer in India is uncertain.

and harmony by mutual love, respect, understanding and faith. The fifth is taken to have children for whom they will be responsible. The sixth step is taken for self-control and longevity and the seventh is taken to be loyal and remain life-long companions (Accessed on 4 March 2013 from vrindavan.xanga.com/.../seven-vows-of-hindu-wedding---saptapadi).

⁸⁷ *Purtassi* is the sixth month of the Tamil Calendar beginning on September 17 and ending October 16. The Tamil calendar is a lunar calendar constituted with twelve months.

The form and style of worship has evolved over the years to become one that is uniquely South African.

Further, the *Pongal* festival which is celebrated in India as it marks the coming of the rains, ensuring a successful harvest, is celebrated in South Africa where it has no relevance whatsoever. The rural-styled festival is not acknowledged for the harvest but acknowledged for its recollection of the practices of imaginary India. Similarly, other prayers and celebrations like *Holi* have evolved over the years and developed to become key signifiers of Hindu culture and worship in South Africa. While originally in India, *Holi* is a celebration to mark the end of winter and the beginning of spring, it is celebrated in South Africa in March which marks the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. However, the intensity of the celebration is zealous creating an opportunity for the Indians to feel closely connected to the cultural roots of India and for local Hindus to strengthen relations amongst the diasporic group. This type of practice locates itself explicitly in the desire of the Hindu to find what Minty (2004:14) referred to as ‘roots’ and a sense of rootedness.

In *Destiny* (Figure 92, 1998), Naidoo once again focuses his attention on Hindu philosophy and belief. Here he offers commentary on the concept of life and death (*Samsara*) as pertinent to Hindu philosophy. In this work, he suggests mankind’s struggle for freedom within the realm of spirituality where he is caught in the endless cycle of life and death. The print represents the constant search of the anonymous individual for this freedom and innate desire to be released. The cycle of life and death is manifest with the inclusion of the *chakra* or wheel which is used to represent a foreboding sky (Figure 93).

In another work, *I am an African* (Figures 94-102, 2010), Naidoo commemorates the 150th anniversary of Indian arrival in South Africa. The work has been presented in sections as it is too long and narrow (more than 225cm in length) to be photographed as a single piece. This work is a representation of images which are specific to Indian life and culture in South Africa. Each panel presents a particular aspect of Indian life, with Figure 94 being a representation of a cremation pot which houses the ashes of the deceased and foregrounds the cycle of life and death. Panel Two (Figure 94) pays homage to Indian women who have made South Africa their home and created sustainable lifestyles for their families. The red overlaid cross speaks of the large number of Hindu women who have converted to Christianity, a phenomenon evident in the townships of Chatsworth and Phoenix, for example, where the

number of Christian denomination churches has grown significantly to accommodate growing congregations. However, reasons for the high rate of conversion are diverse and not the focus of this work. Figure 95 and Figure 96 represent the *Murkoo* and *Vada* respectively, as a reflection of improving the economic position of Indians in this country. Even today, the selling of these savoury treats is common practice for many Indian women trying to supplement their income.

Panel Six (Figure 96) is a depiction of the grinding stone, a common item of every Tamil home in South Africa. This is a tool used for the processing of food and is a poignant piece as it reflects upon the manual labour that women and their families had to endure in order to ensure survival in a foreign country. Panel Seven (Figure 97) is the betel leaf with the betel nuts that are a common feature of every prayer or ritual conducted in a Hindu home. These are not only used for prayer but are also eaten as an after-meal refreshment. The eighth (Figure 97) and ninth (Figure 98) panels are representations of the *Kolum* and marigold respectively, which are intrinsic aspects of Hindu ritual and worship in South Africa, while Panels Ten (Figure 98) and Eleven (Figure 99) comment on the desire for material and spiritual wealth. Indians all over the world are particularly partial to gold embellishment, especially ornate items of gold jewellery. This is a reflection of their wealth and their aspirations for economic stability. Here Naidoo uses the gold bangle as a symbol of that material desire. The red string, in contrast, as worn by Hindus is a dedication and reminder of the spiritual wealth that the Hindu desires. The string is worn on the right wrist and is a permanent reminder of the individual's desire to become one with the divine.

In Figure 99, Panel Twelve represents one of the key features of Indian Durban, the Juma Masjid Mosque in Grey Street and Panel Thirteen (Figure 100) recalls one of the most common professions of many Indian men in South Africa, that of waiters. Naidoo's father was a waiter and one of the common forms of acknowledgment of these men were their English names. Their traditional names were far too complicated for the non-Indian to pronounce, so easier, more 'familiar' English names like John, Morgan or Charlie were used. These names neutralised their race and their religious leanings and often resulted in reinforcing their marginal place. In other words, it was commonplace to identify certain jobs or professions with a particular race group. For example, Indians in Durban were stereotyped as shoemakers, waiters and tailors.

The representation of the road name and number in Panel Fourteen (Figure 100), recalls the identity of Indians through such number allocation in Indian townships. Many roads in Chatsworth, for example, have road numbers as opposed to road names, once again removing any form of identity from those who reside there. Similarly, upon arrival in South Africa, indentured workers carried numbers rather than names as observed and used by Desai and Vahed on the cover of their text, *Inside Indenture* (Figure 101).

Figure 102 represents the fifteenth and last panel which poignantly reflects on the many lives that were lost in the cane fields and subsequently in the struggle for freedom. This panel then posits the question of freedom: Naidoo (Interview: 2011) ponders “Are we really free?...Have we really improved our lot 150 years later?” The final words “*I am an African*” are certainly pertinent here as they highlight the difference between those who are acknowledged as Black or African and benefitted from the new South Africa, and those who that have been described as not Black enough in the new South Africa and therefore experienced limited progress and development, like the Indians. The text written in the font style of the Hindi language foregrounds the signification of an Indian South African or to borrow Rastogi’s term, *Afrindian*. The entire image is brought together through the overlaid sheet of glass onto which a vinyl print presents a text documenting the laws to which Indians were subjected and against which they struggled.

As part of the loosely labelled ‘post-Apartheid generation’ of graduates, the experiences for Naidoo were similar to many of those who preceded him at UDW. For Naidoo, everything is politicised and he constantly engages with issues around what it means to be a South African, whether that has positive or negative implications. In Figure 103 entitled *Democracy, Are We Free?* (2008/9), Naidoo explores the grand narrative of a post-Apartheid South Africa from the poignant moment when all citizens cast their vote on 27 April 1994 (Figure 104). The work comprises twenty panels that function together in creating a dystopian narrative. The veritable freedoms that democracy would engender i.e. the right to vote and empower a people through a new constitution regarded as among the best in the world are inverted. The work subversively explores current suffering in contemporary South Africa, the result of corruption (Figure 105) and chaos (Figure 106). This work also highlights the limitations of our democracy and critiques the abuse of power in this country. Here Naidoo questions the nature of South Africa’s threatened democracy, which in an accusatory sentiment questions the unfulfilled promises made by the ANC government. The original piece excludes the red X

associated with voting (added on in photoshop by Naidoo) but also suggesting the possible erasure of the X (via photoshop), an erasure symbolic of the fragility of democracy.

In Figure 107, Naidoo problematises his own identity through the use of his hand print which is a reference to the finger prints used as a fundamental tool of identity in South Africa. His work focuses on the shift away from past exclusions of a colonial and Apartheid legacy to a present legitimising identity by making reference to Thabo Mbeki's "*I am an African*" speech. This speech forms the foundation of the panel over which the hand print is positioned together with a bar-code which highlights the significance of who he is in the new South Africa. The bar-code implicit in the Identification Document for South Africans functions as a signifier of his racialised identity, which to him is only one signifier of his identity : "...above being Black or White or Indian I am South African" (Interview: 2011).

Figure 108 likens a colonial representation of the religious indoctrination of Black people by their 'White masters' alluding also to government's strategies of control. This analogy is extended to explain the glorification of what he calls "the White world" where "what is White is right" (Interview: 2011). He suggests that life has not really changed in present-day South Africa, as there is still a significant portion of the population who maintain the "*Ja Baas*" mentality and remain subject to victimhood.

While Naidoo is still part of a close Hindu family, he has been actively involved in the teaching and practice of art within a non-racial environment where he is a teacher and has recently created platforms for South African Indian artists to exhibit. However, while working in diverse environments, his work shifts from directly engaging with Indian content to commenting on ethnicities in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Yusuf Vahed (graduated in 1994)

The paintings of Yusuf Vahed question his identity through the multi layering of forms. His paintings are used as a medium to create order, or as he notes "the world mediated through paint" (Vahed, Interview: 2012). In this he is engaged in what he regards as a quest to establish a unified identity from the disparate influences or forces in his life. He identifies these as Western media, South African reality, gender politics, Indian and Islamic sub-cultures, all in relation to his Western education in Reservoir Hills, Durban. While this

position presents contradictions, they are seen as complementary in the construction of who he is. This quest in constructing his identity is manifest in content such as self-portraiture, automatism, dreamscapes, Durban landscapes, dance, Indian cinema and sexuality, evident in Figures 109 (2006) and 110 (2006). These works could also be described as mindscapes or metaphysical landscapes with inherent tensions such as the conflation of dream and reality, thought and action, sense and nonsense, the whole and the incomplete, inviting speculation on the paradoxical nature of things.

In Figure 111 (2008) titled *Identity*, Vahed looks at various aspects of the self. The work which is made up of five panels conceptually reflects a series of ‘pages’ from his life, persona, and psyche, consisting of portraits, photos, texts and paintings. He explains the symbolism used here as a conglomeration of vertiginous sexuality, landscapes of home (Reservoir Hills), celestial dancers, memories of childhood and binaries of western and eastern teachings manifest in language (Interview: 2012).

Sharlene Khan (graduated in 1998)

Sharlene Khan is another graduate from UDW who has received recognition as an artist (see <http://www.sharlenekhan.co.za/>). Having acquired a Masters degree in Fine Art, specialising in painting from UDW, she then went on to obtain a second Masters in Fine Art from the University of the Witwatersrand. As a postgraduate student, much of her work focused on Durban street-life in a post-Apartheid South African environment. Her later work from approximately 2008 like *What I look Like, What I Feel series*, engaged with the duality of identity and history. This series of staged photographs of herself, engage with the process of juxtaposing images of herself against the image others have of her. These dualistic portrayals question representations of self and others, complicating perceptions of race, identity and class (<http://www.sharlenekhan.co.za>). The work “*Postgraduate Beggar*” (Figure 112, 2008) is poignant here as it considers the value attached in acquiring a degree or a good education which, as already discussed, was crucial in the Indian community. For Khan (2010: 18), the work also addresses issues of race:

...Racial inequalities that are still being perpetuated in the country. It speaks about the fact that even though I have two Masters degrees in Fine Arts, I have struggled for years to get a job as a lecturer, that often black candidates have to hold a PhD to get employed and that there is still often only one black lecturer employed in most fine art departments around the country. The

graduation pictures speak of the hope of employment, economic and social change one feels on completion of your postgraduate degrees which subsequent unemployment erodes daily.

Khan problematises notions that education brings employment or that an academic position is invariably desirable and further foregrounds the manifestation of identity and race within a complex dystopian post-Apartheid South Africa. Her strategy of 'performance art' has derived from its prominence in current visual art in South Africa as can be seen in the work of Tracey Rose, Bernie Searle and Leora Farber, to name a few. This strategy disrupts conventional ways of art-making and allows for a more nuanced and multi-layered commentary about issues such as privilege, discrimination and marginalisation.

In this image, Khan presents three rows of graduation photographs duplicated three times, one for each of her three degrees. Alongside these she presents a photograph of herself at a red traffic light on a street corner with a cardboard sign reading *1 BA (Fine Art), 2 MA(Fine Art) 1 Housing bond, 1 Secretarial job, No Savings. No Medical Aid*. This type of imagery addresses common occurrences in South Africa, as many street corners in the major cities are populated by beggars holding signage in an attempt at extracting money from vehicle drivers and passers-by. This reality has been subverted by Khan's 'appeal' for assistance from passersby as she offers her curriculum vitae as a sign of the challenges graduates continue to face in the present, and conveys her indictment of the academic realm she is desirable of entering.

7.5.2. Images: Professional Practice

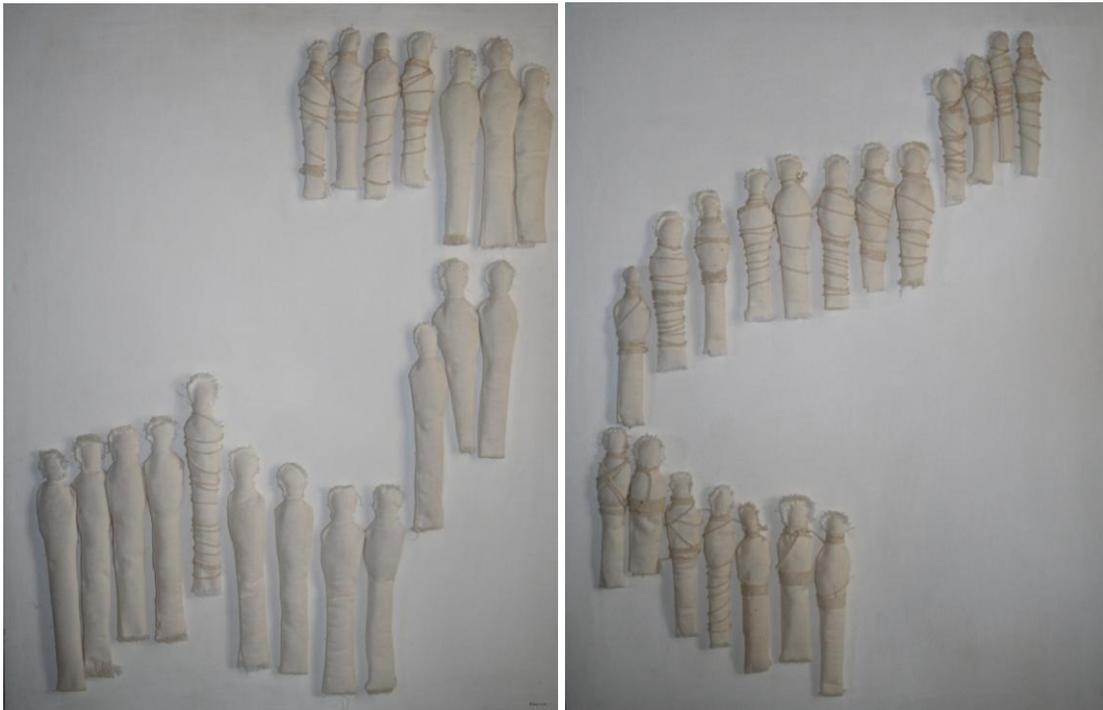


Figure 44: Sherene Timol, *Untitled*, c. 2010, mixed media, 2 x (80 x 60cm)



Figure 45: Vedant Nanackchand, *They Came from the East*, 1987 oil on canvas, 2 x 2m, Collection of UKZN



Figure 46: Vedant Nanackchand, *The Sugar Fields*, 1987, oil on canvas, 2 x 2m, Collection of UKZN



Figure 47: Vedant Nanackchand, *The Merchant*, 1987, 2 x 2m, oil on canvas, Collection of the UKZN

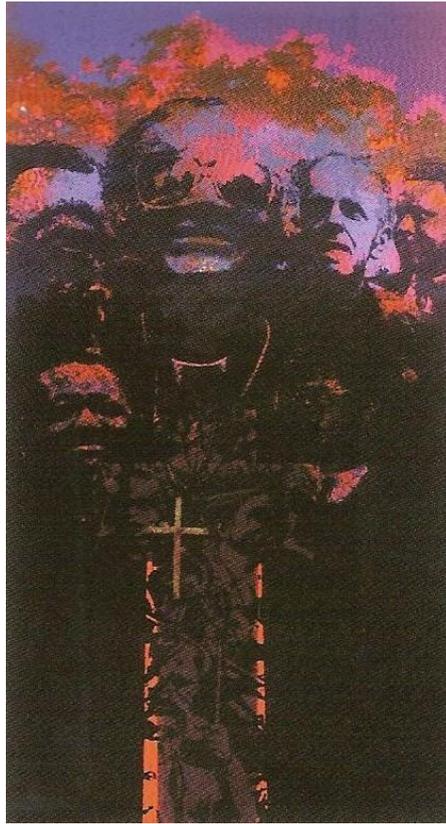


Figure 48: Vedant Nanackchand, *The Purple Shall Govern*, 1991, screenprint, 63 x 34.5cm



Figure 49: Vedant Nanackchand, *Let Us Pray*, 1999, Article 17: Right to own Property, woodcut on paper, 60.7 x 42.8cm. Collection of the Durban Art Gallery



Figure 50: Ayesha Adam, *Untitled*, c.2009, mixed media, approx. 100 x 80cm



Figure 51: Ayesha Adam, *Untitled*, c.2009., mixed media



Figure 52: Andrew Nair, *The African Renaissance*, c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown



Figure 53: Andrew Nair, *The Weeping Cathedral*, c. 2009, graphite on pencil, dimensions unknown



Figure 54, Andrew Nair, *Morning Glory*, c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown



Figure 55: Andrew Nair, *Grotto'esque*, c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown



Figure 56: Andrew Nair, *Vainly, I try to get a grip on things*, c. 2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown



Figure 57: Andrew Nair, *A Life Consumed by Slow Decay*, c.2009, graphite pencil on paper, dimensions unknown



Figure 58: Kiren Thathiah, *Temples*, c.1987, crayon and ink on card, 53.3 x 81cm, Collection of the Durban Art Gallery



Figure 59: *Trishula* brought as offerings to Guna Devi near Dharamsala, free internet



Figure 60: Shiva Holding the *Trishula*, New Delhi, free internet

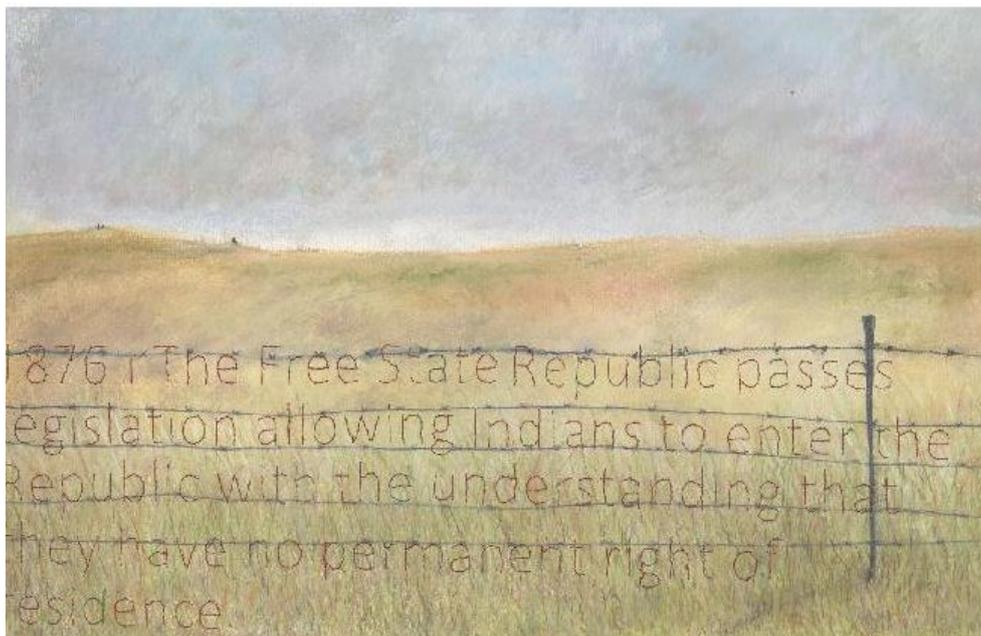


Figure 61: Avitha Sooful, *Dislocation*, 2010, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown



Figure 62: Avitha Sooful, *Burning Field*, 2012, oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm



Figure 63: Avitha Sooful, *Open Field*, 2012, oil on canvas, 100 x 150cm



Figure 64: Avitha Sooful, *Road to Vrede*, 2012, oil on canvas, 91 x 122cm



Figure 65: Ravi Govender, *Eternal Bliss*, 2006, oil on canvas, 50 x 40cm, free internet



Figure 66: Ravi Govender, *God's Acre*, 2006, oil on canvas, 45 x 40cm, free internet



Figure 67: Ravi Govender, *Spiritual Landscape*, 2006, oil on canvas, 45 x 40cm, free internet

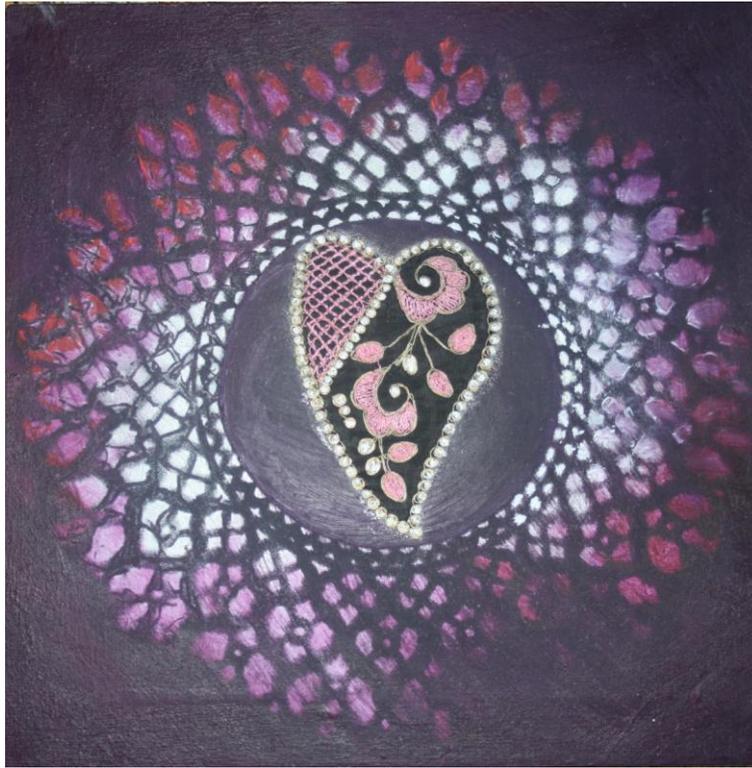


Figure 68: Nalini Moodley, *Untitled*, 2009, mixed media, 30 x 30cm



Figure 69: Faiza Galdhari, *Conversations in my Mind, Then and Now*, 2004, mixed media, approx. 84 x 60cm



Figure 70: Faiza Galdhari, *Conversations in my Mind Then and Now*, 2004, mixed media, approx. 84 x 60cm



Figure 71: Faiza Galdhari, *Conversations in my Mind: Then and Now*, 2004, mixed media, 84 x 60cm



Figure 72: Faiza Galdhari, *Conversations in My Mind: Then and Now*, 2004, mixed media, 84 x 60cm



Figure 73: Faiza Galdhari, *Untitled*, c.1998, charcoal and colour pastel, 84 x 60cm



Figure 74: Faiza Galdhari, *Untitled*, c.1998, lithograph, 84 x 60cm

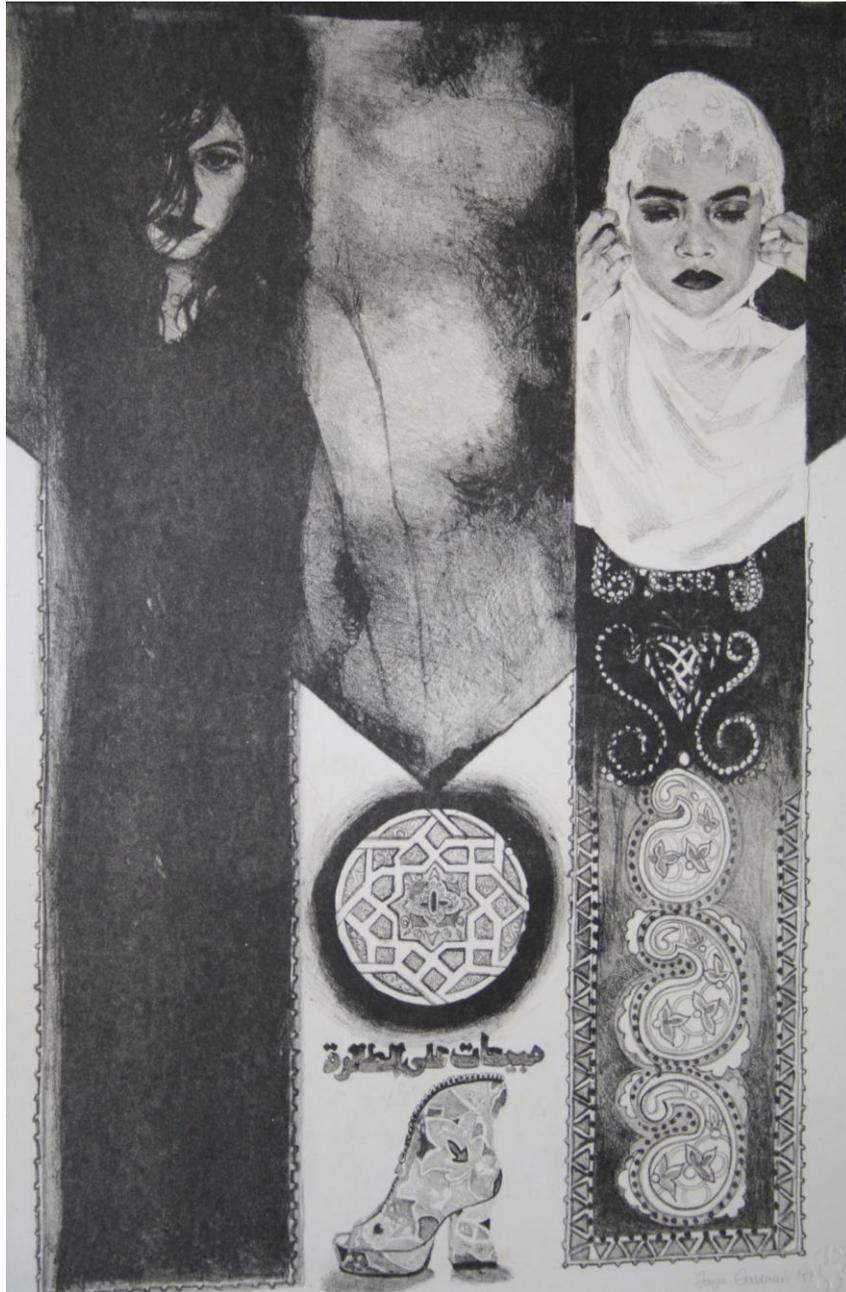


Figure 75: Faiza Galdhari, *Untitled*, 1997, screen print, dimensions unknown

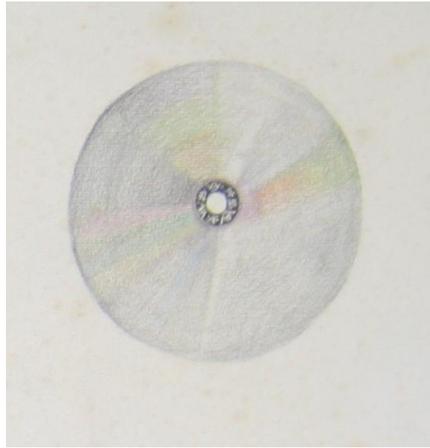


Figure 76: Detail of Figure 73



Figure 77: Detail of Figure 74



Figure 78: Detail of Figure 75



Figure 79: Faiza Galdhari, *Purdah*, 1994, screen print, 49 x 28cm



Figure 80: Faiza Galdhari, *Who Am I?*, c.1995, screen print, 84 x 60cm



Figure 81: Reshma Maharaj, *Untitled*, c.1997, screen print, approx. 84 x 65cm

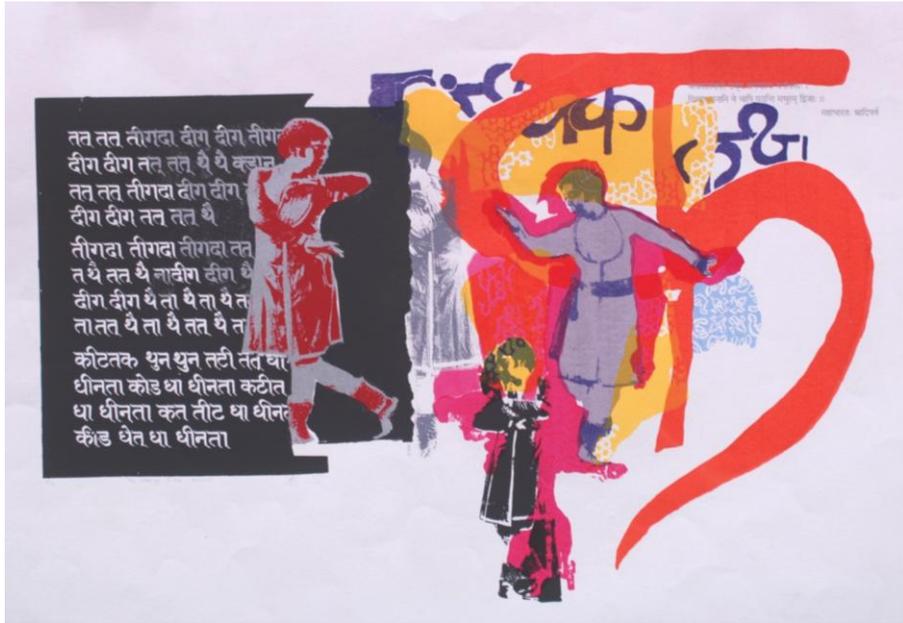


Figure 82: Reshma Maharaj, *The Message is in the Medium*, not dated, screen print, dimensions unknown



Figure 83: Reshma Maharaj, *Holi*, c. 1997, screen print, dimensions unknown



Figure 84: Reshma Maharaj, *Untitled*, c.1997, screen print, dimensions unknown



Figure 85: Reshma Maharaj, *Untitled*, c. 1997, screen print, 84 x 60cm



Figure 86: Reshma Maharaj, *Allah-most beneficial- the most merciful*, not dated, mixed media, dimensions unknown

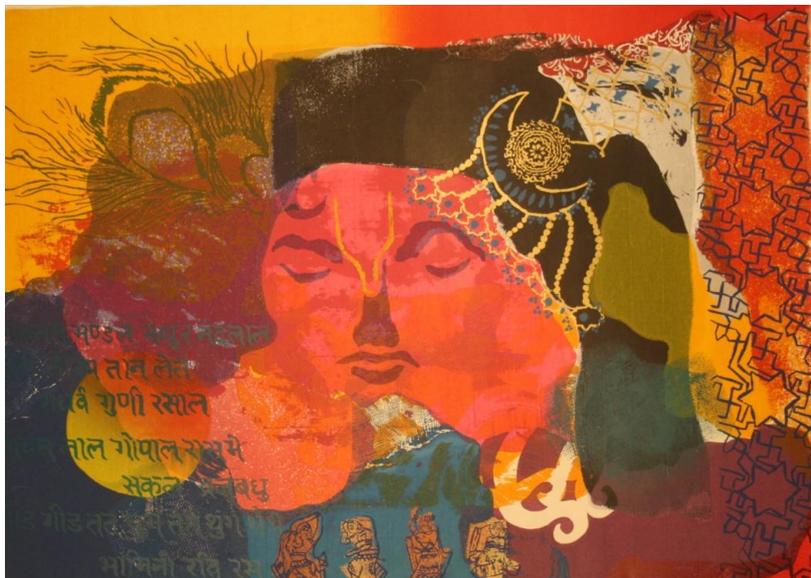


Figure 87: Reshma Maharaj, *Untitled*, c. 1997, screen print, 84 x 60cm



Figure 88: Reshma Maharaj, *Untitled*, c. 1997, screen print, 84 x 60cm

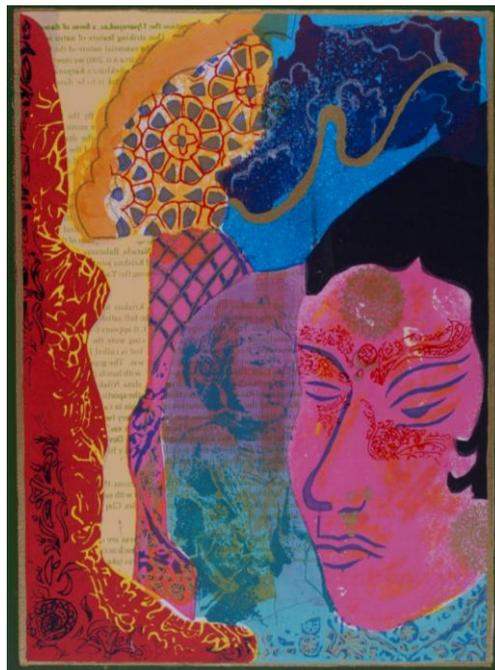


Figure 89: Reshma Maharaj, *Untitled*, c. 1998, screen print, dimensions unknown

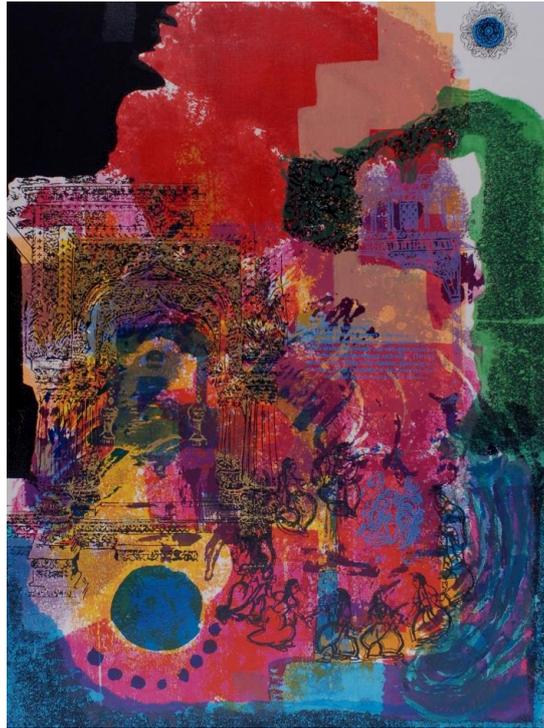


Figure 90: Reshma Maharaj, *Raas*, date unknown, mixed media, dimensions unknown

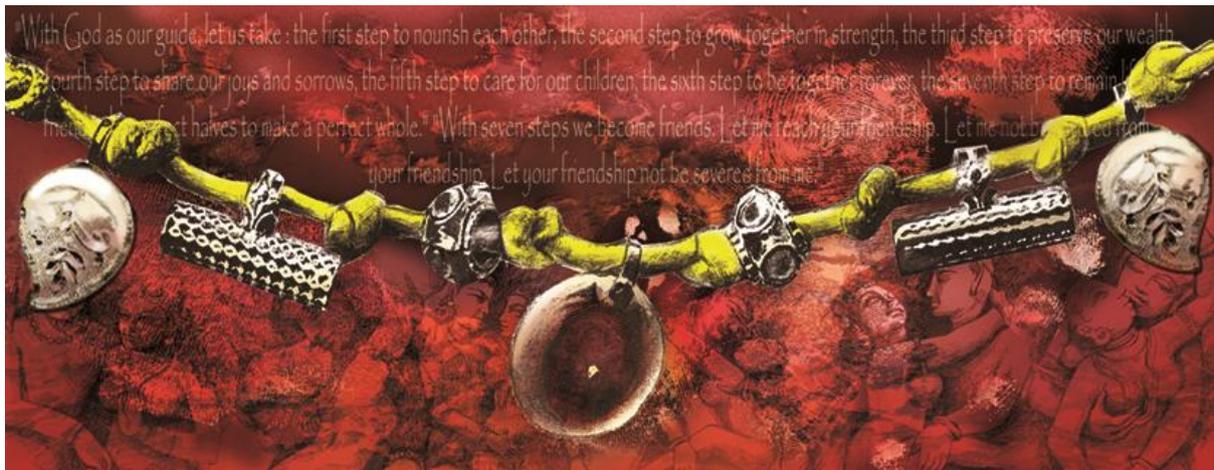


Figure 91: Selvan Naidoo, *Thali*, 2009, digital screen print with oil paint on canvas, 1.2m x 64cm



Figure 92, Selvan Naidoo, *Destiny*, 1998, screen print, size unknown.



Figure 93: Detail of Figure 101



Figure 94: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panel 1 and 2 (each panel is 15 x 20cm), 2010, mixed media, 84 x 54cm



Figure 95: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panel 3 and 4, 2010, mixed media



Figure 96: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panels 5 and 6, 2010, mixed media

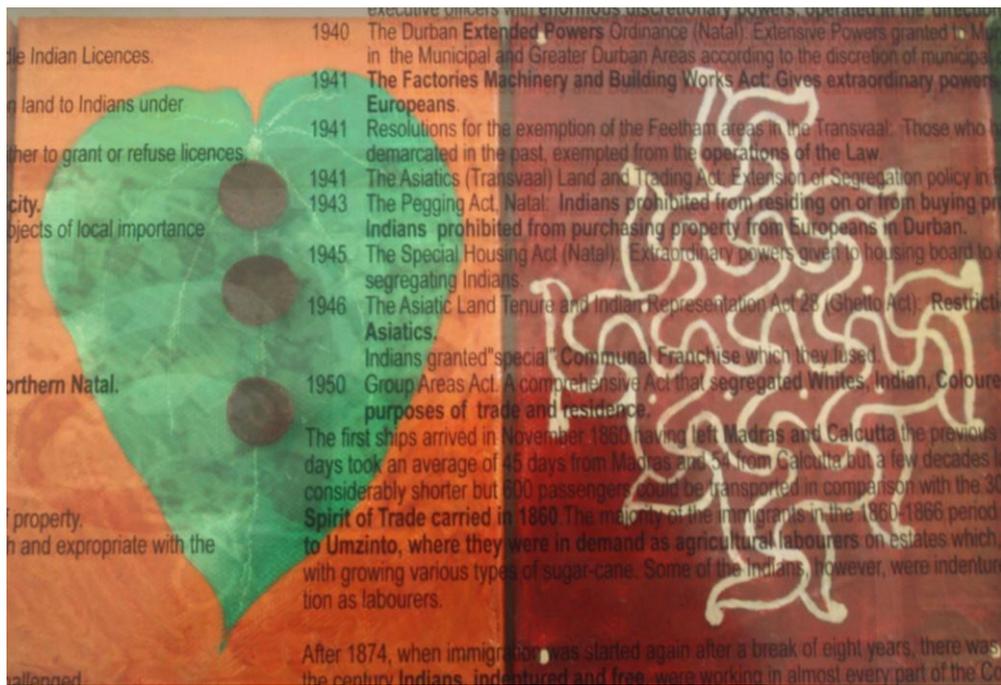


Figure 97: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panels 7 and 8, 2010, mixed media



Figure 98: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panels 9 and 10, 2010, mixed media

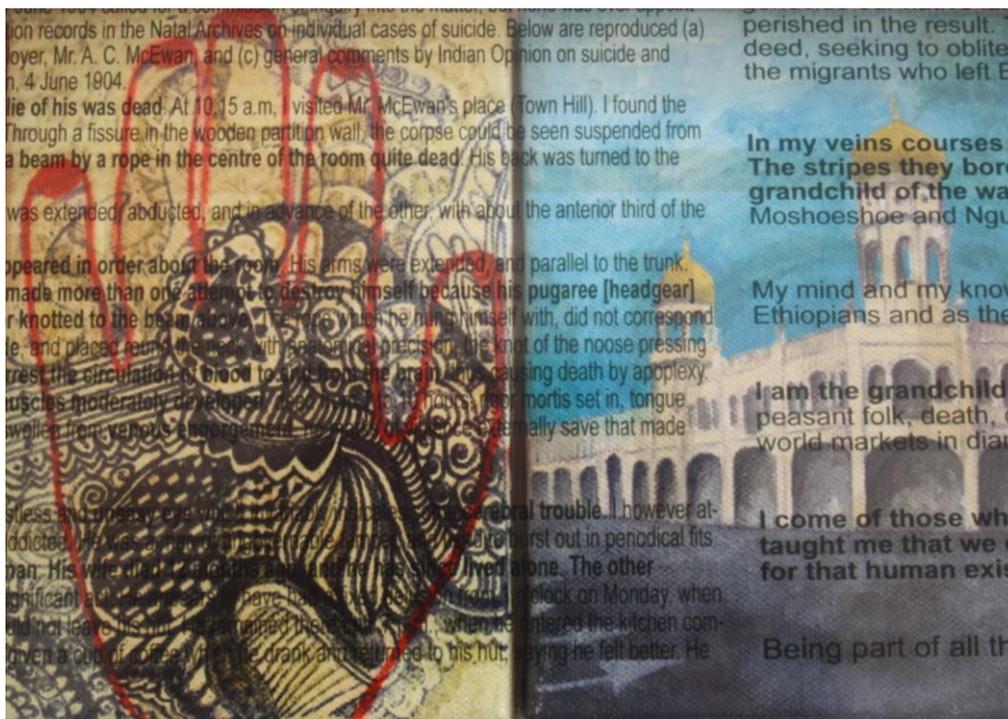


Figure 99: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panels 11 and 12, mixed media

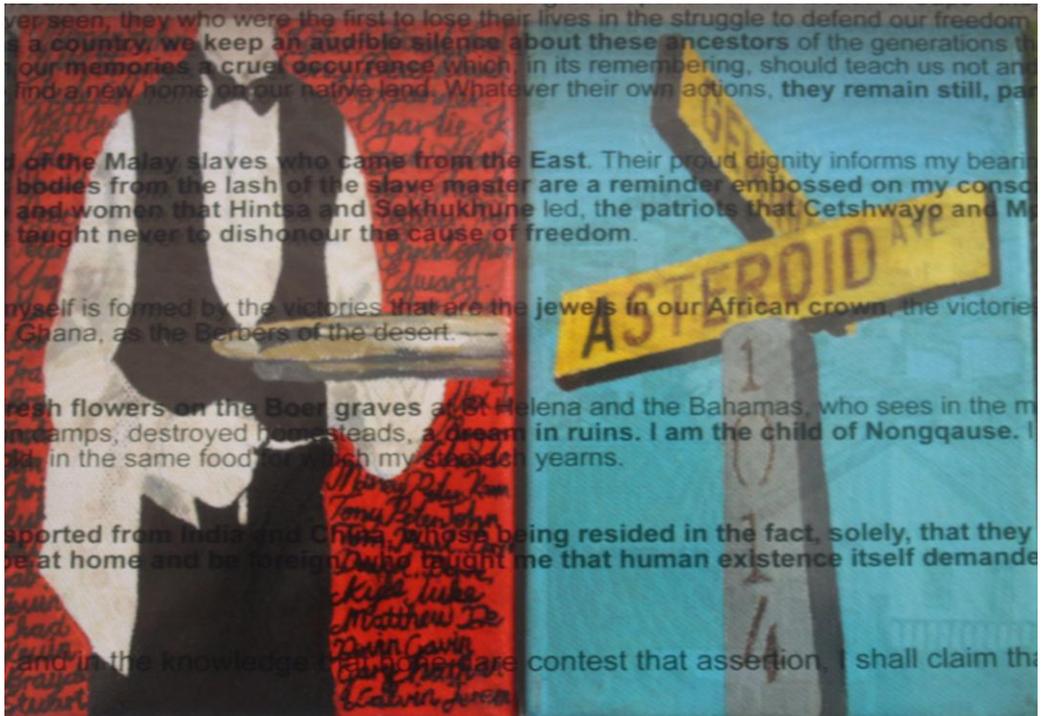


Figure 100: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panels 13 and 14, mixed media



Figure 101: *Indentured labourers*, Inside Indenture, (Desai & Vahed, 2007: inside cover)

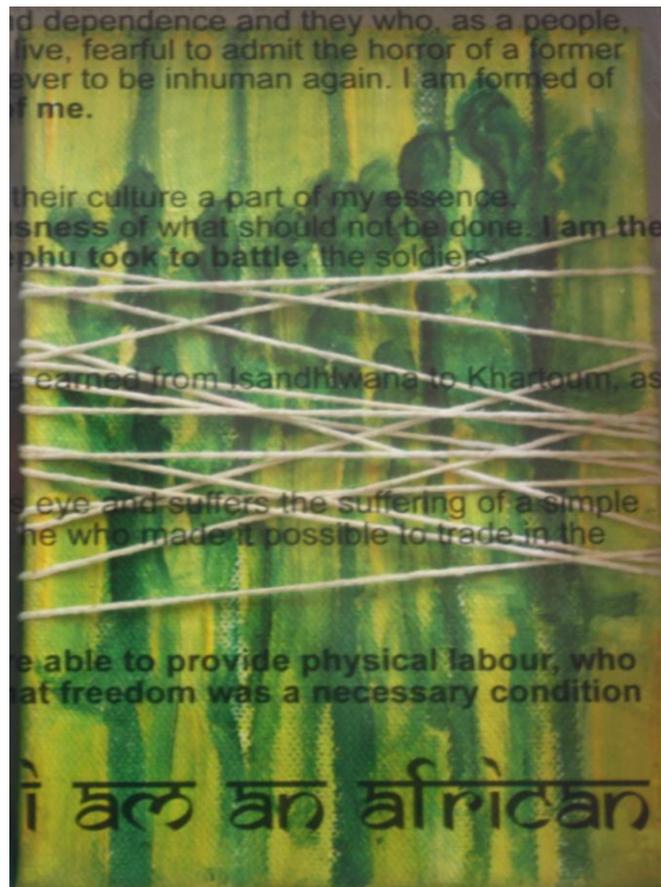


Figure 102: Selvan Naidoo, *I Am An African*, Panel 15, 2010, mixed media



Figure 103: Selvan Naidoo, *Who are we, where are we going to?*, 2008/9, Digital printing on canvas with oil paint, screen print, 80 x85cm



Figure 104: Detail of Figure 103



Figure 105: Detail of Figure 103

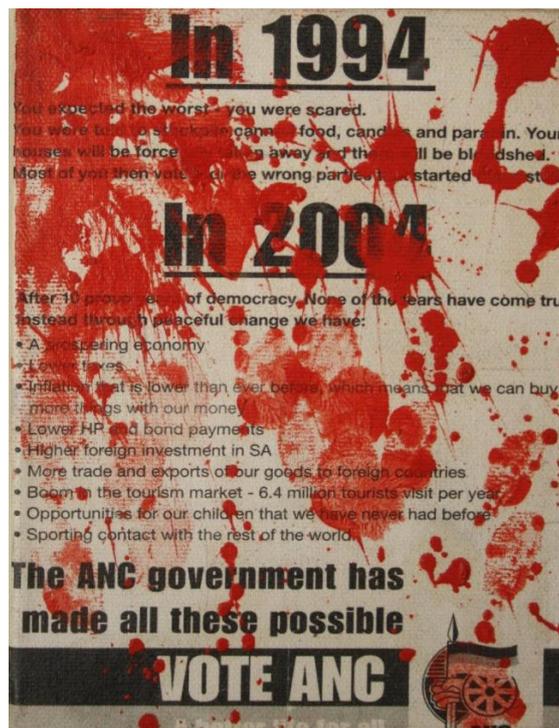


Figure 106: Detail of Figure 103

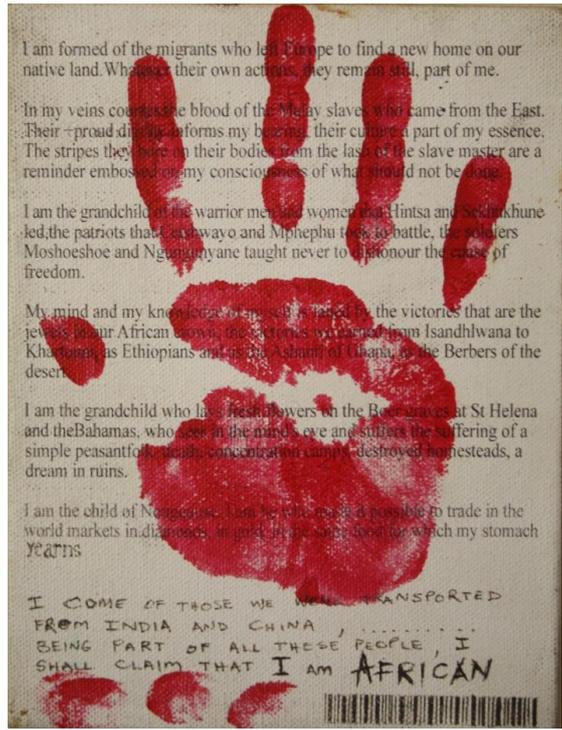


Figure 107: Detail of Figure 103

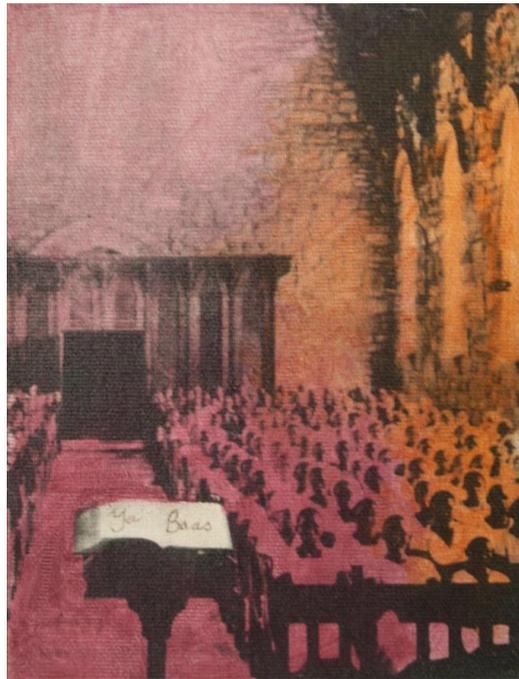


Figure 108: Detail of Figure 103



Figure 109: Yusuf Vahed, *Jackfruit Dreams*, 2006, oil on canvas, 60 x 120cm

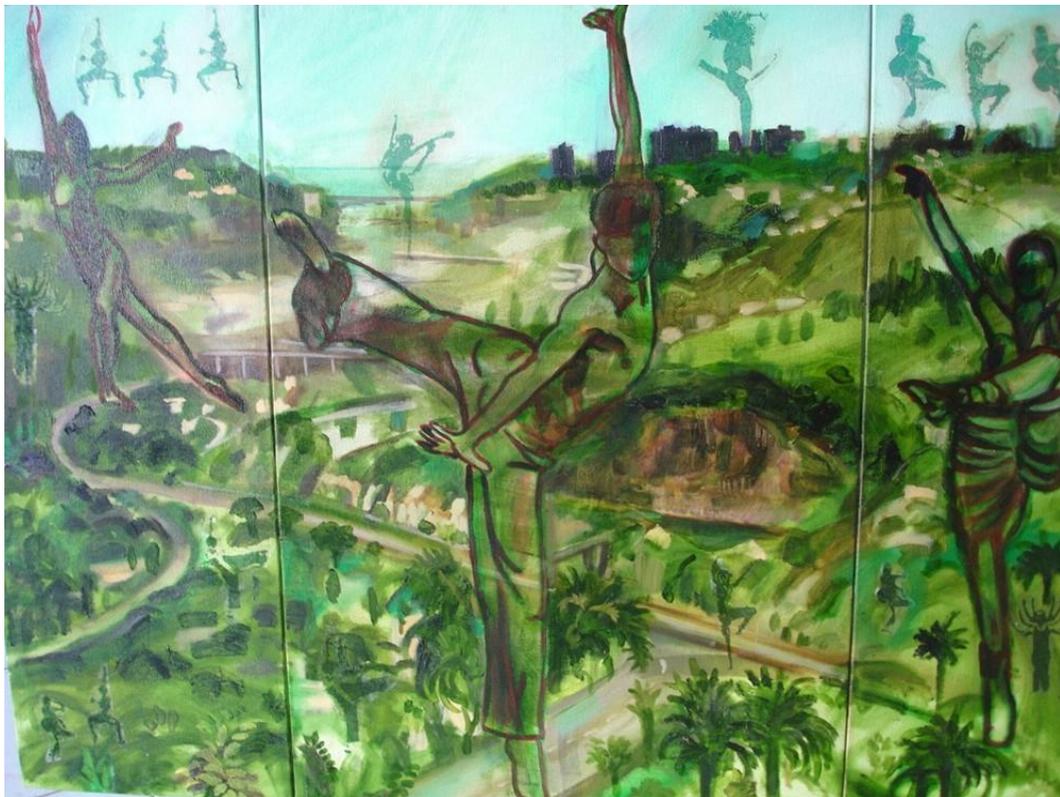


Figure 110: Yusuf Vahed, *Durban Landscape with the Quarry and Dancers*, 2006, oil on canvas, 100 x 90cm



Figure 111: Yusuf Vahed, *Identity*, 2008, oil on canvas, 30 x 105cm



Figure 112: Sharlene Khan, *Postgraduate Beggar*, mixed media, 2008, 61 x 84cm

7.6 Concluding Remarks

Chapter Seven presented an overview of South African art in an attempt at providing a national perspective and framework against which the discussion of the artwork of this chapter was presented. Almost fifty years since the first student registered at UNICOL for a Fine Art degree, art works reflect more prominently now than previously, the struggle with identity, culture and politics. In post-Apartheid South Africa, the transformational agenda and the questioning of culture, politics and identity have become even more crucial. The selection of art works for this chapter was informed by this focus. Against this background, the works were presented with a critical reading informed by the theoretical considerations discussed in this chapter and previous ones, namely diasporic theory as outlined by Govinden, Mercer and Hall, and postcolonial postulations of Bhabha and Said.

Although it would have been valuable not to limit the number of works included in the analysis, the nature of the study restricted the field. The analysis of the work was provided through a discursive context extracted through in-depth interviews conducted for this thesis. While all the graduates discussed in this study are Indian graduates, the construction and interrogation of their identities proved diverse, their personal views reflected in their work largely influenced by the political landscape of South Africa.

The over-riding themes in the works of Faiza Galdhari and Sherene Timol for example, reflects on the impact that classification in South Africa had on its citizens who experienced enormous uncertainty in the construction of their stable or shifting identities. Further, in the work of Galdhari, issues of ethnicity and gender are foregrounded. Further, the expression of religion and culture as manifested in the works of artists like Kiren Thathiah and Ravi Govender highlight the strong influence that these aspects have in upholding diverse Indian identities in South Africa. Notions of roots and rootedness and acquiring an authenticity that transcends Indianness as rooted in the sub-continent of India, find expression here. In this regard, the reference to Indian history and locating Indian-ness in South Africa are referenced in the work of Reshma Maharaj, whose rich formats attempt to explore these notions. Similarly, Selvan Naidoo, Sandy Naidoo and Faiza Galdhari also consider their creolised post-colonial identities.

The political landscape of South Africa was interrogated through the work of Rufus Latchmigadu, Clive Pillay and other graduates, who commented on the challenges experienced by the Indian community as subject to the categorisation 'Black' South Africans.

The next chapter will present the concluding comments and findings of this dissertation, as well as offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER EIGHT: REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction: Looking Back, Looking Forward

In the course of research for this study, I have identified a substantial body of work, some of variable quality, produced by Indian South Africans which has not been foregrounded nor critically engaged in scholarship. Various key art historical publications in South Africa between 1980 and 2011 have not considered this body of work for inclusion and subsequently excluded it from public scrutiny and debate. The reasons for this exclusion are quite clear from this study, which provides significant detail of the various factors impacting on this phenomenon. Fundamental to this absence is the position many of the graduates particularly those who graduated prior to the 1990s, assumed as students: primarily as artists, not exhibiting in order to deny the university and themselves any credibility for their artistic output. This stance also denied them greater exposure at a time which could have proved opportune to establish what could have been productive careers.

Most of these graduates express concerns about the quality and relevance of their work and their voice in South Africa today. Further as in keeping with what occurs with most art students, their limited art production as well as their restrictive level of public engagement contributed to their lack of exposure. The fact that *most* of the work is locked away in storerooms, garages and attics, away from scrutiny and appreciation, is symptomatic of the value they have attached to their art work since completing their degrees.

Be that as it may, this study has attempted to foreground a broad spectrum of work reflecting the diversity of this group. It was also intended that this research initiate a dialogue about their work and generate discourses stimulated by their visual expression. The recommendations will explore possibilities of reinserting the work produced by Indian South Africans into the South African art historical archive.

This chapter is an attempt to consolidate the findings and present recommendations and suggestions for further research, while also highlighting the contribution and limitations of the study. The following section presents a brief chapter overview which will extract and present the salient points thereof..

8.2 Chapter Summary

Chapters One and Two presented the process of transformation as an imperative in South Africa, where national transformation has been debated, legislated and implemented at various levels since 1994. Since the imperative of this process was to redress historical inequalities, this study has highlighted that there still exists segments of history that have yet to be recorded and examined. Historically, within post-colonial societies like our own, minorities like Black artists, women artists and ethnic/minority artists have been marginalised. This impacted and influenced my research focus which was on those graduates of Indian ancestry who graduated from the University of Durban-Westville between 1962 and 1999.

A brief historical overview of university education in South Africa was presented to contextualise the study and research site. The design of an Indian-only university, presented many limitations and frustrations for the student body. While it affected all who engaged with the institution and the Indian community, it was those students in the Fine Art Department who faced a peculiar struggle, influencing their visual documentation of the ethos of that moment in South African history, their career trajectories and their space in the South African art history narrative. The university in Chapter One is problematised as a contested site of engagement playing a key role in investigating the impact and influence that Apartheid education had on the art production of the students, and their current position in a post-Apartheid creative arts framework.

Part of the process of transformation in South Africa was to redefine and position the constructs of identity and notions of displacement. Socially constructed identities in post-Apartheid South Africa are still being contested and redefined while discourses about race and ethnicity still challenge South Africans.

In almost any critical discussion of the history of the Indian population in this country, it is crucial to investigate the role that the construction of the Indian university played. The geopolitical space of the university was devised to cater for the education of an ethnic minority who would have otherwise not had access to affordable tertiary education. This design clearly mirrored the government's policy of separate development and resulted in what Bruce Murray called 'university apartheid'. Naturally, its construction was generally not well received within the Indian community. Some members of the university community felt

it was a necessary solution without which the prevailing Indian community would simply not have had access to affordable tertiary education or would have received very limited education at other universities. For others, the construction of the university marginalised the Indian community and enabled it to fully experience the extent and parameters of racial and political segregation, more so, as this emerged immediately after Indians were acknowledged as official citizens of South Africa.

This dissertation is an attempt at both re-evaluating these graduates *and* their work in an attempt to reposition post-Apartheid South Africa. The purposive sample presented in Chapter One was a result of varied attempts to make contact with past students. While numerous letters were submitted to the various newspapers, only two, *The Post* and *The Daily News*, responded positively. I interviewed forty-three graduates; ten others were unavailable for interviews and a further twelve did not respond in any way to my request for interviews. I therefore made an attempt at communicating with a total of sixty five graduates which from a total population of one hundred and thirty nine (139) is approximately 50% of the Fine Art graduates. In this study I have attempted to include all the graduates who gave their time freely to provide information in this account. To all of them I am deeply grateful.

Chapter Three aimed to position Indian historiography in South Africa. This direction was informed by strategies of segregation and separateness, which ultimately gave rise to an Indian university and impacted upon a student body engaging in a peculiar space of minority politics within the broader political landscape of Apartheid. Within this complex and shifting space, the Indian South African political struggle encountered the dialectic of diasporic engagements and notions of displacements. Here the struggle was based on race difference and cultural or ethnic uniqueness highlighting the diaspora consciousness, which according to Clifford (in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: 225), creates a tension between loss and hope but impacts on notions of alienation.

This chapter also presented an analysis of the chronological framework which situated the Indian presence in South Africa from the early slave trade to the system of indentured labour. Here the colonial and post-colonial presentation of cultures was analysed in order to problematise the subsequent anti-Indian sentiment and the struggle for Indians to accept their place in South Africa as home. A post-colonial reading of the historical context helped interrogate “the dominant hegemonic ideologies prevalent in marginalised histories and

identities” (Ramgolam, 2011: 210). The impact of Gandhi was reviewed as a key contributor to the Indian political struggle in South Africa, while the strategy of repatriation was positioned within the political discourse of marginality. This discourse was further amplified through discussion of the anti-Indian sentiment which found expression in the 1949 riots, and subsequent legislation which restricted and compartmentalised South African society.

Chapter Four investigated and analysed the impact that power and Apartheid strategies had on the Indian minority. Within this strategy, the development of a segregated education system which resulted in the institutionalisation of the EUEA and subsequently the establishment of the University of Durban-Westville, was also contextualised. Here notions of identity construction were problematised within the discourse of the National Party’s policy of Apartheid. Key legislation was extrapolated to inform the discussion and its impact was examined under sections which situated the trajectory of Indian education from primary education to tertiary education, leading finally to a discussion of the *need* for an Indian university.

A brief history of the University for Indians was provided, once again extracting and focusing on key characteristics of the institution. The purpose was to contextualise the conditions under which Indian Fine Art students attended the university and the circumstances under which they made their art. Ethnicity and culture were presented as markers of identity and foregrounded in the discussion in order to highlight the level of segregation and separation experienced by the graduates. The system of education for the Indians was presented through a post-colonial framework and guided by the writings of seminal historians and theorists.

Chapter Five explored notions of art practice as they correlate with ethnicity and identity. The history of colonialism and Apartheid laid the foundation for the definition of a person along the basis of race and in keeping with the classificatory system which labelled all South Africans. According to Bhabha (1994: 64), the very identification of difference acknowledges the colonizers “invitation to identity” – who you are is who he (the colonizer) says you are. This has had far-reaching implications for the Indians in South Africa. The once-diverse community became increasingly homogenised in fulfilling colonial and Apartheid expectations, and in turn, this homogeneity had implications for Indian graduates whose work

was expected to reflect their 'Indian-ness' as an almost static and identifiable aspect, decipherable and manifest among all Indians in South Africa.

The challenge to assert their identity began with the 1860 indentured labourers and continued well into the period of Gandhi's sojourn in South Africa, extending into Apartheid and post-Apartheid South Africa. In 2012, the debate still rages on. A recent perusal of the Indian newspapers like *The Post (All Indians Look Alike, April 18-22, 2012)* and the *Sunday Tribune Herald (Red String Outrage, May 6, 2012)*, highlight the contentious nature of being defined and interpreted as Indian. Television and radio advertisements present and parody Indian-ness through emulating accents, food preferences and dress, all limiting and stereotypical. Comments like '*All Indians look alike*' create outrage amongst the Indian community, with numerous readers and listeners commenting vociferously against such stereotyping. Similar debates that centre on linguistic preference are also controversial, as mediated by the Indian radio station, *Lotus FM* and the abovementioned newspapers. This very parochial approach to resolving conflict and engendering change is what perpetuates the stereotyped Indian South African.

It is, however, my contention that the tide is slowly changing. The Indian community is becoming more involved in national debates around a broader spectrum of topics and the younger generation is finding the shifting space of multiculturalism quite alluring. However, on a warning note, Pissara (in *Third Text, 2010*: editorial) points out that retaining four problematic racial categories as primary indicators of identity has consequences for the future. He says a whole new generation who were never subjected to the Population Registration Act of Apartheid legislation is now being asked to tick boxes categorising African, Indian, Coloured, and White, and since many of these young people come from families and communities that have themselves accepted these identities, there is little hope of ever erasing them. Pissara makes a compelling argument.

Chapter Five further explored the notion of identity determining how Indians became or are in the process of becoming South Africans, thereby highlighting their varying degrees of assimilation in a country that has been their home for over 150 years. In this regard, During (2005: 145) suggests that identity, in this case *Indian* identity, is created by placing into groups individuals who share the same traits and consequently reduced individuality, within that group. In contrast, Appiah (in Back & Solomos, 2009: 671) argues that there is an

“intentional conformity” to existing expectation in the process of reinforcing that identity. However, as a result of being a collectivising notion, the projection of a homogenised identity on Indians has created a sense of dislocation from the broader South African collective. This, though, is in the process of change, by bringing dialogue into the public domain through mere conversation about a sense of place and a place called home.

In this chapter, I also propose that UDW’s Indian graduates, prior to the 1990s were in a position of self- imposed “internal exile”, a term I borrowed from Henry Kamen. These graduates ‘exiled’ themselves in South Africa by desisting from participating in activities that would have been instrumental in possibly developing their careers as practising artists. As already mentioned, their mentality of defeat perpetuated their presence on the margins of the society.

Chapter Six continued with the historical perspectives of Chapter Three and Four, but centred the discussion on accounts that emerged from interviews with the forty-three graduates who were participants in this study. Within the context of the Indian family, the intrinsic value of the B.A. degree was analysed as a key to economic freedom and liberation from the limitations of ethnicity, while the value of a Fine Art degree was viewed with slightly less enthusiasm. In this chapter, the economic and educational position of Indian families was foregrounded. Between the 1970s and 1980s, there was a shift in consciousness in many Indian families, as they became more enlightened and educated, gaining a greater understanding of the arts. The chapter further interrogated the limitations of these families, where in spite of their limited economic means, the acquisition of a degree was of such great significance that it was always supported and encouraged. However, as mentioned, while any degree was valued, the Fine Art degree in particular presented some cause for caution as individual families were not always engaged in the visual arts any further than having brass sculptured deities and a few wall hangings which depicted the myriad of deities and related mythologies of their religion. The pressure to seek employment and contribute was significant for many male graduates, but of almost no significance to their female counterparts. Thus their career paths were quite diverse. Some of the graduates had not even considered employment possibilities prior to attending university, and only in their third or fourth year of study did they realise the extremely

limited avenues for employment. Opportunities for people of colour were further restricted through the Job Reservation Act of 1926,⁸⁸ significantly impacting on these graduates.

Chapter Six focussed on the individual life history of the graduates, their pre-training at secondary level, their expectations of the university, their political engagement and their subsequent career paths. In a study of this nature, an attempt at telling the story of each graduate was not practical. Thus there were many graduates seemingly absent from this discussion with details of their personal stories extrapolated, summarised and woven into the narratives. While not all the histories and experiences of these graduates were discussed in detail, it is my intention that these will be made available through a later publication which will provide a more comprehensive account of all the graduates from UNICOL and UDW.

In the interviews, graduates generally agreed that the university's Fine Art Department provided a well-balanced programme with high quality teaching. However, there are some who found the earlier days of the FAD lacking direction and providing little, if any, guidance. Hajra Vahed-Greer is a case in point. With notable diverse reaction to the FAD, there was one common sentiment about the UDW campus: in spite of its politicised nature, the department was one that is also fondly remembered as a hive of activity and a space for challenging the *status quo*. In this way, the students thrived. The discussion on career paths in this chapter illustrates the limited options available to the graduates as a large number of them entered the teaching profession, with some employed at universities around the country.

The chapter hence extrapolated and presented a view of the narratives of the Fine Art graduates as they emerged from the interviews, with a few critical points being highlighted. Firstly, most students, particularly those prior to 1990, attended the Indian university under protest. Secondly, they emerged from families who valued the degree certification above all else. Most graduates went to great lengths to point out that even though there may have been challenges on campus and in the FAD, their degrees should never have been put in jeopardy.

⁸⁸ The Industrial Conciliation Act empowered the Minister of Labour to reserve any job on a racial basis and orders the dissolution of racially mixed trade unions (South African History Online). The government defended it as a measure to prevent racial rivalry and friction in the field of employment (Hepple, 1963: 6).

Thirdly, a large majority of students came to university from lower income families where university fees were an additional financial burden. Fourthly, most embarked upon teaching as a profession as it provided secure employment and finally, all graduates received a political education *with or without their consent*.

Due to the volume of data, including art work I collected for this study, I attempted to include as expansive an array of work as possible, thereby providing a holistic view of the body of work *excluded* from South African art history. However, this proved unwieldy and was therefore not possible due to the parameters of this dissertation. Thus from a total of six hundred and eighty one (681) works located, only sixty six have been included in this study to be scrutinised for their scholarly and academic value.

Chapter Seven introduced a brief overview of South African art in an attempt at situating art practice in South Africa as relevant to the time frame and style of the graduates under discussion. This chapter presented the work in two sections with the first focusing on student practice and the second on professional practice. Student practice engaged in an analysis of work that was produced while students were still studying at university. This work, mainly from the 1980s, focused on the impact that political activity and exposure had on the student output. Here, a selection of works from fourteen graduates like Clive Pillay, Mahendra Govender and Selvan Naidoo were discussed.

The section on professional practice focussed attention on the analysis of work from graduates who produced work subsequent to their graduation. Here, through a chronological presentation of work the graduates were now referred to as ‘artists’ as they practice outside the limitations of university teaching. Works were engaged with in terms of identity, politics and cultural engagements which reference the limitations of the study. Here the interrogation of notions of identity and difference are explored in the works of Kirendra Thathiah, Ravi Govender and Yusuf Vahed, while identity and cultural commodification were problematised by artists like Reshma Maharaj, Faiza Galdhari and Selvan Naidoo who investigated their religious and cultural philosophies. The multicultural space in South Africa was presented against the considerations of sameness and difference as manipulated through the classificatory system of this country. Landscape as a genre and a politicised space, was also discussed as a vehicle for commentary on South Africa’s past and explored through the works of Andrew Nair, Avitha Sooful and Kiren Thathiah.

8.3 Contributions of the study

The contribution of this study is to provide data on the art produced by Indian South Africans who graduated from the University of Durban-Westville until its closure in 1999. The study undertook to locate and foreground this body of work in the interests of reviving a lost generation in the art history of this country. As I emerge from the same sample, it was of concern to me that this group of graduates have all, but receded into the past without a voice, or any form of acknowledgement that they existed. However while some suggestions for their relative invisibility has been proposed, it is important to acknowledge that the small number of graduates limited their possible opportunities for development. Other art schools like Rhodes University for example, graduated three hundred and sixty nine Fine Art students between 1965 and 1999, while Wits and UCT graduated four hundred and ninety three between 1992 and 2012 and two hundred and sixty six between 1990 and 1999 respectively. UCT and Wits were unable to provide me with the exact numbers for the same time frame, however, from the figures they did provide, it can be deduced that their larger numbers offered greater possibility for more students to gain recognition than the relatively small number (139) of UDW graduates.

While this study is intended to be an ‘unveiling’ of these graduates’ work and a presentation of a community that was excluded from art history, it also demonstrates how silences in history are constructed in South Africa and how many other voices have still to be unearthed and included in the South African dialogue. Andre Brink in his essay *Truth, Memory and Narrative* (in Nuttall & Coetzee, 1998: 36) notes the value attached to memory and the need to create opportunities to explore these, even though they may sometimes be unreliable. He observes that memory reflects acts of recovery as well as acts of suppression, and it is easy for the post-Apartheid memory to conveniently forget other events and characters.

The focus of this study was not only to find the artistic output and foreground the work of this sample, but also to identify the impact that politics played in their practice both as undergraduates and practicing artists. Further, during the student years from 1962 to 1990, the South African political landscape was severely disabling in terms of their desire to practise as artists. Compounded by an Indian community which was not well positioned or informed to support their art, their art practice faded and became a memory for many of them.

Artists like Colin Sabapathy, for example, had tried to practise as an artist but failed to sustain himself and thereafter plunged into the corporate world in order to survive and support his family. Rufus Latchmigadu has also on numerous occasions questioned the value of his work reflecting doubt about his talent, skill and potential as an artist. While Faiza Galdhari has had a very short yet successful career as an artist, it is no longer sustainable. Although she does receive the odd commission, payment for her work is not immediately forthcoming, a challenge which many artists face today. However, Galdhari's numerous distressing and challenging experiences have left her feeling exploited, thereby limiting future engagements, much to the detriment of South Africa, as it is losing one of the more prolific artistic voices from the Islamic community. Thus while the study has in some cases presented an opportunity to rekindle a passion for art-making, for others it has been a sobering reminder of how challenging life as a practicing artist can be.

This dissertation has therefore provided an opportunity for some of these Indian graduates to reconsider their potential as artists in a post-Apartheid society. While many are producing work, this work is seldom if ever viewed by the public and continues to remain in the attics, garages and store rooms of the producers. However, since this research has required that those works resurface, the artists have found renewed courage to engage in their own production and reconsider a future where their art production could become a more overt exercise, generating greater confidence and potential in South Africa.

As a result of locating this body of work, I have engaged the Durban Art Gallery and the South African National Gallery in Cape Town to consider hosting an exhibition of this work. Both galleries have responded positively and await my proposal. It is my fervent desire to curate such a show in the hope that an exhibition of this body of work will revive an interest in this sector of graduates and artists, and possibly result in the blurring of race categorisation in the creative art foray of South Africa.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study regarding the relevant academic requirements presented some limitations: as an explorative study, there is an enormous opportunity for future research. Since the late 1980s the FAD had opened up to students of other races, resulting in a multiracial and multicultural student population. The subsequent voice of African graduates from the university is perhaps more audible with many working in art galleries and

museums as well as practising artists, like Prince Dube (ex-Education Officer at the Johannesburg Art Gallery); Gabisile Ngcobo (independent artist and curator); Archibald Musa Mncwabe (Education Officer at Durban Art Gallery) and Pinky Nkabinde (Education Officer at the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg), who are active in their respective fields. Further, given the large numbers of African artists documented and collected in South Africa, the focus of this dissertation excluded the thirty-seven African graduates in favour of the Indian graduates who experience a greater level of obscurity in the public domain and for whom the university was initiated. Due to the limited consideration and appreciation of art produced by Indian South Africans, this was taken up as a necessary focus of this study, and not the art produced by *all* the graduates of the university. In South Africa, there is no dearth of information on Black artists or White artists, with a small population of so-called Coloured artists included. While it was not my intention to use race as an exclusionary device - and indeed this dissertation makes it patently clear that race was in fact a divisive factor which led to the exclusion of Indian artists from the South African art history - it was an inevitable result of the classification in the recovering this work which resulted in the exclusion of Black, White and Coloured graduates.

Further, this dissertation was not a critical study of the Fine Art Department of UDW as that would have required all graduates to have been included for consideration as well as all members of staff. The work of the jewellery graduates like Judy Ramgolam and Nimmi Sheodas was excluded from this study because of the absence of art work and limited access to a very small group of graduates and relevant staff. With the exception of Vijay Shah, there are no other practising jewellers or graduates who had any work which I could document. Likewise, sculpture and ceramics as fields of specialisation were given minimal exposure because of limited access. However, it should be noted that it was not the intention of this study to focus on the art work produced by each department, but rather to focus on the art produced by all Indian graduates during a specific time period.

Thus the limitations of the study were two-fold: firstly, it focused only on Indian graduates and secondly, it did not include any jewellery items and only two sculpture pieces in the analysis.

8.5 Recommendations for further research

This study has presented numerous opportunities for further research. A study of the work of all the graduates would be a noteworthy area of exploration, in order to consider the political, social and cultural tensions peculiar to that art school. Further, a study of all Indian artists practising in South Africa would be valuable in locating the possible existence of an Indian aesthetic in this country or in asserting the value of being South African in this particular moment in this country's history. The possibility of investigating Indian women artists in South Africa, and in particular Muslim women artists in Durban, as there is significant growth in the number of women practising as artists, would no doubt add to the body of scholarship in this field.

A comparative analysis between the art produced by Indian graduates from the former University of Natal's Fine Art Department and the UDW's FAD would provide an opportunity to evaluate their artistic output, thereby either entrenching existing beliefs about cultural and religious idioms present and anticipated in the art work, or contradicting stereotypes in this regard. This research could also be valuable to either establish or negate the impact that race-specific teaching has had on art students throughout the country.

Finally, as Durban has the largest concentration of Indians in South Africa, was the first port for the arrival of Indians, and has the largest apportion of land developed and owned by Indian farmers, an investigation into notions of identity as embedded and related to the land within a post-Apartheid and post-colonial context, warrants investigation. There are many works which engage with this idiom and an investigation into the re-presentation of such a dialogue would certainly prove useful.

This dissertation is the story of Indian South Africans who graduated with a degree in Fine Art from the former University of Durban-Westville from 1962 until its closure in 1999. For much of its life, this department functioned within the particular project of Apartheid which no longer exists in South Africa. The narratives presented highlight the ways in which most of these graduates have been isolated and therefore written out of the art history of this country. However, we are in a new political order and the historical context has changed. There are now new groups of practising artists emerging and new opportunities for engagement where race is no longer a primary point of differentiation. There is now more support available for artists and art students through competitions, corporate sponsors and

exhibition opportunities: this access gives meaningful impetus to the development of aspiring art students.

The constructs of culture, politics and identity, as manifest in and through the visual art presented in this study, bear testimony to the impact an unequal society has on the creativity of its artists. As a sequel to this dissertation, which has consumed me for a number of years, I intend to review the vast body of work that has been hidden from view and as mentioned earlier embark on a publication and an exhibition. This will bring the work into the public domain and create an opportunity for further dialogue about the role of art within the Indian community and within the South African art history narrative. At this time it is also possible to imagine the presence of a new affluent Indian audience, who might find resonance in these artworks and begin a new patronage. This does not preclude the support of the diverse populace of this country, but will, I hope, inspire, encourage and create a platform for the multiracial and multicultural creativity of South African artists.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Fine Art graduates who participated in the study

	Name	Year of graduation
1	Adam Ayesha	1980
2	Anghar Niven	1995
3	Bansi Sandhia	1999
4	Baskali Rajiv	1991
5	Charles-Lazarus Herselene	1968
6	Chetty Pragasen	1988
7	David Errol	1992
8	Galdhari Faiza	1992
9	Galdhari Saleem	1989
10	Ganess Sheri	1986
11	Gokool Selina	1989
12	Govender Lucky	1987
13	Govender P.N.(for Mahendra)	1992
14	Govender Poobalan	1988
15	Govender Ravi	1987
16	Haffejee Razia	1975
17	Latchmigadu Dianne	1990
18	Latchmigadu Rufus	1990
19	Maharaj Reshma	1993
20	Maharaj Sarat	1967
21	Moodley Charles	1989
22	Munsamy Ashley	1990
23	Naidoo Manjula-Devi	1980
24	Naidoo Sandy	1995
25	Naidoo Selvan	1995
26	Nair Andrew	1983
27	Nanackchand Vedant	1977
28	Patel Chandra	1969
29	Pather Prabashan	1995
30	Pillay Clive	1984
31	Ramgolam Judy	1990
32	Sabapathy Colin	1984
33	Sabjee Sajida	1996
34	Sekola Desiree	1984
35	Sewpersad Ujala	1986
36	Shah Vijay	1990
37	Sheodass Nimmi	1991
38	Singh Anesh	1988
39	Suhka Kanu	Left in 1970
40	Thathiah Kirendra	1984
41	Timol Sherene	1972
42	Vahed Greer Hajra	1973
43	Vahed Yusuf	1994

Appendix B

Generic Questionnaire for the Sample Population

1. Where did you study?
2. When? 19... to 19 ...
3. What did you study? Why?
4. What were your perceptions of :
 - a. Art training at UDW?
 - b. The limitations in terms of teaching...constraints in terms of content/context/materials/isolation of the campus?
5. What was, if any, the idea of the Indian identity at the university?
 - a. What was its impact on teaching and learning and/or your related expectations?
 - b. What were the racial dynamics of the staff?
 - c. What was the focus of the curriculum as you remember it?
6. What do you recall about the cultural atmosphere at UDW?
 - a. What was happening in the cultural sphere at the university and its surrounding communities?
 - b. Was there an interface between the production of art and the Indian community?
 - c. Was there an underlying tendency towards the negation of a specific Indian identity or an affirmation of Indian identity?
 - d. What aspects of your Indian identity were/are reflected in your work?
7. Highlight the content/curriculum and outcomes of the Fine Art degree.
8. What motivated creativity and how was it solicited/encouraged?

9. How was your work sold or marketed? In which collections, if any, are your works accessioned?
10. Are there expectations in you or your audiences regarding an “Indian-ness” in your work?
11. Any general comments you would like to add about UDW or your art making and reception in the ‘new’ South Africa?
12. Are you willing to participate in further interviews?

Thank you for your time and contribution.

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Appendix C

Sketchbook Explorations and Studio Practice



Figure 113: Herselene Lazarus-Charles, *Sketchbook Studies*, c. 1966, pencil, 60 x 42cm.



Figure 114: Herselene Lazarus-Charles, *Sketchbook Studies*, c. 1966, pencil, 60 x 42 cm.



Figure 115: Herselene Charles-Lazarus, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1966, pencil, 60 x 42cm.



Figure 116: Herselene Lazarus-Charles, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1966, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm



Figure 117: Colin Sabapathy, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1982, charcoal on paper, approx. 60 x 42cm



Figure 118: Colin Sabapathy, *Sketchbook Studies*, c. 1982, charcoal on paper, approx. 60 x 42 cm



Figure 119: Colin Sabapathy, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1982, pen on paper, 60 x 42cm



Figure 120: Colin Sabapathy, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1982, charcoal on paper, 60 x 42cm



Figure 121: Colin Sabapathy, *Sketchbook Studies*, c. 1982, charcoal on paper, 60 x 42cm



Figure 122: Colin Sabapathy, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1982, mixed media, 84 x 60cm



Figure 123: Saleem Galdhari, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1986, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm



Figure 124: Saleem Galdhari, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, pencil on paper, approx. 60 x 42cm



Figure 125: Saleem Galdhari, *Aunty Nora*, c.1986, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm

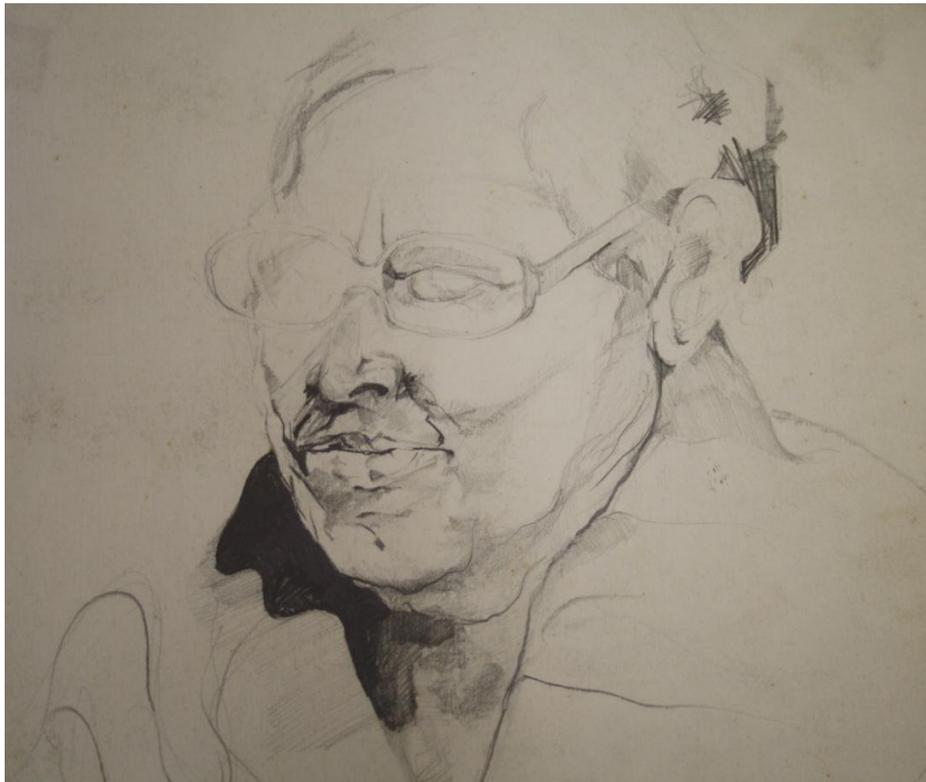


Figure 126: Saleem Galdhari, *Aunty Panjalai*, c. 1987, approx. 42 x 30cm



Figure 127: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm



Figure 128: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm



Figure 129: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm



Figure 130: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Untitled*, c.1988, pen on paper, 42 x 30cm



Figure 131: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, ink on paper, 60 x 42cm,



Figure 132: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, mixed media, 42 x 30cm



Figure 133: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, mixed media, 42 x 30cm



Figure 134: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, charcoal, 42 x 30cm

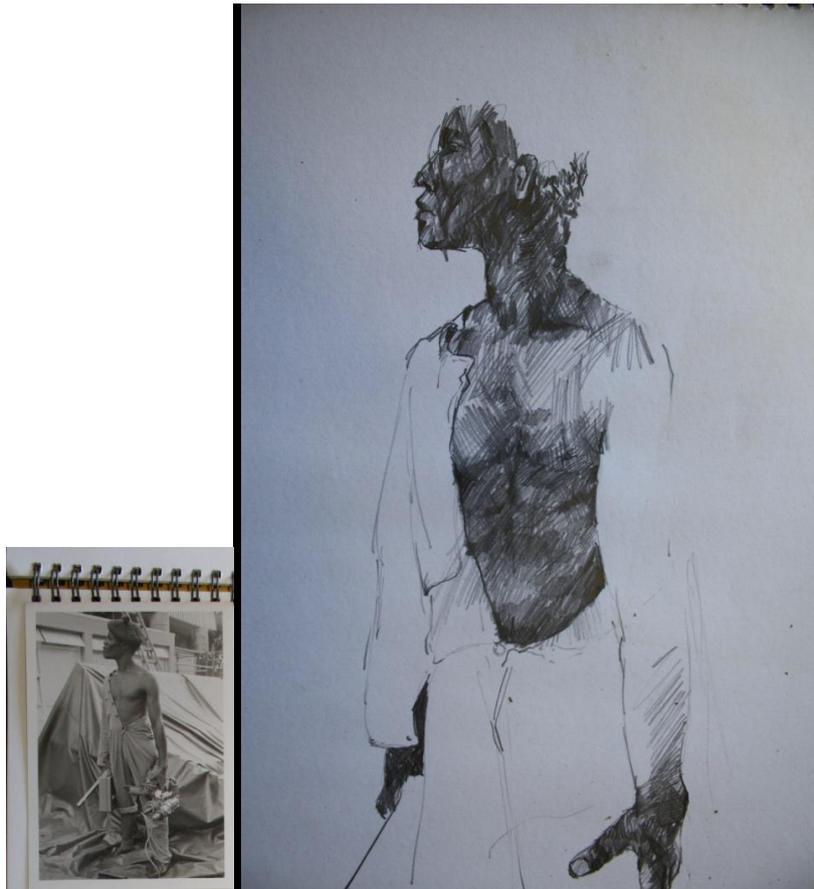


Figure 135: Rufus Latchmigadu, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm



Figure 136: Selina Gokool, *Sketchbook Study*, c.1987, pencil on paper, 60 x 42cm



Figure 137: Rajiv Manilal, *Sketchbook Studies*, c. 1988, pencil on paper, approx. 40 x 30cm



Figure 138: Rajiv Manilal, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1988, pencil on paper, 42 x 30cm



Figure 139: Rajiv Manilal, *Sketchbook Studies*, c 1987, pencil on paper, approx. 42 x 30cm



Figure 140: Rajiv Manilal, *Sketchbook Studies*, c.1987, pencil on paper, approx. 42 x 30cm



Figure 141: Rajiv Manilal, *Sketchbook Studies*, c. 1987, watercolour on paper, approx.42 x 30cm



Figure 142: Nalini Moodley, *Untitled*, lithograph, 1990, approx. 43 x 30cm

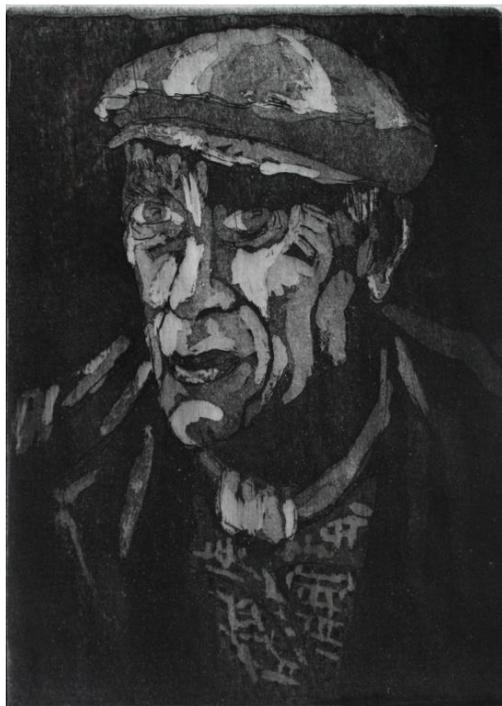


Figure 143: Selina Gokool, *Untitled*, c.1987, etching, 42 x 30cm